18/2589/MFUL Demolition of existing polytunnels /greenhousesand erection of 10dwellings ,public open space and a car park for use by the Church at Lympstone Nurseries.

**Support in principle.**

This site is allocated for housing in the Neighbourhood Plan. It was assessed in the 2011 SHLAA as having the capacity for between 11 – 19 dwellings. No detailed study of the type now undertaken was made before the allocation for 6 houses was included in the Neighbourhood Plan. The figure of 6, together with other allocated sites, added up to the 40 dwellings required by the then EDDC draft local plan. The text makes clear that there would be an opportunity to develop the site for up to 9 dwellings subject to a development brief and consultation. The developers commissioned 4 architects to prepare design briefs for the site. These all illustrated how it would be possible to accommodate 10 dwellings within the area currently occupied by greenhouses and polytunnels. The Council is supportive of the provision of 10 houses, one more than was envisaged in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The greatest concern is that the scheme only includes 1 3bed dwelling with the others being all 4 bed dwellings . Policy 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan clearly sets out the particular need in the village for affordable housing, two and three bedroom family homes and single storey homes adapted for the elderly. While affordable housing may not be able to be provided due to viability issues the Council would like to see some smaller dwellings or even a couple of flats adapted for older people provided within the scheme.

The applicant’s Design and Access statement is an excellent analysis of the existing character of the village and demonstrates how this has informed the design of the scheme. The proposals show how the important views from the Church towards the Mill will be preserved and a new village street created. The dwellings have pitched roofs and make extensive use of traditional materials, a mixture of natural slate and clay tiles for the roofs, render and brickwork for the walls. Agreement is needed on the exact pattern of use of these materials and also the colour of the ppc aluminium windows. Unlike most of the recent development in the village their design accords with the principles set out in Policy 7 of the Neighbourhood Plan. In design terms the least successful elements of the scheme are the 3 large detached properties at the southern end of the site.

The Neighbourhood Plan (Policy 17) also requires the provision of a new ‘village green’. The western half of the site has been designed to provide a simple open green space with a small discretely sited parking area for occasional use by the Church. The attenuation pond needs to be carefully designed so that it is integrated into the proposed lower meadow area. The Council considers that the scheme will provide an attractive area of public open space. Being brought into public ownership will ensure that this green area is not subject to pressure for further infill development. The two parking spaces for the development are an unfortunate intrusion into this space and should be re-located within the housing development.

The development is likely to increase traffic using the main route into the village, a road which is only single carriageway width in places, with a number of pinch points.

The Council welcomes the provision of a new footpath inside the boundary wall which will enable pedestrians to avoid walking around a blind bend in the road. This section of road has no footway and is a route used by parents and children going to school. The wall should be retained at its existing height (the preliminary highway and levels plan PHL-101 shows it being reduced in height around the entrance to the site) and repaired.

The site is in a sensitive position in the Conservation Area, opposite the Church. The Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that in most respects there will be significant conservation gains. The removal of the unsightly nursery buildings and their replacement with a well-designed group of houses together with the new public open space will enhance the character and appearance of the village which outweighs the loss of some of its rural character.

The developers are to be commended on the extensive consultations carried out on the proposals prior to the submission of the application. The scheme received generally positive support from these consultations.