



RODWAY PLANNING
CONSULTANCY LIMITED

PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

IN RELATION TO:

‘Change of use of land from permitted B8 storage use, and erection of new detached office building (Use Class B1), with access via Hangleton Lane, and associated car parking, cycle storage and refuse storage.’

**Land at Hangleton Lane, Ferring,
West Sussex, BN12 6PP**

November 2017



RTPI

Chartered Town Planner

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a new single storey office building with roofspace accommodation on vacant land located to the east of Hangleton Lane. The development will be served by a new car park and access off Hangleton Lane. Refuse and cycle storage will also be provided for on-site.
- 1.2 The application is made on behalf of District Carers Limited, who are a locally based company that has been operating for almost 20 years, providing carers to vulnerable adults to support them to live independently, both at home and in their community. The company provides services directly to WSCC and the NHS as well as privately funded citizens in West Sussex.
- 1.3 This application stems from the applicants having an immediate need for larger premises, both to service its current customer base but also to allow it to recruit more carers to meet the unmet need in the community.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of the above planning application. The statement describes the site, its surroundings and the proposal itself. The Planning Policy background is considered along with an assessment of the proposal in light of the relevant policy and all other material planning considerations.
- 1.5 This Statement should be read alongside the other supporting documents that make up this planning application submission, comprising:
 - Full drawing package, prepared by Folkes Architects;
 - A Transport Statement, prepared by GTA Civils;
 - A Business Plan, prepared by Sussex District Carers (the applicants); and,
 - A Commercial Report, prepared by Michael Jones & Company.

2. SITE CONTEXT

- 2.1 The application site, which is the subject of this pre-application enquiry comprises a parcel of land that is located east of Hangleton Lane. The site comprises a generally flat, unused and overgrown area of land, which measures approximately 0.16 hectares in size. The site currently forms part of a larger site which benefits from planning permission for the open storage of vehicles (B8).



Fig 1. Aerial view of the site and its surroundings

- 2.2 The proposal would be located east of existing office accommodation and parking area, which currently serves our clients business, District Carers. This building offers limited office accommodation, which is insufficient to meet the needs of our client's expanding business.

- 2.3 The proposed building will be accessed via an existing access point off the east side of Hangleton Lane.
- 2.4 The immediately surrounding area is defined by a variety of uses, which have altered dramatically over the years. Whilst many neighbouring sites were former nurseries (horticultural use), the surrounding area is now semi-industrial in character with lawful development certificates and planning permission being granted for a mixture of B1 and B8 uses along Hangleton Lane. There are residential properties to the north west and south west, which includes the immediately adjoining neighbour, Florence House; whilst the application site is enclosed by existing development with an existing office (B1) to the west, open car sales to the south and east; B1 offices associated with the car sales to the east; and caravan storage and commercial uses to the north.
- 2.5 The adjoining site to the east is known as Hangleton Nursery. The nursery use ceased in approximately 2000 and since this time, the nursery area has been largely vacant with the buildings primarily being used for storage. The site now benefits from planning permission for the change of use of the land from agricultural/ compost production to B8 Storage (Planning ref: FG/45/15/PL; Appeal ref: APP/C3810/W/15/3130468). The premises are to be used for the open storage of vehicles associated with the use of the car dealership premises adjacent.
- 2.6 The site is located outside of any defined built up area boundary, within the designated countryside. To our knowledge, no other restrictions or constraints relate to the site.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a new single storey detached building with accommodation set within its roofspace. This will provide office accommodation (B1 use class) to be used by District Carers Limited, who are a locally based company. The building will provide employment for 15 full time equivalent employees.

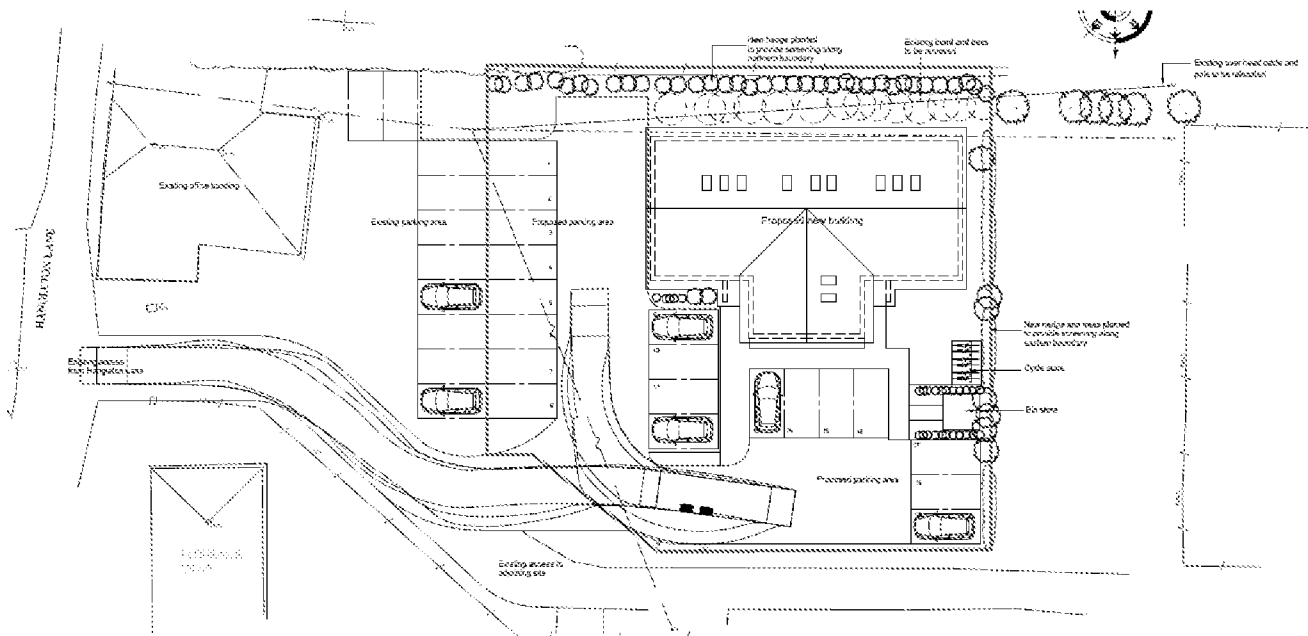


Fig 2. Proposed site layout

- 3.2 The building will provide a total of 377 sqm of new office floorspace (comprising 226 sqm at ground floor, and 151 sqm at first floor). Within these floor areas will be the provision of ancillary uses, such as a training room, kitchens, w.c's, a lift, and circulation space.
- 3.3 Externally, the building will be clad with profile metal sheeting and panels of vertical cedar boarding to its walls, and to the roof there will be metal cladding with standing seams. The windows and doors will be powder coated aluminum, to

be finished in dark grey. The building will have the appearance of a bungalow with low level eaves, but with first floor accommodation set within the roofspace.

