

Application Reference: 19/0519/OUTL **Date Received:** 19/08/2019
Ord Sheet: 387065 273991 **Expiry Date:** 18/11/2019
Case Officer: Helen Hawkes **Ward:** Wyre Forest Rural

Proposal: Outline application for proposed 70 bed care home (C2) (means of access only to be determined)

Site Address: LAND ADJACENT AT A448, MUSTOW GREEN,
KIDDERMINSTER,

Applicant: Mr Rana

Summary of Policy	CP01, DS01, DS04, CP02, CP03, CP07, CP11, CP12 and CP14 SAL.PFS1, SAL.DPL1, SAL.DPL2, SAL.CC1, SAL.CC2, SAL.CC7, SAL.UP1, SAL.UP5, SAL.UP6, SAL.UP7 and SAL.UP9 CC1, CC2 (Chaddesley Corbett Neighbourhood Plan) Design Guide SPD National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance National Design Guide
Recommendation	REFUSAL

Reason for referral to Committee

'Major' planning application

1.0 Planning History

1.1 There is no planning history for this site.

2.0 Consultations and Representations

2.1 Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council – Recommend refusal on the grounds that the proposals would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and not in accordance with Neighbourhood Plan Policy CC1.

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2.2 Highway Authority – (Initial response) – Recommend deferral. The justification for this decision is provided below.

The application is located in Mustow Green which is a community of very modest scale, it is most likely that the proposal will rely of staff and supporting services arriving from Kidderminster, it is therefore essential that the proposal considered, and promotes sustainable travel to Kidderminster as the largest and nearest large settlement. The applicant has submitted a transport statement to consider the proposed impact, but this is not considered to address matters in sufficient detail. There are concerns that the location of the site relative to larger communities and the quality of the connections will be a limiting factor which the applicant should demonstrate is addressable, this is necessary to demonstrate that the proposal represents sustainable development. From the Highway Authorities considerations the following key matters need to be addressed:

The proposal relies on the existing bus services to gain access to Kidderminster and cites a 5 minute journey time to the town centre. This approach is overly simplistic and needs to consider how shift patterns fit into the time table. The walking route from the site to the bus stops is inadequate. On the development side there is no footway and none is proposed. There is a footway on the opposite side of the road which is unacceptably narrow and no improvement is proposed. No crossing facility near the proposed access is suggested to access the existing footway. Additionally there are substandard crossing facilities at the roundabout or to cross the A448 to access bus stops on the opposite side of the road. It may be possible to install laybys nearer the site to address the distance matter and this should be explored. Additionally contributions towards community transport may be needed to provide access to services which cannot be addressed by the commercial bus service, the Highway Authority has estimated that £26,000.00 of support would be needed.

Staff accessing the site on foot is unlikely given the distance of 2.5km from the site entrance to the edge of Kidderminster's built up area, this distance exceeds the industry standard maximum walking distances to places of work. Additional when considering the suitability of the walking route the lack of a continuous footway, its width, gradient and lighting levels are disincentives to travel on foot.

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Cycling is also not assessed sufficiently, whilst the industry recognised 5km distance may be achieved this ignores the detail of the route. Cyclists would need to be on street, and the A448 beyond Spennells Valley Road to the site is subject to a 40mph and 50mph speed limit with no dedicated cycling infrastructure. The high volume of traffic, vehicle speed, gradient, lighting levels make this route unattractive to all but the most experienced cyclists. Against this needs to be considered against what time shift patterns change. Cycling is presently considered to be an unlikely means of accessing the site.

It is considered that the TS does not give sufficient analysis of sustainable travel considerations and this should be reviewed. Additionally a Walking, Cycling and Horse Rider Assessment (HD42/17) should be submitted to review the deficiencies and provide mitigation as needed.

Details are not clear or missing relating to the visibility splays (and tangential splays and refuse vehicle tracking. Details of these should be provided to confirm that the access arrangements function for vehicular purposes. The car parking levels have not been justified, the applicant must provide a suitable evidence base to show what is proposed is suitable. It is noted that this is a reserved matter but the applicant should ensure that they can accommodate the required demands without impacting on other material planning considerations.

The travel plan should be placed onto Modeshift STARS (Business) at www.modeshiftstars.org, the applicant can register, or if they are not familiar with this system they can contact the Highway Authority who can do this on their behalf for a small fee.

The Highway Authority therefore submits a response of deferral until the required information has been provided and considered.

(Second response) - Recommend Refusal on the grounds that the site lacks suitable sustainable access opportunities for pedestrians and public transport users and would result in an unacceptable vehicle access due to insufficient visibility. It is advised that the Applicant and the Highways Authority have undertaken several discussions since the recommendation dated 1st October 2019 to explore opportunities to address the matters of concern, however, that there are still issues that remain unresolved, and as such, the application is recommended for refusal.

