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Mr Ian Richardson
Director of Growth and Development
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12th February 2018

Planning application: 10/17/1378

Dear Ian

I write further to concerns raised at a Coffee Morning that I held at Cherry Tree Cricket Club, last Saturday, as regards a planning application submitted by the Council and to be considered by the Planning and Highway's Committee at its meeting on Thursday 15th February.

A number of residents turned out to voice their concerns about the application, which they consider fails to adequately recognise the importance of the large public 'green' situated on the triangle of land between Tower Road and Hillcrest Road. I must point out at this stage, that the residents accept that the site of the former Feniscliffe Bank care home is a logical location for housing development, and they do not object to housing per se. It is, however, the scale of this development, and the changes proposed to the 'green' area that have caused most dissatisfaction within the local community.

I am aware of comments made as to adjustments to the Greenbelt boundary, in 2014, which take the entire Feniscliffe Bank site out of Greenbelt and therefore enable it to be eligible for housing development, and the Position Paper which led to these changes describing the site as one of a number of 'Green belt anomalies'.

However, I also note information provided by residents, which lists the open green as one of the most valuable open spaces in the Borough excluding designated parks. It is clear, therefore, that the 'green' is a very prominent and long recognised feature of the landscape, familiar to any person who accesses Pleasington Playing Fields and Cemetery from Tower Road – as tens of thousands do every year.

I realise that this is an outline application and that the plans are indicative and not specific. However, the proposal, as I understand it, maintains a strip of grass nine metres wide, along the Hillcrest Road/Tower Road perimeter. This will, however, be cut through by an access road, and residents have described the concession as little more than a traffic island. Further to this residents have highlighted to me, the Council's plan to commute £1000 per dwelling in section 106 monies, for use in the nearby Witton Park or Pleasington Playing Fields. Given that the sites in question are already Council owned amenity space, subject to Council funded maintenance and investment the local residents see no realistic benefit of such a fund, nor does this compensate local residents at all for their own loss of amenity.