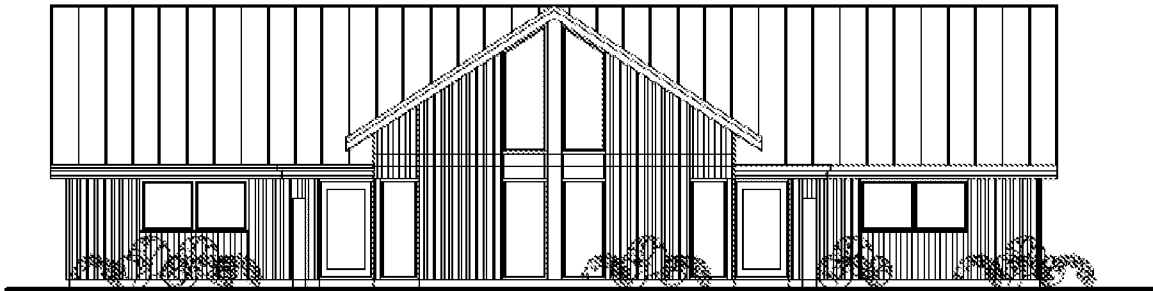


Fig 3. Proposed south elevation (front)

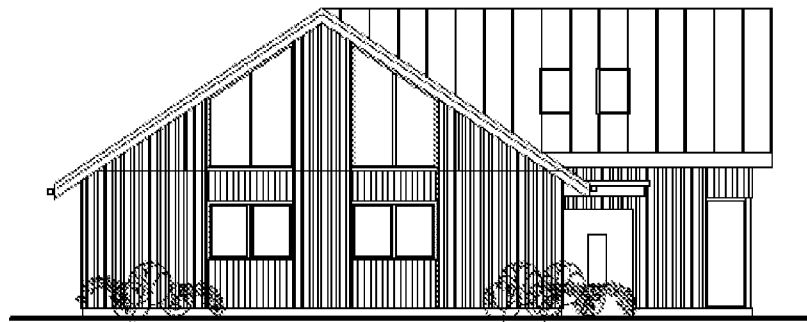


Fig 4. Proposed west elevation (side)

- 3.4 The site will utilise an existing vehicular access off the east side of Hangleton Lane. Access to neighbouring sites/premises will be unaffected by these proposals. The access drive will lead to a new parking area that will serve the new use. It will provide a total of 19 car parking spaces, which will be for the use of staff working at Sussex District Carers.
- 3.5 Dedicated cycle parking and refuse storage areas to be provided within the application site. In addition, significant levels of new planting are to be provided, primarily in the form of new hedging and trees to the sites north and east boundaries. In addition, an existing bund to the northern boundary is to be removed.



(i) Application Site

Fig 5. Block Plan approved under Planning ref: FG/45/15/PL/ Appeal ref: APP/C3810/W/15/3130468)

4.2 Following this permission a number of variations and discharge of condition applications (ref: FG/143/16/DOC and FG/144/16/DOC) have been determined by the Council, as set out below:

- Planning ref: FG/103/16/PL/: Demolition of section of wall to provide internal vehicular & staff access to & from the adjoining premises (amendment to FG/45/15/PL). Approved Conditionally 14-10-2016.
- Planning ref: FG/104/16/PL/: Erection of 3m high security fence around the previously approved car compound, amendments to existing storage buildings & associated lighting. Approved Conditionally 14-10-2016.
- Planning ref: FG/10/16/PL: Erection of a wash-down area adjacent to existing wash-down bay including a connection to existing interceptor at adjacent car dealership premises. Approved Conditionally 31-03-2016.
- Planning ref: FG/9/16/PL/: Variation of condition 6 imposed under FG/45/15/PL relating to use of site. Approved Conditionally 31-03-2016.
- Planning ref: FG/8/16/PL: Variation of condition 7 imposed under FG/45/15/PL to extend the use of the site hours. Approved Conditionally 31-03-2016.

4.3 According to the Council's on-line planning register, the site also has the following previous and other planning history:

- Planning ref: FG/46/15/PL/: Change of use of land from agricultural/ compost production to B8 storage. This application is a Departure from the Development Plan. Refused Planning Permission. Appeal Dismissed 31-12-2015.
- Planning ref: FG/162/14/PL/: Change of use from agricultural/ compost production (Sui Generis) to B8 (Storage or Distribution. (Resubmission following FG/127/14/PL). This application is a Departure from the Development Plan. Refused 23-12-2014.
- Planning ref: FG/154/10/: Application under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country General Regulations 1992 for continued use as a facility for production of compost from green waster for a temporary period of 2 years as previously approved under



RODWAY PLANNING
CONSULTANCY LIMITED

FG/62/03 which expired 30th June 2006 (This application was determined by WSCC).

- Planning ref: FG/109/08/: Continued use as a facility for production of compost for a temporary period of 2 years previously approved FG/62/03. (Determined by WSCC) Approved Conditionally
- Planning ref: FG/135/06/: Continued use as a facility for production of compost for a temporary period of 2 years previously approved FG/62/03. (Determined by West Sussex County Council) Approved Conditionally
- Planning ref: FG/62/03/: Provision of facility for production of compost from green waste for a temporary period of 2 years. County Matter. Determined by WSCC. Approved Conditionally
- Planning ref: FG/72/01/: Outline Application for demolition of existing glasshouse and horticultural buildings. Development of site for residential dwellings. (Departure from the Development Plan). Refused
- Planning ref: FG/21/99/: Temporary use of land for storage of cars. Refused 23-04-1999.
- Planning ref: FG/49/98/: Glasshouse (No. 3 - Phase 1). Approved Conditionally 28-10-1998.
- Planning ref: FG/62/97/: Demolition of existing lean-to extensions and conversion of existing offices with single storey extension to form two bedroom detached dwelling (for Manager). Refused 02-12-1997.
- Planning ref: FG/51/96/: Glasshouse (No.3 Phase 2). Approved Conditionally 18-10-1998.
- Planning ref: FG/110/88/: A range of nine multispan glasshouses with galvanized steel support structures and aluminium glazing bars. Approved Conditionally 11-07-1988.
- Planning ref: FG/90/80/: Glazed extension of existing greenhouse to provide covered way. Approved Conditionally 16-07-1980.
- Planning ref: FG/93/78/: Erection of 5 glasshouses for horticultural use. Approved Conditionally 16-08-1978.

4.4 In addition, Planning permission has been granted for additional car parking for the Peugeot dealership under ref: FG/134/13/PL - Demolition of existing single dwelling, construction of paved display and parking forecourt, with associated landscaping and lighting which was approved conditionally on 15-01-2014.

