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To: Harrison, Liz
Subject: F/22/93194 - Ageas Bowl - Final Landscape Comments

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Many of the landscape comments from previous consultations remain valid for the current application and its plans. The areas outlined below pick up on the latest documents submitted for the application and do not pick up on all previous comments.

Principle of development and its impact.

The application includes a Landscape and Visual Appraisal but not a more in-depth Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Given the area of proposed development, its scale and setting, I would have expected the more thorough assessment to provide a detailed understanding of the various impacts upon receptors, how they have been assessed and the proposed measures to mitigate those impacts. The LVIA should also have been part of an iterative process whereby the design evolves and improves based on an understanding of its effect, and where residual effects can be mitigated based on the detailed understanding of the scheme. For example for evolution; moving the care home element into the residential areas and reducing the heights of the taller apartments so that they sit more sympathetically with the setting of the stadium/pavilion and below its roofline to minimise the effect on mid distance views. Following previous comments the applicant has amended the apartment roof design which is picked up in the residential parcel comments

With the simpler appraisal it is debatable the level of visual impact caused by the elements mentioned above however with the limited number of short distance views and the degree of impact in long distance views these seem less problematic. In the mid distance the evidence is more critical, in the lower lying land between the Itchen and the Hamble rivers I have anecdotal experience of views to the existing stadium and pavilion. It would have been helpful to produce a Zone of Theoretical Visibility plan to demonstrate the degree to which the proposals would be visible over this area.

The design of the most recent stadium additions and hotel sought to maintain views to the original Sir Michael Hopkins designed Rod Bransgrove Pavilion and its distinctive roof structure. This roof is often seen against the backdrop of trees in Telegraph Woods. I have not seen an assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the existing buildings/setting? In my view the proposals should be subservient to the existing landmark structure.

Impact on existing Public Rights of Way.

The existing footpath through the site has an interesting route since the previous planning permission and subsequent diversions. The route current enters via Botley Road and meanders through the open golf course and provides an open public view of the northeastern stand and hotel (Key Representative Viewpoint 10). The route is reliant on signage to direct walkers and limit wandering into the golf course at large. Once entering Long Copse the PRoW route is clear and but the outlook reduces, while the path is squeezed between the south and eastern earthworks of the Nursery Ground and the edge of the golf course. The narrow path then follows the boundary between these two areas, corralled by fences, hedges and scrub with clearer views of the golf course. Another interesting view into the site is at the Pavilion gate, with the timber and glass pavilions in the foreground and the southern stand behind. The path then opens out slightly as it climbs the hill towards Telegraph Woods but wider views become more constrained. Those using the PRoW will experience changes as a direct result of the proposals with the re-routed around the extended carpark and separated with a native tree and shrub mix. Although I can see why this might be proposed, I think it should remain visually connected to the open area/occasional car park rather than tucked away. In addition, indirect impacts will change the setting of the PRoW with the golf course giving way to different parking areas and the new hotel, and towards Telegraph Wood the care home.

Visual impact from Telegraph Wood.

Telegraph Wood is owned and managed by Eastleigh Borough Council, it is classified as Open Space and has public access. Within the wood it has few formal paths but contains many well used informal paths which facilitate access to the whole area. The heritage visualisation, although set back from the woodland edge, show the way the character of the woodland will be affected by the development. The informal paths that follow nearer to the woodland edge does not benefit from as many intervening trees and will be affected to a greater degree (Key Representative Viewpoint 13).

Key Representative Viewpoint 12, probably represents the largest single impact from Telegraph Wood. This view will change substantially with housing in the foreground, the apartments rising above them in the midground potentially screening the main pavilion and the view to land beyond.

Key Representative Viewpoint 8. This viewpoint starts to illustrate mid distance effects of the proposals. The Care Home is likely to be seen in front of Telegraph Woods however the apartments roofs would probably not be visible above the stadium roof. Views from further away in this direction would see these roofs with the most southerly apartment being most visible.

