

Application No: 13/3883M

Location: site of KNOWLE HOUSE, SAGARS ROAD, HANDFORTH

Proposal: Residential development of 20 dwellings and associated works

Applicant: Nichola Burns, MORRIS HOMES NORTH LTD

Expiry Date: 13-Dec-2013

Date Report Prepared: 9 January 2014

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether the proposal is acceptable in the Green Belt
- The impact on the character of the area
- The impact the amenity of adjoining residents and future occupiers of the residential units proposed
- Whether access and parking arrangements are suitable
- The impact of the proposal on existing trees and landscaping
- The sustainability of the proposal

REASON FOR REPORT

The application is for the erection of 20 dwellings, and under the Council's Constitution is required to be determined by the Northern Planning Committee.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site comprises an area of vacant land, some of which was previously occupied by a private nursing care facility, which was demolished (following a fire) in 1996. The site is located within the Green Belt as identified in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks full planning permission to erect 20 dwellings.

RELEVANT HISTORY

71134P - HEALTH CARE FACILITY TO INCLUDE 24 BED ACUTE CARE UNIT 12 BED NURSING CARE UNIT 12 NO. LOW DEPENDENCY UNITS ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT AND 16 NO. GARAGES

96/0564P - TWO 48 BEDROOMED NURSING HOMES – Refused 03.03.1996

96/1725P - REBUILDING OF KNOWLE HOUSE TO PROVIDE NURSING CARE UNIT (OUTLINE APPLICATION) – Withdrawn 13.01.1997

01/0507P - RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF FOOTPRINT OF KNOWLE HOUSE (OUTLINE) – Refused 25.04.2001

02/1131P - REPLACEMENT DWELLINGHOUSE – Withdrawn 12.08.2002

POLICIES

Local Plan Policy

NE11 Nature Conservation
BE1 Design Guidance
GC1 New Buildings in the Green Belt
H1 Phasing Policy
H2 Environmental Quality in Housing Developments
H5 Windfall Housing Sites
H8 Provision of Affordable Housing
H9 Affordable Housing
H13 Protecting Residential Areas
T2 Integrated Transport Policy
DC1 New Build
DC3 Amenity
DC6 Circulation and Access
DC8 Landscaping
DC9 Tree Protection
DC35 Materials and Finishes
DC37 Landscaping
DC38 Space, Light and Privacy
DC40 Children's Play Provision and Amenity Space

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)
Interim Planning Statement on Affordable Housing

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Public Rights of Way – The development does not appear to affect a public right of way.

Environmental Health – No objections subject to conditions

Environment Agency – No objections subject to conditions

United Utilities – No objections subject to conditions

Housing Strategy and Needs Manager – No objections

Strategic Highways Manager - No objections subject to further access details and conditions

VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Handforth Parish Council – Support the application

REPRESENTATIONS

67 letters of representation, and a petition signed by 169 people, have been received from local residents and interested parties objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Local infrastructure cannot accommodate increase in population
- Impact on SSSI
- Out of character
- Highway safety
- Greenfield site
- Presence of Japanese Knotweed on the site
- Green Belt
- Handforth needs social housing
- Proposed houses locally unaffordable
- Site is open space and should not be built on
- Loss of openness
- Absence of recreational / play areas
- Impact on nature conservation
- Disturbance during construction
- Cheshire East Local Plan to be finalised – premature
- Adverse impact on conservation area
- Houses not needed in light of plans for Handforth East
- Damage to Sagars Road from construction traffic
- Cramped appearance
- Traffic calming needed on Sagars Road
- Unmet demand does not outweigh harm to Green Belt (Ministerial statement)

5 letters of representation have been received raising no objection and / or supporting the proposal for the following reasons:

- Brownfield site
- Housing more appropriate than any other use
- Hope that it will reduce antisocial activity
- Affordable houses are welcome
- Local economic growth through jobs

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The information that has been submitted alongside the plans and drawings include:

- i) Design & Access Statement
- i) Planning Statement
- ii) Flood Risk Assessment

- iii) Phase 1 contaminated land report
- iv) Ecological Assessment
- v) Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- vi) Access Appraisal