(ii) Nearby Sites

4.5 With regard to the character of the area, it is clear that this has changed beyond all recognition over recent years. The surrounding area was former typified by former nursery sites, however is now semi-industrial in character.

4.6 A brief overview of the planning history of adjoining sites is outlined below for clarification purposes.

- McIntyres Nursery' and Highdown House

4.7 Planning permission was granted to 'demolish existing offices and provide replacement offices for McIntyres Nursery' (Planning ref: FG/129/00/ Appeal ref: APP/C3810/A/01/1063334). This decision was granted via an Inspectors decision, following a formal Hearing on 22nd August 2001.

4.8 A further planning application sought to remove the requirement for the ancillary office accommodation (known as Highdown House) to be occupied to persons related to the needs of agriculture, horticulture or forestry, as per the requirements of condition 3 attached to planning ref: FG/129/00, which was allowed at Appeal (ref: APP/C3810/A/01/1063334). This application was granted under planning ref: FG/190/16/PL.

- Highview Nursery

4.9 An application for new storage facilities for an existing scaffold yard and firewood yard (related to landscaping contractors), and replacement of structures that are to

be demolished (application ref: FG/149/14/PL) was approved by the Council in 2014 for a site to the northwest of Highview Nursery. This followed a previous enforcement appeal that allowed the change of use of the former nursery site to various uses including a scaffolders' yard and a firewood yard.

- Hill View Chalet

- 4.10 Hill View Chalet had permission granted by Arun District Council in respect of an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed use as an unrestricted residential unit (application ref: FG/23/14/CLP). This essentially has confirmed that there is no AOC that relates to the occupancy of this adjacent dwelling. The Officers report states: "Outline permission FG/166/57 was granted on 07-12-1957 for a farm foreman's dwelling with no conditions restricting its occupation. This was followed by FG/36/58 which granted permission on 09-05-1958 for a farm foreman's dwelling. There were no conditions attached to the permission. Agricultural occupancy was not therefore controlled by condition. An internal memo was sent from the Area Planning Officer to the Council's Solicitor on 17-10-1975 stating it was not possible to insist that the dwelling was occupied by an agricultural worker. A later memo from the Solicitor dated 27-01-1978 states *"there is no agricultural occupancy condition relating to its future use and accordingly there would be difficulties in trying to preserve the use of the dwelling for agricultural properties by enforcement. The proposal at that time for employment on the nursery by one of the occupiers was deemed appropriate... The current owners of the premises have occupied the site in accordance with the spirit of the original planning permission description, albeit no restrictive condition existed. Now having checked the planning history it is evident that whilst their occupation was in accordance with the original intentions of the permission, and was desirable, at no time has it been enforceable. It is therefore demonstrated from the planning history that the proposed unrestricted occupation of the dwelling does not require planning permission in order to be undertaken."*

- Bell Davis Fencing

4.11 Lastly, the Bell Davis fencing site was granted planning permission in 2010 for the change of use from the former agricultural nursery to B8 storage and wholesale supply of fencing and associated materials (application ref: FG/59/10).

5. POLICY CONTEXT

a) THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012, and is the most-up-to date Government planning policy document.
- 5.2 The focus of the new NPPF is achieving sustainable development, the definition of which is summarised in paragraph 6 as being the whole of paragraph's 18-219 of the Framework. Paragraph 7 goes further as it specifies that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Under the economic role it states that the planning system should contribute "*to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure*".
- 5.3 Under paragraph 11, the NPPF confirms that planning law requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan.
- 5.4 Paragraph 14 is an important element of the NPPF. It states that: "at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking". It details that objectively assessed needs, have to be met unless "*any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits*". This is assessed against all the policies of the NPPF, as a whole, or specific policies relating to SSSI, Green Belt, Local Green Space, AONB, Heritage Coast, National Park, designated heritage assets, flood risk locations and

coastal erosion. It also states that decision makers should be *"approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay"*.

- 5.5 The NPPF advises that a set of 12 core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking, and these principles are listed under paragraph 17. Although the NPPF omits the wording that was present in the draft which referred to the default position of "yes" to applications for sustainable development, it does retain the significant change that requires a response to market signals. Each of the bullet points are important, but of particular note is no. 3, where it states the need to *"proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities"*.
- 5.6 Section 1 relates to Building a Strong, Competitive Economy. Paragraph 18 notes that *"the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system"*.
- 5.7 Paragraphs 22 goes on to state that *"planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the*

allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities".

5.8 Section 3 refers specifically to Supporting a prosperous rural economy, noting that *"planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:*

- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centers; and*
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship".*

5.9 Section 4 is entitled 'Promoting Sustainable Transport'. Under paragraph 29 it advises that different policies and measures are required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas. This section also highlights the importance of LPA's and/or developers working with transport providers, and also that Travel Plans are key documents. With reference to car parking, paragraph 39, states that if a LPA

provides local parking standards, account should be had of *“the accessibility of the development; the type, mix and use of development; the availability of and opportunities for public transport; local car ownership levels; and an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles”*.

- 5.10 Paragraph 30 confirms that Local Planning Authorities should be supportive of proposals that support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.
- 5.11 Section 7 discusses the need for good design. Under paragraph 58 the NPPF provides what appears to be a clearer and more robust approach to design than in PPS1 paragraph 33 – 39.
- 5.12 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF states that the Government attaches great weight to the design of the built environment and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. It goes on to state that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, should respond to local character, create safe and accessible environments and is visually attractive. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 5.13 The NPPF wishes to avoid unnecessary prescription or detail (paragraph 59), whilst the key criteria of scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials, access, relationship to neighbouring buildings and relation to the local area more generally remain. Paragraph 58 expands on this by stating that developments should: *“function well and add to the overall quality of the area... establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit... optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses...*



RODWAY PLANNING
CONSULTANCY LIMITED

respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation; create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping".

- 5.14 The crucial caveat of PPS1 paragraph 35 remains within the NPPF. That is that good design goes far beyond aesthetic considerations, with paragraph 61 specifically referring to *"integration of new development into the natural and historic environment"*.

b. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

(i) Arun District Local Plan (2003)

- 5.15 At the time of submitting this planning application, the relevant local level policy document remains the Arun District Local Plan.
- 5.16 **Policy GEN2** entitled 'Built up Area Boundary' determines that the *"the boundaries of the built-up area for the purposes of... this District Local Plan are defined on the Proposals Map. Development or redevelopment will be permitted within the built-up area boundaries, subject to the other policies in this plan. **Outside the built-up area boundaries, development or redevelopment will not be permitted unless it is consistent with other Local Plan policies.**"*
- 5.17 The Local Plan proposals map designates that the site falls outside the boundary of the built-up area of Ferring, and therefore lies within an area defined as countryside, where **Policy GEN3** applies. This is a rather general rural policy, which reiterates the intentions of the now redundant PPG7. Essentially the Policy outlines the Council's objectives with regard to the areas of the countryside within

the District. The Policy seeks to protect the countryside “*for its own sake*”, with new development restricted to cases where a need exists.

