



ASCOT SUNNINGHILL & SUNNINGDALE

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
DELIVERY GROUP

Heatherwood redevelopment – new hospital and housing

A Planning application **16/03115** has been made by Frimley Health Trust (“FHT”) for the redevelopment of the Heatherwood site. Closing date for consultation responses to be submitted to RBWM is **18 January 2017**.

This document is a summary of this application, prepared by the ASandS NPDG Committee to the best of our ability. We have also set out our views on the application: we are overall in support of it although we have a number of areas of concern (highlighted below) which we hope Frimley Health Trust will be able to address.

If you wish to consider all the detail for this application, we suggest you read the individual documents that make up this application; go to the RBWM planning portal:

www.rbwm.gov.uk/pam/view.jsp?ID=16%2F03115%2FOUT

This is an important application and we urge local residents to feedback their views to the Borough, either online through the planning portal or by email to planning.maidenhead@rbwm.gov.uk.

HYBRID APPLICATION

This is a single application which includes all of the following:

1. Full application for a new hospital and an Administration Hub, to be built in the corner of the woodland southwest of the current site
2. Change of use of “Block 40” for use as an Admin Hub until the new hospital and Admin Hub are built
3. **Outline** planning permission for redevelopment of the current main hospital site for up to 250 new houses
4. Full application for the designation of the woodland south of the current site to become a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

NEW HOSPITAL

The new hospital will be for elective care and will provide over 11,000 sq m of medical floorspace:

- 48 in-patient beds
- 6 operating rooms
- Various medical services such as Radiology, a Pain clinic, Orthodontic and others
- Outpatient services such as Antenatal, Cardiology, Orthopaedics, Paediatrics, Physiotherapy and others

It will be 4 storeys but its location is on lower ground than the current site so that its impact will be lessened.

A total of 450 car parking spaces will be provided for the hospital and admin hub combined, plus cycle parking and drop-off spaces.

A new roundabout on Kings Ride will provide an access road to a new entrance for the hospital. It is proposed that bus route(s) will come right to the hospital entrance – see also section below on HIGHWAYS.

Frimley Health Trust have made a case for Very Special Circumstances, as required by planning policy, to justify their application to build both the new hospital and the new Admin Hub (see next section below) in undeveloped Green Belt.

NPDG View:

- 1. This proposal is for a state of the art hospital which will be an asset to the community.*
- 2. FHT have made out an acceptable case for Very Special Circumstances for building the new hospital in undeveloped Green Belt, including the rationale that it will enable the existing hospital to continue functioning until the new one is completed.*
- 3. We believe that there is overwhelming local community support for a new hospital, even though it involves the sacrifice of some woodland Green Belt. This view was confirmed by the results of the last community consultation undertaken by FHT [[link to consultation results document](#)]*

ADMINISTRATION HUB

The existing building known as Block 40 will for the short term be converted for use as an Admin Hub (“Woodland Offices”) for Frimley Health Trust, providing administrative support for the new hospital and for Wexham and Frimley Park hospitals. This will be only until the new Admin Hub associated with the hospital has been built, when all these services will move into the new building. This Admin hub will include:

- Office space (for IT, HR etc)
- Data Centre
- And also include a Primary Care Hub for GPs. This will be on the ground floor and have its own dedicated entrance

Note that when the new Admin Hub is occupied, it is proposed that the land currently occupied by Block 40 will be redeveloped for housing. These houses are included in the total number of new units proposed in the Residential application – see section on Residential below.

The same case for Very Special Circumstances made by FHT for building the new hospital in Green Belt also included the rationale for the Admin Hub.

NPDG View:

- 1. The “Very Special Circumstances” case for siting the Admin Hub in undeveloped Green Belt is not as convincing as that for the new hospital.*

2. *The Admin Hub will retain and bring more high quality jobs in our area, which we welcome.*
3. *We are however concerned about the potential impact on traffic congestion – see section on Highways below.*

RESIDENTIAL

Important note: This application only covers “access and layout”. Matters such as Design and Landscaping will be decided in a future (Full) application by whoever develops the site.

The application area covers the entire site currently occupied by Heatherwood hospital and its ancillary buildings. This is all currently in Green Belt although, as mostly “Previously Developed Land” national policy allows it to be redeveloped.

A total of up to 250 new dwellings (Note “dwellings” or “units” can represent houses and/or flats) is being proposed on this site, with associated parking.

A mix of housing is proposed, suggesting 87 one- and two-bedroom flats, 86 two- and three-bedroom houses, 67 four-bedroom houses and 9 five-bedroom houses. Building heights will vary with predominantly 2.5 to 3.5 storeys and apartment blocks of 5 storeys in height.

Note: This proposed mix and other matters such as building heights and design, and landscaping are all matters reserved for a future full application, so are provided as suggested guidelines only.

