



The Planning Officer
Waverley Borough Council
Western Planning Committee
BY EMAIL

25 March 2022

Dear Sir

Andrews, Hindhead (WA/2022/00498) - Objection

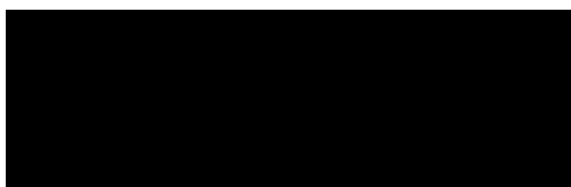
The Haslemere Society wishes to object to the above application on the following grounds:

1. Impact on local healthcare. The key matters here have been set out very clearly by the local GP surgery but it is perhaps worth drawing out one or two of the points they raise. The applicant asserts that, in their experience, residents are drawn from the local area so that there is a minimal impact on the local GP – effectively the patient just moves home within the surgery area. This is to be a high-dependency and end-of-life facility in an area which already has a large number of care homes with significant vacancy rates. In order for the applicant's prediction to be true, the home will have to draw 74 high dependency or end of life patients from the GPs existing 12,100 patients, a rate of 0.6% of the population. That sounds a very low figure but in fact it is around the level of the UK population living in care homes *of any type* in 2020 (based on a government Care Home Analysis paper from April 2020). It is not unreasonable to ask where those patients are currently being treated but that question does not appear to have been asked. The data strongly suggests that the GPs are right when they state that the care home patients will be a net addition to their workload. We recognise that, in proposing a care home for this site, the applicants are responding to the restrictions set out in LPP2, but the issues raised regarding the potential impact on healthcare for existing residents are serious and Waverley has a duty to ensure that they can be adequately addressed before giving approval to this application.
2. Lack of need. The Planning Officer's report refers to a 'demonstrable need' for such facilities in the borough but does not attempt to argue that there is a local need, instead stating that there is no enforceable limit on care home provision in the area. The PO's report states (para 15) that the SHMA Waverley Summary Report indicates a need for 396 additional bed spaces in care homes (that is, all forms of care homes). This suggests that the provision of 74 high dependency and end of life beds is overprovision even for the borough as a whole, let alone the local area. The GPs explain clearly why it is better to provide these nearer the actual patients.

3. Freeing up family homes. To the extent that residents come from outside the borough (as opposed to outside the current GP surgery catchment area) any benefit from freeing up of family homes (Planning Officer's Report, Paragraph 15) is also lost, though we would note that people moving into care do not always live alone in any case. This may be particularly true of people moving into high dependency homes as they are perhaps more likely to have moved from another care home.
4. Staffing issues. The GPs also raise the matter of staffing for care homes, which is already a problem for the existing care homes in the area. This is often poorly paid or minimum wage employment and housing for those income groups is already hard to find locally.
5. Parking. We note that, to the extent that staff and visitors are expected to travel by car, this will add to traffic and parking issues in the area. The Planning Officer's report notes the steps the applicant proposes to take to prevent visitors to the nearby National Trust site at the Devil's Punchbowl from using its car parking spaces but has nothing to say about the possibility that staff or visitors to the care home will use the National Trust parking or will park on adjacent streets. The National Trust site at Hindhead is a very popular visitor attraction and its car park is frequently full on summer days. Natural England's concern, understandably, is to prevent visitors to the Punch Bowl avoiding the parking fees at their site. We would expect the Council to have a wider concern about public access to a significant tourist site in the area and about possible additional parking congestion in nearby streets. Those matters are not addressed in the Report.

Finally, we note that the Planning Officer's report (paragraph 27) does not respond to the shift to integrated service provision in the Health & Care Bill referred to by the local GPs and argues that the issues of shortage of healthcare staff and indeed much of the wider issue of healthcare provision, falls outside the remit of planning. If it is indeed true that the borough cannot prevent the building of a care home in the area when it appears likely to be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of existing residents then there is clearly a problem with the planning system. While WBC must act within the rules as they stand, it is not unreasonable to ask what steps WBC plan to take to ensure that any detriment is minimised.

Yours Sincerely



S. Dullaway
(on behalf of The Haslemere Society Planning Group)