(Third response) – Following a review of the information that has been submitted in support of the application and addition information, the recommendation of refusal is considered to be sound and appropriate and as such, there is no reason why a change to the recommendation should be made.

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It is noted that one aspect of concern in the recommendation is that a visibility splay of an appropriate standard could be achieved to the east if the applicant had control of the necessary land which is clearly shown as outside the red line of the application. If the area covered by the splay were to be included within the red line that part of the reason for could be overcome.

(Officer comments – The red line site boundary shown on both the Location and Site Plans has been amended to include the adjoining field, which is within the ownership of the applicant. The proposed scheme now demonstrates that suitable visibility can be achieved at the proposed access without crossing third party land).

(Fourth response) – I can confirm that the amended drawings demonstrate that the necessary visibility splays can be provided within the land that lies within the revised red line; and the access is acceptable in principle. For the avoidance of doubt, the applicant has not addressed concerns about the sustainability of the site location; and adequacy of the pedestrian routes between the bus stops on A448, its junction with A450, and the application site. Finally, if the application was to be granted consent contrary to the Highways recommendation, conditions and informatives would need to be added.

2.3 WCC Landscape Adviser – No objection to the application, although it would create a development that encroaches into open countryside. I welcome, therefore, the intention to include soft landscaping that will both soften the development and enhance the setting. The landscape strategy submitted sets out the overall plant and species mix proposed. However, I would recommend that, given the scale and complexity of the scheme, should you be minded to grant outline planning permission, a condition is attached to ensure that details of the landscaping design, method statement and aftercare is attached. This should aim to ensure that all aspects of the scheme are delivered, established and managed to deliver net gain for both landscape and biodiversity.

2.4 West Mercia Police Designing Out of Crime Officer – No objection to the application and the Officer has advised the following: The size and height of this building will dominate the surrounding area. This could make it a target for the curious, and those with criminal intent. It is therefore important to make sure the security is such that residents feel safe. Of concern to me are the doors in the ground floor rooms that open to the outside. These doors should comply with standard PAS 24:2016. A question for the future is what regime will be put in place to ensure that residents do not leave these doors unlocked/open when the respective room is empty?

An access control system will be required on the main entrance.

The theft from builder's compounds on developments is becoming a problem. Should planning permission be granted I would be happy to work with the builders on making the site as secure as possible.

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- 2.5 North Worcestershire Water Management Officer – No objection subject to a condition to secure a strategy for surface water drainage.
- 2.6 Severn Trent Water – No objection subject to a condition to secure suitable disposal of foul and surface water drainage.
- 2.7 Campaign to Protect Rural England – Objects to the application and have provided the following comments:

It is a speculative application which is wholly contrary to Planning Policy. The location is completely contrary to the basic settlement hierarchy policy in WFCS Policy DS01.

Mustow Green is a hamlet in Chaddesley, just south of the slightly larger hamlet of Harvington. Even Chaddesley Corbett is only a small village (“rural settlement”). Even in Chaddesley village, WFCS policy DS01 would only encourage housing to meet identified local needs, but this is nearly 1.5 miles from the village. The Chaddesley Corbett Neighbourhood Plan may indeed identify a need for housing for the elderly, but that also would need to be to meet a local need. This would need to be a need arising in that parish or perhaps other parts of the rural east of your district, not from Kidderminster, whose needs ought to be met in the town. This is emphasised by WFCS policy DS04, which says that rural hamlets will be able to meet local housing needs only, as established through surveys.

The site is in the Green Belt. The applicant calls in aid provisions in Framework, paragraph 138 as to mitigating for loss of Green Belt, but this paragraph is about altering the boundaries of the Green Belt, which can only be undertaken as part of a Local Plan Review. It is accordingly completely irrelevant to this application. Furthermore, the applicant does not suggest any mitigation measures, which would compensate for the damage his development would do to the Green Belt. Any development in the Green Belt (which certain exceptions) is always inappropriate. The applicant claims no very special circumstances to depart from this.

The applicant appears to be claiming that there is a lacuna in your Council’s planning policy, as it says nothing of where class C2 accommodation should be sited. There is a simple answer to this. Your council’s policy documents talk of housing and dwellings, not of “class C3 housing”. A residential care home is a residential institution, which is a variety of specialist housing, cognate with a house in multiple occupations or a hotel.

Your council’s local plan review is well advanced and it is currently consulting on a revised version of the Deposit Draft. CPRE has issued with some of the land allocations in that, but it provides large sites for housing, just east of Kidderminster and at the Lea Castle hospital site. Some of this involves an element of mixed use. The right place for the kind of development proposed would be in one of these sites, or at some other site allocated for housing, either in it or your present Site Allocations and policies Plan.

