



Sarah Holmes
Gravesham Borough Council
Civic Centre
Windmill Street
Gravesend
Kent
DA12 1AU

Via email only

Our ref: JB/HM/30965

Dear Sarah,

**APPLICATION REF. 20240402 – HUGGENS COLLEGE, COLLEGE ROAD, NORTHFLEET
FURTHER DETAILS ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING OFFERING**

Thank you for your time at our meeting on 19th June 2024, which was arranged to discuss the matter of affordable housing in relation to the proposed redevelopment of Huggens College, College Road, Northfleet, DA11 9DL.

I write to provide a summary of our discussions and provide further information where requested.

We understand that you agree in principle that the proposal will be policy compliant as a result of the nature of almshouse accommodation which is inherently affordable in its operation and provision. The proposal comprises 100% affordable almshouse accommodation which significantly exceeds the policy requirement. As set out in the submitted Planning and Affordable Housing Statement, we have requested that the following clauses are included in the Section 106 legal agreement to ensure that the proposal remains policy compliant in perpetuity:

- That all residents must meet the criteria set by Huggens College, which includes but is not limited to the need to be of limited financial resource.
- That if the charity ever dissolves or the properties are sold, at least 30% of the site-wide provision must be provided as affordable housing in accordance with Policy CS16. As discussed, this could include an additional clause requiring the tenure split of affordable homes to be in line with the relevant adopted policy at that time and agreed with Gravesham Borough Council in advance of occupation.

The existing site currently contains 30 bungalows, all of which are continuously occupied other than during shorter periods between occupants when internal improvements have been required. When a bungalow becomes available, the housing is offered to those on the waitlist, which generally results in a number of prospective residents being considered. The number of people on the waiting list fluctuates, owing to prospective occupants finding



alternative accommodation elsewhere. Despite this, over the years, Huggens College have been unable to accommodate the level of interest that has been received.

In respect of demand, the proposed development will be built out in phases to:

- (1) Take account of funding availability from Homes England; and
- (2) To minimise disruption to existing residents by allowing the site to continue to operate at a reduced capacity and ensuring that existing residents do not need to move more than once.

A benefit of this phasing strategy is that the development will be built out over a longer period of time, which would more effectively align with the lower but continuous level of demand expected for age-restricted affordable housing, compared to general family housing for the wider demographic.

In advance of each phase becoming operational, Huggens College would liaise with Gravesham Borough Council to identify prospective occupants on the Housing Register at that time. This has the potential to reduce the local demand on family and other forms of affordable housing, which could be allocated to other households in need within the local area. In addition, Huggens College would continue to manage their own waiting list for interested parties not currently on the Housing Register.

Huggens College is confident that there is a continuing and growing need for almshouses and expect there to be a continuing demand up to the completion of the development and beyond.

I trust this is helpful but please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need anything further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Buckwell', is positioned below the 'Yours sincerely,' text.

Jonathan Buckwell
Director
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