

Statement from Denise Campbell, resident, Chair of the Billingshurst Community Partnership and Chair Billingshurst Surgery Patient Participation Group.

Hearing Wednesday 18th December

Matter 6 : Infrastructure, Transport & Healthy Communities

Issue 1: Is the approach to infrastructure provision legally compliant, justified, effective, and consistent with national policy and positively prepared?

Q1: Is Strategic Policy 23 Infrastructure Provision sound?

Q1.b : Is the relationship between this policy and the site specific infrastructure requirements identified for each site allocation clear.

My name is Denise Campbell. I have been a resident of Billingshurst since 1985, and I am Chair for the Billingshurst Community Partnership (BCP) and also Chair of the Billingshurst Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The BCP is an organisation that is an umbrella group for a number of local voluntary sector groups, including the Lions, Billigreen, Local History Society, Choral Society, Sing for Pleasure, Weald School, Scouts & Guides, Station Road Gardens, St Mary's church and several pre-schools, the Community Larder as well as having individual members. Therefore, it represents a wide cross section of the community.

The Partnership has a good reputation locally through its consistent community engagement and activity over the past 20 years. We have been instrumental in delivering most of the community infrastructure facilities of the last 25 years. Namely, Jubilee Fields, Fishing lake, Sports Pavilion, WAKOO's child care facility. Our ability to support our community is being severely curtailed and hampered by the lack of infrastructure provision by developers and HDC over the past 25 years. We need more facilities from which we can deliver activity and offer services to our community.

The BCP had lengthy detailed and constructive discussions with Highwood Development over several months leading up to the Horsham District Draft Plan Regs 19 decision. **Their Development Plan is the proposal we support.**

By contract, and in the interest of open mindedness and fairness, the Council's preferred developer Bellway & Crest Nicholson, were invited to meet with the Directors of the BCP on several occasions, eventually after we were repeatedly dismissed they agreed to do so; (probably when they realised the extreme opposition locally to their proposed development plan). We questioned them about the proposed community infrastructure listed in their proposal. Their response was to protest ignorance and to say that the items must have been included by HDC. In other words they could tell us nothing about them. This does not suggest they have considered the needs of our community and therefore cannot be considered justified, effective or positively prepared. It also seems to be further evidence of material being copied from the Regulation 18 plan. By its own admission HDC have said they did not give enough time for community consultation for Regs 19 and much of the data used is from 2018.

As examples: Infrastructure such as an Ambulance Response Post, a 'Hall' and a co-working space are proposals that the community has never heard of or considered as being necessary. No one has ever asked whether these things are needed or how they would work for our community. The Plan proposes a 'community hub' but this building, judging by the design shown to the BCP by Bellway Crest when we met with them, and by the Appendix 7a wording: **'could include flexible commercial units / 'work from home' units. ... A community shop and cafe is suggested as a potential use ...'** All of this suggests that this 'hub' would potentially be filled with commercial elements, and therefore of no use to community groups whose projects and activity might conflict with commercial use. (ie noisy children or youth after schools clubs, dance classes etc). Also, HDC Strategic Policy 28.8.39 states that retail and employment space **should not** be included in any provision for community infrastructure and should be provided for separately. **These should be considered under retail policy not community facility.**

Bellway Crest in SA118 of the Draft Local Plan speaks of 'proposed' and 'possible' infrastructure, and states that it 'could' provide as well as 'indicating a willingness to contribute' towards upgrading infrastructure in Billingshurst. Bellway also wrongly credits themselves as having a 'good track record' of delivering in Billingshurst. This is a false claim. A promised Primary School within the Amblehurst Development did not happen, nor did the plot allocated to being a dental surgery. Both plots of land allocated to these have since been built on with more houses. There can be no surprise that we, as a community, have very little faith that this developer is either compliant or effective with Strategic Policy 23, and, we believe, support for this development (SA118) is definitely not justified given the track record that Bellway Crest have in terms of engaging and consulting with Billingshurst or delivering on past commitments. The current Draft Plan is vague and would allow the developer to be slippery and dodge its obligations to this community in terms of infrastructure development as it has done in the past. There is no clarity on what Bellway Crest are proposing; I suspect it will be the bare minimum, with little thought of, or consultation with the local community. It has definitely not been positively prepared.

