

Statement by Ms Nicky Parsons, Pegasus Group - Application No. 19/02330/FUL - Land South West Of, Oak Road, Halstead

Members, you have before you a scheme that your officer's report has thoroughly assessed and has concluded as being consistent with relevant national and local planning policy.

The proposal is to replace an approved and unimplemented convenience store with 5 new homes. As your officer has explained, the principle of this alternative use of the land is acceptable. The convenience store is not protected by policy or planning condition and was not considered to be a planning benefit for the approved development at this site. This is probably why this use is not carried over in the allocation for this site in your emerging local plan. Residents in this area will be able to access an existing convenience store, complete with post office within a 10-minute walking distance. The Town Council's objection to the loss of this facility cannot therefore be substantiated.

The Town Council also object to the loss of amenity space. The wide area of amenity space along the frontage of Oak Road is outside of the red line and is therefore retained. The proposed houses occupy the area of the convenience store and its car park only. There is no loss of amenity space.

As your officer has explained, the wider site that this application is part of delivers 283 of the 292 homes that were approved at outline and identified in the emerging allocation. This represents a shortfall of 9 homes at this site, which this proposed scheme will help to address. Members will be aware that the impact of the 292 homes on local facilities was a consideration when the outline scheme was considered. This latest proposal does not breach the 292 homes figure and therefore the impacts have already been taken into account and deemed acceptable.

Our initial affordable offer was to provide 2 x 2 bed affordable homes as part of the 6-unit scheme. Following discussions with the Housing Enabling Officer, a request was made to substitute these two units for the 4-bed unit that is now proposed. This had the effect of reducing the scheme from 6 to 5 units and with it the proportion of affordable housing went from 33% to 20%. This reduction was considered by officers to be appropriate as the provision would meet an existing demand in the local area that is currently going unmet. This is an important material consideration that justifies the 20% offer included within this scheme.

The applicant has worked closely with officers to ensure that the scheme delivers a high-quality design that complements the wider area and respects the amenities of local residents. Appropriate garden widths and depths are provided and windows have been positioned to avoid overlooking. The noise condition that is proposed provides further protection for residential amenity.

The delivery of 5 additional homes on a site allocated in an emerging plan for housing and delivering an affordable home that meets an identified local need secures substantial and obvious benefits that weigh heavily in favour of granting planning permission. Members, you can accept your officer's recommendation safe in the knowledge that there are no technical objections to this proposal and that the

scheme will deliver a high-quality development that will complement the character of the area. I therefore respectfully request that you accept your officer's recommendation and approve this scheme without delay.