The planning statement concludes:

- Development is proposed on a previously developed site within Green Belt, adjoining settlement boundary of Handforth.
- Proposals are consistent with the local plan policies which are consistent with the Framework.
- Some local plan policies are silent, absent or out of date.
- Paragraph 14 of the Framework states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or where specific policies indicate that development should be restricted.
- Proposal will have no significant adverse environmental impacts that would weigh against the benefits.
- The site is previously developed and the proposed scheme would have less impact on the openness of Green Belt than the previous use of the site; in the circumstances, it is capable of being favourably considered under paragraph 89 of the Framework.
- Notwithstanding this, the site has been cleared and an assessment of the scheme against paragraphs 87 and 88 indicate that the development would be inappropriate and result in harm by virtue of a loss of intrinsic openness.
- The harm would be tempered by the extent of developed features on the land and the limited though-views from outside of the site and the provision of open space and landscaping within the scheme. There would be no harm to the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and overall the proposals would result in beneficial effects in relation to the use of land within the Green Belt.
- The overall scale of harm as a result of the proposed development will be moderate.
- Seven considerations have been identified in this instance which, when taken together, amount to VSC. These include:
 - i. The Suitability of the Site for Redevelopment
 - ii. Handforth as a Sustainable Location for Development
 - iii. Housing Land Supply in Cheshire East and Handforth
 - iv. Affordable Housing
 - v. Community Benefits
 - vi. Existing Use / Environmental Benefits
 - vii. Support for Redevelopment
- These seven considerations which, when taken together, constitute very special circumstances, which clearly outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt, thereby satisfying paragraph 88 of the Framework

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Housing Land Supply

The Framework states at paragraph 47 that there is a requirement for local authorities to maintain a 5 year rolling supply of housing. In light of recent appeal decisions, it is accepted that the Council cannot demonstrate the required five year supply of housing land.

Further to this, the NPPF clearly states at paragraph 49 that:

“housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.”

This must be read in conjunction with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 14 of the NPPF which for decision taking means:

“where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

n any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or

n specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.”

Therefore, the key question is whether there are any significant adverse impacts arising from the proposal that would weigh against the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In addition it should be noted that Green Belt policy at paragraph 89 does indicate that development should be restricted, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

Sustainable Development

The site is considered to be adequately proximate to Handforth district centre and its associated shops, services and public transport links, which are approximately 600 metres from the site and within walking / cycling distance. It is therefore considered that the site is in a relatively sustainable location and the principle of a residential use in such a location is accepted.

Sustainable development is development that meets economic, social and environmental objectives. The main social and environmental considerations are highlighted in this report.

Green Belt

The site lies in the Green Belt as identified in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan. The submitted planning statement suggests that the site is previously developed land. Given that there was once a care building on this site, it is fair to say that the land has been previously developed. However, the definition of previously developed land in the Framework states that it excludes, *“land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.”* In this case the buildings have been cleared from the site and as such any remains have blended into the landscape. Whilst there is nothing currently on the site other than building rubble and with some evidence of hardstanding, aerial photographs show a heavily vegetated site with little signs of hardstanding areas. Presumably some work has recently taken place to get the site to its current condition, however this is not considered to alter the fact that the site has reverted to a greenfield site. The construction of new houses in the Green Belt is an

inappropriate form of development, which is by definition harmful, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. In terms of other harm, the construction of 20 dwellings on this open site will significantly reduce the openness of the Green Belt.

As noted above, the applicant's position is that the site is previously developed land, and is referred to as such in the Council's Draft Handforth Town Strategy Consultation and the Cheshire East SHLAA Update January 2013. They maintain that the Framework makes it clear that land which was occupied by development (i.e. where demolition has taken place) is classified as previously developed land. Information has been provided showing the extent of the building that previously occupied the site, and they consider that it is apparent from visiting the site (and in photographs provided) that there are areas of hardstanding associated with the previous development and rubble associated with the demolition of the previous building. Their view is that these elements have evidently not blended into the landscape and can clearly be distinguished in contrast to the natural character and appearance of the surrounding undeveloped Green Belt countryside.