Q5. Is Strategic Policy 27 Inclusive Communities, Health & Wellbeing sound?

The PPG is a requirement by NHS England for all surgeries in the UK to have. We work with the surgery to improve patient services and their experience of the surgery.

Despite the fact that the Developer Bellway Crest has not consulted with either the PPG, Surgery Management, the PCN, or NHS Sussex Heath they claim that "the overall health needs of the new community are considered to be met by existing health facilities". No on site facility is proposed by Bellway Crest.

Whilst policy 27 may read as being sound on paper, the Draft Local Plan proposal does not align with the reality. Once again, the document has relied on Regs 18 data which is out of date. There needs to be up to date and relevant data provided by both HDC and the developer to substantiate their claim that the existing healthcare facilities are capable of meeting the demands of Billingshurst population when an additional circa 2000 people will be living here:

1. There is no mention in the report of the additional residents who will be living in a new housing development planned in Barnes Green who will also want to use the Billingshurst surgery. There is no evidence that any forward planning, due diligence has been done for the

draft LP. If there has, no residents or community groups, including the surgery management have been involved in this process.

2. Billingshurst surgery provides healthcare service for many satellite villages as well as a significant proportion of houses in Broadbridge Heath (5 miles away). This is because HDC planners failed to ensure that adequate healthcare provisions were provided as part of the overall development plan there (in Broadbridge Heath). This must not be allowed to happen again.
3. There are currently 13,954 patients at Billingshurst surgery. (October 2024). The population of Billingshurst is currently circa 12,200. Bellway were supposed to provide a site for a dentist on the Amblehurst Green development (550 houses). This site has since been built on. (as well as the Primary School site). Developers should be forced into contractual agreements with the Council to ensure they provide the Healthcare and educational facilities that they promise as part of the planning approval agreements.
4. HDC and the developer Bellway need to cooperate better, more widely and more enthusiastically with residents and service providers.(ie Surgery, PCN, ICB and NHS Sussex and WSCC Education Dept).
5. HDC and the developer Bellway should facilitate resident's ability to be able to influence the future healthcare provision of services in our community. At the very least, as mentioned previously, they should be having discussions with the Surgery, PCN and NHS Sussex.
6. The Draft LP had relied too heavily on old information and data from 2018 in order to get the Draft LP through quickly. The provision of healthcare needs must be based on projections taking into consideration any proposed new housing development. This has not been done. In 2018 there were 11,028 registered patients at the surgery. By the end of December 2023 there were 13906 patients. The surgery believes that the full impact of the new Amblehurst Green development has yet to be felt. (ie many patients haven't registered yet). These figures represent a **26% increase in registered patients in a 5 year period** with no additional or enhanced healthcare provision during that time. Any additional development will increase this percentage even more unless more healthcare infrastructure is factored into the draft LP.
7. I see no clear evidence that the Draft Plan HA4 complies with NPPF 8. Promoting Healthy & Safe Communities. The proposed plan is vague, wishy washy and unlikely to be upheld as it currently presents leaving much wiggle room for Bellway Crest to wriggle out of its obligations. This must not be allowed to happen (again).
8. **This plan has been rushed through with no evidence to support the developer's statements about healthcare or community infrastructure provision. (ie they claim that no additional provision of healthcare in Billingshurst is needed). The fact that this hasn't even been checked or challenged demonstrates that HDC have not fulfilled their legal or statutory obligations to Billingshurst. They have not done due diligence on the whole process, and they have not consulted with this community. Any cursory discussions that have happened, (after the draft LP was approved at HDC Council in Dec 2023) have come too little and too late. None of this demonstrates that a robust process has taken place. These matters need addressing and correcting.**

