



SUNNINGDALE PARISH COUNCIL

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The development of a community health hub (Use Class D1) with associated parking, access and landscaping. Land to The North Lynwood Crescent Sunningdale Ascot

Sunningdale Parish Council acknowledges that

- A new medical facility is a necessity.
- We support the overall design approach, and
- The position of the Hub at the top of the site is the best option to date

However, the role of the Parish Council – and this Panel - is to review the application against Planning Regulations especially those affecting the Green Belt.

The Planning Officer's Report confirms that the Hub

- DOES cause significant harm to the Green Belt
- The site is also an important Gap between Villages, and
- the Hub could only be approved in very special circumstances.

The real question here is the balance of the SIGNIFICANT harm to the Green Belt against the provision of new medical facilities.

Much of the harm results from the sheer size of the Hub. With an internal area of 1866 square metres, the Hub would be 28% larger than the internal area of Waitrose Sunningdale.

The main argument for Very Special Circumstances (VSC) rests on the Hub delivering a Medical Centre which meets a specific community need (under BLP policy IF6). However, the report also confirms that IF6 requires that any new community facilities be in a sustainable location – and it is clearly stated in the report that this Hub does not. This raises doubt about whether this policy

can be relied upon to justify VSC. Also, the new facility damages, not enhances, the biodiversity of the site and sustainability is a building regulations requirement – so neither of these should be considered for justifying VSC.

A significant proportion of the Hub is allocated to non-clinical functions. Our understanding is that this non-clinical space is purposely oversized to accommodate administration overspill from Heatherwood and other medical practices outside of Sunninghill and Sunningdale.

While a much-needed community health hub could be argued as acceptable in the Green Belt, the provision of excessive non-clinical admin space could not.

Under Green belt planning policy, size matters – with great weight being given to restricting the size of buildings in the Green Belt to preserve its openness.

We have not seen any evidence that the size of this Hub has been scrutinised with a view to ensuring this building is as compact as possible while still meeting its clinical objectives – and therefore in keeping with Green Belt Planning policies.

We do not believe the case for VSCs has yet been made to the extent that the benefits **far outweigh** the substantial harms.

Whilst we fully support the new Medical Facility, even a slight reduction to the overall size of this building, would allow the benefits to outweigh the harm when reviewed from a planning perspective.

Sunningdale Parish Council

1 March 2022