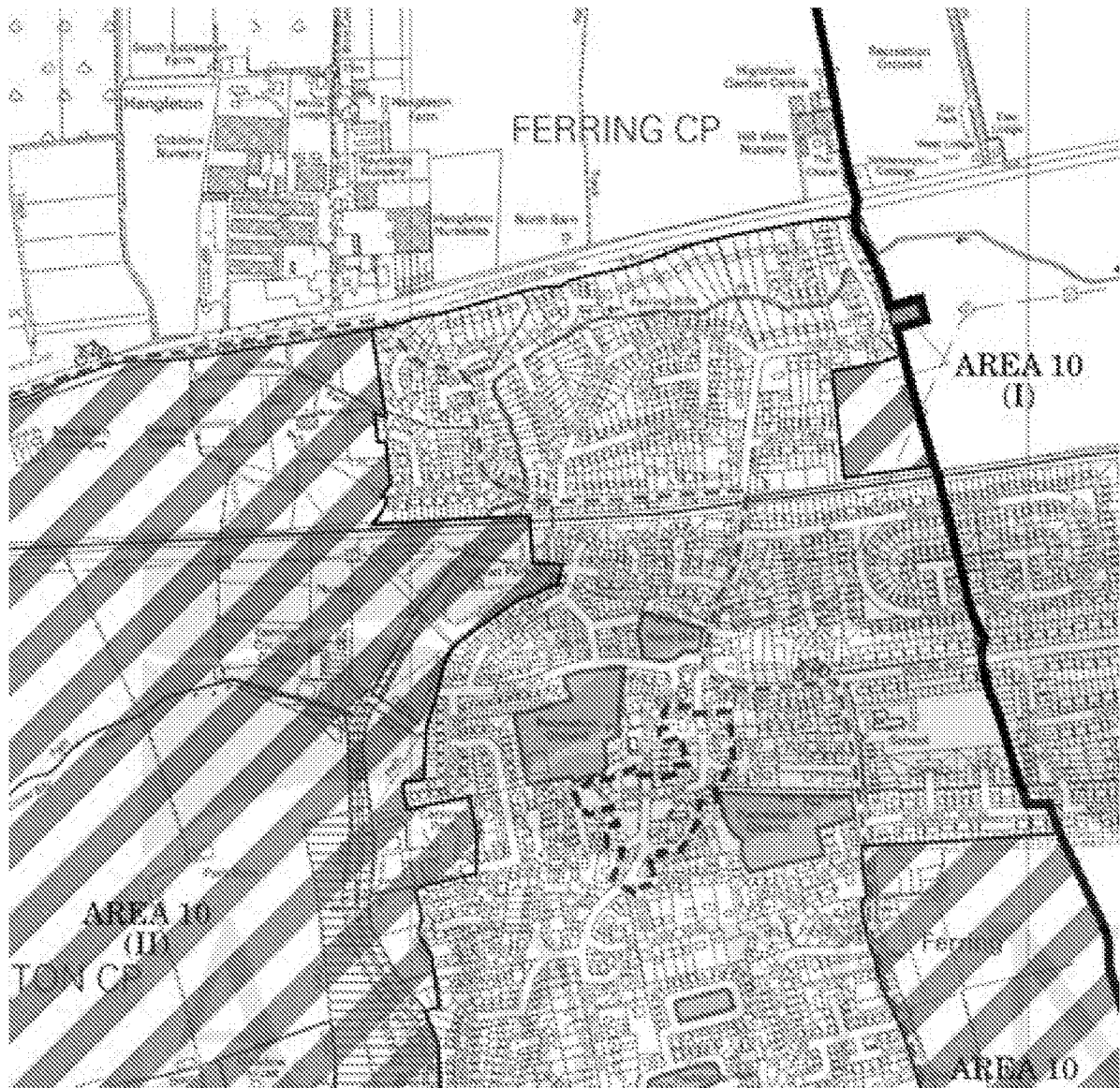


Fig 6. Extract from Arun District Council (2003) Proposals Inset Map L: Ferring

5.18 **Policy GEN7** entitled ‘The Form of New Development’ is a rather general design based policy that sets out the criteria against which new build development will be assessed. It states:



**RODWAY PLANNING
CONSULTANCY LIMITED**

"Planning permission will only be granted for schemes displaying high quality design and layout. Development proposals involving new buildings or significant extensions or alterations must be accompanied by an illustrated written analysis of the site and its immediate setting, together with its relationship with the relevant townscape, landscape, wildlife and movement characteristics of the wider area.

Development will be permitted provided it:

- (i) makes efficient use of land or buildings and, in the case of new residential development, achieves net densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare;*
- (ii) demonstrates that it responds positively to the identified characteristics and resources of the site and the area to create attractive places and spaces with the needs of people in mind and respects and enhances local distinctiveness;*
- (iii) promotes sustainable development, including the effective use and conservation of energy and reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car;*
- (iv) does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on adjoining occupiers, land, uses or property and, where relevant, facilitates the development of adjoining sites;*
- (v) takes account of any unacceptable adverse impacts that may arise from adjoining land uses or property;*
- (vi) retains significant open or wooded areas which, in their own right, make a material contribution to the local environment;*
- (vii) allows for the safe movement of pedestrians and vehicles, giving priority to pedestrians;*
- (viii) provides for vehicle parking in accordance with Policy GEN12 and Appendix 2 and open space in accordance with Policy GEN20.*

In all cases, the District Council will expect a high standard of design and layout and all applicants will be encouraged to improve the visual amenities of the particular locality in scale, external appearance, hard and soft landscaping and materials."

5.19 **Policy DEV8 relates** to Circumstances in which additional development may be permitted by local firms. This policy states that planning permission may be granted to local firms, currently located within the District, proposing development on sites outside the built-up area, provided that the applicant can demonstrate a accordance with a number of points, which are as follows:-

"(i) that no acceptable alternative can be identified within existing permitted or allocated floorspace or within or through redevelopment of existing commercial premises; and

(ii) that the proposal:

(a) exhibits a high standard of design and layout;

(b) is capable of being well served by public transport or otherwise is readily accessible other than by private car to a significant residential workforce if employment intensive uses are proposed;

(c) provides access arrangements and parking facilities in accordance with the Council's adopted standards;

(d) relates sympathetically to the surrounding built or natural environment;

(e) includes suitable landscaping and floorscaping provision where appropriate;

(f) displays a satisfactory relationship with neighbouring uses in order that the amenities of nearby residents in particular are protected; and

(g) incorporates, where appropriate, crime prevention measures..."