Comments on the design and layout

Legibility of the site. Recent changes have improved the design and layout of the overall masterplan to, more naturally, guide visitors into and around the site. The pedestrian area and fanzone creates a better focal point and main arrival area as part of the public realm and will require less active marshalling for event days. The revisions do not segregate pedestrians and vehicle access, which will still mix during event days and require marshalling. Given the scale of development being proposed there is still scope to improve movement of people to, from and around the site, to design out conflicting and create active and inclusive access. Outside of events this issue is less pronounced.

Residential area - It is laudable to seek to maximise the number of trees within the proposals and try to offset some of the other impacts however the numbers shown on the plans are not achievable.

The majority of street trees are shown in locations that are unsustainable, they are too close to houses, would require regular pruning to fit within their location or would need to be a small tree that does not contribute significantly to the streetscene. On sites where this close approach has been adopted we see the removal of street trees in private ownership, even where conditions are in place; or conflicts between neighbouring properties and pressure for regular crown reduction or removal. What is needed in these prominent locations is space for significant trees of a size that reflects the buildings so that residents see real benefits not conflicts. The Quality Places SPD proposes medium sized trees to be at least 7m from buildings, large trees 10m away and highlights the limited benefit of smaller trees.

In addition, the trees within rear garden are a welcome addition to the plans but they cannot be relied upon to provide long term benefits. In my experience over time the majority of new trees are removed from new development gardens for a variety of reasons. In a neighbouring district it has been shown that longer gardens back to back can create an environment where residents are generally happy for medium to large trees to establish and mature, however this would require larger block sizes.

Apartment Blocks. In terms of Landscape and Visual Impact the amendments to the apartment buildings roof design has reduced the overall effect. While an element of each building is still higher the overall roofline has dropped. The landscape assessment work does not pick this up but Section DD show the height to be closer to the neighbouring stand and pavilion. A longer section or verifiable wire frame would now potentially show minimal intrusion above the roofs of the existing stadium buildings however this has not yet been demonstrated.

The carparking associated with the apartment buildings does not meet the Quality Places SPD requirements to reduce the visual impact of parking, which are for areas of over 10 parking spaces to be broken up and sub-divided with appropriate paving and tree planting. The tree planting should average 1 tree per 6 spaces incorporated within the parking to help break up the rows. The current proposal shows very long, arcing rows of parking which are large

enough to be more prominent than the streets of the housing area. The proposed tree planting does not break up the parking area but generally surrounds it reinforcing the linear effect.

Permeability - It is good to see plans to improve permeability with a pedestrian link to Telegraph Road that would shorten the distance to local facilities. Although this is likely to be a bit of a climb it gives future residents better options. Will the "possible future footpath/cycle link" provide an accessible route for all?

The amendments to the residential area layout have improved its permeability

Telegraph Brook and SuDS - It is beneficial to have some of the watercourse opened up and while it would have been better to see this happening throughout the residential area it is noted that this is an improvement. It is unclear from the plans submitted how this will work in practice. It would be counterproductive to see lots of retaining walls to facilitate the change in level which would negatively affect the amenity of the space. There are significant level changes between the bottom of the watercourse and the surrounding landscape. It looks like a 5m level change between the surrounding area and the open water course water level. The maximum gradient should take into account CIRIA's guidance and if the open space is being considered for adoption the requirements of EBC's Open Spaces service

The site sections C-C and D-D show large changes in topography close to the boundary. It is unclear what effect these will have on neighbouring residents or the public amenity of Telegraph Wood.

Proposed Hotel - In plan the proposed hotel has a links to existing hotel through its alignment however in terms of its elevation it is a different story. The existing hotel's curved roof transitions through brise soleil all the way to the ground. In this way it reflects the rounded form of the Ageas bowl itself and matches the stands. The proposed hotels form makes no architectural reference to its setting or the structures around it other than to bend to fit within policy boundaries. Where the current hotel has a strong architectural entrance clearly defined by its structure, the proposed hotel elevation faces this with a fire exist or secondary exit with its main entrance instead facing the car park.

