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Case Number	22/04338/FUL (Formerly PP-11731060)
Application Type	Full Planning Application
Proposal	Hybrid planning application for (i) the demolition of Dore Moor Garden Centre, and (ii) the construction of an Integrated Retirement Community (IRC) of up to 125 Extra Care units (Use Class C2) with ancillary communal and care facilities and green space consisting of: (a) A full planning application for 63 Extra Care units (C2); the Village Centre; means of access; landscaping and open space; and all other associated works and infrastructure; and, (b) An outline planning application (all matters reserved except for access) for up to 62 Extra Care units (C2) with ancillary communal space, landscaping and all other associated works and infrastructure
Location	Dore Moor Nursery Brickhouse Lane Sheffield S17 3DQ
Date Received	02/12/2022
Team	City Centre and Major Projects
Applicant/Agent	DLP Planning Ltd
Recommendation	Refuse

**Refuse for the following reason(s):**

- 1 The Local Planning Consider that the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which would result in substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would be contrary to the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Very special circumstances that are necessary to justify this inappropriate development in the Green Belt do not exist. The development would therefore conflict with Chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies GE1, GE2, GE3, GE4, GE5, GE8 of the Unitary Development Plan, Core Strategy Policy CS71, and DN Policy 2 of the Dore Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2 The Local Planning Authority consider that the proposal would result in a substantial harmful impact to the spatial and visual character and landscape in this location, having a detrimental impact on the Area of High Landscape

Value, the Green Belt, and the setting of the Peak District National Park. This would be contrary to Policy GE8 of the UDP and Paragraphs 180 and 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 The Local Planning Authority consider that the proposal owing to its scale, siting, form and layout results an incongruous development that represents general overdevelopment of the site. The proposal would result in poor outlooks afforded to some of the units within the proposed development, resulting in unacceptable living conditions for future residents. This would be contrary to Policies GE4 and H15 of the UDP, Core Strategy Policy CS74 and Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Attention is Drawn to the Following Directives:

1. Despite the Local Planning Authority wishing to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with a planning application, this application does not follow the pre-application advice given, or show sufficient regard for the (policy) requirements set out within that advice, so an agreed solution has not been sought on this occasion.
2. The applicant is advised that this application has been refused for the reasons stated above and taking the following plans into account:

Site Location Plan, dwg ref. 2458-URB-ZZ-XX-DR-A-208900-P00

Illustrative Masterplan, dwg ref. 452-UW-P-003 Rev C

Application Elements, dwg ref. 2458-URB-ZZ-XX-DR-A-208901-P00

Site Block Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-ZZ-XX-DR-A-208903-P01

Site Demolition Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-ZZ-XX-DR-A-208904-P00

Site Sections as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-ZZ-XX-DR-A-208350-P00

Height Parameter Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-ZZ-XX-DR-A-208905-P00

Access Principles as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-ZZ-XX-DR-A-208906-P00

Design and Access Statement (November 2022)

Design Commitment Statement (November 2022)

Block 1 Ground & First Floor Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-B1-ZZ-DR-A208150-P00

Block B1 Second Floor Plan and Roof Plan Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-B1-ZZ-DR-A-208151-P00

Block B1 Elevations & Section as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-B1-ZZ-DR-A208250-P00

Block 2 Ground, First, Second Floor & Roof Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URBB2-ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00

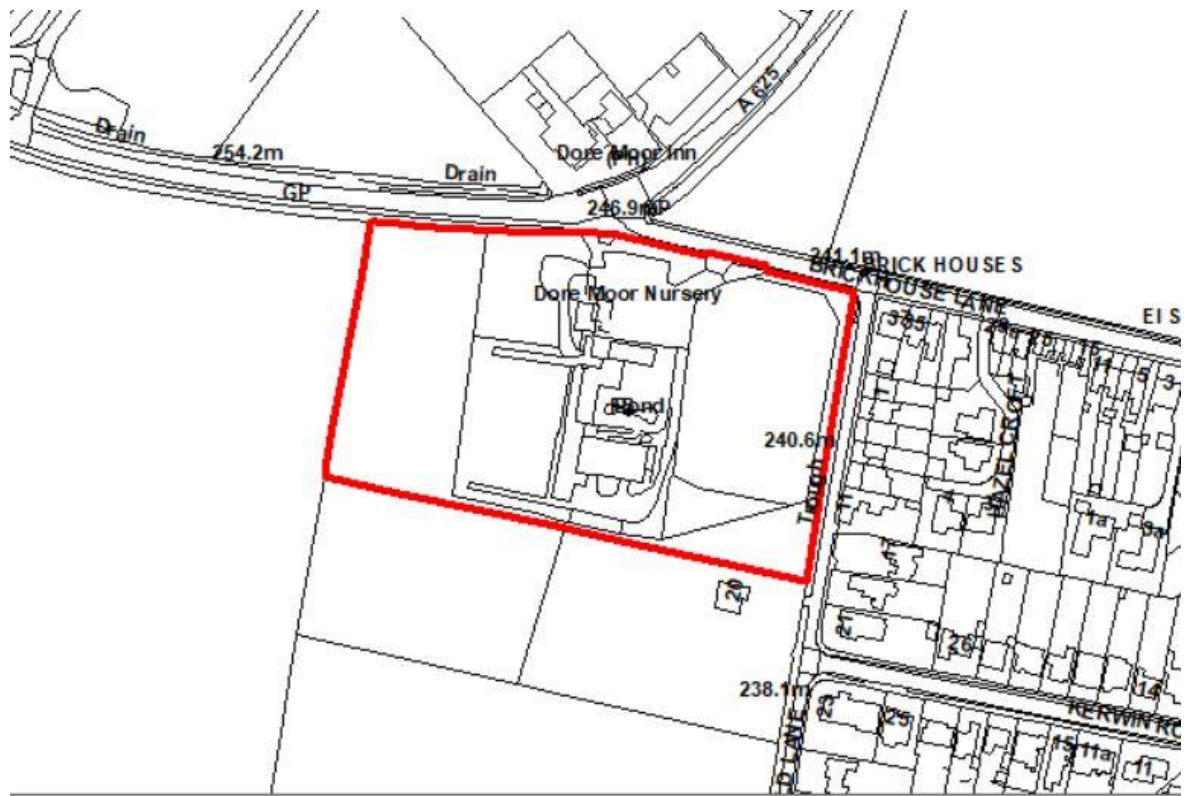
Block 2 Elevations & Section as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-B2-ZZ-DR-A-208250- P00

Block B3 Ground, First, Second Floor & Roof Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URBB3-ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00

Block 3 Elevations & Section as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-B3-ZZ-DR-

A-208250- P00  
Bin Store - Type 1 Plans & Elevations as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-BS1-ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00  
Bin Store - Type 2 Plans & Elevations as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-BS2-ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00  
Bin Store - Type 3 Plans & Elevations as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-BS3-ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00  
Bin Store - Type 4 Plans & Elevations as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-BS4-ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00  
Bin Store - Type 6 Plans & Elevations as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-BS6-ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00  
VC Bin Store Plans as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-BS7-ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00  
VC Bin Store Elevations as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-BS7-ZZ-DR-A-208151- P00  
Cottage Type BU Plans, Elevations & Sections as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-BU-ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00  
Cottage Type S3 Plans, Elevations & Sections as proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-S3- ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00  
Cottage Type S4 Plans, Elevations & Sections as proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-S4- ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00  
Substation Building floor plan & elevations as proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-SS-ZZ-DR-A-208150-P00  
Village Centre Ground Floor Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-VC-00-DR-A-208150-P00  
Village Centre First Floor Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-VC-01-DR-A-208150-P00  
Village Centre Second Floor Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-VC-02-DR-A-208150-P00  
Village Centre Undercroft Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-VC-BS-DR-A-208150-P00  
Village Centre Roof Plan as Proposed, dwg ref. 2458-URB-VC-RF-DR-A-208150- P00  
Village Centre Elevations as Proposed - Sheet 1, dwg ref. 2458-URB-VC-ZZ-DR-A-208250-P00  
Village Centre Elevations as Proposed - Sheet 2, dwg ref. 2458-URB-VC-ZZ-DR-A- 208251-P00  
External Levels Sheet 1 of 2 dwg ref: FW1984-C-500-01 (P2)  
External Levels Sheet 2 of 2 dwg ref: FW1984-C-500-02 (P2)

Site Location



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## LOCATION AND PROPOSAL

The application relates to a site which is located on the junction of Hathersage Road and Brickhouse Lane (to the north of the site), with Newfield Lane running along the eastern boundary. Immediately to the south of the site is a small dwelling at Newfield Farm. Beyond the western boundary of the site is a large open field.

The site comprises of approximately 2.5 hectares of land, which fall into three main sections. The section in the centre of the site is occupied by a garden centre building, with associated outbuildings and structures and car parking to the front. The eastern section of land is an open field with mature landscaped boundary, and the western section contains a small plantation.

The overall site is approximately 205 metres wide (east to west) and 107-123 metres deep (north to south). There is a natural fall in topography from the northwest corner of the site, down to the southeast corner of the site by approximately 10 metres in total.

The site is located within Sheffield's Green Belt, and an Area of High Landscape Value. The Peak District National Park boundary is approximately 1 km to the west of the site.

Permission is sought for a hybrid application, to include:

- a) the demolition of Dore Moor Garden Centre, and
- b) the construction of an Integrated Retirement Community (IRC) of up to 125 Extra Care units (Use Class C2) with ancillary communal and care facilities and green space consisting of:
  - i. A full planning application for 63 Extra Care units (C2); the Village Centre; means of access; landscaping and open space; and all other associated works and infrastructure; and
  - ii. An outline planning application (all matters reserved except for access) for up to 62 Extra Care units (C2) with ancillary communal space, landscaping and all other associated works and infrastructure.

The full application is located within the eastern portion of the site and consists of 63 units, which are made up of 24 units within the Village Centre Building, 12 units within Block B1, 9 units within Block B2, and 9 units within Block B3, resulting in 54 apartments. 9 bungalows/dormer bungalows are then proposed, identified as Blocks B1a, b, c, d and B2a.

The Village Centre Building is approximately 72 metres long x 20 metres deep, over 4 storeys, featuring an undercroft/basement level of car parking, a communal area to the ground floor, and two levels of accommodation above, totalling 27 units, with a pitched roof above.

The three apartments Block B1, B2 and B3, all propose 3 floors of accommodation with 3 units per floor.

Car parking is provided dispersed throughout the site, along with bin storage.

The outline element is located to the western portion of the site, with an indicative layout accompanying the outline element showing up to 62 units. This demonstrates a possible site layout, massing and design of the proposal which vary between 2 storey dwellings and 3 storey apartment blocks. Again, car parking is distributed across the site.

The outline and full elements each amount to an approximate 50/50 split of the site area.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

Planning permission was granted in 1995 for the alterations and extensions to a nursery and provision of a means of vehicular access and car parking accommodation. Application No. 94/01435/FUL.

Advertisement consent was granted in 1996 for the installation of signage to the building. Application No. 96/00041/ADV.

In 1997, planning permission was granted for the erection of shop and toilets, pergola, covered area and glass canopy. Application No. 97/00617/FUL.

Planning permission was then granted in 2006 for installation of a new ramp and alterations to the fenestration of the buildings. Application No. 06/01242/FUL.

A pre-application enquiry was submitted in 2022 for the erection of a retirement village with ancillary communal and care facilities (Approximately 140 units in total). The advice given was that any proposal for housing (including C2 extra car housing) would unlikely be considered favourably owing to an overriding conflict with Green Belt policy.

## **SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS**

The application has been publicised through the posting of site notices, notice in the local newspaper and individual neighbour notification letters to the closest properties.

One Neutral comment has been submitted:

- This raises concerns about Just Build Homes, and the comments received in support of the application, by people not seeming to realise it's a retirement home.

In total 357 letters of support have been received.

The vast majority of these letters are from residents who live in Sheffield, but not within the immediate area, and have been submitted through a third party named "Just Build Homes". However, there are several comments from residents who live on the adjacent streets (Kerwin Road/Kerwin Drive/Brickhouse Lane). The comments received below are a summary of the main points raised:

### General

- Any new homes are better than none, lots of people are struggling to find a home, so many are struggling with location and price.
- Something needs to be done to resolve the housing crisis, with more starter homes and more affordable housing needed.
- There aren't enough homes and the ones being built are the larger homes for families. We need more of all types of homes, and to build more homes for the future generations.
- It's difficult for young people to get onto the property ladder also it's become more difficult for young people to get into university and get a well-paid job.
- The more homes that get built the cheaper they are and its fair everyone can gets a chance to buy a house, not at ridiculous prices and be forced to buy something cheap in an area where they don't want to live.
- More houses are needed across the country regardless of where they are.
- Sheffield is a very diverse city and in order for this to continue we need to be able to make sure there are enough homes for all different demographics.
- When I get to that age would be nice to be looked after, and people should have the ability to live in the area if that's what they choose to do.
- There is a population swell and people are living longer, and we don't cater to that growth, so if there are new homes built near facilities like banks, chemists and a need for it in commercial demand this is acceptable.
- There are plenty of greenfield sites.
- There is a lot of regulation and red tape, making it harder and harder to develop.