(ii) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- 5.20 The 'Parking Standards' Supplementary Planning Guidance note, dating from October 2000 is also considered relevant to the consideration of this application.

(iii) Emerging Local Plan

- 5.21 The Arun District Local Plan 2011-2031 was submitted on 30th January 2015 for independent examination to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government via the Planning Inspectorate. The Local Plan sets out a vision for the future of Arun District up to 2031. The Local Plan Examination-in-Public was formally suspended by the Planning Inspector in February 2016 following a Procedural Meeting and initial Hearing sessions. The suspension was granted to enable the Council to undertake further work and produce proposed modifications to the Local Plan in response to a range of observations and concerns identified by the Planning Inspector.
- 5.22 More recently the Council consulted on proposed modifications to the Plan prior to the Local Plan undergoing further examination in public by a new Inspector. The modifications proposed constitute both 'minor' grammatical, and non-material changes to the Plan, and 'main' substantive material changes to the contents of the Plan. A number of new evidence base studies have been produced and these studies have been produced to inform and support the proposed modifications to the Local Plan. It appears that the most significant modifications required to the Plan relate to the need for a substantial uplift to the housing requirements for the District. The latest evidence produced by GL Hearn (applying the approach endorsed by the Inspector through existing Hearings and interim conclusions) utilising the 2014 Sub-National Population Projections and associated Housing Projections indicates that OAHN equates to 919 dwellings per annum, or 18,380 dwellings over the Plan period 2011 – 2031. This is significantly higher than the OAHN in the Submitted Local Plan (580 dwellings per annum) or the OAHN figure

recommended by the Local Plan Inspector (845 dwellings per annum) in February 2016 following the OAHN Hearing.

5.23 The Council has proposed substantive modifications to chapter 12 of the Local Plan 'Housing Delivery' to reflect 'testing' of spatial options, Sustainability Appraisal, other evidence, and the substantial increase in OAHN for the District. These changes can be summarised as follows:

- Chapter largely re-written;
- Updated references;
- New policies HSP1 and HSP2;
- New policies HSP3 - HSP5 relating to site allocations;
- Revised affordable housing mix HSP2.

Through the proposed modifications, Arun District Council is planning to meet an updated housing requirement. The proposed modifications to the Local Plan respond to the latest evidence, which indicates an OAHN equating to 919 dwellings per annum.

5.24 The subsequent hearing sessions into the examination of the Arun Local Plan ended on 28th September 2017. The Inspector will now consider what he heard at the hearings alongside the representations and other evidence. He will in due course write to the LPA setting out any significant issues arising from the hearings and examination so far. In parallel, and without prejudice to his findings on the soundness of the Local Plan, he has asked the LPA to prepare a composite Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications for him to consider in due course.

5.25 Given that the Inspectors final report, which will contain his findings on the soundness of the Local Plan are awaited, we consider that only limited weight can be attributed to this emerging Local Plan at this time.

5.26 Notwithstanding the above, the following policies of the emerging Arun Local Plan are considered relevant to this revised application:

- **Policy D DM1** relates to Aspects of form and design quality. This policy notes that when considering any application for development the Council will have regard to a number of criteria.
- **Policy T SP1** relates to Transport and Development. This policy states that *"to ensure that growth in the District strengthens Arun's economic base, reduces congestion, works to tackle climate change and promotes healthy lifestyles; the Council will ensure that development: provides safe access on to the highway network; contributes to highway improvements and promotes sustainable transport, including the use of low emission fuels, public transport improvements and the cycle, pedestrian and bridleway network".*
- **Policy C SP1** entitled 'Countryside' sets out that *"Outside the defined Built-Up Area Boundary (as identified on the Policies Maps) as well as outside both the strategic, site specific and broad allocations, the countryside will be safeguarded for its own sake. Development will not be permitted there unless it is:*
 - a. for the operational needs of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, the extraction of minerals or the management of waste as part of a waste site allocation within the West Sussex Waste Local Plan; or*
 - b. for quiet, informal recreation; or*
 - c. for green infrastructure; or*
 - d. for the diversification of the rural economy; or*
 - e. for road and/or cycle schemes; or*
 - f. in accordance with other policies in the Plan which refer to a specific use or type of development."*

- **Policy EMP DM1** entitled 'Employment Land: Development Management' is an encouraging policy that seeks to provide flexibility for employment uses of land and the needs of enterprise. With respect to the provision of economic growth outside the built-up areas, section 6 of the policy states: *"Planning permission will be granted to local firms, currently located within the District, proposing development on sites outside the built-up area, provided that the proposal demonstrates:*
 - a. No acceptable alternative can be identified within existing permitted or allocated floorspace, or within or through redevelopment of existing commercial premises, and which can be delivered in a reasonable timeframe;*
 - b. That it would not intensify uses at the site to the detriment of existing public access routes and highways;*
 - c. A high standard of design and layout;*
 - d. That it is capable of being well served by public transport or otherwise is readily accessible by means other than by private car to a significant residential workforce if employment intensive uses are proposed;*
 - e. Access arrangements and parking facilities will be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards;*
 - f. A sympathetic relationship to the surrounding areas that shows consideration of the landscape, habitat, built and historic environment contexts, the opportunities to deliver on-site habitats and protect key species;*
 - g. Suitable landscaping and floorscaping provision where appropriate;*
 - h. That it is not in a protected area including Gaps Between Settlements;*
 - i. A satisfactory relationship with neighbouring uses in order that the amenities of nearby residents, in particular, are protected; and*
 - j. Where appropriate, crime prevention measures are incorporated."*

- (vi) Neighbourhood Plan

5.27 It is understood that the Ferring Neighbourhood Plan 2014 – 2029 was ‘made’ in January 2015. **Policy 7** of the NP relates to ‘Land North of Littlehampton Road’, and is considered of relevance to this planning application. It states that the “neighbourhood Plan will support:

