

2.8 REFERENCE NO - 16/506946/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Proposed mixed use development comprising 165 no. residential apartments, medical centre and pharmacy across three blocks with associated parking and landscaping, refurbishment of existing Bell House with retention of offices and an additional storey.		
ADDRESS Bell House Bell Road Sittingbourne Kent ME10 4DH		
WARD Homewood	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL	APPLICANT Aria Group AGENT The JTS Partnership

The Major Projects Officer drew Members' attention to the tabled update, and reminded them that this was a long-standing problematic site, in a state of decline and an eyesore. He acknowledged that the application was not perfect, and that it was a balanced recommendation.

Tim Gibson, an objector, spoke against the application.

Kain Kassar, the Applicant, spoke in support of the application.

The Chairman moved the officer recommendation to approve the application and this was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman drew attention to the exempt papers for this item and the need to exclude the press and public if Members wished to discuss the contents of them.

A Ward Member spoke against the application and raised points which included: the density of the development was too high; seven storey flats would be overlooking two-storey dwellings; a balance was needed to consider the amenity of local residents; this would generate parking issues in the surrounding roads; the NHS did not want to occupy the medical centre, and considered this would then become further housing; out-of-keeping with the surrounding area; tired of hearing that it was not viable to build affordable housing; and it had a detrimental effect on the amenity of local residents.

Members raised points which included: needed to make a stand on affordable housing; car parking issues; the viability issues were questionable; this scheme would help to regenerate and improve this part of the High Street; the developers had been 'upfront' from the beginning about the viability of affordable housing on the site; there could be funding from a Section 106 Agreement; this was an exciting development, and had the potential to be a good development, but the demand for 10 per cent affordable housing should be met; and continued discussions were needed with the developer.

The Major Projects Officer outlined the Section 106 Agreement offer of £250,000 that had been made, as outlined on page 145 of the report. He acknowledged that there was a possibility that the medical centre could be used for affordable housing. The Major Projects Officer added that a commuted sum from the Section 106

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Agreement could be used for affordable housing to be provided elsewhere in the Borough.

Further comments included: not happy with the medical centre being used instead for affordable housing as this would make parking worse; the density of the development was over-intensive; and Ward Members should be involved in any further discussions with the developer.

The motion to approve the application was lost.

The Chairman moved a motion to defer the application to allow for further discussions with the Developer, Ward Members and officers. This was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

Resolved: That application 16/506946/FULL be deferred to allow for further discussions with the Developer, Ward Members and officers.