Introduction

1.1 This brief sets out the vision of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), as planning authority, and Chichester District Council (CDC), as housing authority, for the former Syngenta site near Fernhurst.

1.2 The site lies within the South Downs National Park, the designation reflecting the highest quality of the landscape in which the site sits. The purposes of National Park designation are:
   - To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
   - To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public.

In delivering National Park purposes, the SDNPA has a duty:
   - To seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the National Park.

1.3 It is essential, therefore, that the redevelopment of the site is only permitted if it would achieve these National Park purposes by demonstrating the highest principles of architectural design and environmental performance. In addition, as National Parks are recognised by the Government as not being suitable locations for unrestricted housing, the expectation is that any new housing will be focused primarily on meeting the affordable housing requirements of the communities in the National Park, supporting local employment opportunities and key services.1

1.4 The purpose of this brief is to encourage and promote comprehensive redevelopment of the site and to inform future applicants of the requirements and expectations of the SDNPA and CDC. It establishes a planning framework that will be used in order to assess any future planning application, although it does not bind the SDNPA to granting planning permission for any specific development on the site. It also identifies likely constraints with suggested solutions in order to facilitate redevelopment in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

A Vision for this Site – Sustainable Modern Living in a National Park

1.5 Development of a new sustainable community providing a variety of dwellings, employment space, recreational space and other uses, with a clear character and distinctive sense of place that draws upon the distinctive qualities of the western Weald area of the South Downs National Park and its villages.

1.6 Encouraging sustainable modern living in the South Downs National Park by achieving high environmental standards, with low environmental “footprints” for the buildings and their occupants.

1 English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010
1.7 Long-term stewardship that engages residents and protects the quality of the development and its environment with successful integration into the protected landscape of the South Downs National Park.

1.8 Retention of existing commercial development and provide opportunities for new high quality business creation and employment.

1.9 Redevelopment of the main site, including demolition of the existing buildings and the removal of intrusive features, such as large areas of hard standings and mitigation of any contamination, as well as the protection of the best trees and water features.

**The Brief**

1.10 The Syngenta site offers a unique opportunity for a groundbreaking development of exemplary design quality and environmental performance to create a new community in the South Downs National Park. The site has potential, through the correct mix of use and high quality design, to produce a sustainable development and improve the environment of the site and its surroundings.

1.11 The objectives of the Brief are:

- To inform and involve the local community and other stakeholders and to give them an opportunity to influence and contribute to the future development of the site;
- To provide a guide for development of the site; and
- To act as material consideration in any planning decision.

1.12 The key requirements for development are:

- Within the constraints set out in the vision for the development of the site, to provide a good range, size and mix of housing type and tenure, which is integrated within the site to meet different housing needs and is responsive to the surrounding landscape.
- To maintain and encourage further business/employment use.
- A Transport Assessment to fully consider the impact of development on the A286 Midhurst Road and to assess how the sustainability of the site can be enhanced through improved footpaths, cycle routes, provision of electric vehicle charging points, a car club and enhanced access to public transport and key services.
- To achieve integration and compatibility with the landscape, minimising avoiding adverse visual impacts of development and the impacts of traffic or other activities, which may disturb the tranquillity of the South Downs National Park.
- To enhance biodiversity and natural habitats and mitigate adverse environmental impacts.
- To develop as part of the proposals a strategy for the disposal of foul water, which should include the investigation for linking the site to mains drainage. As part of this work the impact of any additional foul water flows on the capacity of the Fernhurst Sewage Treatment Works and foul network connection should be assessed and any re-enforcement or upgrade requirements should be reviewed and considered.
- To include measures to maximise the amount of energy from renewable sources, including consideration of Combined Heat and Power, ground source or air source heat pumps.
• To keep light pollution to a minimum by means of high quality design. Any proposed external lighting system should comply with the Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE) guidance notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution.

• To achieve carbon neutral status, i.e. that the use of new buildings over their lifetime results in net zero carbon emissions. This involves measuring the emissions likely to be created and ensuring there are measures in place to reduce them. Reductions can be achieved in many ways, e.g. by energy efficient design, photovoltaic panels and generation from an on-site Energy Centre. Any residual emissions need to be off-set by other activities, such as growing plants for fuel or planting trees.