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Institutions such as proposed are for elderly people most of whom are frail, but some of whom as sufficiently able bodied to be able to go out and walk a short distance to a shop, for example. This means that the appropriate place for such an institution is within a village or larger settlement where there are shops, not a rural hamlet with none. No doubt there is some bus service along A448, but we presume that like most rural bus services in the county, it is infrequent and poorly used. This is hardly a means by which frail elderly people (such as reside in care homes) are likely to be able to visit shops.

- 2.8 Worcestershire Public Health – No objection, however recommends that further consideration is given to accessibility and would recommend conditions to secure appropriate lighting, cycle parking provision, electric vehicle charging points and careful design of the building.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) sets out the Government's requirement to promote healthy communities and to draw on evidence of health and wellbeing need. This is supported by Planning Practice Guidance which also emphasises the importance of health and wellbeing in planning.

Public health suggests that the understanding of this commitment and its policies from a health and wellbeing perspective (where it relates to design of buildings and developments), is represented in this application and includes guidance relating to health promoting design of buildings, developments and public realm covering the following subjects:

- The provision, quality and accessibility of green spaces, community facilities and play areas;
- Design of buildings and developments so they cater for the needs of all groups of population during their whole life. Lifetime homes standards could be references in this section;
- Age friendly developments which include the provision of safe and walkable environments including benches and shading; the provision of opportunities for social cohesion including parks, seating areas and community gardens and orchards and ensuring that bus stop within walking distance; the provision of segregated walking and cycling routes within the developments;
- Site design which promotes physical activity by encouraging walking and cycling; and
- Supporting healthy foods through provision of allotments, community orchards and street fruit trees.

Accessibility and active travel - The Public Health Directorate would recommend that accessibility is considered further, and in particularly around access to and from the site for pedestrians and cyclists. The A448 is a busy thoroughway from Kidderminster to Bromsgrove, ensuring that there are good walking and cycling links in all directions from the site is imperative for visitors and staff alike. A pedestrian crossing on this main through route should also be considered.

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It is also recommended that the lighting is considered to ensure that the walkways and cycle routes are well lit around this area, which is quite a rural area. An increased number of cycle parking points may also like to be considered to encourage more staff members and visitors to reach the site via active travel methods. Travel to and from the site by bus is currently at a limited service, and an increase in public transport provision should also be considered.

Sustainable development - To mitigate against climate change and with UK plans to ban petrol and diesel cars by 2040 it will be important to future proof the site. The Public Health Directorate recommends the installation of electric vehicle charging points for the property using fast chargers and at all visitor parking points.

Encouraging healthier food choices - There is no reference about how the proposal will contribute to healthy food provision. However, there is the opportunity for this proposal to contribute to such provision through edible planting throughout the site and the planting of a small community orchard within the nearby open green space. In addition, the Public Health Directorate would like to see opportunities for food growing in small plots distributed throughout the site including raised beds to ensure inclusivity for all residents and making the growing of food easy, accessible and sociable. Growing plots can contribute to positive mental and emotional health for future residents. A sensory garden may also like to be considered.

Age friendly design - It is also recommended that age-friendly and dementia friendly concepts are employed in the design, layout, and internal décor to ensure that the build and facilities are appropriate and suitable to support the residents and future residents including those who may have a dementia diagnosis to facilitate individuals to be able to live well with such conditions.

- 2.9 Arboricultural Officer - No objection subject to a condition to require a Tree Protection Plan in order to protect the trees on the boundary with Bentley Grove.
- 2.10 Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) – No objection subject to conditions to secure details of: the proposed commercial kitchen extraction system; the proposed glazing and ventilation products; and details of external lighting. An informative is also recommended to make the applicant aware of WRS Demolition & Construction Guidance which seeks to minimise any nuisance from noise, vibration and dust emissions during the construction phase.
- 2.11 WCC Archaeologist – No objection subject to conditions to secure a Programme of Archaeology work including a Written Scheme of Investigations to be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority and then undertaken.