- i. Any development shall minimise visual impacts on the surrounding countryside
 - ii. All new buildings are located as part of the existing clusters of buildings to ensure existing patterns of development are maintained and to avoid significant incursions into open countryside, wherever possible unless details show an improved siting.
 - iii. Suitable measures are proposed to improve the setting and / or screening of the development within its wider setting of the National Park.
 - iv. Where appropriate, proposals shall be accompanied by drawings or other images showing impact of the proposed new development from key vantage points in the surrounding open countryside
 - v. Development will be permitted in exceptional circumstances for example, if it is essential to meet utility infrastructure needs and no alternative site is available.
- The Neighbourhood Plan will resist any proposals for a change of use from an established agricultural, horticultural or equine use or any other unrelated uses”.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

a. Pre-Application Advice

- 6.1 In May 2017 a pre-application planning enquiry for 'erection of new detached office building (Use Class B1), with associated parking, cycle storage and bin storage' was submitted to Arun District Council (pre-app reference: PAA/104/17).
- 6.2 On 5th July, the Planning Officer (Mr David Easton) provided a written response to this enquiry which made the following key comments:
- 6.3 With respect to the principle of development, the Planning Officer states that *"Development Plan policies seek to exert a strict control over new development in the countryside to protect it for its own sake. Development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances or where there is a strong justification for a countryside location. The Government's planning advice indicates that planning authorities should continue to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected, and where possible enhanced... However, there are a number of key policy considerations beyond policy GEN3 of the Arun District Local Plan. Paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. Policy 7 of the Ferring Neighbourhood Plan will support new development to the north of Littlehampton Road so long as;*
- i. Any development shall minimise visual impacts on the surrounding countryside;*
 - ii. All new buildings are located as part of the existing clusters of buildings to ensure existing patterns of development are maintained and to avoid significant incursions into open countryside, wherever possible unless details show an improved siting;*

iii. Suitable measures are proposed to improve the setting and / or screening of the development within its wider setting of the National Park;

iv. Where appropriate, proposals shall be accompanied by drawings or other images showing impact of the proposed new development from key vantage points in the surrounding open countryside;

v. Development will be permitted in exceptional circumstances for example, if it is essential to meet utility infrastructure needs and no alternative site is available

In this case it is considered that the proposal will accord with Policy 7 (i) and (ii) of the Ferring Neighbourhood Plan as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy DEV8 of the Arun District Local Plan (2003) is also relevant to the determination of this application with the policy identifying circumstances in which additional development may be permitted (local firms). The proposed development is deemed to accord with requirements of DEV8(ii) but it will be necessary for the applicant to provide adequate justification and evidence that there are no acceptable alternatives within existing permitted or allocated floor space or through redevelopment of existing commercial premises."

- 6.4 With respect to the proposed design, the Officer states "development in the immediately locality is varied and the materials proposed are in keeping with existing development. The application site is well screened on all boundaries and is enclosed by existing development. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed office building will not encroach upon or have an unacceptably adverse impact upon the countryside surrounding the development on Hangleton Lane. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal accords with policy GEN7(ii) of the Arun District Local Plan".

- 6.5 In respect of the impact on neighbour's amenities, the Officer determined that the *"development/uses immediately abutting the application site are commercial in nature and as such it is considered that the proposed office building will not give rise to any unacceptably adverse overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking impacts on neighbouring uses... The nearest residential property to the site is located approximately 20m to the south-west of the application site. The proposed office building will not adversely impact upon this existing property by overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts... The most significant potential impact of the proposed development upon the residential amenity of neighbours would be through vehicular movements associated with the proposed use, with the access to the site being located immediately next to the property. It is acknowledged that this access already serves the existing B1 office occupied by the applicant as well as the B8 storage use and as such it is considered that the number of associated vehicular movements and the times at which they would be carried out would not give rise to unacceptably adverse harm to the residential amenity of neighbours... The proposed development would provide 11 parking spaces with the planning statement referring to 15 staff being based at the office full time and an additional 60 staff working remotely. It is presumed that on occasion some of the 60 remote staff will visit the office for training/meetings and as such consideration should be given to the provision of parking in these circumstances. Conditions will be required to ensure that lighting of the new building and car parking areas does not have an unacceptably adverse impact on neighbouring amenity. However, it is considered that the proposal will not give rise to any unacceptably adverse impacts upon residential amenity of neighbours and as such the proposal will accord with policy GEN7(iv) of the Arun District Local Plan."*
- 6.6 The Officer also advised that further guidance maybe required from WSCC Highways in respect of parking provision and access arrangements. The Officer also confirms that the site is considered to be sustainably located given the proximity to bus stops, just 300 metres away on Langbury Lane with a crossing point on the A259 allowing ease of access for those on foot.

- 6.7 In conclusion the Planning Officer commented that *“were an application for planning permission to be submitted it would be likely to be recommended for approval subject to the sufficient evidence being provided to meet the requirements of policy DEV8(i) of the Arun District Local Plan.”*

b. Principle of Development & Policy Assessment

- 6.8 The application site is located outside the defined built up area boundary, and as such countryside policies that seek to restrict development are applicable. However, this does not mean that development in this location is prohibited, but instead it should be more closely managed. Paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government’s support for the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.
- 6.9 Attention should also be given to Policy 7 of the ‘made’ Ferring Neighbourhood Plan, which sets out that there is support for new development to the north of Littlehampton Road provided certain criteria are met. With respect to caveat (i) of this policy, we are of the opinion that the single storey form and resultant low height of the new building together with its location relative to neighbouring buildings and the proposed addition of landscape screening, will ensure that visual impacts on the surrounding countryside arising from this development will be minimised. With respect to caveat (ii), it is evident that the application will provide a new building set within an identifiable existing cluster of buildings, which will ensure that the existing patterns of development will be maintained, and this will also contribute to avoiding any incursions into the surrounding open countryside. In respect of caveat (iii) of Policy 7, and as set out above, the proposed design and layout includes measures to ensure the setting and / or screening of the development within its wider setting of the National Park will not be impacted upon demonstrably in visual or any other terms. Given the sites appropriate location and the reduced scale of the proposed building, it is therefore not deemed

necessary to provide additional landscape drawings or other images that show the impact of the proposed new development from key vantage points in the surrounding open countryside. This is simply because we feel that it is clear that no such impacts will be resultant. Therefore caveat (iv) of the policy will be complied with. Lastly, and in respect of caveat (v) we can confirm that no alternative site is available for this use. This will be expanded upon below. Consequently, we concur with Officers (as set out in the pre-app response), in that the proposal will accord with Policy 7 of the Ferring Neighbourhood Plan as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6.10 It is agreed that Policy DEV8 of the Arun District Local Plan (2003) is also relevant to the determination of this planning application. This local level policy identifies circumstances in which additional development may be permitted in rural areas, specifically where the applicant is a locally based company.
- 6.11 Caveat (i) of this policy requires the applicant to demonstrate that no acceptable alternative can be identified within existing permitted or allocated floorspace or within or through redevelopment of existing commercial premises.
- 6.12 Firstly it is worth confirming that District Carers Limited are a local company. The company started operating almost 20 years ago in Worthing. They are now based in the adjacent building to the immediate west of the application site, on Hangleton Lane. A Business Plan prepared by the applicants accompanies this submission. This sets out the background of the company, including their success in achieving Core Status on WSCC framework of providers in 2016. The company are a preferred supply for Worthing Hospital discharge team, End of Life Care teams and Social Services Maintaining. Due to their success, the company has expanded, and they have now outgrown their current premises due to the employment of more staff, and that this existing building does not provide

suitable facilities in terms of their requirements for meeting rooms and training rooms.