• Construction of the development to minimise embodied carbon in materials.

• To have carried out a contaminated land site investigation and risk assessment, in order to ensure ground conditions are suitable for development. Possible sources of contamination to consider include boiler houses, above and below ground fuel tanks, informal or formal areas of landfilling or burning, sub stations, areas of made ground and areas used for laboratories or chemical storage. Materials containing asbestos may be present at the site, which are likely to need specialist waste disposal.

• To follow the “Considerate Construction Code” with respect to minimising noise, dust, transport movements and encouraging recycling on-site where possible. A site waste management plan will be required.

• To include measures to maximise water efficiency and minimise water use.

Site History and Location

1.11 The site is previously developed land. It was originally used as an army base and subsequently purchased by ICI and later Astra Zeneca. The site has been largely vacant without any permanent use since the 1990s when it became surplus to requirements.

1.12 The site is located approximately two km south of the village of Fernhurst, adjacent to the A286 Midhurst Road between Haslemere and Midhurst.

1.13 The site contains a number of buildings, including the very large three storey Highfield office building and four storey Conference Centre (pagoda/ziggurat) both connected by a covered walkway. It is thought that these were built in the 1980s, both are red brick. Also on the site are a number of smaller buildings towards the north eastern corner including a single storey workshop building. There are substantial landscaped car parking areas across much of the site.

1.14 Fernhurst Park is set below the surrounding mature tree groups, which contain and frame the site. At the southern boundary, existing deciduous and coniferous tree planting reach approximately 15 metres and due to rising ground provide additional screening from the south. Along the northern boundary existing tree belts also reach up to approximately 15 metres, with several specimen trees to the north-eastern area of the site reaching over 20 metres in height, providing a substantial screen and distinct green framework.

1.15 The northern boundary of the site lies adjacent to a belt of mainly coniferous tree planting followed by open pastureland. Courts Farm and associated pasture land lies adjacent to the site’s eastern boundary, whilst to the southeast the mature woodlands of Ash Reeds Copse and Dawes Highfield Copse (designated as an Ancient and Replanted Woodland) contain the site.
Appropriate Uses and Development Principles

1.16 It is accepted that the site is not viable to be developed entirely for employment; however, it is suitable for a mix of uses, which would be predominantly residential.

Employment

1.17 The Chichester Employment Land review states that: “Demand for facilities of this type and size in this location cannot be relied upon, especially for single occupation. Subject to market testing and valuation advice, the site may be suitable for some kind of business use, or partial business use, in the future. It is currently being promoted for mixed use development including residential and as previously developed land it may assist in supplying some of the residential requirements north of the Downs”.

1.18 The report states that viability testing in the market would conclude that the property is not capable of being let for the reasons stated above. There is no demand in the locality of the District for this volume of space and the preference is to be located in the regional centres.

1.19 New business parks and employment centres are focussed on the edge of major town and cities to offer better access to the workforce and meet other criteria associated with government led policies on sustainability and carbon reduction. Out of town facilities such as this are now beyond their intended and alternative use and unviable for multi-occupancy which requires a change of use.

1.20 A development solution involving a mix of uses including housing with some employment floorspace therefore represents the most appropriate solution for the site.

1.21 Employment/business uses could be located to the western edge of the site adjacent to the current employment site at Longfield House or as an extension to this. This building would be the only one suitable for retention, as it is considered that the remaining buildings are unsuitable for conversion or retention for other uses, therefore the remainder of site should be cleared of all buildings and hard standing.

Residential

1.22 The development scheme should be sympathetic to the South Downs National Park and the surrounding designated Ancient Woodland by means of a considerate design and layout. The proposed development needs to establish a healthy and “sustainable” community, which facilitates a diverse and integrated community through a balanced range and mix of tenures and dwelling sizes to be confirmed following discussion with CDC’s Housing Investment Team. A commuted sum for (rented) affordable homes may be sought, as it may be more appropriate to deliver smaller developments of social rented housing at more sustainable locations within existing communities in the north of the District National Park with the intermediate /low cost home ownership dwellings being provided alongside the market housing on the site. All tenures should be indistinguishable and integrated throughout the development.

1.23 In order to ensure the development does not become a dominant feature in the landscape, the height of the buildings may need to be restricted to generally two storeys on the boundary of the site with the potential for two and a half/three storey in the centre.

