

By email only

Copies to Andrew Tice, Landlink and Mrs Anita Gardener ADC

Attached – Revised Need Report -Peter Mitchell Associates

February 8, 2019

Simon Davis
Arun District
Council Offices
Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
West Sussex
BN17 5LF



Dear Simon,

Planning Application Y/103/18/PL Crematorium Proposal, Grevatts Lane West

This letter relates to the above application in the context of the Southern Co-op planning application which was validated by your authority on 29/1/19. I have copied this letter to the case officer for that application.

Southern Co-op Proposal CM/4/19/PL

A detailed planning application for a crematorium has been submitted by Southern Co-op Ltd on land south of the A259 reference CM/4/19/PL.

This 'rival' application is helpful in that it reinforces that there is a clear need for a single crematorium in this location. Indeed, the area of search considered for application CM/4/19/PL identifies land in which the above application is located. However, the report incorrectly asserts that there is no land available for delivery in any other area of search. Clearly the Landlink Estates application shows that statement to be mistaken.

I attach an updated need report by Peter Mitchell Associates that examines whether two crematoria could operate at the locations chosen by Landlink and Southern Co-op. The report is categorical that the market need is for only one facility.

As you stated in your pre-application response the need for a facility could justify a departure from planning policies that seek to normally restrict development. However, it would be perverse in the extreme to suggest that there was planning justification that would result in an oversupply of crematoria facility in this location, the need argument cannot outweigh the harm from the development in both applications.

Whilst it is not the role of planning authorities to prevent competition between private entities, as set out by the Courts, it is possible and legitimate that a use that would be contrary to planning policies designed

to protect the particular characteristic of the locality should prevail if the need could be met by another proposal. In this case the 'rival' planning application by the Southern Co-op is located within the strategic gap, an important policy restriction that does not apply to the Landlink Estates site.

The recent decision CM/16/18/PL by your Council on 15 November 2018 to refuse an application for Development of a 64-bed Specialist Dementia Care Centre together with access, parking & landscaping at land at the rear of Baird's Farm Shop demonstrates this point.

The assessment for the above application considered Policy SD SP3 'Gaps between Settlements' and the report states that the generally open and undeveloped nature of the gaps between settlements will be protected to prevent coalescence and retain their separate identity. The report accepted demand for a dementia care home but stated there is no satisfactory argument put forward as per criteria c of the policy to demonstrate why the proposal cannot be located elsewhere given the sensitivity of the location.

Given the need for an additional single crematorium can be met by the Landlink proposal there is no need to approve development within the strategic gap, and criteria c of policy SD SP3 cannot be met. It would be unnecessary to support the Southern Co-op proposal whilst knowing that the Landlink proposal could meet the need for the facility outside the strategic gap. The suggestion by some commentators that permission should be given to both and the market should decide does not follow well established planning principles and would be inconsistent with decision making on application CM/16/18/PL.

Furthermore, the size of the development and extent of site coverage of the Southern Co-op proposal would result in the integrity and objectives of the settlement gap being compromised in conflict with criteria a,b and d of the policy SD SP3.

The criticisms leveled at application CM/16/18/PL in relation to landscape character equally apply to the Southern Co-op proposal:

"The identified sensitivities of LCA 31 as a whole are clearly associated with the rurality of the arable plain landscape and undeveloped coastline which LCA 31 covers, along with the role of the character area as a buffer between settlements. Such characteristics are directly associated with the site itself and are at risk as a result of the development as proposed. The proposal relates to development in a field that has been used for agricultural purposes which will not be contiguous with any existing development pattern."

The Southern Co-op proposal appears to be in great difficulty when judged against the policies of the Adopted Arun Local Plan, as it cannot meet the requirements of policy SD SP3 and in particular criteria (c) as the proposal for a crematorium can be met outside the strategic gap as the Landlink application clearly demonstrates.

Crematorium Operator for Landlink Estates Site

Landlink Estates is in direct dialogue with four operators, as part of a commercial bidding process, which will conclude with commercial terms being agreed. The preferred bidder who will operate the site on behalf of Landlink will be confirmed well before the application is due for determination in March.

This demonstrates that the deliverability of the proposal cannot be questioned. There is no third-party landowner and the relationship between operator and applicant will be a direct one. The operator selection process requires that as soon as planning permission is granted, they are geared to mobilise immediately and would seek to be open for the first cremation services as soon as Spring 2020.

I hope this additional information is helpful for the determination of the application, but should you have any questions on the content of this letter or the attached report please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Yours sincerely



Lisa Jackson MA BSc MRTPI