#### This Location/Proposal

- The development will help bring more people to the area, it will be a positive especially in such a nice area to live.
- This development will contribute to driving the local economy and ultimately provide more affordable homes for people, as private rent is too expensive.
- This development will help keep people in Sheffield and not moving out to Doncaster or Rotherham, to keep people in the area they grew up in.
- The proposal utilities brownfield land and is well designed and good quality retirement properties and communities like this are desperately needed in Dore.
- Allowing older people to downsize from larger houses and still remain living in the area, thereby releasing those larger homes for new families wanting to move into the area.
- The location of this proposed retirement village will allow residents access to both the peak District and the local community.
- The proposed site is already partly developed, and from the plan the new development doesn't extend beyond existing property on Newfield Lane. Although the scale and height of the proposed buildings should be reduced in consideration of the local community.
- The focus of development in the city centre of Sheffield has caused harm in the South West of the city where provision for growing families and aging populations is poor.

- This development does not breach the 5 purposes of the Green Belt published by Sheffield City Council in 2014, particularly that there is an existing (albeit smaller) development on the site.
- There is a need for this type of development in Dore. The plans seem sensitive to the environment, it won't impact on the facilities in Dore i.e.. access to GP surgery (it can't be any worse than it is at the moment), and should the GP / Dentist situation not be addressed anyway?
- Regarding the pressure on the amenities and damaging the 'village atmosphere', do shops not want more customers, more people using shops and other local services would improve them. Dore is a suburb of Sheffield no longer a village.  
The "Dangerous" roads and junctions need to be dealt with anyway.
- Should the bus service be simply tolerated? Perhaps if more people used it, it would be improved.
- I think there has not been much development in and around this area and the demand is there.
- Whilst services (doctors, dentists, buses, etc) are under pressure, this is true across the nation. It would be helpful if the developer could provide an estimation of additional requirement – suspect it will be low as most will be from existing residents.

#### Provision of Retirement Homes

- Providing retirement homes allows elderly people to have a good quality of life but have that independence too and be able to call on someone, living in an environment with help available to them.
- There's a shortage of elderly person homes, with queues for the waiting lists, causing property prices to go up.
- This proposed Retirement Community development will enable residents to live independently yet benefit socially and emotionally from the care and leisure facilities available so hopefully delaying the need for our busy NHS services.
- Living in a community with like-minded people will help to reduce loneliness in the elderly, good for their mental health, and will help them to avoid dementia. There will be plenty of interaction and keeping an eye on each other.
- Looking to the future we need more infrastructure to care for an increasingly elderly population. The developers have committed to the buildings being low carbon & the site is brownfield, such as heat pumps to provide under floor heating and having PV roof panels.
- These homes are going to be accessible which is very important as you get older, some of the housing designs elsewhere are not practical for the elderly.
- Old houses are not in great condition and there is a need for more new homes which have less maintenance for the elderly. We need sustainable housing properties that are well-insulated, and energy-efficient.
- This development is good support for the elderly especially when their family members have other commitments and are working, making it difficult to look after them.



- The proposals will benefit local residents as there are not enough bungalows or apartments being built, building a community rather than just a home will be more beneficial.

## OBJECTIONS

262 individual representations have been received, the vast majority are from the immediate area and Dore.

### Green Belt

- The application is for development in the Green Belt and should be rejected in its entirety on that basis.
- Local and National policies seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development, which by definition is harmful, and only approved in very special circumstances.
- There are no very special circumstances demonstrated which outweigh the harm resulting from this inappropriate development.
- The development does not fall within one of the exceptions listed in National policy, in that it's not an agricultural building, not an outdoor sports or recreational facility, not a proportionate extension or alteration of an existing structure, not a like for like replacement of the current building and does not provide much needed affordable housing. These homes are priced well above the affordability of most elderly people in need of care. There are plenty of brownfield sites in the city that could accommodate such a proposed retirement village.
- This site is not washed over by Green Belt; it is greenbelt adjacent to the Peak District National Park. Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl.
- The Garden centre is classed as agricultural use which is why it is allowed on Green Belt. This is not a Brownfield site.
- The Peak District National Park boundary is 600metres to the south-west of the site, with the existing buildings complementing the transitional role between the edge of Sheffield and the Park.
- The application site is not contiguous with the built development of Dore and would constitute an entirely separate development outside the western settlement boundary, which in this area is formed by Newfield Lane. There are only isolated buildings to the west of Newfield Lane, and a retirement village would constitute an unacceptable large intrusion into the local landscape, with a severely detrimental effect on the landscape character in the Green Belt and at the edge of the National Park.
- The proposal is contrary to the aims of the Dore Neighbourhood Plan which seeks to respect the setting of the Peak District National Park.
- The site is an Area of High Landscape Value, adjacent to the Peak National Park. The important of this landscape is in its pastoral nature, being part of the gentle transition from urban to rural. To deport this by the insertion of a dense development would destroy the tranquillity and character of this transitional landscape. It would be visible from the National Park.
- Currently 40% of the site is minimally developed with temporary structures, and 60% undeveloped consisting of open grassland. The plan not only covers the footprint of the garden centre, but also the neighbouring

grassland and woodland. The applicant admits that only 40% of this land is previously developed.

- The existing glass single storey and weathered timber constructed buildings on the site have very limited visual impact on the site, and the non-permanent structures, whereby the proposed development will be a major intrusion and enormous visual and physical impact in this area of green space in the Green Belt.
- The wood opposite the site is dedicated to Ethel Haythornthwaite and her husband Gerald the pioneers of the importance of preserving the environment and a lifetimes defence of the countryside of Sheffield and the Peak District. Ethel helped make Green Belts part of government policy in 1955, and Sheffield's first Green Belt.
- In a 2020 Review of Green Belt land SCC noted it critical to consider the impact on the Peak District National Park. The Green Belt on the west of the city forms part of the Peak District 'fringe' landscape, which in turn impacts the setting of the National Park. Open land forms transitional landscapes which the Green Belt protects from urban encroachment that may harm the setting of the National Park. This parcel of land DW3b, was noted to perform strongly against the identified Green Belt purposes.
- This land has a prominent position in the Green Belt, the proposal would completely alter the vista when entering the Peak District or entering Sheffield. It's an area of high landscape value. The visual impact is therefore important in both Green Belt and landscape terms. I would like to question the principle given its location.
- The SaC and SPA are European ecological designations and important.
- Impair views onto open countryside and moorland,
- The Green Belt was designated for the benefit of all - past, present and future generations, to keep the air free, and a place to help the peace of the mind and soul, and health. It must not be destroyed by speculating landowners and developers for the benefit of a few individuals.
- It adjoins land of great beauty that affords wonderful views over to Houndkirk, Blackmoor and the Peak District National Park.
- The 257 page planning statement provided by DLP states that various applications for retirement communities have been granted on Green Belt land however the position of these granted developments are scattered around the country. The current garden centre has no impact on views or light pollution whilst driving in or out of Sheffield on Hathersage Road however this development would be an almighty giant eye sore for everyone visiting or leaving the city to head into the Peak District.
- This proposal is in a highly vulnerable countryside area next to Blacka Moor which is a large and spectacular nature reserve of breath-taking scenery and forms part of a much larger internationally important wild landscape - the Eastern Peak District Moors, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This development is just outside this SSSI and as Paragraph 175B of the Governments National Planning Policy Framework clearly states, 'development on land within or outside a -Site of Special Scientific Interest and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it should not normally be permitted'.
- Newfield Lane acts a boundary between the existing residential area and the Green Belt, this proposal would see an encroachment or urban spawl.

- With the site being in an Area of High Landscape Value, policy requires the protection and enhancement of the landscape as the overriding consideration and maintaining the open character.

## Design

- The existing garden centre has a low profile on the site with little visual impact. This whole new development will be a blot on the landscape with up to 4 storey apartment buildings blocking the openness of the area.
- The proposal will tower over the low level 2 storey properties along the opposite side of Newfield lane and surrounding the site.
- The proposal will have a huge footprint on the site where the much smaller nurseys sit, showing a total overdevelopment of the site.
- The development fails to respect the landscape sensitivity of the setting by its visibility; the number and density of units and the height of buildings.
- The proposal fails to respect the existing architectural style of scale of the surrounding area, making poor reference to local vernacular architecture and places buildings of an inappropriate style on the threshold of a National Park.
- On reaching the Dore Moor Inn the countryside just opens up, this development would be totally out of keeping, being the first thing you see when entering Dore/Sheffield.
- The development is not in keeping with the rural and historical theme within the area, and architecturally these buildings are of little merit.
- The proposed 'Village Centre' building is designed with a lack of flexibility for future uses resulting from poor design.
- Inappropriate scale and height for this site which is the gateway to the Peak District National Park, with such a high density scheme (75% more than at Fairthorn Retirement Community).
- The proposals include the destruction of a historic water-trough on Newfield Lane.
- The proposed mixture of materials (frontages in stone, but most secondary elevations in buff brick) is not in keeping with the Dore local plan and not fitting for a development which will be overlooked from the nearby National Park and form the boundary of the Green Belt.
- The trees bordering the site are deciduous and do not form an effective screen for at least 6 months of the year. Moreover, they are not tall enough to screen 3+ storey blocks built on higher ground.
- Unable to identify any consideration within the application of the effect of the proposed development on Dore Moor House Historic Park and Garden, located some 130 metres to the south of the application site. Dore Moor House Historic Park and Garden is locally listed.
- The site is at a prominent spot at the top of the hill that can be seen from the surrounding countryside and literally unmissable from the main Hathersage Road and it can be seen from the National Park.
- This is a hybrid application and detailed plans have only been submitted for the southern half of the site. The northern half of the site, which is more prominent from Hathersage Road has only outline proposals and these could be substantially changed in the future for taller buildings.

## Policy

- A Dore Neighbourhood Plan was approved overwhelmingly by Dore residents in a referendum in October 2021 and is now adopted by both Sheffield City Council and the Peak District National park as part of their planning policies. This neighbourhood plan supports the protection of the Green Belt.
- Development on green space is very wrong in this time of climate emergency and environmental destruction.
- The emerging local plan states that Sheffield's future housing targets can be met without building on the Green Belt (except for Norton Aerodrome) and windfall sites which this is not.
- We should be looking at re-using developed areas such as ex-industrial, town centres and ex RAF base in Norton.
- The housing proposed is neither infilling of the village, nor 'limited affordable housing for local community needs'.
- The Green Belt Review scores the area with the highest possible score for robustness of its Green Belt boundary.
- The applicants alternative site selection attempts to justify the application on the grounds that the council have failed to allocate sufficient land to accommodate the need for housing and that the councils review is flawed. However, Sheffield's emerging plan does meet the targets required by 2039.

## Provision of Retirement Homes

- There is plenty of this type of housing across Sheffield and within the immediate area, including MHA Fairthorn Retirement Home, Jacob's Gate in Millhouses, Westview Lane in Totley, The McCarthy and Stone developments at Millhouses, Bupa Care Home Broomcroft House on Ecclesall Road South, and the Holt House site, all have vacancies and there is a new one under construction along Twentywell Lane.
- Rightmove lists 66 retirement properties for sale within a 3 mile radius of Dore, some have been on the market since 2020.
- The local need for expensive/luxury retirement properties is not proven and does not address Sheffield's need for affordable homes for older people.
- Reasons for not moving to Fairthorn cited by elderly villagers include maintenance fees and out-of-village position. This proposed development will have maintenance fees and is even further out of the village.
- The proposal has the potential to isolate residents requiring a high car setting.

## Living Conditions

- The proposal is right up to the boundary with Newfield Lane, with the site being elevated there will be a loss of light and overshadowing to all adjacent occupiers.
- The large 'Village Centre' and 7 other apartment blocks will totally dwarf and overshadow the existing cottages in Brickhouse Lane and Newfield Lane. They will dominate that area completely.

- The proposed screening is insufficient to mask the intrusion to and from Newfield Lane residents whereby there will be a loss of privacy to nearby residents through overlooking.
- There will be an increase in noise to nearby residents through construction traffic, builders cars, large heavy site vehicles, and then from the amount of future residents and staff on site (possibly 300+).
- Access to existing homes nearby will be difficult during construction.
- The 24 hour lighting (recommended in the police report) will generate excessive light pollution and nuisance to Newfield Lane residents.
- There will be social costs to existing residents through nuisance and impacts including loss of peace and quietude, degradation of ambient conditions, disturbance to the neighbourhood and diminution of local culture.
- The proposal will not deliver an adequate quality of life experience for intended clientele. Site is impacted by traffic noise and fumes and during the winter months the site is very bleak with icy conditions not suitable for the elderly.
- There is existing farm machinery working close up to the boundary, along with animals roaming alongside the boundary creating noise and odours. The existing tree plantation should be maintained for protection of this noise.
- Elderly or disabled persons will be isolated, with no means of reaching the village centre.
- The Village Centre proposes a restaurant and café, which could lead to smells and odours from the commercial kitchen impacting on existing residents.
- There will be increased risks to health, through ambulance call outs and demand for local medical and dental services already in short supply.
- The majority of the site will be either building, road or parking as a result of cramming in as many homes as practical to the extent that this site has hardly any open green space, putting further pressure on local green spaces.

