

Application No: 14/3884M

Location: Land Off, ROTHERWOOD ROAD, WILMSLOW

Proposal: Outline application with all matters reserved for a residential development of up to 26 units

Applicant: P.E. Jones ( Contractors ) Limited

Expiry Date: 03-Mar-2015

## **REASON FOR REPORT**

The application is a major development that requires a committee decision.

### **SUMMARY**

The application is for a new residential development in the Green Belt, which is an inappropriate form of development, which reduces openness, and is a form of urban sprawl that encroaches into the countryside. There is therefore substantial harm to the Green Belt arising from the proposal. Whilst the relatively sustainable location of the application site and the provision of affordable housing are clear benefits of the proposal, no very special circumstances are considered to exist that would outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy GC1 and paragraph 89 of the Framework. In addition, the creation of a residential development of the scale proposed in this rural location will have an urbanising and detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the area and thereby conflicts with policies BE1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

The vehicular access along Rotherwood Road is not currently suitable for an additional 26 dwellings and is therefore contrary to policy DC6. In addition access to the site needs to cross a Restricted Byway (where vehicles without access rights are prohibited). The access rights of the applicant / landowner are currently being investigated, and will be reported in an update.

Whilst no protected species will be adversely affected by the proposal, insufficient information has been submitted in order to assess the impact upon the grassland habitats on the application site.

Accordingly, the proposal is not considered to be a sustainable form of development and the application is recommended for refusal.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Refuse**

## **PROPOSAL**

This application seeks outline planning permission with all matters reserved to erect up to 26 dwellings.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The site is a greenfield site lying on the western fringe of the Wilmslow urban area. Rotherwood Road is a restricted byway, but does provide vehicular access to the residential properties on Springfield Drive and a small number of other dwellings along Rotherwood Road. The site is located within the Green Belt as identified in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

No history relevant to the current proposal.

## **NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY**

### **National Policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance are paragraphs:

- 14. Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 50. Wide choice of quality homes
- 56-68. Requiring good design
- 69-78. Promoting healthy communities
- 89. Green Belt

### **Development Plan**

The Development Plan for this area is the 2004 Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, which allocates the majority of the site, under policy GC7, as safeguarded land, and the remainder as open space under policy RT6.

The relevant Saved Policies are:

NE11 relating to nature conservation; BE1 Design Guidance; BE24 Archaeology; GC1 Green Belt; H2 Environmental Quality in Housing Developments; H9 Affordable Housing; H13 Protecting Residential Areas; DC1 and DC5 Design; DC3 Residential Amenity; DC6 Circulation and Access; DC8 Landscaping; DC9 Tree Protection; DC35, DC36, DC37, DC38 relating to the layout of residential development; T3 Pedestrians; T4 Access for people with restricted mobility; and T5 Provision for Cyclists.

The saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP)**

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

- MP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- PG1 Overall Development Strategy

PG2 Settlement hierarchy  
PG6 Spatial Distribution of Development  
SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East  
SD2 Sustainable Development Principles  
IN1 Infrastructure  
IN2 Developer contributions  
SC4 Residential Mix  
SC5 Affordable Homes  
SE1 Design  
SE2 Efficient use of land  
SE3 Biodiversity and geodiversity  
SE4 The Landscape  
SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
SE6 Green Infrastructure  
SE9 Energy Efficient Development  
SE12 Pollution, Land contamination and land instability  
SE13 Flood risk and water management  
CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport  
CO4 Travel plans and transport assessments  
Site CS 30: North Cheshire Growth Village

**Supplementary Planning Documents:**

Interim Planning Statement: Affordable Housing (Feb 2011)

North West Sustainability Checklist

**CONSULTATIONS**

**Highways** - No objections .

**Environmental Health** - No objections subject to conditions relating to pile foundations, construction management plan, dust control, travel planning and contaminated land.

**Housing** - No objections subject to 30% affordable provision

**Public Rights of Way** – Holding objection - Rotherwood Road is recorded as an upadoted highway and private vehicular rights may not exist over Rotherwood Road/Wilmslow RB34.

