

Date Provided: 14 June 2019

Seaford Health Hub

Ref: FOI / 9159

Information Request and Response by Lewes District Council

1. *What measures are in place to avoid conflict of interest and to ensure that the planning application goes through an impartial, fair and objective process?*

In the case of proposals for a new Health Hub at the site of The Downs, the Planning Authority will be Lewes District Council. Lewes District Council owns the land at The Downs. The council may grant planning permission for its own development. The role of the council as planning authority is independent from its role as landowner.

The planning system is governed by a range of legislative and regulatory requirements. Planning applications for council development are assessed in the same way as those from private / other developers which is on the basis of planning policy. Planning applications are publicly available to view – online and there will also be a copy of the application hosted at the Seaford Town Council Offices. An extensive public consultation regime will run alongside the application process, this will include a letter drop to the closest residents and notices placed in the wider locality in the press. The application will be reported to the Planning Committee at Lewes District Council. This committee is made up of Lewes District elected Councillors. Planning Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested members of the public can engage in writing at the consultation stage and are also able to make representations to the Members of Planning Committee (by prior arrangement and limited by number).

Given the scale of the development the case officer will be a member of The Royal Town Planning Institute and will be bound by their code of conduct, the main points of this code are outlined below:

- Competence, honesty and integrity
- Independent professional judgement
- Due care and diligence
- Equality and respect
- Professional behaviour

2. *What is the timeframe for Lewes District Council's Playing Pitch Review and when it is due to be completed?*

The council's Playing Pitch Review is currently underway. The review will look at existing provision in the District (including quality) and future need and demand. It is anticipated that a strategy will be adopted early in 2020

3. *How will Lewes Council be able to assess the loss of the existing recreation grounds (playing fields and garden) if the application is submitted before the district's Playing Pitch Review?*

The council, in its development of any proposals for The Downs, might use up to date information that has been collated at the time of the Playing Pitch Review, even though the final study will not be published until next year.

If a planning application for the development is submitted before the Playing Pitch Assessment is adopted, then the proposals will need to demonstrate that they are in accordance with any relevant policies in the Local Plan, and those of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The NPPF (2019) states (para 97) that: existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

The review of playing pitches in the Lewes District, for the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy, is being undertaken in accordance with national guidelines developed by Sport England. A Steering Group has been formed which is made up of Sport England and other national governing bodies.

4. *What other sites were proposed and / or assessed for development of new or extended GP practices / What were the criteria under which other sites were rejected?*

The council's role, in respect of the proposed Seaford Health Hub, is that of developer. The council was approached by the two GP practices in Seaford, which are in urgent need of more space, and new, modern facilities. The council identified an opportunity, on land that it owns at the Downs Leisure Centre site, to develop a new health hub - to include new premises for the GPs alongside Wave leisure facilities, which

would support the future delivery of health services for local residents. The council understands that the GPs have been looking for suitable opportunities for new premises for many years. The CCG has noted that the existing sites of both practices are too small to develop a health hub that would accommodate the expected local growth in the population of Seaford and the subsequent need for more and better care facilities in the future.

5. *What were the criteria for choosing The Downs Leisure Centre, Sutton Road as a site for the GP premises?*

The Downs site is located within the boundary of Seaford Town and as such is considered to be an appropriate location for the siting of a new health development (subject to planning).

The view of the health care partners involved in the emerging scheme is that the siting of the new GP premises at The Downs will offer an opportunity for closer working between GPs, healthcare staff and leisure staff and will help them to support residents in a more pro-active and dynamic way, including through preventative care and social prescribing.