#### Flooding/Land Drainage

- This proposed development site is on high ground in relation to the village and will have an impact on ground water, substantially increasing the risk of flooding. Currently, Hathersage Road floods at various points as water comes down from Blackamoor and from Longline.
- There will be a detrimental effect on the rear gardens on Kerwin Road. These rear gardens suffer from waterlogging due to the brook which runs down the gardens and the runoff from the moors. Building a development on this scale will create flooding and waterlogging.
- The number of properties will result in further discharge of water into the current water systems which already causes problems in Dore. A "fatberg" style blockage occurred within the last year close to the site, with just the existing load on the sewer. The sewer pipe running along Kerwin Road will not cope with additional flows.
- The addition of 104 car parking spaces, tarmac roads, paving and foundations will increase surface water problems within the site and the sites adjacent.

- There is an existing water course which runs through the site, this proposal will result in the destruction of the natural water course.
- The survey work carried out was in 2022 when there was an official drought, the results aren't representative of normal conditions, whereby there is standing water in the surrounding fields.

### Local Amenity

- The local medical and dental facilities do not have capacity to accommodate an increase in local population and are unlikely to do so within the next 5 -7 years.
- GP surgery in Dore is already under pressure to meet demands of community, taking 4 weeks for a routine doctor's appointment. Extra patients by the nature of the age could have complex needs. This could amount to a 16% increase and 185- 250 extra patients.
- Waiting list of Dore dentist on Causeway Head Road is over 3 years long.
- The planning application cites studies showing a reduction in GP visits for residents of housing with care facilities. This is per head and there will still be a net increase in GP visits overall due to the increased population in the area, since not all residents are likely to be currently living in Dore & Totley.
- The proposal will have an impact on the village structure which is disproportionate on local community, public services and shops.
- There are limited local facilities, with no post office, bank or public lavatory.
- Two thriving businesses will be lost, the garden centre and the café, both are valuable services and social spaces for local residents and wider villages in the Peak District for over thirty years.
- There will be the loss of a family business employing 5 full time equivalent jobs.
- The proposed development doesn't have the required infrastructure for its proposed residents.
- By freeing up family homes, there isn't the infrastructure in the local area at present, with oversubscribed local schools and doctors.
- The application site is too far from local services such as shops for elderly residents to access them easily on foot.

### Ecology and Landscape

- The existing garden centre and surrounding land is a haven for animals and insects all year around. The proposal would impact on owls, buzzards, bats, badgers, foxes, Curlews, deer, insects, birds, hawks, grouse, newts, cray fish, pink grasshoppers, hedgehogs, weasels, stoats, mice, shrews, roe and red deer, white stag, falcons, herons, Wood Peckers, Jays, House Martins, Swallows and Barn Owls among many others.
- There is a secluded old natural pond on the site which will be lost in the development. It's the only one like it around for frogs, toads, insects and maybe even Great Crested Newts, in addition to other reptiles on the site including snakes and lizards. No study has been undertaken to ascertain whether the pond is a habitat for any protected species.

- Current environmental challenges and government initiatives seek to protect the environment, this proposal is the opposite, removing a field, Green Belt land and green networks.
- The Landscape Strategy document shows the proposed scheme seeks to eradicate all but the native hedgerows bordering the development site resulting in a loss of habitat for flora and fauna.
- We are in a biodiversity crisis, Sheffield City Council have also declared a climate emergency, so why are the developers allowed to build over undisturbed grassland (meadow), woodland and wetland remains on this site? A few token bat boxes and a few trees to replace those felled for the development will not make up for the biodiversity that will be lost.
- This area is currently quite dark at night and the development will lead to 24 hour light pollution that will disturb the rich diversity of wildlife.
- The ecology report is heavily biased towards its client and does not seem to be at all independent. Despite admitting that two hedges qualify for a 'priority habitat' (3.23, 3.24), it then says elsewhere that the hedgerows are 'species poor and of poor structure'.
- There will be the introduction of alien, invasive and otherwise unwanted species to the local environment.
- The proposal will degrade and fragment the green corridor which runs through Dore to towards Ecclesall Woods.

### Highways

- Hathersage Road and Brickhouse Lane junction is a notorious accident black spot, with cars exceeding 50mph limit.
- Brickhouse Lane is a quiet residential street, the traffic associated with the proposed development will cause danger, especially to the elderly and young children and cause a major disruption.
- The Dore bus links appear good on paper, but it is poor and cannot be relied upon. There are no buses serving the train station, the Doctors on Dore Road, or direct to the hospitals.
- The distance to the retail facilities is 0.7 miles (1.3 km) which is a 15 to 20 minute walk for a fit individual along an exposed busy road of moderate gradient and would not be possible for those with even minimal infirmity. Car travel would be essential and parking near to the retail facility is extremely limited.
- As there is no right turn onto Brickhouse Lane for any traffic travelling towards Sheffield on the A625, the traffic from this direction would have to turn right at the Cross Lane/Long Line junction. Increasing traffic will only make this worse to a an already dangerous junction.
- There is no pavement, or room for one, where the wood begins at the bottom of Newfield Lane and the extra traffic will be a deterrent to the present recreational users such as walkers, joggers, hobby cyclists and horse riders and for residents to cross the road here. The existing ancient hedgerow will need to be felled and reduced owing to poor visibility.
- Surrounding roads are narrow due to parking and two-way traffic not possible and should not be relied on for overspill carparking.
- There will be a loss of on street parking along Newfield Lane to accommodate the dropped kerb.

- There is insufficient car parking for visitors of the shop, café and restaurant which is not exclusive to residents. Using the Councils Car Parking Guidelines (August 2016) this could amount to 209 spaces for residents and up to 56 staff (direct and indirect).
- The Dedicated Transport Service only mentions local trips and is unlikely to transport residents further afield.
- There are existing parking pressures at weekends with events at Sheffield Tigers Rugby Club and the Pony Club Riding events spilling out onto the surrounding streets, there is no space for further on street parking.
- There is a total lack of parking provision on site, with 136 spaces for 180 residents, 30 full time employees, visitors, care and health workers/ visitors and delivery vehicles. This will create parking and safety issues around Newfield Lane and Brickhouse Lane.
- There are inadequate pavements for a retirement home serving the proposed development.
- It is unlikely that residents will access to bicycle transport, having to have a specific care plan to live on the site.
- Whilst the Crash Map suggests no existing safety issues, the additional vehicles on the road will change.
- Local bus services not reliable or frequent and the M17 Service has recently been suspended.

### Other Issues

- There has been a lack of time for commenting over the Christmas break.
- There has been no planning notice posted at the garden centre or nearby.
- Local residents in the immediate vicinity did not get notified of the application.
- The community engagement exercise carried out in July (peak time for retired people to holiday outside of school holidays) revealed more than twice as many respondents raised negative comments rather than positive. The GPS tracking of community engagement leaflet delivery indicates that residents immediately adjacent to the proposed development were not included.
- The support letters are almost exclusively from outside of the Dore and Totley area and drummed up by the developers, all of which are very similar. These are orchestrated by Just Build Homes and many who have commented don't understand what the proposal actually is and that it's for a care home in the Green Belt etc, not just general housing.
- Proposal does not include any affordable housing.
- Is it intended that there is an age limit (70+ year olds)?
- If the scheme is built out and not occupied like other care homes in the area, will the houses be put on the open market?
- Sheffield has a clean air zone, and this development does the opposite. No replacement trees/drainage solutions will adequately or quickly replace the natural absorption of rainwater and air pollutants which currently takes place from the existing landscaping on the site.
- Family homes in Dore may be freed up, but these won't be affordable homes for first time buyers, having high market values.



- There is existing low water pressures in the vicinity, adding further demand will only worsen the situation.
- The alternative site selection concludes that this is the only site across Sheffield that could accommodate an IRC, but instead, this is the only site that meets the developments specifications and timescales.
- The prices of Inspired Village other developments are likely to be 3 times the average house price of homes in Sheffield, with service charges, ground rents etc, it will be out of reach for virtually all Sheffielders.
- Would a positive decision set a precedent for the other green areas on Newfield Lane.
- An alternative site should be looked into off Limb Lane at the Sports Ground.
- Selection of this site is based purely on maximising profit given this is the most expensive part of the city in relation to property prices. It is acknowledged that as the population ages demand for care units as proposed will increase. However, this is not the correct location for such a development in Sheffield.
- Pre-app advice from the Council appears to have been ignored in the current application.
- Concerns raised during the community engagement have not been addressed.
- There is no ecology survey and first and second floor plans have not been submitted.
- The area is an Acorn category 1 - Affluent Achievers where over a fifth of these people are company directors and a higher than usual proportion of people are self-employed. Most incomes are higher than average so there will be little or no chance of getting staff to work in the residential home who will be on wages near the minimum wage from the local population.
- Increased risks of fire for the area and associated demand on local fire services
- Introduction of hazardous materials and vehicles containing hazardous materials to the area; the use of hazardous materials for the development is not mentioned in the sustainability report.
- The development would be on land which was known to be contaminated and the proposed use would be vulnerable to the contamination. Mitigation of suspected or real WWII unexploded ordinance would have to be carried out.
- The Council refused a planning application in 1977 for the erection of 1 bungalow on the site.

Olivia Blake (MP) has objected on the following grounds:

- Concerns about the idea of building a luxury 'retirement village', which does not adequately address our city's housing needs. There is a need for new homes for older residents in Sheffield, but these need to be genuinely affordable for all residents in this city.
- Similar luxury retirements villages across the country regularly have large numbers of vacancies, and this is untenable whereby the city faces an acute need for housing.

- This application does not assist the housing crisis and will have no social housing at all. The only reason this site has been chosen is to maximise profits.
- I have concerns about the large 'service' charges requested through similar developments, which are often extortionate and make such properties even less affordable for prospective residents. I ask the Planning Committee to take the issue of service charge levels into account when deciding on this application.
- This development would infringe upon the Green Belt, which would upset the setting of the National Park and character of the area, extending the reaches of the city closer to the National Park, contrary to the Dore Neighbourhood plan.
- The proposal is essentially for a new neighbourhood in the Green Belt and would be built on a haven for local wildlife.
- This site is completely unsuitable for a development of this scale, and this application would undermine our city's nature and climate ambitions; would- in overriding the Neighbourhood Plan-undermine the ambitions of local people and local democracy; and would not address Sheffield's housing needs.

Councillors Martin Smith, Colin Ross and Joe Otten have all objected to the scheme. Issues raised include:

- This site is in Green Belt and the existing local plan, the emerging local plan, The Dore Neighbourhood Plan and national planning legislation are all very strong on protecting the Green Belt. For this reason alone the application should be rejected.
- The scale & massing of the proposed development is totally inappropriate to the site and the design does not fit in with the character of the surrounding area.
- The argument that this is a developed site within the Green Belt is weak as there is only one permanent building, the rest of the site is either open or has temporary horticultural buildings.
- The site lies adjacent to the commemorative woodland planted in memory of the Haythornthwaites and only a few hundred metres from the National Park.
- The tall 3 storey buildings are totally out of character for this area with its visual impact being very obvious from the National Park.
- This development does not address the housing needs of Sheffield. There are vacancies at Fairthorn and a new large retirement home is under construction on Twentywell Lane.
- This luxury development would not be affordable to many and is likely to have many vacancies like other similar villages across the country.
- There is a demonstrated sufficient supply of housing land in Sheffield, much with planning permission and this must be used first before any thought of going into the Green Belt. Proposal does not meet the test of exceptional circumstances.
- The site is not sustainably located, with a very limited rural bus service, local shops over 1km away down hill and is car reliant.

- The proposal would generate an unacceptable number of traffic movements with existing parking scenarios being a potential for road traffic accidents.
- The site has a wide biodiversity and is a haven for wildlife which would be displaced.
- Individually each point should be sufficient to reject this application but cumulatively they present an overwhelming case for the rejection of this proposal.

Sheffield Wildlife Trust have objected to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The hedgerow gain should not be combined with the habitat loss. A gain is required in both. There is mention of paying a contribution to SCC for off-site mitigation but there is no policy, procedure or tariff in place for this yet. No off-site option has been identified as an alternative to a financial contribution.
- The proposal represents inappropriate development on designated Green Belt land and should therefore be refused as it is contrary to local and national policies.
- The site is not just 'washed over with Green Belt' and only 40% is occupied by the garden centre.

The Peak District National Park Local Planning Authority have objected to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The proposal is of a scale and design that bears no relationship to anything found in the National Park, and there is no reference to the PDNPA Landscape Strategy which describes the landscape and its characteristics.
- The Fridge Landscapes play an important role in protecting the setting, character and wider experience of the National Park. The dense, compact and urban form of the proposed development creates urban qualities in what is more rural character at this point of the landscape, having a detrimental impact on the key characteristics of the landscape and setting of the National Park.
- Further work is required on the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), particularly from Whitelow Lane.
- The proposal will increase footfall on protected areas and increase domestic animals.
- The proposal will rely on car-borne travel to access the National Park owing to the limited public transport.
- Some of the land is brownfield and has the potential to be developed sensitively, but not the greenfield elements.

The CPRE, Dore Neighbourhood Forum, Dore Village Society all are very lengthy comments, raising similar concerns as those raised above. The main issues raised are summarised below:

Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Peak District and South Yorkshire Branch have raised the following comments:

First set of comments received January 2023.