**Environment Agency (EA)** - No comments to make

**Flood Risk Manager** - Comments not received at time of report preparation

**United Utilities** - No objections subject to condition relating to foul and surface waters

**Wilmslow Town Council** – Comments not received at time of report preparation

**REPRESENTATIONS** (to 19 Jan)

Neighbour notification letters were sent to all adjoining occupants, a site notice erected and a press advert was placed in the Wilmslow Express.

To date, approximately 37 letters of representation have been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and no very special circumstances
- Bridleway heavily used by joggers, walkers, cyclists
- Noise impact from piling
- Impact on local schools, doctors, etc
- Flood risk
- Impact on wildlife
- Impact upon Lindow Moss
- Unadopted road with restricted access
- Reduce openness
- Other brownfield sites exist in Wilmslow (e.g Ned Yates garden centre)
- Site not identified in the Local Plan for development at any time, not even as an Alternative, Non-preferred site or for safeguarding.
- Site is regarded locally as being unsuitable for development due to subsidence
- Loss of view
- Loss of privacy
- Surrounding roads not suitable for additional traffic
- Conflict with aims of Green Belt
- Impact on highway safety
- Applicant does not have legal right to use Rotherwood Road

## **APPRAISAL**

The key issues are:

- Whether the proposal is acceptable in the Green Belt
- Impact upon nature conservation interests
- Impact upon character of the area
- Amenity of neighbouring property
- Public Right of Way
- Highway safety

## **Housing Land Supply**

Paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that Council's identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements.

This calculation of Five year Housing supply has two components – the housing requirement – and then the supply of housing sites that will help meet it. In the absence of an adopted Local Plan the National Planning Practice Guidance indicates that information provided in the latest full assessment of housing needs should be considered as the benchmark for the housing requirement.

The current Housing Supply Position Statement prepared by the Council employs the figure of 1180 homes per year as the housing requirement, being the calculation of Objectively Assessed Housing Need used in the Cheshire East Local Plan Submission Draft.

The Local Plan Inspector has now published his interim views based on the first three weeks of Examination. He has concluded that the council's calculation of objectively assessed housing need is too low. He has also concluded that following six years of not meeting housing targets a 20% buffer should also be applied.

Given the Inspector's Interim view that the assessment of 1180 homes per year is too low, we no longer recommend that this figure be used in housing supply calculations. The Inspector has not provided any definitive steer as to the correct figure to employ, but has recommended that further work on housing need be carried out. The Council is currently considering its response to these interim views.

Any substantive increase of housing need above the figure of 1180 homes per year is likely to place the housing land supply calculation at or below five years. Consequently, at the present time, the Council is unable to robustly demonstrate a five year supply of housing land. Accordingly recommendations on planning applications will now reflect this position.

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.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Green Belt**

#### **Inappropriate Development**

Local Plan policy GC1 and paragraph 89 of the Framework state that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for one of the listed exceptions.

The proposed development is not for one of the identified exceptions and is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is harmful by definition. Very special circumstances are therefore required to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm.

#### Other harm

Paragraph 79 of the Framework states that, *“The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”*. The application site is currently an open field. The construction of up to 26 dwellings would significantly reduce the openness of the Green Belt.

In addition, two of the five purposes of the Green Belt are to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The application site is located on the edge of the urban area of Wilmslow, and the proposal will conflict with these purposes by extending this built up area by encroaching into the countryside.

#### Very Special Circumstances

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:

- Lack of 5 year housing supply
- Wilmslow does not have enough brownfield site to meet its housing requirements
- North Cheshire Growth Village in Handforth will be more harmful to Green Belt and will serve to merge Greater Manchester and Cheshire East
- Providing Wilmslow's housing requirement in Handforth does not meet Wilmslow's housing needs.
- Sustainable location of the site
- Provision of much needed affordable housing.

These matters are considered below in the Planning Balance section of this report.