1.24 The environment of the site within the South Downs National Park needs to be conserved and enhanced in the long-term. It may be appropriate to consider whether areas within the site for example the south eastern edge by the Ancient Woodland should be left primarily as
open space or of a lower density than other areas. This might indicate a need to identify sub-areas within the site.

1.25 There is an increasing trend towards more flexible working practices, including working from home. Workspaces should be provided either as part of homes or in a small development, as a separate workspace. One of the aims of the live/work approach is reducing the need to travel and therefore improving the overall sustainability of the site. High technology homes could also provide the opportunity for people to work from home. Incorporating some flexible workspace options into this site could mean that some low key business use is retained in addition to the Longfield site.

Leisure and Countryside Uses

1.26 The site is suitable for inclusion of leisure and countryside access uses that support the second purpose of the National Park.

Environmental

1.27 The development should achieve carbon neutral status requiring at least, wood fuelled/dual fuelled Combined Heat and Power (CHP), enabling potential harvesting of the National Park’s timber resource, on and off site renewables, Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5 rating for energy and a minimum of Level 5 for water consumption (as the development is in a water supply deficit area) with Level 4 rating for other code categories. Non-residential buildings should achieve Excellent rating under BREEAM assessment and for any refurbished units an Excellent rating under the EcoHomes Standard. Development should seek to use locally sourced materials and labour to enhance its sustainability and contribute to the local economy.

An analysis of the sustainability and carbon footprint of the development should take into account the sustainable sourcing of materials from accredited local suppliers, energy of manufacture, transportation and use. It should be considered how the existing structures could contribute to the sustainability of the new development. For example, basements may be converted to other uses such as underground parking, or they could be filled with the demolished inert building material, which may mean they become open green spaces (subject to complying with Waste Legislation/Environment Agency requirements).

1.29 There is scope for a sensitive and creative approach to open space, taking into account existing features (ponds and trees) and providing and creating corridors/green links between and around the development and the National Park. Particularly the creation of high quality habitats, particularly BAP habitats, referring to the Snapes Copse and Verdley Wood Biodiversity Opportunity Area (http://www.biodiversitysussex.org/landscapes/chichester-district), with the addition of buffer areas adjacent to existing woods.

1.30 To reflect the history and location of the site, road names etc should show the past uses and associations. The ponds and water features should be retained, as well as all trees of value; there should be no incursion into woods surrounding the site, particularly on the south eastern edge. However, opportunities should be taken where appropriate to enhance the landscape setting of the site, which may include the replacement of some non-native species of tree eg leylandii with native species.

Transport and Access

1.31 The site has good access from/to the A286 Midhurst Road The main vehicular access should be in approximately the same position as the current main access to the site. It may be
possible to upgrade the access from the northern edge of the employment site to allow another access point onto the main highway. However this would need to be developed through discussions between the applicant’s highways consultant and the Highways Authority.

1.32 There may be potential for a very limited amount of development to have vehicular access from the east via the minor roads towards Courts Farm. This should be for, say, 4-5 dwellings at the most.

1.33 Due to the location of the site it is likely that there will be a high dependency on the use of the private car, however, providing alternatives to car use should be thoroughly investigated. For those commuting out on a regular basis a car club could be beneficial, as would contributions to local bus services or the potential for provision of a shuttle bus to take residents into Fernhurst village.

1.34 Any development of the site would need to consider and integrate well with nearby rights of way and the opportunity for good green links to the South Downs National Park should be investigated. There is potential to use contributions to upgrade local footpaths enabling good cycle and pedestrian access into Fernhurst.

On-site Facilities

1.35 Some or all of the following facilities should be incorporated into the site to enable a mix of uses and provide facilities for residents:

- Retention and extension of some employment floorspace;
- Retail and office provision
- Leisure facilities (potentially with residential accommodation above); and
- Community facilities (with residential accommodation above).

Off-site Facilities

1.36 Development will need to consider the potential impact on the capacity of services and facilities in Midhurst and Haslemere, particularly the health services, education and Fire and Rescue.

1.37 The potential impact on car parking at both Midhurst and Haslemere will need to be considered, as will the potential increase in commuter demand at Haslemere Railway Station from this development and further additional development in Waverley.