- We are guardians of the woodland and commemorative stone opposite the site, which celebrates the success of our founders the Haythornthwaites, and the designation of the city's first Green Belt.
- The site is within a kilometre of The Peak District National Park, with the Green Belt protecting this fine moorland landscape.
- Existing buildings on site are small and single storey, some not permanent, and are only on the central area, and not the 40% of the site which the developer claims as previously developed land. The site is poorly served by transport other than the car.
- The Draft Local Plan does not propose to release the land or change the Green Belt boundary in this area. The Green Belt serves 3 of the 5 national purposes of the Green Belt.
- The applicant describes the Green Belt allocation merely 'washing over' the site and the Council's Green Belt boundary being based on outdated evidence. The Green Belt was reviewed recently as part of the Draft Local Plan, and the urban edge of Sheffield is unmistakably the line of semi-detached 2 storey houses along Newfield Lane.
- The 2, 3 and 4 storey blocks will sit close to and above the treescape and be clearly visible with a complete loss of openness. The proposed buildings will be much more visible than the existing spilling over onto the adjacent open land. This will be clearly visible from the Peak District National Park
- There is little room left for any amenity space, and pressure to remove trees.
- The use of reconstituted artificial stone is not suitable for the area.
- There is a shortfall in housing for older people, but the substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, impact on the landscape and rural character at the edge of the National Park make the development completely unacceptable.

A second set of comments have been received in November 2023.

- The submission does not clarify the lawful land use, and the extent of the planning units on the site. The land within the red edged site still has a primary use as a plant nursery then this is not previously developed land.
- The Haythornthwaite memorial wood is a material consideration as a undesignated heritage asset.

Steering Group appointed by the Dore Neighbourhood Forum:

- Dore's Neighbourhood Plan Policy DN6 supports the development of smaller homes with no more than 2 bedrooms in the Housing Area. This site is outside of the Housing Area within the Green Belt.
- The development would attract new residents from very far and wide, reducing the extent to which this development will get people out of large homes in Sheffield, and increasing the number of older people living in Dore and the city.
- The existing Garden Centre meets a genuine need, which is highly valued.

- The site is located within the Green Belt, on a parcel of land which scored highly in the Green Belt review 15/20.
- The need for a retirement development should not trump the location in the Green Belt.
- The site has some previously development land within it, but the site should not be seen as if it was part of a larger brownfield site.
- There are no exceptional circumstances to justify the application.
- All of the Green Belt in this location is within the setting of the Peak District National Park, which is only approximately 1000 metres away. Inserting a retirement village with insensitively spaced prominent tall buildings would be an intrusion into the existing setting of the National Park, and the Parks Natural Zones.
- The Dore community is developing a Green Infrastructure strategy to better expose the Green Belt's essential characteristics and merits, as recommended in the Dore Neighbourhood Plan.
- Ethel Haythornthwaite was a great campaigner and innovator, a Sheffield heroine who has had lasting impact on our local and the nation's landscapes, campaigning for England to create National Parks, with the Peak District to be the first.
- The overall design of the buildings does not reflect the locality and is more intensely developed than any other part of Dore.
- The facilities within Dore are not easily accessible, with a long walk up the hill to come back to the development and an even longer walk to the train station.
- The parking provision on the site is inadequate and there is a potential for accidents near the main entrance of the site given the increased level of traffic.
- No tree belt will screen the intensive tall buildings.

#### Dore Village Society

- The site is located in the Green Belt, with the emerging Local Plan remaining as Green Belt.
- The site is clearly visible from and close to the Peak District National Park.
- The proposal would neither safeguard nor enhance the natural setting of Dore and would constitute significant urban extension into the natural setting.
- The access for vehicular traffic is close to the junction of Brickhouse Lane and Hathersage Road (A625), which is a dangerous junction. The additional traffic generated from 125 units from occupiers and service traffic cannot be accommodated by Brickhouse Lane.
- Public transport is poor, with the buses infrequent, unreliable and little use to residents of a retirement village. The train station is 1.7 miles away downhill which is not feasible for people whom this proposed retirement village is targeted.
- There is 1 medical practice (part time hours) and 1 dental practice in Dore.

- There are many retirement homes available in the immediate area for sale (45 in January 23).
- The loss of the existing garden centre would have a negative effect on the local economy, with journeys to other garden centres impacting on carbon emissions in this part of Sheffield.

### Officer Response to comments

The majority of comments will be responded to in the main body of the report. A response to the other matters raised is given below.

- Just build homes have facilitated the ability for people to comment on the planning application without going through the Council's public access route. All comments received have been uploaded to the file and are taken into consideration in this assessment.
- The timings of the submission are not under the control of the planning department. Site notices were posted a couple of weeks after the letters sent out and extend the time for consultation.
- Ecological surveys have been submitted.
- A full suite of drawings has been submitted.
- A Detailed Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Threat & Risk Assessment document has been submitted accompanying the application. It recommends a number of risk mitigation measures during intrusive works in all previously undisturbed ground.
- This development would not be required to make S106 contributions towards local facilities such as health and education because it is not of a large enough scale. In this respect the adopted Supplementary Planning Document entitled Community Infrastructure Levy and Planning Obligations sets the following thresholds: - Education contributions for sites of 500+ dwellings, Health contributions for sites of 1000+ dwellings.

## **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

### Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For development management decisions in Sheffield, the development plan comprises the Sheffield Core Strategy (adopted March 2009) and 'saved' policies from the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998).

The Council is currently developing a new replacement Local Plan (entitled 'The Sheffield Plan') which will set out planning policies and land use allocations to shape development within Sheffield for a plan period running to 2039. Public consultation on the draft Local Plan commenced in January 2023 and was endorsed by full Council on 6 September 2023. The plan was submitted for examination on 6 October 2023. It is anticipated that the plan will be adopted at the end of 2024. At this stage the Sheffield Plan has very limited weight.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised in 2023 is also a material consideration, whereby the key principle is the pursuit of sustainable development, which involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Council's development plan (UDP and Core Strategy) substantially predates the publication of the NPPF. Paragraph 225 of the NPPF requires that existing policies in a development plan should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the NPPF and that due weight should be given to existing policies in a development plan, according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. The closer a policy in the development plan is to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight it may be given.

The assessment of a development proposal needs to be considered in light of paragraph 11 of the NPPF, which provides that, when making decisions, a presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied. For decision making, this means:

(c) approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay; or  
d), where there are no relevant development plan policies, or where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date (e.g. because they are inconsistent with the NPPF), this means that planning permission should be granted unless:

- the application of NPPF policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance (As listed at Footnote 7, for example designated SSSIs, Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park, certain heritage assets and areas at risk of flooding) provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against NPPF policies taken as a whole.

Sheffield has an emerging Local Plan that has been submitted for examination. As a result, the new NPPF revised in December 2023 in paragraph 226 requires a minimum 4 year supply of housing (instead of the standard 5 years).

Sheffield's annual local housing requirement is 3,038 homes, taking into account projected household growth, local affordability ratios and the 35% uplift for England's largest towns and cities. The total net 5-year requirement is 15,192 homes. Sheffield is able to demonstrate a net 5-year deliverable supply of 9,165 homes, equating to 3.01 years. Therefore, the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 4-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Consequently, in accordance with footnote 8 of the Framework the most important policies for determining the application are considered to be out of date and so Paragraph 11d is engaged.

As the site is within a protected area and affects an asset of particular importance, in this instance the Green Belt and the setting of the Peak District National Park,

the so called 'tilted balance' set out in Paragraph 11dii is not automatically triggered. As a result of paragraph 11(d)(i) it is necessary to consider whether the application of policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. Footnote 7 makes clear that this refers – among other things – to the policy relating to Green Belts and National Parks.

The following assessment will evaluate the compliance of the proposed development against the existing policies within the UDP and Core Strategy, will consider the weight of these local policies against NPPF policies whilst accounting for the most important policies automatically being out of date because the development proposes a housing scheme and assess the proposals against national policy.

In terms of assessing the level of weight to be attributed to a policy, any harm, or benefits, the terms 'very limited', 'limited', 'moderate', 'significant', and 'substantial' are used within the following report. 'Very limited' being the smallest amount, and 'substantial' being the highest amount of weight.

### Housing Land Supply and Density

Policy CS22 'Scale of the Requirement for New Housing' of the Core Strategy is the most up to date development plan policy in relation to delivering a sufficient supply of housing for Sheffield, stating that a 5 year supply of deliverable sites will be maintained at all times.

The updated NPPF in paragraph 11 requires local authorities to plan positively to meet development needs and paragraph 123 requires policies and decisions to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses.

The majority of CS22 carries very limited weight as the Core Strategy is now more than 5 years old and the NPPF states that the housing requirement must be based on the local housing need figures using the Government's standard methodology.

As stated previously, Sheffield can demonstrate a 3.01 year deliverable supply of housing land.

### Housing Delivery Position

The 2022 Housing Delivery Test confirms that 121% of Sheffield's housing requirement has been built over the last 3 years. Therefore, there has not been significant under delivery within Sheffield over this period in relation to the 75% threshold.

Furthermore, the emerging Sheffield Plan indicates that Sheffield's development needs to 2039 will be met within the existing urban areas. The spatial strategy utilises the land available taking account of the need to ensure sustainable patterns of development. Within the emerging Local Plan no exceptional circumstances are considered to exist to justify the release of land from the Green Belt, with the exception of one strategic land release on a predominantly brownfield site at the former Norton Aerodrome for residential use.



The applicant has submitted a comprehensive document regarding Sheffield's 5 year housing supply (prior to the 4 year supply update in the 2023 NPPF). Both this document and the Council's document conclude that the Council does not have a 5-year housing supply, and that the figure is not a marginal position being some way off the required position. At this stage, the applicant's document has not been scrutinised in terms of each individual site or the overall quantity of accommodation proposed, as both sides agree that there is a significant shortfall in the housing supply.

#### Efficient Use of Land

Policy CS26 'Efficient Use of Housing Land and Accessibility' of the Core Strategy encourages making efficient use of land to deliver new homes at a density appropriate to location depending on relative accessibility. The density requirements are a gradation flowing from highest density in the most accessible locations down to lower densities in suburban locations with less accessibility. This is reflected in paragraph 129 of the NPPF and therefore Policy CS26 is considered to carry significant weight in determination of this application.

Policy CS31 'Housing in the South West Area' of the Core Strategy limits housing development at appropriate densities to infill and windfall sites in the urban area and developments in highly accessible locations. This reflects the approach of the NPPF whereby substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes is applied, however, additional land may be needed to meet future housing needs, and therefore moderate weight should be applied to this policy.

For a site such as this, which is within a rural area, CS26 part (e) is relevant and states that a range of 30-40 dwellings per hectare is appropriate. The immediate surroundings are generally characterised by much lower density development due to the presence of a high number of large dwellings which are set in reasonable sized plots within the main urban area, and then very sporadically positioned buildings within the Green Belt.

The application site is approximately 2.5 hectares, and the 125 proposed units would give a density of approximately 50 dwellings per hectare. This falls above the suggested range within the CS26 (e). The Council seeks to encourage efficient use of land, with the NPPF using minimum density figures. CS26 states that densities outside the ranges indicated will be allowed where they achieve good design, reflect the character of an area or protect a sensitive area.

In this instance in this rural location within the Green Belt, a density to reflect the policy requirement would not reflect the prevailing density of the area, which is lower.

This site is not an infill or windfall site, the majority of the site is not brownfield land, is not within the main urban area, and is not within a highly accessible location.

Furthermore, the full plans for ½ of the site, and the indicative plans for the Outline Application on the other ½ of the site show that to accommodate 125 units on the

site, a large number are likely to be within 3 and 4 storey apartment blocks, with the whole development indicating a tight knit urban grain pattern of development. This is at odds with the characteristics of the area, and therefore it is concluded that the proposal does not accord with CS26 and CS31 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 129 of the NPPF.

## Conclusion

Sheffield could not demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing, nor a 4 year housing supply as set out in the updated NPPF 2023, with a significant shortfall resulting in a 3.01 year supply. However, Housing Delivery Test confirms that 121% of Sheffield's housing requirement has been built over the last 3 years, and the emerging Sheffield Plan indicates that Sheffield's development needs to 2039 will be met within the existing urban areas, with the only exception of Green Belt release at Norton Aerodrome.

The application site is not in a sustainable location, is not an infill site, with only part of the site on brownfield land. To accommodate 125 units on the site would result in a density and character that would be incongruous with surrounding characteristics of the area, conflicting with local and national planning policies. The impacts of the development on the character and appearance of the area are addressed in more detail below.

## Green Belt

### Introduction

The application site is located in Sheffield Green Belt. Paragraph 142 of the NPPF sets out that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence, with paragraph 143 identifying their five key purposes:

- 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.

Paragraph 145 states that once the Green Belt boundary has established, there is no requirement for it to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated.

Paragraph 152 states that "inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances".

Paragraph 153 advises local planning authorities to give substantial weight to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Policy CS71 of the Core Strategy is the most up to date local policy which seeks to safeguard the countryside by maintaining Green Belts. Development needs will be met through the re-use of land and buildings rather than expansion. The supporting text to Policy CS71 requires that the policy will be implemented through the development management process in accordance with national policy and therefore defers to NPPF paragraph 154.

Policies GE1, GE2, GE3, GE4, GE5 and GE8 are UDP policies relating to protection of the Green Belt. These are all assessed with relevant weight given to each in the sections below.

The following assessment is split into 5 main headings:

- (i) Whether or not the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- (ii) Whether there would be harm to the Green Belt
- (iii) Other considerations which weigh in favour of the development
- (iv) Whether very special circumstances exist.
- (v) Green Belt Balancing Exercise.