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- 2.12 Conservation Officer – Request that a Heritage Statement is submitted to consider the impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Winterfold House (located 500 metres from the site) and its curtilage (175 metres from site) and the wider setting of the hamlet and Conservation Area of Harvington (750 metres from the site).
- 2.13 Housing Enabling Officer - This site is in the Green Belt, it is not a site allocated for housing. Its rural location, lack of local amenities in terms of access to health and social care facilities, community groups and its limited public transport links make it inappropriate in terms of both policy and location. This application is not supported.
- 2.14 Countryside and Parks Manager – No objection subject to suitable tree protection fencing to protect all existing trees and a condition to ensure the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures as set out in the submitted Ecological Assessment are implemented.
- 2.15 Neighbour/Site Notice – 6 letters of objection has been received from nearby occupiers and their comments are summarised below:
- Green Belt location, and there are no ‘very special circumstances’
 - Failed to adequately demonstrate that there would be no harm to openness and that the harm would be outweighed by the benefits
 - No consideration of the impact on adjoining premises, Cedar Barn
 - Out of character with surrounding buildings
 - Over-development of the site
 - Likely to lead to increased isolation of residents due to its rural location away from the amenities of the town
 - Unsustainable location
 - Public transport is very limited and Mustow Green residents rely on their own transport to access local amenities
 - Does not meet with the current needs and other needs for the future, which is an important aspect of the WCC and Parish CC Housing Assessment needs
 - Poor vehicle access, close to the school entrance, Curslow Lane and within 50 metres of a bend in the road
 - Unacceptable impact on the roundabout. The A450 Corridor Enhancement Report by Jacobs for Worcestershire County Council dated June 2019 did not include the proposed care home and specifically identifies the A450 / A448 Mustow Green Roundabout is already over capacity, requiring major highway works
 - Building on greenfield should be a last resort, especially considering the vast amount of brownfield sites within the local area and in particular those within the town centre, which would have better transport links to support staff, visitors to the proposed care home
 - Desperately need to keep our green spaces undeveloped

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3.0 Site Location and Description

- 3.1 The application site extends to 0.84 hectares and comprises an area of undeveloped pasture land, located on the south side of the A448 Bromsgrove Road. It is situated within the open countryside, and within the West Midlands Green Belt. The ground level is flat across the site and there are boundary trees and a hedgerow along the front boundary and a mature tree belt along the west boundary, which provides screening for the adjoining residential property at Bentley Grove. The site is secured by palisade fencing to its boundary and currently only has access from a gate on the eastern side of the site.
- 3.2 The wider context of the site is mainly two-storey dwellings and farmhouses dispersed by gently undulating, open countryside. Adjoining the site to the Bentley Grove, a residential property set within a relatively large plot and beyond this property is a cluster of mostly two-storey detached and semi-detached properties that form a small hamlet, known as Mustow Green, which is concentrated around the roundabout junction of the A448 and A450 Worcester Road. To the east and south of the site, are agricultural fields and to the southeast, beyond a field, are detached dwellings that are dispersed between fields and front onto Cursley Lane. To the northeast, approximately 175 metres from the site, is the lodge house, a two-storey Victorian building that lies adjacent to the entrance into Winterfold House School. Winterfold House School includes a Grade II listed building, which cannot be seen from the application site. To the north of the site, approximately 500 metres is Harvington, which includes a number of listed buildings including the Grade I listed Harvington Hall and is designated as a Conservation Area. The site is approximately 3 miles from the town of Kidderminster and 1.3 miles from Chaddesley Corbett village.
- 3.3 The application is seeking Outline Consent for the erection of a 2.5 storey, 70-bed residential care home (Use Class C2), with all matters reserved for later determination except for access.
- 3.4 The proposed care home would consist of 70 en-suite bedrooms, as well as a day space cinema, hair and nail salon, nurse station, clinical room and communal dining spaces and assisted bathrooms/WCs. It would be provided within one building, which would be rectangular in shape and would extend back into the site, behind parking and landscaping to the front. The care home building would lie parallel to the side boundary of the neighbouring property, Bentley Grove, and the site access would be provided from the A448. A provision of 21 car parking spaces, including 2 disabled, would be available for visitors, and a further 10 spaces for staff would be provided. A secure landscaped garden would also be provided for residents.

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- 3.5 The application has been submitted with illustrative site, elevation and floor plans to show how the development would be provided and would appear on site. In addition, a Planning Statement, Statement of Community Involvement, Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal, Design and Access Statement, Noise Assessment, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Preliminary Arboricultural Assessment, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Sequential Assessment, Landscaping Scheme, Transport Assessment and Travel Plan have been submitted in support of the application.

