

F/22/93194 The Ageas Bowl

Planning Policy comments 6/02/2023

In August 2021 Planning Policy provided a response on the pre-application for the Ageas Bowl, reference Q/21/90701. This raised an objection to the proposed scheme and stated where further information was needed. This response provides an update on the Local Plan and a response to the revised proposals.

Progress of the Local Plan

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 was adopted in April 2022. The adopted version incorporates all the main modifications previously proposed to the plan. These included the Inspector's proposed modification MM115 on changes to policy WE4. The revised policy wording clarifies the general criteria for development and the type of development appropriate in the parts of the site within urban edge. It also identifies the limited development which may be appropriate in the site outside the urban edge. The Council's policy map changes PM30 and PM34 amend the site area for the Ageas Bowl and identify an area suitable for residential development in the north west corner.

Policy WE4 provides criteria to support the site's role as a leisure and sporting led venue. It does not include information on the quantum of development. It should be read alongside other Local Plan policies which provide the detailed policies by topic and address specific requirements such as affordable housing (policy DM28), older peoples housing (DM25), parking (DM14) and community, leisure and cultural facilities (DM36).

Proposal

Residential led area to the north west

Criteria 1d in policy WE4 addresses development within the urban edge. Criterion 1d.i. requires that "development creates a high quality of design and takes the form of distinctive individual buildings each set within an open and high quality landscape setting; the extent of development and the boundary treatment of that development (built design and landscape) creates a high quality, distinctive, green and open setting to the Ageas Bowl."

In the Planning Policy comments on the pre-application, objections were raised on two issues – as the scheme did not create individual buildings each set within an open landscape setting and the impact on the green and open setting to the Ageas Bowl. It was suggested that these aspects of the scheme need to be reworked and led by a high quality landscape and design approach. While the scheme has been amended and improved, the residential development remains contrary to policy WE4. This is due to the impact of infrastructure and car parking on the character of the area and the lack of public open space to serve the residential development. We would also support detailed comments submitted by colleagues in Urban Design and

Landscape which highlight a lack of amenity space, the extent and impact of car parking and question the feasibility of the proposed street trees.

Residential development is specifically addressed in criterion 1d.ii of policy WE4. This criterion covers the location of residential uses; access to/from West End; and layout and design to ensure an appropriate level of residential amenity.

The policy identifies an area in the north west corner where any residential development should be solely located. The supporting text to policy WE4 in paragraph 6.5.56 explains that this is 'so that it does not affect the setting of the wider site and connects directly to the existing settlement'. The supporting text also states the potential for impacts on residential amenity and the requirement that any residential development should not compromise the existing function of the Ageas Bowl.

Access to/from residential area

The criterion in 1d.ii relating to the access to/from West End is designed to deliver a direct pedestrian/cyclist route to West End and ensure the new residential development is integrated with existing residential communities. Ideally this would be through the redevelopment of the Pitters site to the north of the residential development. It is recognised that the Pitters site is not currently available for development. However the design retains the potential to deliver vehicle, cycle and pedestrian access if this becomes available in the future.

The pre-application response advised that the proposed route through the edge of Telegraph Woods would need to be provided in a way that ensures no adverse impact on the woodland while being designed to create a safe and attractive route. It must be sufficiently wide with appropriate grading, have an all-weather surface and some form of lighting to provide a useable alternative to residents accessing the development via Marshall Drive.

The proposed routes shown to the north west include an upgraded pedestrian only link to West End centre through the edge of Telegraph Woods to the west of Royal Heights and a possible cyclist/pedestrian link to the east of Royal Heights (in addition to the possible future vehicle, cycle and pedestrian link through the Pitters site if it becomes available).

Further information is required on the proposed links to demonstrate that they are deliverable and would create safe and attractive routes delivering the requirements above or alternatively provide justification if these requirements are not achievable. This should also demonstrate no adverse impact on the Telegraph Woods SINC, taking into account their likely use to access both the proposed residential development and visitors on match days and event days. Further information should be provided on the design and deliverability of the possible link identified to the east of Royal Heights.

Care home

Adopted Local Plan policy DM25 provides general support for accommodation suitable for the needs of older people subject to meeting criteria on the sustainability

of the location, access to local facilities and integration into the local community. In accordance with WE4 1d.ii, within the Ageas Bowl site, residential uses should be located solely in the north west corner as shown on the Policies Map. Uses within the urban edge outside this area are limited to sports/recreation, leisure, hotel and office/research use.

While there is general support for the provision of a care home on the site, the application does not provide justification for its location outside the area identified for residential uses. This proposal is therefore contrary to policy WE4.

Hotel

The proposed hotel is located within the urban edge on land identified as suitable for hotel uses. The Planning Statement reports that the hotel will complement the existing Hilton hotel on the site which derives the majority of its income from the stadium. It reports the amount of income directly associated with existing sports and recreational facilities on site for the last normal trading year (60% in 2019).

Criterion 1e. in policy WE4 requires a sequential test to be undertaken to demonstrate that there are no suitable, available and viable sites in city, town or district centres for hotel, leisure and office uses. A sequential test has not been completed and the Planning Statement states that it is considered superfluous due to the hotel's association with the Ageas Bowl.

National guidance recognises that certain town centre uses may have a particular market and locational requirements. To demonstrate this, robust justification is required to show that the hotel will primarily serve the Ageas Bowl. We would request further detail on the trading of the existing hotel (covering more than one year) and the impact of the additional hotel to establish if a sequential assessment is required in this case.

Conclusions

The proposals are contrary to policy WE4 in respect of the design of the residential development and the location of the care home. Further information is required to demonstrate the deliverability and suitability of the pedestrian/cyclist routes. Further information is also required to justify the lack of a sequential test.

Planning Policy objection.