If it was accepted that the land was previously developed land as defined in the Framework, then paragraph 89 is relevant to the determination of this application where it states, that one of the exceptions to inappropriate forms of development is:

"limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development."

The applicants state that any impact on openness is contained to the site and is not a tangible or perceived impact on the openness of the wider Green Belt, the extent of which is substantial in this location. They also suggest that the proposed development will not have a greater impact upon openness or the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the development approved under application 71134P in 1992. However, this is not the existing development. The existing development has to be that which exists on the site at present. There are no buildings or structures on the site at present as they were demolished in 1996. As such the proposed development will inevitably have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. The proposal is therefore considered to constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, whether it is identified as previously developed land or not.

Affordable Housing

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update 2013 identified that for the Wilmslow and Handforth sub-area there is a net need for 25 new affordable units per year between 2013/14 – 2017/18, this totals a requirement for 125 new affordable homes for the period and is made up of an annual requirement for 49 x 3 beds, 5 x 4+ beds and 13 x 1 bed & 3 x 2 bed older persons accommodation. (There is an oversupply of 1 bed and 2 bed accommodation).

There are also currently 278 active applicants on the housing register with Cheshire Homechoice who have selected Handforth as their first choice. These applicants require 87 x

1 bed, 124 x 2 bed, 45 x 3 bed & 7 x 4 bed (15 applicants haven't specified how many bedrooms they require).

The Interim Planning Statement on Affordable Housing (IPS) states that in areas with a population of more than 3,000 the Council will negotiate for the provision of an appropriate element of the total dwelling provision to be for affordable housing on all unidentified 'windfall' sites of 15 dwellings or more or than 0.4 hectare in size.

The IPS also states the exact level of provision will be determined by local need, site characteristics, general location, site suitability, economics of provision, proximity to local services and facilities, and other planning objectives. However, the general minimum proportion of affordable housing for any site will normally be 30%, in accordance with the recommendation of the 2010 Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The preferred tenure split for affordable housing identified in the SHMA 2010 was 65% social rented (affordable rent is also acceptable) and 35% intermediate tenure.

The applicant is offering 6 dwellings as affordable housing which is acceptable, however there is no detail as to the number of rented and intermediate units. As there is clearly a housing need in this area (as shown above) and a high demand for 2 bed accommodation on the Cheshire Homechoice system there is no reason to provide anything other than the 65% rent / 35% intermediate split required by the IPS. The SHMA Update shows that there is an oversupply of 2 bed accommodation in the Wilmslow and Handforth area however, Strategic Housing advise that due to the evidence from Cheshire Homechoice that all 2 bed units is acceptable.

The IPS requires that the affordable units should be tenure blind and pepper potted within the development, the external design, comprising elevation, detail and materials should be compatible with the open market homes on the development thus achieving full visual integration. It is accepted that pepper-potting on this site is difficult to achieve due to its size however it is necessary to ensure that the materials used for the affordable units are compatible with the open market units.

The affordable homes should be constructed in accordance with the Homes and Communities Agency Design and Quality Standards 2007 and should achieve at least Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (2007) (as per the IPS). They should be provided no later than the sale or let of 50% of the open market units (as per the IPS), and their provision will need to be secured in perpetuity.

Design and site layout

The application site sits adjacent to an established housing area, which is characterised by a wide variety of properties. As such, the proposed design of the dwellings will not be unduly out of keeping with the local area.

The existing access and driveway is retained, which does ensure that the houses are set well back from Sagars Road, reducing their visual impact from public vantage points. The row of 10 parking spaces in front of the affordable units is not ideal, however given that the other properties provide a range of parking options, which will reduce frontage parking, and overall car dominance, the layout is generally considered to be acceptable.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policies BE1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

Trees / landscaping

Trees within and immediately adjacent to the site are not afforded statutory protection by a Tree Preservation Order and the site does not lie within a Conservation Area.