Grass carpark - The intention for this area is to create an open grass space which could occasional be used for event parking and provide a space that has characteristics of the countryside/gap. The inclusion of trees within this area is a welcome improvement, however it still looks like a car park in all but the surface finish. It is unclear how parking spaces will be demarcated, previously half round timber logs were to be used and this was not supported as it would be a constant reminder of the spaces temporary use, the boundary for the space looks regimented and is reinforced by the planting at the edges. The extent of the parking area pushes into RPA and does not show how it will integrate with the existing topography. The example overflow area off Charles Watts Way shows how flattening out the topography and creating a grass monoculture does not integrate a space into the landscape, it is quite the reverse. The layout could be loosened up by reducing the parking numbers, blending the topography, reprofiling the edge, increasing tree cover, managing the transition from the grass to the wider landscape in a naturalistic way and reducing the prominence of the 1st tee path.

In a previous amendment the trees separating the temporary parking area from the permanent parking area have been significantly reduced in number. These were useful in defining the transition between the two areas.

Extra carpark - The creation of additional carparking behind the properties on Botley Road on the current tee and fairway. This area seems quite awkward and an inefficient use of space with a single row off the access road. With the building up of levels for the car park and the sloping boundary with the Botley Road properties care is needed. However the retaining structures appear modest at the edge of the parking area rising around a 1m above the boundary levels shown. It is useful to have an area of parking that can be used more frequently than the grass area, it is sensible to have that nearer to the hotel and stadium however I think there are better ways of implementing it.

Hotel carpark - Lacking in trees to softening the enlarged parking layout

Care Home - I do not support the principle of a care home in the current location. The applicant has not adequately demonstrated why the building should be in this location when other parts of the site are more appropriate. From a perspective of landscape impact, it is not the right place for a building of this scale and height. It would have an

adverse effect from Telegraph Wood and from the PRoW and it is counter to policy. The car park retaining wall is shown within tree group G54. There is an awkward relationship between the widened pedestrian cycle route and building path/frontage requiring retaining structures that are not shown.

The garden area will require further detail (in condition) to ensure DDA compliance in movement around the building perimeter to ensure acceptable residential amenity. Access to the Terraced Gardens and Woodland Walk is via steps which given the potential mobility issues with some of the residents of the care home is unwelcome. As the garden links to the publicly accessible Telegraph Woods, the PRoW and paths used by event day guests, I assume fencing/railings/walls and secure gates will be required. These are not currently shown.

New stadium entrances - I support the improvements to the public realm and fan zone however previous proposals have included a new entrance to the stadium. It was good to see a more direct route to the stadium off Marshall Drive and it aligned well and created a better focal point for events.

SuDS - Need to see how these accord with CIRIA four pillars of SuDS. The basins look like engineer led structures that do not fit within open spaces where their value for amenity and biodiversity is also important alongside managing water quantity and improving water quality.

Conclusion - Maintain objection

Insufficient information has been submitted with the application to demonstrate the extent of landscape and visual impact that the proposed development would have, the area affected by that impact and how design iterations have reduced and mitigated the remaining effects. The uncertainty around the impact of the proposed development on the surrounding area and wider landscape means the application is contrary to policies DM1 and WE4(1)(a) of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 and the provisions of the NPPF

Given the size, scale and design of the proposed care home, I believe it would have an adverse landscape and visual impact on the surrounding area, the setting of Telegraph Woods and the adjacent public right of way. Relevant policies DM1, WE4 (1)(a) and WE4 (1)(d)(ii) and NPPF

The design, appearance and landscape of the proposed residential development fails to achieve good quality design in the public realm and to successfully integrate and harness the benefits of SUDS. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies DM1, WE4(1), WE4(1)(b), WE4(1)(d)(i), and WE4(1)(d)(ii) of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036, the Council's Quality Places and Trees & Development Supplementary Planning Documents and the provisions of the NPPF

The form, design and landscape of the proposed event day car park accessed off Botley Road would have a detrimentally urbanising impact on the character of the countryside and settlement gap. Relevant policies S5, S6, DM1 and WE4(1), WE4(1)(b) and WE4(1)(c) and the provisions of the NPPF

The design of the proposed hotel fails to respect the strong curved form of the existing hotel that it would sit immediately adjacent to. The result would be an awkward relationship in a relatively small space around a communal arrival area, to the detriment of the public realm. This would fail to achieve the high quality of design required by policies DM1, WE4(1), WE4(1)(b) and WE4(1)(d)(i) of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036, the Council's Quality Places Supplementary Planning Document and the provisions of the NPPF

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