#### Whether Inappropriate Development

The site is located within the Green Belt as defined by the UDP, forming part of the fringe to the Peak District National Park.

Policy GE1 'Development in the Green Belt' states that development will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances where it would lead to unrestricted growth of the built up area, contribute towards merging of existing settlements, lead to encroachment of urban development into the countryside or comprise urban regeneration.

Policy GE3 'New Building in the Green Belt' states that the construction of new buildings will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances, for purposes other than agriculture, forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation and cemeteries and other uses which would comply with Policy GE1.

Policy GE2 'Protection and Improvement of the Green Belt Landscape' seeks to maintain and enhance those areas with a generally high landscape value and improve poor landscapes in priority areas.

Policy GE5 'Housing Development in the Green Belt' deals with the principle of new houses in the Green Belt. It details that other than those needed to support agricultural and other acceptable uses (as set out in Policy GE3) they will only be permitted where they would involve either; (a) infilling of a single plot within the confines of an existing village, group of buildings or substantially developed road frontage; or (b) replacement of an existing house on the same site, providing that the new house is not significantly larger than the one it replaces.

NPPF Paragraph 154 sets out that new buildings are regarded as inappropriate

and lists 7 criteria (a-g) which are exceptions to this. These are:-

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
  - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
  - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Policies GE1 and GE3 set out a number of exceptions where development in the Green Belt may be acceptable. The objectives of the policies are similar to the objectives of Paragraphs 154 and 155 (i.e. identifying when development is not inappropriate). However, the exceptions set in the NPPF are wider than those set in the local policy, including at Paragraph 154 (g) which refers to the redevelopment of Previously Developed Land (PDL) as one of the exceptions to new buildings being inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As such these Policies are afforded only limited weight.

Paragraph 150 of the NPPF states that local authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of Green Belts via a number of measures including retaining and enhancing landscapes and improving damaged and derelict land. Whilst this relates to beneficial use it does have some parallels to GE2. Furthermore, the objectives of policy GE2 reflect both design and landscape protection policies at paragraphs 135 (c) and 180 (a and c). As such Policy GE2 has moderate weight.

Policy GE5(a) partly reflects the aims of Paragraph 154(e), however the NPPF refers only to limited infilling in villages and does not include groups of buildings or substantially developed road frontages. Furthermore, GE5 does not reflect all the exceptions set out in the NPPF, notably Paragraph 154(f) which relates to limited affordable housing for local community needs; 154(g) relating to previously developed land; and 155(d) which relates to the re-use of buildings provided they are of permanent and substantial construction. As such this policy has limited

weight.

The reuse of previously developed land (PDL) is encouraged by government policy, and paragraph 123 of NPPF says that strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed land. The redevelopment of previously developed land can also constitute development that is not inappropriate within the Green Belt if it falls within the meaning of paragraph 154(g). The Glossary at Annex 2, to the NPPF defines PDL as: '*Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.*' There is an exclusion for "*land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings*". Under section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 "*agriculture*" includes "*horticulture*" and "*fruit growing*", as well as "*market gardens and nursery grounds*".

The applicant details in the planning statement that the proposed development site substantially comprises previously developed land, going on to refer to the site as, it is in large part previously developed land, washed over by the Green Belt. They further identify *a central area within the site (approximately 40%) which is PDL.*

It is acknowledged that some of this central area can be classed as PDL, including the areas of hardstanding for car parking, and the more substantial brick-built buildings, however the greenhouses and polytunnels are within the definition of horticulture (The cultivation of plants, particularly fruit, flowers, ornamental plants and vegetables, usually for sale, either in gardens and smallholdings or on general farms).

*Therefore, the area of PDL is only a small part of the site, limited to the central section of the site. It is again highlighted that not all of this central section is classed as PDL, owing to horticulture not falling within the definition of PDL. The remainder of the site comprises an open field and plantation, these elements cannot be classed as previously developed land.*

*This proposal is for 125 C2 Extra Care Homes within new buildings. The scheme does not seek to re-use any of the existing buildings on the site and encompasses areas which are clearly not PDL. Therefore, the new buildings and the area they occupy, as proposed in this application, which significantly exceed the small central section of PDL cannot be considered to fall within the exception set out in 154 (g) as it far exceeds limited infilling or the complete or partial redevelopment of previously developed land.*

Furthermore, the proposal does not meet any of the other exceptions set on in Paragraph 154 and as such is considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The Applicant does not put forward an argument that the proposal is not "inappropriate development" within the Green Belt. It follows that to be acceptable the proposed development would have to demonstrate very special circumstances

which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt (which must be given substantial weight) and any other harm.

In conclusion, the proposal fails to meet any of the exceptions listed in Paragraph 154 of the NPPF and amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. This is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

#### Would there be harm to the Green Belt

Policy GE4 'Development and the Green Belt Environment' seeks to ensure that the scale and character of any development which is permitted in the Green Belt is in keeping with the area and wherever possible, conserves and enhances the landscape and natural environment. Paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF allow a number of exceptions provided they preserve openness. The wording of Policy GE4 is different to the wording of the NPPF policies in that it requires development to be 'in keeping' rather than preserving openness. Therefore it has moderate weight.

Dore Neighbourhood Plan (DN) notes in its introduction that the protection of the Green Belt in Dore Neighbourhood Area is important not only because it strongly fulfils the purposes for Green Belt set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, but also because it safeguards the setting of the National Park. DN Policy 2 on the Landscape Sensitivity of the Setting of the Peak District National Park states that: "Development must respect the setting of the Peak District National Park."

The site is located on the western side of Newfield Lane, within the open countryside, and has a rural edge of upland character with enclosed fields, dry stone walls, hedgerows and woodlands. It is enclosed by mature hedgerows and trees which provide screening to the buildings and structures from views into the site.

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF establishes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Accordingly, openness is one of the essential characteristics of Green Belts which it is necessary to maintain.

#### Openness

Openness is not defined but can reasonably be taken as the absence of development and a number of factors can be taken into account in assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt. Openness can comprise both spatial and visual aspects. The duration and remediability of the development and the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic movement, may also be relevant.

In regards to the way the site is currently developed, the PDL amounts to only a small part of the site, and not the whole of the central section of the site. Within this central area is a small brick built single storey building, a range of green houses,

polytunnels, framed sheds and outbuildings. The buildings are low level in nature and their scale, form and use ensure that they do not form prominent features from near or far views. The existing landscaping which runs around much of the perimeter of the site, including the plantation to the west of the site and the open field to the east of the site make up the majority of the site. There are hedgerows around the site, which provide considerable screening to the existing nursery use, reducing the visual impact.

This application seeks permission for 125 units, within bungalows and smaller 2 storey building under pitched roofs, 3 storey apartment blocks under pitched roofs, and the main Village Centre building which stands at 4 storeys under a pitched roof, and over 70 metres long x 20 metres wide. The buildings would occupy a far greater footprint and stretch across the entire site. Their height and extent would hugely exceed the current built form on the site. They are positioned to be tight up to each other, with little space afforded around the building. The proposed development comprising substantial masonry residential buildings with vehicle roads would be very much more substantial and permanent in nature and very much more difficult to return to a state of openness than the existing developed area of the site. As such, it would have a substantial impact on openness.

Furthermore, the increased level of activity experienced by owners/visitors to 125 new units would affect the openness of the site as it is currently used as a garden centre during the day time. The proposal would result in increased activity, movement and light. This will include not only additional vehicle movements, but pedestrian movements and general activity, including light omitting from window openings and from balconies, with main habitable windows at upper floor levels which would be readily visible. This would be especially apparent at night time through light emitted from the buildings, street lighting and car head lights. This type of harm would be permanent and not remediable. These elements will all have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Reference is made by the developers to Fairthorn to the south of the site. This development was allowed within the Green Belt location on the grounds that it didn't occupy a footprint greater than the existing buildings (amalgamated) on the site and was no higher than the existing building. On this basis it is concluded that this is not comparable to this proposal.

Horticulture is an expected feature of the Green Belt and the existing building on site sit quietly in the landscape. The loss of openness of the existing garden centre, the open field, and tree plantation, and erection of up to 125 units would be substantial. This would result in substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt in this location.

#### Effect on the Green Belt Purpose:

The 5 purposes of the green belt are set out in Paragraph 143 of the NPPF.

- 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

In 2020 a Green Belt Review was undertaken as part of the preparation to the emerging Local Plan. The outcomes of which were used to determine the Green Belt boundaries for the long term. The main aim of the review was to assess whether land within the adopted Green Belt (and adjacent land) satisfies the purposes of the Green Belt, and if there had been any change in circumstances since the Green Belt boundary was originally established. This application site forms parcel DW3b, which scored highly in performing the role of the Green Belt, with a total score of 15 out of 20. The Green Belt Review assessed purposes a), b), c), and e) and did not assess purpose d).

In terms of purpose a), the adjacent housing along Newfield Lane is closely arranged and marks a clearly defined suburban edge to Dore and Sheffield. Therefore the Green Belt in this location strongly fulfils the purpose of checking unrestricted sprawl of the urban area of Dore / Sheffield scoring 4 out of 5. When considering purpose b) the site did not score highly with no other nearby towns to merge with, scoring only 1 out of 5.

With regards to purpose c), to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The majority of the site is open field and a plantation. The central portion has a horticulture use which is associated with a countryside location. The site strongly fulfils its purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, scoring 5 out of 5 in the 2020 review.

Purpose e) scored 5 out of 5, in that it's protection strongly encourages the re-use of alternative sites through encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The conclusion of the 2020 Green Belt Review scored the site 3 out of 5 for robustness of the Green Belt boundary.

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF requires that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Accordingly, the harm to the openness and purposes of the Green Belt, in addition to the harm by reason of inappropriateness, carry substantial weight against the application proposal.

Newfield Lane forms a very strong edge between the housing area to the west of Dore and the Green Belt, and this proposal would result in significant encroachment of built form beyond this edge into the Green Belt. The scale, extent and nature of the proposal will create a suburban extension to the built up area, which will be clearly visible from near and far views and will be contrary to the purpose of including land within the Green Belt as set out in Paragraph 143.

The site is visible from a considerable area of land within the Peak District National Park boundary. This includes sections of Whitelow Lane and also includes areas of Houndkirk Moor, which is crossed by several public rights of way, including the Houndkirk Road byway. It is also crossed by multiple informal paths and is open access land for pedestrians. The area is heavily used and highly valued for recreation.



As concluded in the previous section the proposal is not considered to fall within any of the exceptions set out in Paragraph 154. It is accepted that there is a small section within the central portion of the site is PDL but the extent of the development extends well beyond the PDL portion of the site. Notwithstanding this 154(g) allows for the complete or partial redevelopment of the site provided that (a) there is no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt or (b) the proposal would not cause substantial harm, would reuse PDL and contribute towards meeting an identified affordable housing need. The proposal does not fall within 154(g) because the proposal is not one for redevelopment of PDL, with the majority of the development on land that is not PDL. It has been demonstrated above that the complete redevelopment of the site will result in an intense, dense form of development that will result in substantial harm to the character and openness of the Green Belt from both immediate and longer range views. The development would have a direct impact on 3 out of the 5 purposes of the Green Belt.

### Other considerations

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF requires decision makers to ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very Special Circumstances' (VSC) will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The applicant has submitted a number of case studies, which have been cited within their supporting information and reports. No two cases are the same and it is a core principle of the planning system that each proposal is considered on its own merits. Furthermore, officers do not think these are directly comparable to this application.

By their nature, VSC are unique to the specific site and proposal, principally relating to the benefits of the proposal, and are reviewed in the sub-heading below. Individual Councils have different figures for their 5-year housing supply and therefore different levels of weight can be attributed to each policy in the planning balance.

Furthermore, harm that a development would cause can include the impact on the setting of the Peak District National Park, the design, the landscape setting etc, and this is quite clearly not the same for all Green Belt locations within other areas of the country.

Part of the analysis of whether very special circumstances exist is 'can the proposal be carried out elsewhere, and why is it specific to this site'.

An Alternative Site Assessment (ASA) has been submitted. Whilst detailed information hasn't been submitted to explain why 141 of the 148 sites have been discounted, the majority of the sites in Sheffield are in very urban locations. Based on the business model and size requirements of the site, the ASA document takes a reasonable approach and there are no obvious other sites to look at for this particular business model/specification. However, this does not preclude the ability

to change the business model and enter into an agreement with a landowner for a more realistic land price, albeit this may not be possible for extra care homes whereby there is a large quantum of communal facilities and services.

The Social Need submitted by the applicant confirms the Council's own understanding, that there is a need for a variety of elderly persons accommodation within the city, and this is acknowledged in the Council's own evidence.

Furthermore, the Dore Neighbourhood Plan policy DN 6 seeks the development of smaller homes with no more than two bedrooms, although this does specifically relate to within the Dore housing area and not sites within the Green Belt.

A significant number of local representations have pointed out that there are several units within Fairthorn, a retirement development located nearby to the site and within other local retirement homes which are vacant and available for sale. Whilst some of these may not offer the same level of community facilities and services as proposed in this application and are only restricted through a minimum age threshold, there does constantly appear to be a number of units for sale, some of which have been on the market a lengthy period of time. In addition, there is the newly built care home along Twentywell Lane which is nearing completion. Furthermore, it is likely that in this location, the proposal will attract future occupiers from outside of the city boundaries and not necessarily from within Sheffield.