#### **Visual impact**

The site is approximately 1ha in area and as such the provision of 26 dwellings on the site is considered to be an acceptable density in the context of the existing residential development on Moor Lane and Springfield Drive. The indicative layout is also considered to be a broadly acceptable way of providing this number of dwellings. However, despite the site being located immediately adjacent to an existing built up area, a residential development of this scale would have an urbanising effect upon what is currently a distinctly rural location in character and appearance. This would be to the detriment of the area and as such there would be some conflict with policies BE1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

#### **Trees**

The submitted Planning Statement states that trees on the site will be retained as far as possible, but several trees within the centre of the site will need to be removed to accommodate the proposed development. It is further stated that tree losses will be

compensated by boundary planting and specific construction methods employed in respect of certain trees within the site to ensure their retention.

The application is supported by a Preliminary Tree Survey Schedule (Cheshire Woodlands Ref CW/7418-SS dated 25 September 2014 and Tree Constraints Plan (Cheshire Woodlands Ref CW/7418-TC dated 26 September 2014).

*BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and Construction – Recommendations* places an emphasis on 'evidence based planning' and requires a higher level of certainty for proposed outcomes at the design development stage when resolving tree constraints. The submitted Tree Survey has complied with part of the Feasibility and Planning stages of the British Standard (Feasibility and Design Brief). Whilst an indicative layout has been produced, no assessment has been carried out by the Arboriculturist on the impact of the indicative layout on existing trees to address design development requirements as part of the British Standard.

The survey has identified and classified vegetation within the site as comprising of twelve individual trees, six groups, two Hedgerows and a small group of shrubs. These have been assessed in accordance with the British Standard Categories and identify 2 High Quality (A category) individual trees, 3 High Quality (A category) groups; 7 Moderate Quality (B category) individual trees; 1 Moderate Quality (B category) group; 2 individual and 2 groups that a Low Quality (C category) and 1 U category tree which appears to be located offsite and of reduced vitality. Three individual trees assessed (Trees T10-T12 (A and B category) are located offsite, with one tree Silver Birch (T10) located near the junction with Rotherwood Road and Springfield Drive overhanging the site.

Without the Tree Constraints plan overlaid onto the site layout, an assessment of the impacts upon trees cannot be fully assessed. Indicative positions of trees identified on the site layout drawing appear to suggest that the position of the proposed main access of Rotherwood Road may be acceptable in principle, although some adjustment may be required to accommodate the retention of Group G4 (Sycamore, Birch, Hawthorn and Alder) in the northern corner of the site.

The Design and Access Statement states that the design of the indicative layout takes full account of the sites constraints and that the site benefits from a number of mature trees which would be retained as far as possible.

Anticipated losses within the centre of the site are restricted to younger specimens or C category trees of no particular outstanding contribution to amenity.

In terms of proposed Plots 5-7 and 26 there are potential daylight and sunlight problems that would arise as a consequence of the proximity of dwellings and size of gardens to retained trees. It is anticipated that the gardens of these properties would be dominated by tree cover and the properties heavily shaded from direct sunlight during the morning hours.

Such matters may be resolved by good design, although this may compromise the number of anticipated units that could be accommodated on the site.

The retention of those trees of high and moderate quality (A and B category trees) should be sought to protect landscape/visual contribution to the local character/amenity of the area and ensure good quality design. In this regard those trees should be assessed and considered for formal protection by a TPO.

#### Hedgerows

A Hawthorn hedgerow fronting the highway has been identified in the submitted Tree Report but does not appear to have been assessed under the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. This is a matter that would need to be addressed within any reserved matters submission.

#### **Ecology**

The nature conservation officer has commented on the application and confirms that it is supported by an extended phase one habitat survey and reptile survey.

#### Badgers

No evidence of badgers was recorded on site, however badgers are known to be present in the broader locality. As the status of badgers on a site can change within a short timescale it is recommended that if planning consent is granted a condition be attached requiring any future reserved matters application to be supported by an updated badger survey.

