

Sackville Gardens, HOVE: Section 106 Agreement

Submission by Cllr Tom Bewick, Westbourne ward

Background

The site of the old Sackville Hotel in Westbourne is earmarked for development. Hyde Housing put forward an initial scheme, "Sackville Tower", which was rejected by local residents and planning.

A completely revised scheme has been submitted and consulted on by developers, which is lower (8 stories), and meets most of the objections of the previous scheme. A planning committee submission has been prepared for the beginning of September.

Local views

The principal planning officer has received over 80 individual submissions about the proposed development. Westbourne councillors have received several representations, including information from conservation groups.

The application has been discussed extensively at meetings of the West Hove Forum, where consideration has focussed on community benefit issues, including the Section 106 Agreement with the Council.

On behalf of the community, I would like to see the s106 take account of two issues for further consideration. Both are important to local residents:

- 1) Development of a new **Children's Play Area** / Senior Citizens' Exercise Area with disabled access, adjacent to the proposed development on the Western Lawns;
- 2) Regeneration of **Clarke Court**, a local authority owned block on Walsingham Road, situated behind the proposed development.

New children's play area – Western Lawns

The demographics of Westbourne are changing. In recent years, the ward has been an attractive option for families with pre-school children. Demand is driven by the availability of outstanding (public & private) pre-school childcare choices in the area, including outstanding council maintained infant schools in West Hove.

One fifth of residents (21%) in Westbourne are aged 0-15 years, compared to just 8% of residents aged 0-15 years in Regency Ward. Along with Wish Ward,

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Westbourne is predicted to experience a significant increase in the child age population – the third highest in the city.

According to Council data, the child population is projected to increase by 5% until 2024.

Currently, the council maintains no outdoor recreational facilities for young children in Westbourne. Residents in the north of the ward, around Poets' Corner, use Stoneham Park (in Wish Ward) and residents with older children may travel further to use Hove Lagoon or playgrounds further a field.

A popular (privately owned) indoor facility known locally as "Westows" is earmarked for housing redevelopment and will close next year. While the new housing has been welcomed, the lack of recreational facilities for pre-school children in Westbourne is of major concern to young families in the area.

The combination of many factors: the significant growth in the child population; the continued attraction of young families to rent accommodation in the ward; delays with the King Alfred redevelopment; and the planned closure of local facilities at the Westerman Complex; makes the consideration of a new children's play area in Westbourne an urgent priority.

Section 106 monies could be used to build and maintain such an area, positioned on the un-used bowling greens at the Western Lawns. This would have the advantage of making provision available to parents of babies and pre-school children that live in the flats along the Kingsway. As seen on the continent, the area could also be developed/ co-located with an elderly exercise and recreational area with disabled access.

Affordable housing policy and Clarke Court

Westbourne has a growing proportion of properties from the private rented sector. Over one third of residents already privately rent and the ward has been subject to HMO licensing since 2015. The proposed additional licensing scheme (currently out for consultation) may help improve standards. Rents are high in the ward: average £1800pcm for a three-bedroom property.

There is less local authority housing compared to other wards. It is one of the reasons why the Council policy of 40% affordable housing must be adhered to in Westbourne where developers come forward with new housing schemes. We do not want to see the steady social cleansing of low-income households from this part of the city.

Clake Court is a mid-sized local authority block situated behind the planned Sackville Gardens re-development. On inspection of the block the exterior is looking run down. In discussion with residents, they have told me that they would like to see more attention given to the needs of social tenants, including an

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upgrade of facilities. The s106 Agreement with Hyde Housing represents an opportunity to address the needs of our tenants, as well as promote community cohesion, since the Sackville Gardens development will no doubt target up-market buyers.

Councillor Tom Bewick