#### Whether very special circumstances exist.

In carrying out the 'very special circumstances' test, it is important to note that under paragraph 153 of the NPPF, for 'very special circumstances' to exist, the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposal must be 'clearly' outweighed by other considerations. As assessed in the sections above, the proposal is inappropriate by definition, and the development would cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, and the fundamental aim and purpose of the Green Belt.

The applicant has put forward a number of Very Special Circumstances. (VSC).

- Providing specialist housing for older persons

The NPPF seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing and meet the needs for various groups, including those older people who might require retirement housing, housing-with-care or care homes. The PPG 'Housing for Older and Disabled People' advises that the need to provide housing for older people is critical, given we are living longer lives and this proportion of the population is increasing.

This proposal for 125 units within an integrated retirement village, will meet a growing need for self-funded occupiers with a variety of care needs who want to stay in their own homes.

The Council does not dispute that there is a shortfall in this type of specialist housing for older persons within the city, and the social benefits would amount to

substantial weight in the planning balance.

- Freeing up family homes, facilitating downsizing and bringing back housing onto the market.

The Council cannot demonstrate a 4 year supply of housing, with the most up to date figure demonstrating only a 3.01 year supply. The provision of an extra 125 units and releasing larger family housing onto the market is a positive, with the applicant affording substantial weight to this. This is broadly agreed by the Council whereby the provision of 125 units will make a helpful contribution.

- NHS and Social Care benefits from the proposals,

Reference to several reports have been detailed in the applicant's submission, which show that people are living longer and that those living in a dedicated living environment enjoyed a reduced risk of health challenges. The proposed Integrated Retirement Village provides a wide range of care requirements, along with communal areas to socialise, eat and drink, spa facilities and treatment rooms which can have a positive impact on older people's health and wellbeing which could reduce the costs to the NHS and Social Care. This is clearly a benefit, although part of that benefit has already been considered through the weight given to providing elderly persons accommodation. Nevertheless, the Councils assigns significant weight to this.

- Economic Benefits

The applicant states that the proposal could generate up to 56 on-going net jobs comprised of 25 direct jobs and 31 indirect/induced jobs. Over a 10-year horizon, the applicant considers this could create approximately 713 net jobs through the construction and supply chain. In addition, there will be an increase in local spending and a boost to the local economy if residents use the local shops and services. The NPPF paragraph 85 requires significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

The development would provide additional facilities and services, which are intended to be made available to the wider community. Furthermore, the applicant states that there are also benefits in new homes bonus and council tax payable on properties. The Council places significant weight on the economic benefits of the scheme.

Paragraph 152 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances, and substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt as required through paragraph 153 of the NPPF.

The housing benefits and freeing up family homes amount to significant weight whereby the Council cannot demonstrate a 4 year supply. There is also significant weight attached to the economic benefits of the proposal and the benefits to the NHS and Social Care. Substantial weight is given to the provision of specialist

housing for older persons. In considering if these amount to very special circumstances, consideration must be given any harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposal. VSC will only exist if these clearly outweigh other considerations. The harm to the Green Belt is substantial and has been clearly set out above and the report will go on to consider all other relevant matters.

Paragraph 152 requires a balancing exercise of all harm set against the proposed very special circumstances. This will be carried out in the final Summary and Planning Balance section of the report following consideration of all key elements of the scheme.

### Design, Character and Appearance

In general terms, Policy CS74 'Design Principles' of the Core Strategy requires high quality developments, which respect and take advantage of topography, Green Networks, important habitats, woodlands and other natural features, along with contributing to place-making. Policy BE5 'Building Design and Siting' of the UDP also puts forward good design and use of good quality materials, taking advantage of the site's natural and built features. Furthermore, new buildings should complement the scale, form and architectural style of surrounding buildings. These policies are considered to accord with the design principles in paragraph 135 of the NPPF and have significant weight.

Policy GE4 'Development and the Green Belt Environment' seeks to ensure that the scale and character of any development which is permitted in the Green Belt is in keeping with the area and wherever possible, conserve and enhance the landscape and natural environment. Paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF allow a number of exceptions provided they preserve openness. The wording of Policy GE4 is different to the wording of the NPPF policies in that it requires development to be 'in keeping' rather than preserving openness. Therefore it has moderate weight.

Dore Moor House Historic Park & Garden is located close to the southern site boundary. This heritage landscape is identified as a Historic Park and Garden under UDP Policy BE21 and is included in the South Yorkshire Local Heritage List. This heritage landscape asset is not included in the LVIA Assessment. Given the close proximity and visibility of the proposed development, the value and impact on this historic landscape should be fully considered.

At present the site is occupied by the garden centre buildings, a small brick built single storey building, and a range of green houses, polytunnels, framed sheds and outbuildings. The existing landscaping which runs around much of the perimeter of the site, including the plantation to the west of the site, screens the majority of the buildings on the site.

The applicant has submitted a Design Commitment Statement. A master plan for the site has been developed with the site layout based around a Village Centre building which provides all of the communal facilities which is included in the full planning permission element. There is then a mixture of apartment buildings and

smaller bungalows/dormer bungalows. The apartment buildings propose 3 floors of accommodation, under pitched roofs which are located around the Village Centre building, and close to entrance of the site, with the bungalows positioned towards the edges of the site.

In layout terms, the site forms a gateway to the city when approaching on the Hathersage Road from the west. The landscape is largely undeveloped and limited to sporadic low scale buildings within a generally pastoral landscape. Given the scale of the proposed built form, intensity of development and removal and gradual replacement of existing tree cover and vegetation, to facilitate the development, this would have a completely urbanising effect on the locale and detract from the generally undeveloped approach into Sheffield at this point. The sheer scale and density of the development is insensitive to the context of the site, and results in a large proportion of the site being covered by buildings, hard landscaping/highways, with limited space between buildings.

The proposed layout (although partially indicative) has a very suburban character owing primarily to the tight knit urban grain proposed as well as the height of the blocks. This does not reflect or reinforce the rural character of the area, with the scale of development occupying the full application site.

The built form consists of between 1 storey bungalows with pitched roofs, to 3 storey apartment blocks, and then a 4 storey Village Centre building. The bungalows are positioned towards the edges of the site and have a reduced mass, however they are tight up to each other, with little space afforded around them.

When traveling along Brickhouse Lane, viewable at present is the side of the brick building set away from the boundary, with the greenhouses and outbuildings positioned beyond. With the extensive planting in the northwest corner of the site, and along the north boundary there are only fleeting views of the side gable of the brick building and greenhouse roofs beyond, again located well away from the boundary of the site, allowing the buildings to appear smaller in context. Beyond the central portion of previously development land is then the plantation to the west, and the open field with mature planting around the perimeter to the east.

The scale and massing of the proposal when viewed as you enter the site, consists of 3 storey apartment blocks tight to the back edge of the internal highway, with large expanse of elevations. The sheer size of the elevations in comparison to the immediate environs of the site will dominate the views into the site.

Once within the site, the layout is based on drawing visitors to the Village Centre Building. This building is over 70 metres long x 20 metres wide, with 4 storeys of accommodation under a pitched roof. This building is totally at odds with all other structures in the vicinity, which is characterised by two-storey dwellings with a much finer grain of built development.

The design approach has contemporary elements, under slate pitched roofs, reduced eave heights in places, and chimney details. Overall there is a coherent fenestration pattern, a general hierarchy of openings, bay projections and detailing. However, the features as listed above whilst providing interest to the buildings, do

not overcome the fact that, taken as a whole, the scale, massing, form footprint and sheer density of the development presents an awkward and uncharacteristic juxtaposition within the street scene and the surrounding area, where there is a general urbanising of the city's rural setting.

Furthermore, the existing buildings on the site are not an eyesore or blot on the landscape which is in need of improvement. There is established soft landscaping, which does provide screening to the polytunnels, greenhouses and garden centre buildings which are located away from site boundary and have limited harmful impact and sit comfortably as low level development in a rural environment.

In terms of materiality, the material palette proposed includes gritstone, buff brickwork and reconstituted limestone, under slate roofs. Windows are predominantly uPVC with some PPC aluminium feature windows. Doors are to be composite, with PPC aluminium clad dormers and rainwater goods.

Natural gritstone is welcomed, however the use of reconstituted limestone would be alien to the character of the area and an inappropriate material which would not be of adequate quality for such a prominent site.

The proposal is a hybrid scheme, whereby the scale and form of development to the east of the site has been fully detailed and outline consent is sought for the western part of the site. From the information submitted albeit partly in outline form, it can reasonably be concluded that the general scale, massing, form and urban grain is unacceptable and will create a development which is completely out of scale and character with the surrounding local area, resulting in a harmful impact to visual amenity.

Notwithstanding this, the general architectural style, subject to large scale detailing and use of appropriate natural gritstone for the majority of buildings could be considered acceptable in isolation of all other matters.

### Landscape Visual Impact Assessment

The site forms part of an Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) designated under Sheffield UDP Policy GE8. This policy states that in the AHLV it is appropriate to maintain open character and protect special landscape quality. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF seeks to protect and enhance 'valued landscapes' (VL) in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the Local Plan. It also recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). It notes that the site is 'atypical' of the wider area, given both the commercial use and urbanised context, with the site limiting its contribution to the AHLV, in that it would not compromise the wider purposes of the AHLV, or create harm.

- Landscape Impact

The LVIA refers to the Peak District National Park Landscape Strategy, published

by the National Park Authority in 2009. However, this document has been revised in 2022, with a new edition issued to cover the period 2023-32. The LVIA should be revised to make reference to the most recent edition of this guidance, which is one of the key documents relating to landscape and visual impact given the close proximity and value of the National Park.

The Landscape Strategy notes that smaller improved fields and occasional blocks of coniferous woodland are both characteristic of the Enclosed Gritstone Upland landscape character type where the site is located. These form the majority of the current site area and would be lost as a result of development.

The presence of the memorial plaque to Ethel and Gerald Haythornthwaite is acknowledged in the LVIA, as is the significance of the Green Belt as the first such designation. However, the combined cultural significance and sensitivity of this location is not fully recognised. The site is within the first Green Belt in the country, established to protect the landscape of what became the first National Park in the country, immediately adjacent to both a memorial woodland and plaque commemorating the significance of these designations and the key role of the Haythornthwaites in establishing and protecting them. This cultural significance and value should be adequately incorporated in establishing an accurate landscape baseline and assessing development impact.

The site forms part of an Area of High Landscape Value designated under Sheffield UDP Policy GE8. The LVIA states that the current commercial use of the site limits its contribution to the AHLV and the impact of the proposed development on the AHLV. However, only a small part of the site is currently developed and as stated previously this is of a low level nature and is partly screened from view. The remaining conifer plantation and open field make a limited contribution to the AHLV in a sensitive location close to the Peak District National Park boundary. Urban development over an area more than double the size of the existing garden centre, with a significantly greater volume and height of buildings would have a detrimental impact on the AHLV.

Dore Moor House Historic Park & Garden is located close to the southern site boundary. This heritage landscape is identified as a Historic Park and Garden under UDP Policy BE21 and is included in the South Yorkshire Local Heritage List. This heritage landscape asset is not included in the LVIA Assessment. Given the close proximity and visibility of the proposed development, the value and impact on this historic landscape should be fully considered. In the absence of an adequate assessment and given that the proposal will impact on the rural countryside setting of the heritage asset, the Local Authority conclude that there will be some harm to the asset and that this is contrary to Paragraph 209 of the NPPF.

Therefore, The LVIA should be revised to fully consider these issues, with conclusions regarding landscape impact amended as required. These are likely to be greater than stated in the current LVIA report.

- Visual Impact

The extent of visibility of the site from the surrounding landscape is difficult to

determine from the LVIA, as there is no visibility mapping included in the assessment. However, the site is visible from a considerable area of land within the Peak District National Park boundary. This includes sections of Whitelow Lane, and also includes areas of Houndkirk Moor which is crossed by several public rights of way, including the Houndkirk Road byway. It is also crossed by multiple informal paths and is open access land for pedestrians. The area is heavily used and highly valued for recreation.

The status, sensitivity and value of the National Park landscape is acknowledged in the LVIA. However, the statutory importance of impact on the setting of the National Park is not adequately addressed in terms of baseline or impact, other than in consideration of the AHLV local designation. The importance of this part of the National Park landscape and its setting is further enhanced by its status as a Natural Zone, representing the wildest and least developed areas, with particular importance for recreation associated with adventure and contact with nature. This additional landscape designation is not acknowledged or addressed within the LVIA.

Given the importance of the National Park landscape and its setting, visibility of the development site from the surrounding area should be accurately mapped, and additional viewpoints included as required to adequately represent receptors within this area. This should inform additional assessment of impact on the setting of the National Park, including the Natural Zone.

The AHLV designation includes a requirement to protect and enhance the appearance and character of the Peak National Park and consider the impact of development on land conspicuous from the Park, as well as the landscape within the AHLV boundary. The LVIA should be amended to incorporate additional consideration of impact on the setting of the National Park outlined above as part of impact on the AHLV.