#### Grassland

The submitted Phase One Habitat survey describes grassland habitats within the interior of the application site which support a number of species indicative of 'Priority' grassland habitats which would be a material consideration for planning. As a full botanical survey has not been completed it is not possible to fully assess the nature conservation value of this habitat. A further botanical survey of the grassland at the optimal time of year is necessary in order to enable a full assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development upon this habitat.

#### Reptiles

Common lizard is known to occur in the broad locality of this application site. The nature conservation advises that the submitted survey was constrained by the failure of the ecological consultant to allow the survey tiles to 'bed in' prior to the commencement of the survey. No evidence of the reptile species was however recorded and the survey was undertaken at the optimal time of year. It is therefore considered that on balance reptiles are not reasonably likely to be present or affected by the proposed development.

#### Common toad

This priority species has been recorded on site. The nature conservation officer advises that the proposed development is likely to have a localised adverse impact on this species. This impact would be mitigated to an acceptable level through the retention of the woodland, hedgerows and dry ditch.

#### Woodland and dry ditch

A small area of broadleaved woodland occurs on site (identified as target note 3 on the submitted habitat plan) and a dry ditch also occurs on site. The ditches around this locality whilst prone to drying out are known to support water voles during periods when they hold water



The nature conservation officer advises that these habitats are worthy of retention as part of the proposed development as is the woodland that is shown as such on the submitted indicative layout plan. It is recommended that if outline planning consent is granted the retention of this area of woodland and ditch be required by a condition.

#### Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a priority habitat and a material consideration. The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of a section of hedgerow along Rotherwood Road. If outline planning consent is granted it must be ensured that suitable replacement planting is incorporated into the detailed design for the site the reserved matters stage.

#### **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.

The indicative layout shows that the proposed dwellings are able to meet the distance guidelines set out in policy DC38 of the local plan to the properties on Springwood Drive and to Rotherwood Bungalow on Rotherwood Road. However, some of the separation distances within the site do appear to fall short of these guidelines. Given that the application is for outline permission only, with all matters reserved, there is considered to be sufficient flexibility within the site layout to ensure adequate standards of space, light and privacy are maintained. No further amenity issues are raised.

#### **Accessibility**

There are three primary schools within walking distance, and local shops are available at Lindow Parade on Chapel Lane, which is also within walking distance and would provide for most day to day needs. The nearest bus stop is approximately 100 metres from the application site on Moor Lane with Wilmslow Town centre approximately 3kms from the site. The closest healthcare provision is again close to Wilmslow Town Centre at the corner of Bedells Lane and Chapel Lane. Local facilities are therefore considered to be accessible by a range of transport options from the application site.

#### **Highways**

The Strategic Highways Manager (SHM) has provided the following comments on the application:

#### Access and Internal Layout

This is an outline application with all matters reserved, therefore, no comments are provided on access or internal layout, but the SHM reserves the right to do so at a later date in the application process (i.e. reserved matters). The following guidance is provided for the developer:

The site is accessed from Rotherwood Road which is a single track unadopted road designated as a Restricted Byway. To the south of the site between Springfield Drive and Moor Lane, Rotherwood Road is an unmade road with numerous potholes and along the

western boundary of the site Rotherwood is a narrow single track road. In its current form the SHM does not consider Rotherwood Road suitable for providing access to 26 dwellings in addition to those already served.

Proposals will be required later in the application process for improvements to Rotherwood Road to mitigate for the pedestrian and vehicular traffic generated by the development proposals. However, at the current time it is not clear if the applicant has the rights to provide such improvements. Consequently, the application cannot provide a suitable access and is contrary to policy DC6 of the Local Plan. Should further information be submitted on this issue, members will be advised in an update.

#### Traffic Generation

Traffic generating potential of the development proposals has been estimated from a range of sites within the TRICS database, the morning and evening peak hour estimates are summarised in Table 1.0.

**Table 1.0 Traffic generation associated with the development proposals**

	TRICS trip rate		Trips associated with 20 dwellings	
	Arrivals	Departures	Arrivals	Departures
<b>AM</b>	0.116	0.446	3	12
<b>PM</b>	0.439	0.208	11	5

The morning and evening peak hour traffic generation associated with the development proposals is expected to be low, less than 20 two-way trips per peak hour.