The scheme allows for a total of 527 allocated parking spaces, which is in line with RBWM parking standards. Plus it proposes a further 69 unallocated parking spaces for visitors, to reflect the requirements of Neighbourhood Plan policy NP/T1.

The development will be phased, with the main, phase one development (230 units) commencing as soon as the hospital services have been transferred to the new hospital being built. Phase two, for 20 houses, will commence once the Admin Block 40 has been transferred to the new Admin Hub.

NPDG View:

1. *The Neighbourhood Plan supported the principle of residential development at the Heatherwood site, provided that part of the site remained in use as a hospital or a provider of healthcare services (policy NP/SS4). Although it is now proposed that the new hospital will be built on the woodland south of the main site, we accept FHT’s premise that the only way they can afford to build the new hospital is if they can sell the entire present site for residential development.*
2. *We are seriously concerned that this is a very dense development for “up to 250 dwellings”, mitigated only a little by the proposals to include a reasonable proportion of less expensive smaller houses, in line with local community feedback and policy NP/SS4.*
3. *We are further concerned about the scheme’s proposal to site three large 5-storey blocks of flats along the northern boundary of the site. These sit on relatively high ground on the site and are in close proximity to the boundary with the High Street. Far from respecting the site’s gateway location, these buildings will tower over the street scene and no tree planting can possibly mitigate their overwhelming and harmful impact. This is against*

Neighbourhood Plan policy NP/SS4 and also against Green Belt policy, which states that new development in Green Belt should not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

We urge FHT to consider relocating these blocks either to the centre of the site or along the boundary with Kings Ride where their impact will be less.

- 4. The draft Borough Local Plan (currently undergoing what is known as “Regulation 18” consultation) proposes removal of the Heatherwood site from the Green Belt. We are totally against this as it will remove all constraints from what can be developed on this site and will make it easier for the future full application to attempt to increase the number of dwellings from that currently stated; we would object to this very strongly.*
- 5. The scheme currently makes no mention of provision of affordable housing which we believe should be included in line with the Borough’s affordable housing policy.*
- 6. Finally we are concerned that insufficient parking is allowed for in the scheme and consider it imperative that generous parking provision is made so as to ensure there is no overspill roadside parking.*

SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace)

The area of woodland south of the current site and excluding the area on which the new hospital and Admin Hub are proposed to be built (all of which is Green Belt), will be designated as a SANG (a requirement of a European directive on conservation to mitigate the impact on Chobham Common Special Protection Area “SPA”), and will therefore be protected from any future development.

There will be a network of paths with links to the proposed new residential development. The woodland will be managed to also create woodland copses and glades and opportunities for natural play. The management plan will seek to improve biodiversity.

NPDG View:

- 1. We welcome the designation of the woodland as a SANG which protects it from future development.*
- 2. There is an active badger sett confirmed to exist in the woodland. We are very concerned about how continued protection for the badgers sett and foraging habitat can co-exist with plans to open up the area for public use and especially for dog walkers (which is a key requirement and purpose of a SANG). We would like to see Natural England’s view on this.*
- 3. In accordance with the Borough’s adopted Public Rights of Way Management Plan, pedestrian and cycle Public Rights of Way should be provided either through or along the edges of the SANG to create connectivity between the High Street through to Ascot station.*

HIGHWAYS AND ACCESS

Improvements are proposed to the Heatherwood roundabout, to widen the eastern, southern and western approaches.

The access junction at Gate 1 (on the High Street, nearest Ascot centre) will be improved with a new ghost island right turn into the site.

A new roundabout off Kings Ride will provide access to the new hospital and to some of the residential development.

Pedestrian and cycle way along the northern boundary with a Toucan crossing to allow crossing the High Street. Pedestrian and cycle connections between High Street and Kings Ride.

NPDG View:

1. *We welcome the proposals to widen and improve the Heatherwood roundabout but this by itself is insufficient to address the likely increase in traffic congestion arising from this and other developments in the Ascot area. We need to see a masterplan in place (which also involves engaging in discussions with Bracknell Forest) that encompasses all the major surrounding traffic pinchpoints:*
 - *Station Hill roundabout*
 - *Traffic lights at Fernback Road and further along the London Road towards Bracknell*
 - *Ascot High Street*
 - *Winkfield Road/St. George's Lane roundabout**We call on the Royal Borough to lead in developing such a masterplan and to ensure the funding is in place to deliver it.*

2. *As stated in the section on SANG above, this application should provide for cycle and pedestrian Public Rights of Way, in accordance with Borough's adopted plan.*

OTHER ISSUES

One class A Wellingtonia tree will be felled to facilitate the residential development. Other trees that will be lost will be Class B/Class C trees. The belt of trees along the boundary below the access road will be retained and will help screen views of the new hospital.

Three public open spaces are included in the scheme, totalling 14% of the area:

- Bowledge Green, around the Scheduled Ancient Monument on the site (which will be protected)
- Wellington Place with a Pocket Park and informal play equipment
- Brook Common with informal play equipment

21 December 2016