Visibility from the nearby Dore Moor House garden and effects on the setting of this locally listed historic landscape are not assessed in the LVIA. Given the close proximity of the development site and the value and sensitivity of this receptor, views from here should be included. Given the significant visual impact at nearby viewpoint 8, visual impact is also likely to also be significant from the historic garden.

Mitigation of visual impact relies heavily on visual screening provided by retained and new boundary vegetation. Overall, the amount of vegetation on the western boundary with the National Park will be substantially reduced when the conifer plantation is removed. There are concerns about the feasibility of retaining existing boundary trees as shown on current plans, as well as proposed new tree planting very close to new residential buildings in terms of amenity and the pressure for these trees to be removed in the future. New buildings will be substantially taller than existing, with no analysis or other representation of how visible these will be from key viewpoints.

- Other Matters



In terms of duration and remediability, the amount of substantial permanent structures within the existing garden centre is limited. The majority of the existing low-lying buildings comprise greenhouses, polytunnels or other lightweight agricultural structures that are relatively temporary in nature. Much of the developed area comprises macadam or unbound hardstanding. As such it would be relatively simple and rapid to return most of the current developed area to an open state. The proposed development comprising substantial masonry residential buildings with vehicle roads would be very much more substantial and permanent in nature and very much more difficult to return to a state of openness than the existing developed area of the site. As such, it would have a much greater impact on openness in terms of duration and remediability.

Furthermore, there will be a significant increase in general activity associated with the proposed development. General paraphernalia associated with housing, the coming and going of occupiers and visitors predominately through car borne journeys, and the considerable increase in lighting from the buildings, especially those units on upper floor levels with large areas of glazing, from general street lighting, from security lighting and from car head lights.

In conclusion, the submitted LVIA under plays the impacts of the development. The proposal will not be a subtle variation in the landscape with a back drop of the wider built-up area, but would harm this Area of High Landscape Value, and the setting of the Peak District National Park and is contrary to relevant local and national policy in this regard.

### Tree and Landscaping

Policy BE6 'Landscape Design' expects good quality design in new developments to provide interesting and attractive environments, integrate existing landscape features and enhance nature conservation. UDP Policy GE15 'Trees and Woodlands' within the UDP states that trees and woodlands will be encouraged and protected.

CS74 'Design Principles' part (a). requires high-quality development that will respect, take advantage of, and enhance natural features of the City's neighbourhoods.

These policies are considered to align with the NPPF, in particular paragraph 135 which expects appropriate and effective landscaping, along with sympathetic developments including landscape setting and are afforded significant weight.

The site is not within a conservation area and does not contain any trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders. (TPO).

A tree survey has been submitted which shows the removal of the majority of the plantation to the western boundary, and landscaping within the centre of the site. It is intended to retain the majority of the groups of trees along the very edge of the site, albeit some of the trees and shrubs within these groups will have to be removed / managed. At the entrance of the site, 3 trees are to be retained which are all category B trees (trees of moderate quality) T2, T3 and T4 which are all

Western Balsam Poplar's which are between 19-20 metres tall and have 10+ years lifespan. In addition, T5, T6, T7 and T8 are located on the corner of Brickhouse Lane and Newfield Lane are also identified as category B trees which are all Western Balsam Poplar's at 19 metres tall and are to be retained.

The proposals seek to create new pockets of soft landscaping dispersed throughout the site. The species proposed for planting within the site interior are similar to those found on many urban residential developments, reflecting the urban scale and character of the proposals. However, these bear little relation to the surrounding landscape context. This could be achieved through selecting trees and planting that better reflect the surrounding agricultural and moorland habitat structures. However, there will be pressure to reduce the amount of existing landscaping along the boundaries of the site owing simply to the close proximity of the proposed new buildings, some of which are within / tight up to the canopies of the trees.

In isolation, there are some trees with significant amenity value on the boundaries that we could require to be retained and negotiations could lead to a more appropriate comprehensive soft landscape scheme, but there will always be pressure to remove trees in the future around the perimeter owing to the close proximity of the development to the trees. This would ultimately lead to further visual intrusion and erosion of the openness of the Green Belt.

### Highways

Policy BE9 'Design for Vehicles' of the UDP requires that new developments should provide safe, and adequate parking provision including space to manoeuvre. UDP Policy H15 'Design of New Housing Developments', part (a), expects new development to provide easy access to homes and circulation around the site for people with disabilities or with prams. Policy CS53 'Management of Demand for Travel' of the Core Strategy seeks to make the best use of the road network, promote good quality public transport, walking and cycling and use travel plans to maximise use of sustainable forms of travel and mitigate the negative impacts of transport. Policy CS51 'Transport Priorities' identifies strategic transport priorities for the city, which include containing congestion levels and improving air quality.

The NPPF seeks to focus development in sustainable locations and make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that 'development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.'

Those local policies broadly align with the aims of Chapter 9 of the NPPF (Promoting Sustainable Transport) although it should be noted that in respect of parking provision, the NPPF at paragraphs 111 and 112 requires consideration to be given to accessibility of the development, the development type, availability of public transport, local car ownership levels and states that maximum standards for residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or

optimising density in locations well served by public transport. Policy's H15, CS51 and CS53 are afforded significant weight, and BE9 moderate weight.

- Existing and proposed scenario

The existing access serving the garden centre from Brickhouse Lane is to be maintained, and slightly modified to form a T-junction with the carriageway. This provides a 1.8 metre wide pedestrian footpath on either side of a 4.8 metres wide carriageway. 2.4 metre x 43 metre visibility splays are proposed on either side when exiting the site onto Brickhouse Lane which are appropriate in this instance, meeting the guidelines in the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guidance.

A new pedestrian entrance is proposed on to Newfield Lane. Details have been submitted which show a new footway 7 metres in length, with dropped kerb and tactile paving crossing, to connect to the existing footway on the opposite (eastern) side of Newfield Lane.

- Trip generation

In terms of trip generation, the TRICS database has been used for the existing garden centre use. No data is shown for weekday surveys as a garden centre would generate minimal trips during the weekday peaks, with mainly staff arriving and departing. It was agreed that a nominal 7 two-way trips, during AM (08:00-09:00) and PM (17:00-18:00) peak periods would be expected.

An indicative assessment for the proposed 125 units using TRICS shows that there could be 26 two-way vehicle trips during any given peak period for residents, staff, and visitors. Using the applicant's existing sites as an evidence base and calculating the potential trip generation for the site, shows that 23 two-way vehicle trips are anticipated during any given peak period for residents, staff, and visitors.

Taking the higher of the values, this gives a worst-case scenario of an increase of 19 two-way vehicle trips during any given peak period.

A 7-day survey was undertaken in March 2022 to record existing vehicle speeds and flows. This concluded that the average speed immediately to the east of the site access along Brickhouse Lane was 23mph in an eastbound direction, and 25mph in a westbound direction. Daily flows are 267 trips in an eastbound direction, and 598 in a westbound direction.

A review of accidents in the vicinity of the site shows two accidents along the Hathersage Road, one in August 2020 involving two vehicles, and a second in March 2021 involving a single vehicle. This shows that there are no clusters of accidents within the vicinity.

It is anticipated by the developer, based on a working knowledge of their existing sites/operations that there will be approximately 30 full time staff, with 20 on site at one time. Figures submitted show that there are likely to be 20 staff on duty at 13:00, with only 1 night porter from 22:00 until 06:00. Arrival and departures are likely to be staggered throughout the day.

Therefore, based on a TRICS and first principal assessment, there is likely to be a net increase of 19 two-way movements during the AM and PM peak hours. This is considered to minimal and will not impact adversely on the operation or safety of the surrounding highway network within the vicinity of the site.

- Tracking internal roads

Tracking has been provided for an 8.6 metre fire tender, and a 9-metre refuse vehicle, which can access, travel around the site and leave in a forward gear. Refuse will be managed through a private company and a smaller refuse vehicle has been tracked, with appropriately sized servicing bays.

Internal roads are not intended to be adopted but managed by a private arrangement. These are made up of 4.8-metre-wide carriageway running from the junction with Brickhouse Lane to the undercroft parking within the Village Centre Building, with 1.8 metre wide kerbed footways to both sides. Further internal roads comprise of a 5.5-6m shared surface which operates as a one-way system and includes an overrun of a 1.8metre pedestrian route.

- Public Transport/Walking

The site is within a walking distance of 900 metres to the Causeway Head Road shops, and 1.2km to Dore Methodist Church. This equates to an approximate 10-13 minute walking distance for an able bodied person, in a downhill direction from the site.

The closest public transport facilities are the bus stop along Hathersage Road. This bus stop is served by the No. 65 Buxton – Tideswell – Sheffield – Meadowhall route, which is every 2 hours Monday to Sunday, and the No. 271/272 Castleton – Sheffield route which is once an hour all week. There is also a bus stop along Causeway Head Road, served by the 81/82 Dore-Sheffield-Stannington which is every 30 minutes Monday-Saturday and every hour on a Sunday, along with the 181 which travels from Dore to Sheffield, with 3 services into town (2 services back) Monday to Friday.

The nearest train station is Dore and Totley which is approximately 2.7 km away downhill.

Owing to the distance and topography, it is likely that it will be the more active residents that may visit the local shops and facilities on foot only.

A cycle store is proposed to the lower floor of the Village Centre building. This is covered and secure and shows 18 cycle spaces for residents and staff use. There are 3 further external cycle stores for resident's use, providing 24 cycle spaces and 16 short stay cycle spaces within the scheme.

Mobility scooter parking and charging areas are provided within the Village Centre building which are secure and covered.

In addition, a transport service is to be provided to all future residents of the site, which is a dedicated vehicle that can be pre-booked for local journeys and is managed as part of the care package for the facility.

A Travel Plan accompanies the application. The principles and framework of the document are considered acceptable in principle and compliance with this document could be conditioned on any approval with should members be minded to grant.

- Car parking numbers

The Council's revised parking guidelines set out maximum standards in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS53, and for a 1 bedroom dwelling outside of the city centre, 1 space is required, and for a 2-3-bedroom dwelling outside of the city centre 2 spaces are required as a maximum, with 1 space per 4 units for visitors.

This scheme is not for a traditional housing scheme. Proposed car parking numbers have been established through an evidence base of 6 of the applicant's similar facilities. This shows that 24% of residents did not own a car, 68.5% owned one car, and 7.5% owned two cars. The applicant has confirmed that they intend to limit the number of vehicles kept on the site to one per household as part of the leasehold arrangements. It is estimated that for the 125 units proposed in this scheme, 95 spaces should be sufficient for occupiers, based on the applicant's evidence of 24% of households not having a car.

Staff travel surveys of the applicant's 6 similar sites show that 70% of staff drive to work. Based on a maximum of 20 staff on site at any one time, this equates to 14 parking spaces for staff which is considered a realistic figure.

In total 135 spaces are proposed within the scheme. This allows for 95 spaces for occupants, 14 for staff, and then 26 further spaces available to be used by visitors. 85 of the total spaces are to be provided as part of the full application, with the outline application providing 52 spaces. This allows for more spaces to be provided up front, to accommodate the staff which are to be based within the Village Centre building.

Car parking is all provided as 2.5 metres x 5 metres spaces with 100% of the spaces allocated for electric charging points. Of the 135 spaces, there are 14 disabled spaces located sporadically around the site.

The proposed internal road layout being on the minimal side of acceptance, there are minimal areas for delivery vehicles to pull up and make deliveries. However, this is within the internal arrangements of the site, and may just result in vehicles having to wait/queue within the site for the one-way system.

## Conclusion

The predicted trip generation associated with the proposed development is not likely to be so significant as to pose a severe impact on the surrounding highway

network, including at the junction with Brickhouse Lane, or at Hathersage Road which is already used frequently as a route to and from Dore.

This is not considered to be an accessible site location and as such, does encourage car borne journeys. Whilst public transport services in the form of bus stops are within easy walking distance, the services which use these stops are not regular, which would put people off using them, as is the present situation.

The proposed road layout is acceptable in principle, with the amount of car parking not likely to be to a level which will cause unacceptable pressure to park on the adjacent highways which would cause a highway safety issue.

On balance, the proposal complies with UDP, Core Strategy and NPPF policies in relation to highways and transport matters, as listed above.

### Living Conditions

Policy H15 'Design of New Housing Developments' states that the design of new housing developments will be expected to provide adequate private gardens or communal open space to ensure that basic standards of daylight, privacy, security and outlook are met for all residents.

Paragraph 135 (f) of the NPPF, which states that development should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The UDP policy is considered to be consistent with the NPPF in as far as it goes through it must be read in conjunction with other design policies tools, however the NPPF refers to other health, wellbeing toolkits. Significant weight should be given to H15.

### Neighbouring Occupiers Living Conditions

The closest neighbouring properties are those which are located along Newfield Lane. These consist of 2 storey properties which are positioned approximately 5 metres away from the back edge of footpath on the opposite side of Newfield Lane, with the exception of No. 11 which is located abutting the footpath. This part of Newfield Lane is served by a relatively narrow footpath along the eastern side, and then approximately 5 metres of vehicular carriageway. At present, the outlook from the front of the properties is over public highway with a backdrop of mature soft landscaping within the application site.

Immediately to the south of the site is Newfield Farm, which is made up of a bungalow with what appears to be habitable space within the roof space which is served by rooflights in the front and rear and a window in the side looking towards the application site.

On the opposite the side of Hathersage Road is the Dore Moor Inn. This does not appear to provide any living accommodation, possibly just management flats.