The site has been mostly cleared of trees except for a group of Holly and Yew along the north west side of the existing access, a specimen early mature Beech within the triangular shaped piece of land to the rear of 6 Ash Grove; an early mature Cypress and Beech to the rear of 36 Knowle Park and an early mature Copper Beech to the rear of 38 Knowle Park. These trees are the last remaining landscape features within the site and present a moderate contribution to the amenity of the area as they are visible from a footpath which follows the south east boundary to the woodland (Dobbin Brook) adjacent to the site. The woodland is administered by Cheshire East Council and contributes significantly to the landscape within the locale.

The submitted arboricultural survey has identified four individual trees and eight groups of trees within and immediately adjacent to the application site and have been categorised as High (A), Moderate (B), Low (C) and unsuitable for retention (U) in accordance with Table 1 of BS5837:2012. The survey identifies two individual trees as moderate (B) category, two individual trees as Low (C) category. Three groups of trees have been identified as High (A) category, which are located offsite, two groups form part of the woodland boundary to the north of the site, the third group (G5) form part of the woodland boundary to the south on a steep embankment. Two groups are identified as Moderate (B) category and three as low (C) category.

The Tree Constraints plan identifies a number of trees that require removal for development. One individual B category tree, a Copper Beech (T3) to the rear of Plot 1; six trees within group G5 to the south of the site; two trees within Group G6 to the north of the site to facilitate the new access and a small number of low category trees located close to the entrance.

Generally, these trees are considered not to contribute significantly to the wider landscape. Although included within moderate and high category groups, these losses are not considered to contribute significantly to the wider landscape and amenity of the area. The individual Copper Beech (T3) has a relatively low contribution to the wider amenity, although is visible from the footpath that follows the edge of the woodland. Removal of this tree is not considered to present a significant impact on the wider amenity of the area.

The arboricultural officer has raised some concerns with regard to the position of the proposed access and footpath where it interfaces with the adjacent woodland to the north (G6 and G8) and to Group. The Tree Constraints Plan identifies the areas of conflict with the Root Protection Area (RPA) and advises a 'Proposed Tailored Engineered Road Surface'. BS5837:2012 places an emphasis on evidence based planning and requires a more precautionary approach and certainty of outcome. It is likely that given the access serves more than three properties, it will need to be constructed to adoptable standard. Further details have therefore been requested relating to special engineering within the root protection area to ensure feasibility and adequate protection of the rooting environment of trees. The Strategic Highways Manager will also need to be satisfied that such special measures are acceptable from a highways perspective. A favourable solution is anticipated and the outcome will be reported in an update.

Ecology

The nature conservation officer advises that the application is supported by an acceptable ecological appraisal, and makes the following comments:

The proposed development borders Bobbin Brook Clough Local Wildlife Site on its western and southern boundary. The proposed development is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact upon the adjacent wildlife site and the layout of the proposed development will assist in mitigating indirect impacts.

No evidence of badgers was recorded during the submitted survey, and this species is unlikely to be affected by the proposed development. However, as badgers are known to occur in this broad locality it is recommended that an updated badger survey is undertaken and submitted prior to the commencement of development.

In addition conditions requiring the submission of a breeding birds survey, and detailed proposals for the incorporation of features into the scheme suitable for use by breeding birds, including house sparrow, are recommended.

Highways

The Strategic Highways Manager has commented on the application and noted that the existing width of Sagars Road appears to be about 5.2m just to the east of the existing site access. The Applicant proposes to narrow the carriageway at this location to a width of about 4.8m. The narrowing marginally improves the very limited visibility and allows a wider footway to the east of the site access. There is already a limited width footway to the east of the proposed access and the proposed footway widening will reduce the carriageway width opposite Hampson Crescent to 4.8m. The limited width proposed at this location is exacerbated by on-street parking on Sagars Road to the east. Certainly the proposed footway widening would not be implemented during construction and, indeed, consideration could be given to shortening the length of footway widening (effectively to just a build out) so that carriageway width is not unduly restricted at Hampson Crescent. Such a proposal would reduce proposed visibility but this is unlikely to be a significant issue in this location.