Once distributed on the road network the development traffic would only result very small increases in the traffic flow. In order to resist this application, the Highway Authority would have to prove that there is severe harm arising from this increase, this would not be possible given the low level of trip generation predicted.

#### Road Safety

The Personal Injury Accident (PIA) record of the highway network in the vicinity of the site has been reviewed for the five year period 2009 to 2013 inclusive. There have been no recorded PIA's during this period of time; indicating there are no underlying road safety issues that could be exacerbated by the traffic associated with the development proposals.

It is concluded that the development proposals would not be expected to have a negative impact on road safety.

The SHM therefore raises no objection to the proposal.

#### **Public Right of Way**

The traffic generated from the development has the potential to affect Restricted Byway Wilmslow No. 34, as recorded on the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way. The Restricted by way runs from Moor Lane, along Rotherwood Road adjacent to the eastern boundary of the application site. In order for vehicles to access the application site, they would have to use the Restricted Byway. It should be noted that the Restricted Byway is already used by vehicles to access properties on Springfield Drive and others along Rotherwood Road.

The Rights of Way Team has noted that Rotherwood Road is recorded as an upadoptioned highway and private vehicular rights may not exist over Rotherwood Road/Wilmslow RB34. It is an offence to drive a mechanically propelled vehicle on a Restricted Byway without lawful authority and the Rights of Way Team therefore wish to lodge a holding objection to the planning application until this situation has been clarified.

Further information on this will be provided in an update.

### **Archaeology**

The site of the proposed development lies on the eastern fringes of Lindow Moss from which a number of 'bog bodies' were recovered during the 1980s, whilst the site was being worked for peat. The remains, which are recorded in the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (CHER 1473/0/1-4), are thought to date from the later prehistoric period and although the circumstances of their deposition remains a matter for debate, it appears certain that they represent evidence of some form of ritual activity. The deep accumulations of peat which contained the bodies do not occur within the application area but it is entirely possible that contemporary activities were occurring on the fringes of the moss which have left some below-ground evidence. Any such evidence would be extremely vulnerable to disturbance during development and in view of the national significance of the earlier finds, further archaeological mitigation would be appropriate in the event that development proceeds.

It is not suggested, however, that the potential for archaeological remains is significant enough to generate an archaeological objection to the development or to justify any further pre-determination work. Instead, it is advised that in the event that planning permission is granted, relevant groundworks should be subject to archaeological monitoring in order to identify and record any archaeological deposits present. Relevant groundworks may be defined as initial topsoil stripping, the digging of foundations, and excavation of major services. This monitoring should be accompanied by a programme of metal detecting which should be carried out by a suitably-experienced individual working under direct archaeological supervision. A report will also be required and the mitigation may be secured by condition.

### **Flood Risk**

Comments from the Flood Risk Manager are awaited and will be reported to Members in an update.

### **Contaminated land**

The contaminated land officer notes that the application site is within 250m of a known landfill site or area of ground that has the potential to create gas, and given that the proposal is for new residential properties which are a sensitive end use and could be affected by any contamination present, a condition requiring a phase 1 contaminated land survey is recommended.

## **SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Affordable Housing**

The site falls within the Wilmslow sub-area for the purposes of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment update 2013 (SHMA). This identified a net requirement for 25 affordable homes per annum for the period 2013/14-2017/18. This equates to a need for 49x 3bd and 5x 4+bd

general needs units and 13x 1bd and 3x 2bd older persons accommodation. In addition to this, information taken from Cheshire Homechoice shows there are currently 275 applicants who have selected one of the Wilmslow lettings areas as their first choice. These applicants require 101x 1bd, 107x 2bd, 55x 3bd and 8x 4+bd units, 4 applicants did not set their bedroom requirement.

The Interim Planning Statement: 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 or affordable rented and 35% intermediate tenure.