Water supply and disposal

1.38 Development will need to demonstrate that an adequate water supply can be provided that is not at the expense of worsening water supply issues for adjoining properties and properties in Fernhurst village. A strategy for the disposal of foul water, including consideration of linking the site to mains drainage, will be required. Upgrading of the sewer network and Fernhurst Waste Water Treatment Works may be required.

1.39 Sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and rainwater harvesting/grey water re-use systems in buildings can form a key part of sustainable developments by reducing the impacts that might otherwise occur to surface water runoff, off site flooding and consumption of water resources.
1.40 The Environment Agency’s (EA) Flood Maps indicate that the site lies within Flood Zone 1, which is categorised as having a low risk of flooding. However, due to the site size, a flood risk assessment should be undertaken and a drainage strategy for the site developed to assess and mitigate the impact of surface water.

1.41 The drainage strategy should examine the existing impermeable surfaces as there is a need to reduce the area of impermeable surfaces on the site and ensure any discharge of surface water is to the on site ponds, or directly into the ground. The drainage strategy should seek to reduce the flow rate of surface water run off to adjacent water courses compared with the existing situation.

1.42 Provision needs to be made for the storage and discharge of water from any development at the northern end of the site. If the existing discharge goes out of the site or into a watercourse then this needs to be substantially reduced or halted and the amount of surface water runoff should not be increased by the development.

Broadband

1.43 To encourage residents to work from home and to minimise the need to travel, development should aim to support/improve accessibility and connection to Broadband.
Annex regarding Section 106 Agreements

Matters required to be included in Section 106 (S106) Agreements for all of part of the Development Brief area:

- Development will only take place in accordance with Chichester District Council’s Design Principles Document.

- Affordable Housing provision.

- Retention and maintenance of main open spaces and ponds.

- Required infrastructure contributions, including Chichester District Council sports and play contributions, TAD (defined in West Sussex County Council’s SPG adopted in 2003) and Chichester District Council Community Facility contributions.

- Where on-site provision is determined to be unsustainable, off-site mitigation could be achieved through funding improvements to facilities in the village of Fernhurst, eg, Youth Centre, Sports Pavilion and the sports field, following consultation with the community and Parish Council of Fernhurst.

- Light Pollution

- Survey of existing trees and maintenance proposals.

- Guidance on strategic landscape planting and maintenance is provided in the Council’s Design Principles Document.

- Management and maintenance of SUDS.

- The Authority would wish to see Bridgeland returned to agricultural/forestry use with all buildings cleared. The redevelopment of Highfield will be based on the revocation of the extant planning permission on Bridgeland with no compensation being paid. The Bridgeland site may require a site investigation and risk assessment in order to determine the land quality. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, a remediation strategy may be required in order to ensure the site is suitable for its proposed use.
Appendix 1

Summary of Key Outputs of the Design Development Process

A Design and Access Statement should follow CABE guidance and cover the following:

- Introduction - Objectives of proposal
- Use - What the buildings and spaces will be used for
- Amount - How much will be built on the site
- Layout - How building and public and private spaces will be arranged on the site
- Scale - How big the buildings and spaces will be (height, width and length)
- Landscaping - how open spaces will be treated
- Appearance - What the buildings and spaces will look like - including materials and architectural details

The planning authorities wish to ensure that the development is founded on the soundest principles of sustainability and design quality and suggest an equivalent standard of supporting documentation.

- Masterplan, addressing layout, massing and building heights
- Spatial and Building Type Pattern Book
- Spatial and Building Design Code
- Landscape/topographic analysis and sustainable landscaping strategy
- Archaeological/ historic environment assessment
- Environmental Impact Assessment and enhancement strategy
- Contamination assessment and mitigation strategy
- Sustainable transport strategy (public transport, motor vehicle, cycle, horse, bike, pedestrian)
- Social sustainability and health strategy.
- Sustainable food strategy
- Sustainable employment strategy and economic viability assessment
- Housing type and tenure mix strategy
- Sustainable water, drainage and waste water strategy
- Sustainable energy strategy
- Sustainable building strategy
- Long term stewardship strategy which ensures the protection of the quality of the development and its environment
Appendix 2

Proposed Development Framework Methodology

Stage 1: Contextual Analysis (sometimes referred to as a Pattern Book) to inform subsequent stages.