Within the built up area of the site, the applicant has suggested provision of a minimum 4.5m road and a minimum 1.2m footway with a 600mm service strip. The footway width is constrained to no more than 0.6m at the site access by the gated pillars to the development. The applicant relies upon the width of the road and service strip being beneath the overhang of shrubbery for a considerable length on entry to the development and beneath the crown of trees thereafter. A passing area is provided about 25m from the access to Sagars Lane; widening to 6.0m over 12.0m. The length of carriageway from the point where the carriageway narrows on Sagars Road to the 4.8 to 5.5m carriageway in the proposed housing area is some 110m; interrupted only by the widening for the passing place. In reality, the length of constrained width is further constrained by significant on-street parking on Sagars Road to the east of the site access and Hampson Crescent opposite.

The submitted highways technical note shows the tracking for a refuse lorry accessing the site. The tracking indicates that the refuse lorry can make the movements necessary to serve the site, although some of the turning movements do overhang kerbs. Although such

movements are infrequent, once every two weeks, a car and a refuse lorry could not pass within the development or even on stretches of Sagars Road.

The applicant has indicated that all parking spaces on site will be provided at a minimum 2.4 x 4.8m and this should be conditioned along with the provision of parking at a minimum of two spaces per dwelling.

No indication has been provided of how construction vehicles would safely access the site. Given the limited width of Sagars Road this is a material consideration for the planning application, and will need to be conditioned accordingly.

In terms of issues that need to be addressed, the Strategic Highways Manager advises that the width of the service strip and the provision of an “informal footpath” alongside the carriageway are not acceptable. In light of the comments from the arboricultural officer, further information will be required to demonstrate that an access of a suitable width at a suitable construction depth can be achieved whilst maintaining an acceptable relationship with adjacent trees. The Strategic Highways Manager considers it more appropriate for the applicant to design the access road as a shared surface. It also seems likely that the pillars at the site access will need to be taken down for construction access and rebuilt at a later date. This ought to allow the pillars to be rebuilt such that a less restrictive width is provided at the access point to the development. This needs to be confirmed by the applicant.

Subject to the matters above being satisfactorily resolved, the Strategic Highways Manager raises no objections to the proposal subject to conditions. Further details regarding the outstanding issues above will be reported to members in an update.

Impact on residential amenity

Local Plan policies H13, DC3 and DC38 seek to protect the amenity of residential occupiers. Policy DC3 states that development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property and sensitive uses due to matters such as loss of privacy, overbearing effect, loss of sunlight and daylight and traffic generation and car parking. Policy DC38 sets out guidelines for space between buildings.

A number of two-storey dwellings are located adjacent to the site to the east. The proposed dwellings do not face directly onto these existing properties, and having regard to the distances involved, the specific relationships with existing properties comply with the objectives of policy DC38 and provide an acceptable amount of space, light and privacy.

In terms of the relationships between dwellings within the development site, it is noted that a number fall below the recommended distance guidelines of policy DC38. For example, plot 12a and plot 3, and plot 12 and plot 5 have facing habitable room windows with a separation distance of approximately 15 or 16 metres. This is well below the 21 metres recommended in policy DC38. These relationships could be made acceptable with small amendments to the plans, and a request has been made to the applicant in this regard.

Subject to the receipt of revised plans to address the relationships above, the proposal is considered to comply with policies DC3 and DC38 of the Local Plan.

Open space

The proposed development will trigger a requirement for public open space provision and recreation and outdoor sport provision. In the absence of any on site provision of either, commuted sums will be required for offsite provision.

Based on 20 family dwellings, the required contribution for public open space will be £60,000. The commuted sum will be used to make play and amenity additions, improvements and enhancements at Meriton Road Park just a short distance from the application site and Handforth's main recreational facility.

The recreation and outdoor sport contribution based on the 14 open market dwellings will be £14,000 and will be used, as above, for recreation and outdoor sports additions, improvements and enhancements at Meriton Road Park.

Education

Comments from Education are awaited, however, recent applications in Handforth have indicated that forecasts show that the Council it will have insufficient places in both primary and secondary schools in the locality. Therefore, it is anticipated that financial contributions will be required towards accommodating the pupils generated by this development. Confirmation of this will be provided in an update.