- 6.13 The Business Plan sets out the measures the applicant has taken to try and source suitable premises to relocate to. They state that *“since around 2013, we have been active in the marketplace trying to secure office space. We have not been successful in achieving the majority of our requirements. We are able to find the office space, but the location is troublesome, or it does not come with enough training space. Or we may find somewhere with adequate parking and location but there is not enough office space to allow us to grow. Put simply, one key feature is absent limiting us from pursuing the property. We have engaged a number of local agents to look on our behalf. The most significant is Michael Jones. They have passed us 100% of their stock, sometimes when it is being prepared for market. On all occasions, we have been unable to secure the appropriately size and shape property within the local area.”*
- 6.14 This submission is also supported by evidence from Michael Jones & Co, which confirms that the agency have been acting for the applicants since February 2013, with the intention of obtaining suitable existing premises for the company to relocate to. The letter from Michael Jones & Co acknowledges that the applicant's requirements are “fairly specific”, but the services provided by District Carers are not of a standard or general nature. They are governed by certain requirements, including for training, which have to be complied with legally. In addition, there is a need for adequate car parking provision on-site as well as the location of the premises being suitable given the geographic area that District Carers Limited serve. Michael Jones & Co also identify that the size of premises/site required by the applicant would often mean that they were competing with residential developers, who value sites at a higher level, thus pricing the applicants out of the market on many opportunities. Michael Jones & Co state that *“the commercial office market... is currently seeing demand far out weighing supply. This is largely*

down to the permitted development rights brought in within the last 24 months allowing office space to be converted to residential... Despite our best efforts and despite us keeping in regular contact we have not been able to source suitable premises for District Carers..."

- 6.15 Therefore it is evident that despite over 4 years of active search, including utilising the services of the larger commercial agent in this local area, and due to a combination of factors, the applicants have been unable to identify existing commercial floorspace or other land within the built-up area or elsewhere that would meet their needs. The accompanying Business Plan sets out what would happen if this application were to be refused – specifically *"The business has to make a choice on new premises if it wishes to grow. The current conditions are cramped, without adequate private meeting facilities. We have not been able to find anything suitable within the area. Our options outside are to remain and restrict growth, employment opportunities or to relocate out-of-area which would result in employment moving with it."* This would clearly be disadvantageous for local employment and the wider community. Consequently, we are of the opinion that the evidence provided in support of this application is robust in that it clearly demonstrates the need for this application to be approved promptly. Therefore, the proposals are evidently in compliance with Policy DEV8(i) of the Local Plan.
- 6.16 In respect to the second part of the policy, it is noted that in the pre-app reply written by Mr Easton he accepts that the proposals accord with the requirements set out. However, in order to provide a full assessment, we can confirm as follows:
- (a) The proposed development has been carefully considered so as to not only meet the functionality requirements of the applicant, but also to provide a high standard of design and layout suitable for the sites location;
 - (b) The site is well served by public transport and employees will not be reliant on the private car;

(c) The proposal has been informed by the input of specialist transport consultants, GTA Civils (their Transport Report also accompanies this application). The proposed building would utilise the existing access off Hangleton Lane. A total of 19 parking spaces are to be provided as part of this development. It is acknowledged that this exceeds the requirements of the WSCC Parking Standards SPG (November 2003) updated 2010 (which seeks to secure 1 space per 30 sqm of B1 Use), but these additional spaces are to be used for visitors and training days. Therefore, it is considered that the result is a layout that ensures acceptable access arrangements and parking provision;

(d) The character of the immediately surrounding area is defined by a variety of uses, which have altered dramatically over the years. Whilst this area was once typified by horticultural use sites, the surrounding locality now has a more semi-industrial character. This is particularly apparent with the recent planning permissions relating to Highdown Nursery, Highview Nursery and Bell David Fencing (see above). The site will be positioned immediately to the rear of an existing office building (which currently serves District Careers) and to the north west of Hangleton Nurseries, which has an established B8 storage use. Importantly, the only open fields are positioned further east of the site, with it being clear from a site visit that the site is spatially contained, and effectively 'sandwiched' in-between existing and established business uses and buildings. It is our view that the proposal will be acceptable in design and visual amenity terms and would not have an adverse impact on the rural landscape, and therefore the proposal will relate sympathetically to the surrounding built and natural environment;

(e) It is our view that the existing site is sufficiently screened from public view and further, our client is committed to providing additional landscaping to the north and east boundaries of the site. This could be secured via the use of a suitably worded condition if Officers are of the opinion that it would be appropriate and necessary;

(f) It is our view that a B1 Office use at this site would represent an acceptable form of development in this location. Indeed, the proposal would have minimal impact upon the residential amenities of any neighbouring properties by way of traffic generation and noise and disturbance. Therefore, the proposal displays a satisfactory relationship with neighbouring uses in order that the amenities of nearby residents will be protected; and,

(g) The proposal has been designed in accordance with 'designing out crime' criteria, in particular via the provision of an open forecourt parking area which will benefit from natural surveillance. Boundary treatments will ensure that the site is well contained and not open to the general public outside of office hours. The building itself will be of a secure design incorporating crime prevention measures where appropriate.

6.17 It is therefore clear that the proposal is also compliant with the requirements of ADLP policy DEV8(ii).

6.18 Although it is acknowledged that the emerging Local Plan cannot yet be given significant weight (due to the lack of the Examiners final report), it is considered relevant to consider also emerging Local Plan Policy EMP DM1 which is entitled 'Employment Land: Development Management'. This policy sets out the Councils commitment to provide flexibility for employment uses of land and the needs of enterprise. With respect to the provision of economic growth outside the built-up areas, section 6 of the policy states reflects current ADLP policy DEV8 in that sets out that permission will be granted to 'local firms', currently located within the District, proposing development on sites outside the built-up area, provided that certain criteria can be met, including that *"no acceptable alternative can be identified within existing permitted or allocated floorspace, or within or through redevelopment of existing commercial premises, and which can be delivered in a reasonable timeframe"*. Essentially this and the other elements of the policy

reiterate the existing policy context, and no further assessment is deemed necessary in this respect.