Stage 2: Stakeholder and community facilitated design workshops (such as Enquiry by Design or Charrette) to develop a shared vision, outline masterplan and design principles.

Stage 3: Detailed design framework, founded on Stages 1 & 2.

Stage 1: Establishing the Design Context

Development proposals should demonstrate that they are founded on a thorough assessment and understanding of local character and its various components. Although it will be a requirement of the developer to provide detailed site and contextual analysis, this section is intended to help direct investigations.

The contextual analysis should assess the context for development at various levels of scale:

Large scale: comparable settlement patterns, topography, geology, landscape characteristics.

Medium Scale: spatial characteristics of comparable village streets, lanes and spaces. Building typologies and spatial relationships to streets and public spaces.

Small Scale: architectural characteristics of buildings in nearby villages, building groupings, position within plot, plot size, building massing, scale, proportions and character.

Reference should be made to the West Sussex County Council Land Management Guidelines (Sheet WG4, North Western Ridges, Wealden Greensand and LW1 North Western Ridges, Low Weald). For example, WG4 identifies a key negative issue in the “gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials,” and a landscape and visual sensitivity being the impact of new development on “long views from high ground.” It is also noted that, in order to conserve the remote and tranquil character of the area, it is necessary to “ensure any development respects historic settlement patterns, form and building materials.”

Regard should be paid to the Fernhurst Village Design Statement, which describes design aspirations for the locality and Conservation Area Character Appraisal, which defines the special characteristics of the area.

The size of the site and its potential to accommodate domestic and economic functions make it comparable to a village. The morphological characteristics and growth patterns of historic villages of the western Weald should be understood and reinterpreted when planning this new settlement. These are often referred to as ‘green villages’ as they are invariably organised around a common or large village green. Green villages are still a relevant settlement pattern as the green provides public space, opportunities for community events, social interaction, sport and community gardening.

The relationship between settlement size and the space allocated to the village green or common needs to be understood and related to the planning of this new settlement. The green and associated buildings will also need to demonstrate characteristic patterns in relation to primary, secondary, tertiary and pedestrian circulation routes.

2 www.westsussex.gov.uk/living/planning/the_county_plan/west_sussex_character_project/land_management_guidelines.aspx

3 The analysis of ‘green villages’ will be assisted by Settlement in the Western Weald by Spencer Thomas, published in Fernhurst Furnace, Chichester District Archaeology 2, Chichester District Council 2003 (pp. 9-26).
The contextual analysis should describe the characteristic ways in which traditional settlements of the western Weald relate to their landscape setting. This could include an analysis of the appearance of the settlement from the distant countryside, from approaches to it via highways and footpaths and views across the site area.

Nearby Listed buildings contribute much to local character and should be studied. It should, however, be appreciated that to a large extent the character of places is made up of relatively low-key “background architecture.” Defining the qualities of the local vernacular and the relationship between this and more prominent, higher status buildings will contribute to the correct interpretation of locally characteristic building patterns.

**Stage 2: Facilitated Stakeholder Design Workshops**

The size, significance and sensitivity of this site justify additional developmental work to inform the preparation of a more detailed planning framework. This should involve active engagement with local communities and other stakeholders, employing the use of planning tools such as the Prince’s Foundation’s Enquiry by Design (EbD) process or comparable Charrettes enabled by independent design professionals.

This process will bring key stakeholders together to consider the constraints and potential of the site from every relevant perspective. The design proposal should be developed in relation to the preliminary contextual research and as a response to this dialogue between stakeholders.

**Stage 3: Detailed Design Framework**

Building upon the outcomes of Stages 1 and 2, it will be possible to define the range of spatial conditions, building types and characteristics that the development will be expected to exhibit. These may then be described in a Design Code or detailed design framework.

The code or framework will address settlement-wide issues such as street design, landscape structure, building height and land use, through to more architectural elements such as the massing and layout of individual buildings, their relationship to the street and the way in which buildings are grouped in blocks.4

This work may then be used to coordinate the work of the architects that will be selected for individual buildings or groups of buildings. The selection of a range of different architects will add to the variety and interest of the scheme and bring it into an affinity with nearby villages that have developed incrementally over many hundreds of years.4

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4 http://www.princes-foundation.org/index.php?id=89