Other considerations

In the event that the Council identify the proposal to be inappropriate development, the applicant has submitted the following material considerations, which when taken together, they consider amount to the required very special circumstances to outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt:

i. The suitability of the site for redevelopment

This relates to the limited visibility of the site from the surrounding area due to the extensive boundary screening, the site's proximity to Handforth centre and the settlement boundary, the absence of technical or environmental constraints, the fact that the SHLAA identifies the site as being suitable for housing, and that the site is more suitable than other potential housing sites being considered for housing by the Council.

ii. Handforth as a sustainable location for development

Reference is made by the applicant to the fact that the emerging Local Plan confirms Handforth is a Key Service Centre which can support some modest growth in housing to meet local needs in order to secure its continuing vitality and that it goes on to confirm that small scale alterations to the Green Belt may be required to achieve this growth.

iii. Lack of a 5 year housing land supply in Cheshire East and Handforth.

iv. Provision of affordable housing to contribute toward an identified local need.

v. Community benefits

- increased population to support local shop and services
- financial contributions towards off site public open space
- financial contributions towards education
- financial benefits through new homes bonus

vi. Existing Use / Environmental Benefits

The proposed development would result in the beneficial re-use of a vacant and derelict site, improvements to visual amenity, landscaping and biodiversity, and will avoid instances of anti social behaviour.

vii. Support for Redevelopment is offered by Handforth Parish Council and through responses received to the public consultation process.

Assessment of considerations in favour of the proposal

With regard to the applicant's suggested very special circumstances, many of the considerations such as the limited visibility of the site, the absence of technical or environmental constraints, provision of affordable housing, the sustainability of Handforth as a location for development and financial contributions towards open space and education simply serve to demonstrate that there is no "other harm" in addition to that identified above, having regard to relevant planning policies. Indeed these issues are examined in detail elsewhere in this report.

Whilst it is acknowledged that there is some local support for this development from the Parish Council and 5 letters of support from local residents, a much greater level of objection has been received from third parties, and as such the weight that can be afforded to the support for the development is limited.

In terms of the improvements to the condition of the site, aerial photographs appear to indicate that the site had blended into the adjacent woodland, and has only adopted its "derelict" appearance since it was cleared to its current state. The established vegetation would have previously provided its own landscape and biodiversity benefits. In this state, it would facilitate no more anti-social behaviour than the adjacent woodland and wooded track at the end of Sagars Road. Accordingly, only very limited weight can be afforded to this as a material consideration in favour of the development.

The one matter remaining is therefore the Council's lack of a five year housing supply. The site is identified in the SHLAA where it is referred to as "not currently developable" and does not contribute towards the Council's housing land supply over the next five years. The SHLAA is a study that is intended to inform future policy development and does not confirm the acceptability of specific sites as this would be done through the local plan process.

It is accepted that the lack of a five year housing land supply is a significant material consideration in the assessment of the application. However, the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and paragraph 14 of the Framework does indicate that such development in the Green Belt is one area where development should be restricted. Furthermore, as one of the objectors has correctly identified a written Ministerial Statement by the Local Government Minister in July 2013 stated:

"The Secretary of State wishes to make clear that, in considering planning applications, although each case will depend on its facts, he considers that the single issue of unmet demand, whether for traveller sites or for conventional housing, is unlikely to outweigh harm to the green belt and other harm to constitute the 'very special circumstances' justifying inappropriate development in the green belt."

It is therefore concluded that the above considerations, taken together or individually, do not amount to the required very special circumstances to clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other identified harm.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

Further clarification is required regarding access to the site, trees and relationships between some of the proposed dwellings. These matters will be reported in an update.

The proposal is however an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, which reduces openness. The considerations in favour of the proposal are not considered to amount to the required very special circumstances to clearly outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy GC1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 89 of the Framework. A recommendation of refusal is therefore made.

In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Northern Area Manager has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Northern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

Should this application be the subject of an appeal, authority be delegated to the Northern Area Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Northern Planning Committee to enter into a planning agreement in accordance with the S106 Town and Country Planning Act to secure the Heads of Terms for a S106 Agreement.

1. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which reduces openness. No very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt.

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