- 6.19 In conclusion, the submitted information robustly demonstrates that the proposed development complies with the relevant planning policy context in respect of the principle of providing new employment floorspace at this location. Specifically, it has been proven that the proposals comply with the general thrust of policies contained in the NPPF, the requirements of Policy DEV8 of the current Local Plan (and therefore Policy EMP DM1 of the emerging Local Plan), and the criteria set out within Ferring Neighbourhood Plan Policy 7.

c. Other Matters

6.20 Character / Amenity:

As set out above, it is considered that the building has been well designed and would appear in keeping with the character of the surrounding locality. The site will continue to be well screened, with additional planting providing further visual containment. The proposed site responds positively to the existing spatial distribution of built form on the north side of the Littlehampton Road, as it relates well with neighbouring buildings and commercial uses. The site as existing has a B8 storage use, and therefore the use of the land for commercial purposes is accepted. Further, the applicants operate from the smaller, existing building to the immediate west. Although they will vacate that building so as to move into the proposed new purpose-built building, this does at least confirm that B1 office uses (and in particular the uses of the applicant) in this area are acceptable, and could not demonstrable harm to the visual quality, character or amenities of the area, and nor will adjacent occupiers or businesses be unduly impacted upon by the introduction of a B1 office use of the scale proposed in this location outside of the built-up area. Therefore, the proposals are considered to be compliant with the relevant planning policies, specifically GEN7 of the adopted Local Plan, and Policy D DM1 of the emerging Local Plan.

6.21 Access & Parking Arrangements:

The proposed development will utilise an existing access off Hangleton Lane. There will be 15 staff members on site Monday to Friday working 9am-5pm. Additionally there will be 60 staff working remotely. They will only be on site for 6 training sessions per year that last 4 hours at a time. GTA Civils have prepared a Transport Statement in support of this planning application, which takes into account the type and level of use proposed. The report confirms that *"the likely number of additional vehicular trips on the highway network is very low and can be readily accommodated on Hangleton Lane and the A259 without any material impact on the operation of the highway network."* GTA Civils have also assessed the access arrangements that are proposed, and conclude that it is suitable given that it has good visibility in each direction onto Hangleton Lane and at the junction onto the dual carriage way. In terms of car parking, it is noted that WSCC standards set out in the SPG require 1 car parking space per 30sq.m of new office (B1 use) floorspace. The total floor area proposed amounts to approximately 377 sqm and therefore the SPG determines that 13 spaces are required for the proposed development. However, the proposed layout plan shows the provision of 19 car parking spaces on site which allows for the remotely based staff who attend for training and also visitors, deliveries etc. As such, it is considered that the proposal will not give rise to highway safety or car parking concerns, and the proposal would accord with Saved Policy GEN12 of the Arun District Local Plan, Policy T SP1 of the emerging Local Plan, and the relevant parking standards SPG in that satisfactory access and parking provision will be provided. Please also note that access will be provided on an inclusive basis for all groups of residents and visitors.

6.22 Sustainability:

The closest bus stop can be found on A259 westbound, located approximately 180m south of the site representing just a 2-minute walk. This stop provides three services (8, 9 & 700) which are run by Stagecoach South, which provide public

transport accessibility directly to and from a number of local towns including Littlehampton, Arundel, Worthing and Brighton. The closest railway station is Goring-by-Sea which is located about 2.2km from the site. GTA Civils report accept that this is considered too far to walk comfortably to, but the station can be reached by car and cycle. Services from this station are run by Southern and Thameslink. There are frequent services giving access to many local places as well as London for commuting employees. These destinations include Littlehampton, Brighton, Southampton Central, Portsmouth Harbour and London Victoria. In addition to car parking, the site layout will also provide ample secure cycle parking spaces. In conclusion, the site is considered to be sustainably located, and employees will not have a reliance on the private car. Therefore, the proposals are compliant with the sustainable development criteria set out within the NPPF.

6.23 Landscaping:

It will be noted that currently the site contains no soft landscaping, and is therefore of little visual benefit to the area. In addition to providing a well-designed and appropriate new building, the proposed development also incorporates the provision of new areas of soft landscaping, including hedging and tree planting to provide screening to the north and east boundaries of the site. This will enhance the landscape character of the area, and represents a further benefit of this development. The applicant confirms that they would be content for conditions to be imposed regarding the proposed landscaping details of the site.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The above Planning Statement, together with the drawing package and other accompanying application documents, combine to positively respond to the comments made in respect of the previous pre-application planning enquiry.
- 7.2 Therefore, it is evident that in conclusion, the proposed change of use of the land and provision of a new B1 office use building to be used by the locally based District Carers Limited, is acceptable for the following reasons:
- Aside from lying outside of the built-up area, there are no other designations of constraints that apply to this site;
 - District Carers have a specific requirement for new office space with parking in this local area, so as to meet their expanding business needs. They are a successful local company who provide a significant level of local employment as well as providing an important community service, and we consider that the growth of this 'local firm' should be fully supported by the local authority;
 - The site is suitably located. The submitted plans show that there is ample room for 1 No. detached office building of the size required to be comfortably accommodated, which will result in a development that is perfectly in keeping with the surrounding area. Further, the proposal will result in tidying up a currently unsightly area of land, resulting in a clear visual improvement. There would be no visual impact to the surrounding countryside arising from the proposed level of development;
 - The proposal would continue to utilise an existing access off Hangleton Lane, without detriment to highway safety.
 - The site area has been increased in size from that shown in the pre-application enquiry plans. The development plans now propose a total of 19 parking spaces. Although in excess of the WSCC Parking Standards SPG, it would meet the individual business needs of District Carers, who require additional spaces

for training, visitors and deliveries. Secure cycle parking provision will also be provided on site.

- The NPPF has introduced a policy shift in recent years, with a notable emphasis now being placed on the encouragement on rural businesses, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. This proposal is clearly in compliance with the latter;
- With regard to the character of the area, it is clear that this has changed beyond all recognition over the past decade. A number of surrounding sites were formerly in use as nursery sites, however are now semi-industrial in character;
- Great care and attention has been paid to the scale, form and design of the proposed building, ensuring a development that reflects the character of built form within the surrounding semi-rural area;
- It is our view that the benefits of utilising this existing site (which is currently has a B8 use permission) to serve a well-established and successful local business is clear;
- The proposed level of activity would not detrimentally affect the residential amenities of any neighbouring property by way of noise or disturbance in line with Policy GEN7 of the Arun District Local Plan and the NPPF; and,
- The site is located within a highly sustainable location.

7.3 The proposal meets all the necessary policy requirements, including Policy DEV8 of the Arun District Local Plan, Policy 7 of the Ferring Neighbourhood Plan, and Policies SD SP3 and EMP DM1 of the Emerging Local Plan. The proposals will cause no significant harm to the character of the surrounding area. In our opinion the overwhelming weight of evidence supports the proposal as it is shown to comply with all relevant Development Plan policies. As the proposal accords with the aims and objectives of national, regional and local guidance, the application site is a

suitable for the proposed change of use and residential development and permission should therefore be granted.

November 2017