The Affordable Housing 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 and also that the affordable housing should be provided no later than occupation of 50% of the open market dwellings (unless the development is phased with a high degree of pepper-potting, in which case the affordable housing can be provided no later than occupation of 80% of the market dwellings).

The proposal is for 26 dwellings, and includes a minimum of 30% affordable dwellings which equates to 8 dwellings which should be provided as 5 affordable or social rent and 3 intermediate. The affordable provision is therefore considered to be acceptable.

### **Education**

Forecasts show that there will be insufficient capacity in local schools to accommodate pupils generated by the proposed development. Therefore financial contributions will be required towards accommodating these pupils.

#### Primary

5 primary aged pupils will be generated, which will require a contribution of £54,231.

#### Secondary

3 secondary aged pupils will be generated, which will require a contribution of £49,028.

### **Open Space**

Policy DC40 of the Local Plan and SPG on Planning Obligations requires 40sqm of public open space per family dwelling. Some open space is identified on the indicative site layout, however, given that this is an outline application, the full extent of on site open space provision is not clear.

This level of open space will need to be provided, and it is likely that most, if not all will need to be provided off site. As a result financial contributions will be required in lieu of on site provision at a rate of £3,000 per family dwelling.

In addition contributions towards off site provision of outdoor sport and recreation facilities in the local area will be required at a rate of £1,000 per family dwelling. Although this is waived for the affordable units.

## **ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY**

With regard to the economic role of sustainable development, the proposed development will help to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of land for housing as well as bringing direct and indirect economic benefits to Wilmslow town centre including additional trade for local shops and businesses (in closer proximity to the site than the town centre), jobs in construction and economic benefits to the construction industry supply chain.

## **RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS**

With regard to the comments received in representation not addressed above, there is reference to subsidence on the application site. Whilst these comments are noted, it is not considered to be a material planning consideration in this case. It would be a matter for the developer to adopt appropriate construction techniques to ensure the stability of the buildings.

## **PLANNING BALANCE**

The proposal is an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, which reduces openness, and is a form of urban sprawl that encroaches into the countryside. Substantial weight should be given to this harm to the Green Belt. In addition, there is the urbanising effect of the proposal upon this rural area, and Rotherwood Road does not provide a suitable access for an additional 26 dwellings. Insufficient information has also been submitted to assess the potential impact upon the Restricted Byway and the grassland habitats within the site.

In terms of the considerations in favour of the proposal, the applicant sets out the following matters as very special circumstances to outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt:

- Lack of 5 year housing supply
- Wilmslow does not have enough brownfield site to meet its housing requirements
- North Cheshire Growth Village in Handforth will be more harmful to Green Belt and will serve to merge Greater Manchester and Cheshire East
- Providing Wilmslow's housing requirement in Handforth does not meet Wilmslow's housing needs.
- Sustainable location of the site

With regard to the applicant's suggested very special circumstances, the provision of affordable housing and the sustainable location of the site are acknowledged as benefits of the scheme, however, they do simply serve to meet relevant policy requirements, and demonstrate that there is no further harm in addition to that identified above. It is accepted that the lack of a five year housing land supply is a significant material consideration in the assessment of the application. It is also acknowledged that brownfield sites within Wilmslow

are limited. 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. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development in paragraph 14 of the Framework does not apply. Furthermore, the Council is a considerable way along the local plan process which does seek a strategic response to meeting the housing needs of the area and the Borough as a whole. It would not therefore be appropriate to undermine the local plan process by allowing the development of a Green Belt site that would result in substantial harm to matters of public interest.

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.

The proposal is therefore contrary to policies GC1, BE1, DC1 and DC6 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. It has also not been possible to confirm whether the proposal complies with policy NE11 of the Local Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The application is recommended for refusal.**

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*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 Planning and Enforcement 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.*

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Application for Outline Planning

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse for the following reasons

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 1. R12LP | - Contrary to Green Belt / Open Countryside policies |
| 2. R05LP | - Harmful to appearance of the countryside           |
| 3. R12HW | - Use of sub-standard access                         |
| 4. R03NC | - Insufficient ecological information                |



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