4.0 Officer Comments

- 4.1 The application has been submitted in Outline with details relating to access only to be considered at this stage. All other matters are reserved for later determination. Notwithstanding this, a site layout plan, elevation and floor layout plans have been submitted to show the indicative layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the proposed development.
- 4.2 The proposed development is for the erection of a 70 bedroom, three-storey, residential care home building and associated parking (31 spaces in total comprising 10 staff and 21 visitors with 3 for people with disabilities), access and works.
- 4.3 The proposed access would be from the A448 and would comprise a priority junction with a 5.5 wide carriageway and 6.0 metre corner radii. The access has been provided to ensure it is perpendicular to the A448 carriageway and provides over widening on the internal bends to accommodate the turning manoeuvres of some vehicles.
- 4.4 The application site relates to non-previously developed land, outside of any settlement boundary and within the Green Belt. The main considerations therefore are whether the proposals constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and if it does, then consideration of other matters need to be assessed to see whether very special circumstances exist in order to outweigh the substantial harm to the Green Belt. In addition, consideration of whether the site is suitable for residential development in terms of land use and location and whether the proposed access is acceptable.
- WHETHER INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT**
- 4.5 According to Policy SAL.UP1 of the adopted Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and Paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt for a residential care home does not fall within any of the limited types of new buildings that are considered to be appropriate in the Green Belt. The proposed development therefore amounts to inappropriate development. Also, the applicant, in paragraph 6.37 of the Planning Statement, confirms that the proposals would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

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- 4.6 WHETHER THERE WOULD BE ANY OTHER HARM TO THE GREEN BELT
Paragraph 133 of the Framework emphasises that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. 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.
- 4.7 Paragraph 134 of the Framework highlights that the Green Belt serves five purposes, these are:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 4.8 The character of the surrounding area comprises undulating open green countryside to the north, on the opposite side of the A448, and immediately adjoining the site to the east and south. Further to the northeast and east, beyond the adjoining fields there are dwellings that are dispersed from one another by open fields. To the west, beyond the mature and dense tree belt, there is a detached dwellinghouse, known as Bentley Grove, and beyond is a small cluster of mostly two-storey detached and semi-detached dwellinghouses that extend up to the roundabout junction of the A448 and the A450 Worcester Road. The site as you view it from the road and from distant dwellings to the east, is set within the open countryside and due to the dense tree belt along its west boundary, is clearly separated from the existing cluster of housing, which makes up the small hamlet of Mustow Green.
- 4.9 The site lies within the 'Estate Farmlands' landscape type as set out in the Worcester Landscape Character Assessment. This landscape type is described as *"An ordered agricultural landscape characterised by a sub-regular pattern of medium to large sized fields, small geometric plantations and groups of ornamental trees associated with large country houses. Settlement is largely restricted to discrete clusters of dwellings and occasional small estate villages"*.
- 4.10 It advises that *"Opportunities may arise to achieve some degree of coalescence of existing scattered development by enabling infill development to bring about a degree of spatial unity. However, the siting of new development should be undertaken with extreme care in order to avoid compromising the visual integrity of distinctive estate villages ... Efforts should be made to avoid individual new development of a dispersed nature"*.

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- 4.11 I have carefully considered the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment including the Landscape Strategy for the proposed development and the comments that have been raised by the WCC Landscape Adviser. I am of the view that the proposed development would result in a substantial built form, being three storeys in height and with an extensive footprint, and when considered together with the proposed 31 car parking spaces, would result in a significant reduction to the openness of the Green Belt. I acknowledge that the impact on landscape character and visual amenity would be somewhat mitigated by the retention and proposed additional planting, which would reinforce the key characteristics of 'Estate Farmlands' character type, however, the site is not well contained and sits outside of the cluster of housing within the hamlet of Mustow Green. It would not constitute infill development and would not bring about a degree of spatial unity. Instead, the development would sit on its own, separated from the existing built development by the mature tree belt and would result in visual intrusion and encroachment into the open countryside.
- 4.12 Moreover, it was advised within the Green Belt Review, Strategic Analysis that was carried out in September 2016 as part of the preparation for the emerging Local Plan that this parcel of land (SE5) "contributes to Green Belt purposes through its prevention of change through incremental encroachment of existing built development into open countryside. Whilst current development is modest the openness, topography and extensive vistas (particularly eastwards from Curslow Lane) make the parcel sensitive to change". This assessment is a clear indication that the application site makes a positive contribution to the openness of the Green Belt and helps to contain the existing small cluster of housing at Mustow Green from encroaching into the open countryside.
- 4.13 I therefore consider that the proposed erection of a three-storey residential care home, together with car parking, on this non-previously developed site, within the open countryside setting would result in harm to the openness, which is an essential characteristic of Green Belts. It would also result in encroachment into the countryside and would fail to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging development on derelict and other urban land first before greenfield sites, which are two of the purposes of Green Belts listed in Paragraph 134 of the Framework.

WHETHER THERE ARE ANY OTHER CONSIDERATIONS THAT WOULD AMOUNT TO VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 4.14 The Framework allows the harm to the Green Belt to be weighed against any other material considerations in order to determine if there are very special circumstances which may justify inappropriate development.

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- 4.15 The Planning Statement submitted in support of the application has highlighted a number of other material considerations including social, economic and environmental benefits that, in the opinion, of the applicant should amount to very special circumstances. I have summarised each of these below:
- The residential care home would meet the identified local need for elderly persons accommodation as identified in the Chaddesley Corbett Neighbourhood Plan, 2014 (Policy CC2) and the Chaddesley Corbett Parish Housing Needs Survey, Winter 2013. No reference has been made to any provision of C2 elderly care and/or accommodation in Chaddesley Corbett Parish within the Council's Five year housing land supply (September 2018). The proposed care home would also contribute to meeting Worcestershire and Wyre Forest District's Housing Need for elderly persons, where it was highlighted in the Housing Needs Survey, October 2018 that 1,642 additional units of older person's accommodation would be needed over the emerging Local Plan period (2016 – 2036). The Worcestershire Health and Well-being Dementia Joint Strategy Needs Assessment, March 2019, also advised that there is an increasing need for care home provision.
 - The proposed care home development would allow elderly people to downsize into smaller residential units, thus freeing up larger dwellings for families.
 - The proposals would provide specialist care, from residential to nursing care, which would help relieve pressures on publicly funded hospital and GP services in the locality.
 - The development would improve the choice of specialist accommodation and care for people in the locality. It would also provide a purpose designed community within which leisure and community facilities help foster social integration and alleviate potential isolation and future residents would be able to remain within the District, close to friends and family.
 - A Sequential Site Assessment has been undertaken to assess availability of alternative sites within Wyre Forest District, which concluded that the
 - Other preferable alternative sites are all constrained by designations or access difficulties, or uncertainty regarding availability.

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- An assessment of other existing care homes was also carried out to assess whether they had capacity to accommodate additional residents and it was found that there is a lack of supply and that existing care homes do not seek to provide the level of care and support covered by the proposed development. As such, existing care homes within 5 miles of the site are not comparative and would not result in an over provision of similar accommodation within a confined area.
 - 20 full time equivalent job opportunities would be created, as well as job opportunities during the construction phase.
 - Provide new wildflower habitats, which would accord with Action 5 of the Chaddesley Corbett Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.16 The applicant has made reference to a planning appeal and a planning application that were allowed/granted for the erection of a residential care home. Whilst I do not have copies of these decision notices and do not know the full details of each of these developments, I note that the appeal case did not fall within the Green Belt. The planning application, related to a site within the Green Belt, however, it was noted in the applicant's summary that the "proposed development would comprise a continuous part of the existing and established building line and is clearly less open than some of the surrounding countryside". In comparison, the proposed development would not be part of the existing established building line, as it is separated by the existing small cluster of dwellinghouses by a detached dwelling (Bentley Grove) which is set back approximately 34 metres from the road frontage and the site is separate from this property by a dense tree belt. As such, the proposed development in is clearly not part of an existing established building line and lies within an open countryside setting.
- 4.17 The applicant has made a number of statements about meeting the local housing need within Chaddesley Corbett village, which lies 1.3 miles from the application site. The Chaddesley Corbett Parish Housing Needs Survey 2019 advises that the Parish has a large proportion of older people (25% or 356 people, aged 65 years and older).
- 4.18 The Survey concluded that in total within the next 10 years the following new homes could be required:
- 21 Owner Occupier properties: 11 x 2 beds, 5 x 3 beds and 5 x 4 beds
 - 5 Shared Ownership properties: 4 x 2 beds and 1 x 3 beds
 - 4 Social rented properties: 4 x 2 beds
 - 1 Private Rented Property: 1 x 2 bed

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- 4.19 Although it is recognised from the Local Housing Needs Survey conducted by the Parish Council that there is a large proportion of older people living within Chaddesley Corbett, I do not consider that this triggers a local housing need for 1 bed units in the next 10 years which would facilitate the need for a 70 bedroom care home, as proposed in this application.
- 4.20 The Housing Needs Study, October 2018, advises that when applying ratio of older people to current provision and then using future household projections a figure of 1,642 additional units for the emerging Local Plan period 2016-2036 with 1,174 C3 Sheltered (included in 276 dwellings per annum requirement) and 487 additional C2 residential care being required. I note that the applicant has considered the capacity of existing care homes. Members will note that since this application was submitted, planning permission (19/0406/FULL) has been granted for 5 additional bedrooms at the Offmore Care Home, which provides specialist dementia care and planning permission (19/0127/FULL) has been granted for the erection of a building containing 27no. 1 bedroom and 38no. 2 bedroom affordable apartments for people of 55 years of age. Also, a planning application for a 66-bedroom residential care home has been considered by the Planning Committee in February 2020 and resolved to approve subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement and conditions. I therefore consider that some of the unmet housing need for C2 residential accommodation has already or will be met.
- 4.21 I acknowledge that there will always be a need for accommodation for the growing older population both locally and nationally, however, new residential care homes need to be located in suitable and sustainable locations. The application site, being non-previously developed land, outside of any settlement boundary is considered to be an unsuitable location for new residential development, as it would be contrary to Policies DS01 and DS04 of the Adopted Core Strategy and Policies SAL.DPL1 of the Adopted Site Allocations Policies Local Plan. The Council can demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and therefore the most important Development Plan policies for determining the application (Policies SAL.DPL1) are not considered to be out of date and the tilted balance in Paragraph 11d of the Framework is not engaged.

- WHETHER SUITABLE LOCATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- 4.22 I acknowledge that the proposed C2 residential care home would count as housing provision for the purposes of housing land supply calculations. However, it must be noted that the Council is able to demonstrate in excess of a 5 year housing land supply against its identified housing needs target. Therefore, the most important development plan policies for determining the application are not considered to be out of date.. In any event as Paragraph 11 d (i) and footnote point out, on this occasion the Green Belot policies in the Framework that protect areas a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. The 'tilted balance' is therefore not engaged in the decision making of this application

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- 4.23 Policy SAL.DPL1 of the Adopted Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan sets out suitable locations for residential development which includes previously developed land within areas allocated for residential on the Proposals Map and other urban areas within Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and small windfall sites within Bewdley.
- 4.24 The policy also states that residential development outside of these locations will not be permitted unless in accordance with Policy SAL.DPL2: Rural Housing, or relevant Rural Development and Green Belt policies.
- 4.25 I note that extra care developments generally need to be of a sufficient size to support the shared facilities and therefore require large scale sites and I note that a sequential assessment has been submitted with this application which has assessed other preferable sites within the District. However, I believe that there are suitable sites, such as the former Carpets of Worth site, former Sladen School site, the Timber Yard in Kidderminster, the former Kidderminster fire station site and the former Bewdley fire station site to name a few, which are all allocated for residential development on the Adopted Policies Map; relate to previously developed land within the urban areas; and are in sustainable locations.
- 4.26 I therefore conclude, that the site relates to non-previously develop land, outside of any settlement boundary as defined in the Adopted Policies Map. Policy SAL.DPL2 seeks to protect the countryside from unsuitable development. The proposed development would not fall within any of the exceptions under this policy. As such, the development would be contrary to Policies SAL.DPL1 and SAL.DPL2 of the Adopted Sites Allocations and Policies Local Plan.
- 4.27 GREEN BELT BALANCE
Although there is a recognised local need for accommodation for elderly people, there is no requirement for the amount of 1-bed units in Chaddesley Corbett Parish, and when taking into account the unsustainable location of the site, it is considered that only limited weight can be given to the Green Belt Balance on this matter.
- 4.28 I agree with the applicant that the proposals would help older people to move out of larger homes which would free up family size housing for families and this is a social benefit which will be weighed in the Green Belt balance.
- 4.29 I further acknowledge that the development would provide health and well-being benefits, which would reduce the need for residents to make use of primary health care services or social services and would also help to relieve the pressure on hospital bedspaces. As such, the benefits to health and wellbeing would also weigh positively in the Green Belt balance.

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- 4.30 The creation of 20 full time equivalent job opportunities as well as those within the construction phase would also provide a social and economic benefit and the provision of new wildflower and other planting would also help to improve the environment both visually and for wildlife.
- 4.31 Overall, I note that there are social, economic and environmental benefits arising from the proposals, however, when taken cumulatively, I do not consider that these other material considerations when taken as a whole clearly outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt, in terms of inappropriateness and harm to openness. I therefore do not consider that very special circumstances exist. The development would therefore be contrary to Policy SAL.UP1 of the Adopted Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and Section 13 'Green Belt' of the Framework.

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE SITE BY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT MODES

- 4.32 Policy SAL.DPL5 of the Adopted Sites Allocations and Policies Local Plan advises that the District Council will support applications for extra care provision where it can be demonstrated that (but not limited to) they are able to offer their residents and staff easy access to a range of services, particularly access to appropriate community facilities, including healthcare, by foot or by public transport.
- 4.33 Paragraph 108 of the Framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.
- 4.34 The site is over 3 miles from Kidderminster, which is beyond the recommended 400 metres in order to be considered as reasonable walking distance. The Highways Authority has advised that the public footpaths in the vicinity of the site are very narrow (1 metre in width) and are missing footway links, existing crossing locations are substandard and there are no suitable crossing point proposed to access the site along the frontage, which makes pedestrian access unsafe, impractical and non-existent in places. The absence of suitable pedestrian connections to the site is a significant barrier to encouraging sustainable access, even from within the existing community. Also, that the cycle route to the site from Kidderminster is considered to be difficult due to the topography of the roads and distance and would only be suited for the more experienced cyclist.

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- 4.35 The two bus stops which are located 300 metres from the site are served by nos. 42 and 133 bus services. The no. 42 bus route offers an hourly service between 0538 hours and 1758 hours Monday to Saturday(3 services a day on Sundays) and provides routes between Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Redditch and the no.133 bus service operates between Kidderminster, Chaddesley Corbett and Drotwich, with three services a day from Monday to Friday. The nearest railway station to the site is Kidderminster Railway station, approximately 4.3km from the site. However, I have to agree with the submitted Travel Plan where it states in paragraph 1.1.2 that “Visits from friends and family are usually outside of peak hour periods and can be limited to certain visiting times by the care home operator in some circumstances. This is not always conducive to the use of public transport”. As the no. 42 bus service does not run after 6pm and the no. 133 only has three services a day, I consider that the visitors will be unable to travel to and from the site due to these limited bus services.
- 4.36 I do not consider that the site is in a sustainable location for the proposed care home and that the development would be contrary to Policy CP03 of the Adopted Core Strategy, Policies SAL.DPL1, SAL.DPL5 and SAL.CC1 of the Adopted Site Allocations Policies Local Plan and Paragraphs 108, 109 and 110 of the Framework, which all require developments to be in a sustainable location where they can promote suitable and safe walking and cycling for all users and maximise the opportunities for sustainable travel.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND HIGHWAY SAFETY

- 4.37 In terms of vehicular access, the proposed scheme involves a new access point onto the A448 along the front boundary, which would become the main entrance to serve the development. During the course of the application, the applicant has submitted a revised red line site boundary on both the Location and Site Layout Plans to show that the visibility splay can be achieved for the new access without crossing third party land and can therefore be retained and maintained in the long term.
- 4.38 The Highways Authority has advised that the amended details have addressed their objection to the access arrangements and that the development would have suitable access in principle. I concur with this view and consider that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on highway safety in terms of vehicular access and movement and the free flow of traffic on the A448. However, due to the site location, the proposed development is likely to have a detrimental impact on pedestrian safety due to the inadequacy of the pedestrian routes between the bus stops on A448, its junction with A450 and the application site. The development is therefore contrary to Policy CP03 of the adopted Core Strategy, Policy SAL.CC1 of the adopted Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and Paragraphs 108 and 109 of the Framework.

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5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 The proposed 70 bedroom care home would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would be harmful to the openness which is an essential characteristic of Green Belts as well as result in encroachment into the open countryside. Although, there are other material considerations that would provide some social, economic and environmental benefits, it is considered that these, when combined, would not outweigh the substantial harm to the Green Belt, and as such, no very special circumstances exist. In addition, the development would be in an unsuitable and unsustainable location for a residential care home, given that it is non-previously developed land, outside of any settlement boundary, and would therefore fail to safeguard the character of the countryside or provide suitable and safe access for all users or maximise the use of sustainable transport modes in order to minimise the reliance on private cars and traffic generation. The development is therefore contrary to policies contained within the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework and does not represent sustainable development.

5.2 It is therefore recommended that the application be **REFUSED** on the following grounds:

1. The proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, resulting in harm to openness through encroachment into the countryside and failure to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging development on derelict and other urban land first before greenfield sites. Whilst there are other material considerations that would provide social, economic and environmental benefits, it is considered that these benefits would not outweigh the substantial harm to the Green Belt and do not amount to very special circumstances. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policy SAL.UP1 of the Adopted Sites Allocations and Policies Local Plan and Paragraphs 133, 134, 143, 144 and 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to protect the openness and characteristics of the Green Belt from substantial harm as a result of inappropriate development.
2. The application site relates to non-previously developed land, outside of any defined settlement boundary and therefore is considered to be unacceptable in principle for residential development. The proposed development would not promote regeneration of the urban area and would result in harm to the landscape character of the area, contrary to the objectives of Policy DS01 of the Adopted Core Strategy, Policies SAL.DPL1 and SAL.DPL2 of the Adopted Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and Paragraphs 77 and 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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3. The application site, by virtue of its unsustainable location in the open countryside and inadequacy of the pedestrian routes between the nearest bus stop on A448 and the application site, would fail to provide safe and suitable access to the site for all users, in particular pedestrians and cyclist and those wishing to travel by bus. The proposed development would therefore not promote good accessibility and choice of travel by sustainable transport modes and would be contrary to Policy CP03 of the Adopted Core Strategy, Policies SAL.CC1 and SAL.DPL5 of the Adopted Sites Allocations and Policies Local Plan, Policy CC12 of the Chaddesley Corbett Neighbourhood Plan and Paragraphs 108, 109 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.