The proposal is in two elements, the first is the full application which shows a detailed proposal, and the second element is the outline application, with details of layout, scale design and landscaping being reserved for subsequent approval.

Indicative plans have been submitted for the outline element which show a mixture of 2 storey cottages and 3 storey apartment blocks. By the nature of the scheme and being read in conjunction with Phase 1 which shows full details, it can be assumed that they could reasonably be similar in layout.

Whilst there will be views of built development beyond landscaping from existing dwellings along Newfield Lane, which would change the outlook, the proposed development would not have any adverse impact on overshadowing or overbearing to these occupiers. Regarding any potential overlooking between these existing occupiers and future occupiers, Newfield Lane, which is a public highway, sits between them, with between approximately 18 and 22 metres with a band of landscaping. Therefore no significant overlooking will be created.

Newfield Farm is located to the south of the site and appears to be occupied as a single family dwellinghouse. There are windows on the side facing towards the application site. The house is approximately 8.5 metres from the boundary, with the new bungalows as close as 3.5 metres on the other side of the boundary. The plans show soft landscaping along this boundary however, there will inevitably be pressure for this to be thinned out, and views are likely to be obtained from future residents into the immediate curtilage of Newfield Farm. With the development being due north, and the nature of these units being single storey it is unlikely that these will create any adverse overbearing or overshadowing.

With regards to general nuisance, the proposal would cause noise and disturbance during the construction phases and would create noise and disturbance from the movements of people and vehicles during the operational phase when the dwellings are occupied. However such impacts would not be so significant as to harm the living conditions of existing residents abutting the site, or within the wider locality, which are often in close proximity to each other.

The impact on air quality would not be to a significant level post construction, and the production and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) could control and limit any potential noise during construction, to ensure that any disturbance would be kept to a minimum.

#### Future Occupiers Living Conditions

The full application element seeks permission for 63 units, which are made up of 24 units within the Village Centre Building, 12 units within Block B1, 9 units within Block B2 and 9 units within Block B3, resulting in 54 apartments. 9 dwellings are then proposed, identified as Blocks B1a, b, c, d and B2a.

The National Space Standards specify internal space sizes within new dwellings and is suitable for application across all tenures. For a 1 bedroom apartment over 1 storey the minimum standard is 50 square metres, and for a 2 bedroom apartment over 1 storey, the minimum standard is 70 square metres. Typical sizes through

the Village Centre Building and the 3 apartment buildings show over 55 square metres for the 1 bedroom units, and between 71 and 114 square metres for the 2 bedroom units. All apartments are afforded a private balcony or patio area which is a minimum of 7 square metres. Therefore, the internal space standards are exceeded, and in some cases by a significant amount.

Internal communal areas are proposed to the ground floor of the Village Centre Building. These include seating / lounging areas, a dining facility, treatment rooms and a spa/pool. This will allow future occupiers to socialise in communal areas, with the facilities being to a good quality. In addition there is a small area in front of this building annotated as the Village Square on the plan for outside space.

The upper floor units within the apartment blocks have a decent outlook from main habitable windows, however some of the ground floor units within Blocks B2 and B3 are poor. This is particularly apparent whereby car parking is provided abutting the Blocks, and whereby main habitable living rooms and private terraces are adjacent to a line of parking bays. In these cases, the outlook is extremely poor to these individual future occupiers.

The 8 dwellings located within Blocks B1a, b, c and d are all located tight to the site perimeter which is shown to retain the existing landscaping along the eastern boundary, and new planting along the southern boundary. This results in the private terraces within the tree canopies, and in other places less than 1-2 metres away. This results in a very poor outlook which will inevitably result in pressure to prune or remove this landscaping.

It is acknowledged that the level of residential space afforded to residents of these proposed C2 units will not be at the same level expected for more traditional C3 family housing, especially relating to private garden space, however, this doesn't negate the requirement to have an adequate level of amenity for future occupiers. This includes areas of amenity space to enjoy outside and within communal areas inside, but also to have a decent outlook from main habitable windows.

However, it is clear that there are many instances where there is simply an unacceptable outlook afforded to future occupiers, particularly to those units which are positioned close to the site boundary, but also from the ground floor units of some of the apartment blocks. If this was just the odd scenario, more leniency could perhaps be given. However, this happens on multiple occasions and demonstrates fundamental issues and poor and unacceptable living conditions afforded to future residents.

Therefore the proposal is contrary to policy H15 of the UDP and Paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

### Ecology

UDP Policy GE11 'Nature Conservation and Development' states that the natural environment should be protected and enhanced and that the design, siting and landscaping of development needs to respect and promote nature conservation and include measures to reduce any potentially harmful effects of development on



natural features of value.

NPPF paragraph 180 a) and d) identifies that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment and minimise impacts on and provide net gains in biodiversity. Furthermore, paragraph 186 a) identifies that if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. Part d) of paragraph 186 goes on to state that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Local policy aligns with the NPPF and moderate weight is attached, with the NPPF focusing on Biodiversity Net Gain.

The application is accompanied by two ecological assessments. The first is a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) which was undertaken in 2021, and a second is the subsequent updated Ecological Appraisal which was carried out in 2022. The latter is based on an update 'walkover survey' and additional bat and barn owl surveys. The information within both surveys provide a sufficient basis for biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment.

These concluded that no reptiles, including Great Crested Newts were identified. The bat surveys in August 2021 and then May 2022, showed that no bats were recorded emerging from the tearoom building or any other buildings. The site will provide some local foraging habitat for bats, but it is not regarded as being strategically significant in the wider landscape context.

The site is judged to provide habitat for a wide range of birds found in woodland, open country, gardens and urban habitats. The assemblage of breeding birds using the site is assessed as having site level importance only. Any required vegetation clearance or tree felling should be carried out outside of the bird breeding / nesting season (March 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup>).

No badger setts have been evidenced on site in the 2021 or 2022 survey, whilst some mammal trails are present on the western third of the site, these are likely to just be foraging/commuting.

The 2021 survey showed that barn owls were using buildings 4 and 6, although potential habitat was considered sub-optimal and likely to have been used as a 'day roost'. No evidence of barn owl was found in the 2022 surveys, with just the possibility of the grasslands to the eastern half of the site being used as part of a wider foraging territory.

The Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) Special Protection Area (SPA), South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Eastern Peak District Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located approximately 1km of the west of the site.

The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the assessments submitted and confirms that the approach and outcome of the proposed development is not assessed as

likely to have any significant impact on designated sites (SAC / SPA / SSSI).

Furthermore, the overall assessment of habitats is acceptable, most are regarded as being in 'poor' condition. Examples of habitats considered to be conservation priorities, such as woodlands, hedgerows, pond and swamp are all considered to be in poor condition.

### Biodiversity Net Gain

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment has been undertaken. The baseline biodiversity value of the habitats at the site has been assessed using Natural England's Biodiversity Metric calculation tool, which includes 'condition assessments' of the habitats found on site. As previously discussed, most are considered to be in poor condition.

The on-site baseline figures indicate an existing score of 6.99 habitat units, and 0.82 hedgerow units for the site. The originally submitted BNG calculations submitted in December 22 suggested a 17% net loss of habitats (1.19 units) and a 227% net gain in hedgerow units (existing hedge comprises non-native / invasive laurel). An acceptable scheme to be policy compliant would need to deliver a 10% net gain in both habitat and hedgerow units. The losses were to be compensated through the provision of off-site habitat compensation funded through a contribution in a Section 106 agreement.

An updated BNG report submitted in December 2023 now proposes a 19% net gain in habitat units and a 227% net gain in hedgerow units on site. Whilst there have been no fundamental changes to the layout of the development, some of the gains in biodiversity appear to have been achieved through tweaks to the proposed grassed areas, changes to the extent and size of trees and the 'landscape buffer' and the addition of four ponds. There appears to be some discrepancies in the report and whilst some of the gains have been achieved through the changes from amenity lawn to neutral grassland and the new ponds, it is not clear where the additional units are provided on site, or whether these would be of suitable quality, in particular the locations of the ponds.

To go from a 17% loss of habitat units, with total on site proposed at 5.80 units, to an increase of 19% gain of habitat units, with a total on site proposed at 8.37 units, there needs to be an increase of some 2.57 habitat units. It is not convincing from the information submitted that this is achievable. At this stage, with the fundamental issues with the application, further information has not been sought to finalise these details. However, securing a Section 106 legal agreement to mitigate for the loss can overcome the issue and make the application policy compliant should members be minded to grant the application.

### Sustainability

Policy CS63 'Responses to Climate Change' of the Core Strategy sets out the overarching approach to reducing the city's impact on climate change. These actions include, (a) giving priority to development in the city centre and other areas that are well served by sustainable forms of transport, (d) designing developments

to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions, and (e) promoting developments that generate renewable energy.

Policy CS64 'Climate Change, Resources and Sustainable Design of Development' requires all new buildings to achieve a high standard of energy efficiency, making the best use of solar energy, passive heating and cooling, natural light and ventilation.

Policy CS65 'Renewable Energy and Carbon Reduction' requires all significant developments to (a) provide a minimum of 10% of their predicted energy needs from decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy and (b) reduce the developments overall predicted carbon dioxide emissions by 20%.

At the heart of the NPPF, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11), with paragraph 157 stating that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. The local policies should be afforded significant weight, except for CS65 part (b) which is deemed to be unviable in the wake of changes to Part L of the Building Regulations.

New developments of 5 or more houses are expected to achieve the provision of a minimum of 10% of their predicted energy needs from decentralised and renewable, low carbon energy, or a 'fabric first' approach where this is deemed to be feasible and viable.

In this instance, the site is not within the main urban area, and is not considered to be in a sustainable location. The developer seeks to achieve Net Zero Carbon Target for all its sites. These will include enhanced building fabric specifications which will reduce energy demand, with natural ventilation and passive solar heat gains, energy efficiency improvements to help reduce energy consumption, installing heat pumps to provide clean renewable heat and installation of photovoltaic panels to generate renewable electricity on the site.

A condition on any approval can ensure that 10% of the predicted energy needs are from decentralised and renewable energy sources, or a fabric first approach, through the submission of fully worked up details and calculations.

### Air Quality

UDP policies include Policies GE22 and GE23 relating to pollution and air pollution which seek to ensure development is sited so as to prevent or minimise the effect of pollution on neighbouring land uses or the quality of the environment and people's appreciation of it.

NPPF paragraph 192 seeks opportunities to improve air quality, with significant weight given to UDP policies.

An Air Quality Assessment is not required because of the scale of the development, the anticipated number of vehicles per hour and the site's position, which is not likely to have a significant effect on local air quality. Condition(s) to secure a construction environmental management plan to mitigate the impact of

dust during construction would be necessary in the event of planning permission being granted.

### Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy CS67 'Flood Risk Management' of the Core Strategy states that the extent and impact of flooding should be reduced. It seeks to ensure that more vulnerable uses (including housing) are discouraged from areas with a high probability of flooding. It also seeks to reduce the extent and impact of flooding through a series of measures including limiting surface water runoff, through the use of Sustainable drainage systems (Suds), de-culverting watercourses wherever possible, within a general theme of guiding development to areas at the lowest flood risk.

Policy CS67 is considered to align with Section 14 of the NPPF. For example, paragraph 165 states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided and development should be directed away from areas at the highest risk. Paragraph 173 states that when determining applications, LPA's should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere with relevant applications being supported by a Flood Risk Assessment. Paragraph 175 expects major developments to incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence to demonstrate otherwise.

The site does not fall within a high or medium risk flood zone that would affect the principle of the development. The site itself is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore not at any significant risk of flooding.

This area has a history of problems with the watercourse system therefore this site needs to manage its surface water to avoid any increase in flow. Discharge via infiltration is unlikely to succeed owing to the prevalence of shallow watercourses within the area. Discharge to the watercourse (culvert) within the site is therefore the most sustainable solution.

Elements such as permeable paving (type C- which is a lined system) can hold water within the site, along with attenuation tanks. These will then have a flow control to slow discharge into the sewer.

Whilst not respecting the hierarchy of dealing with SUD's, the comprehensive drainage strategy, including the newly updated information for rainwater gardens within the site would allow for surface water to be attenuated on site, and then released at suitable rate to the public sewer.

### Land Contamination

A Phase I Study and Site Investigation and Interpretive Report have been submitted to accompany the application. The Phase I report is considered satisfactory, and the Investigation report is broadly acceptable, however an updated remediation strategy is required with reference to imported fill. A suite of conditions can be included if members are minded to grant the application.

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (June 2015) sets the levy rates applicable to certain developments. This document states that retirement/extra care/sheltered housing/assisted living developments are excluded from the types of development to which the CIL charge is applicable.

In this instance, the proposed 125 extra care retirement units are not CIL chargeable.

### Affordable Housing

Policy CS40 Affordable Housing states that in all parts of the city, developers of all new housing developments will be required to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing where this is practicable and financially viable. This is supplemented by the SPD.

The SPD requires all housing developments to pay a contribution towards affordable housing, and it defines housing development to include all types of housing, including independent homes for older people, and purpose built student accommodation. It does not include institutional housing which would be wholly or partly affordable, such as care homes.

Footnote 15 defines 'Independent' as meaning a self-contained unit of accommodation. Self-containment is where all the rooms (including kitchen, bathroom and toilet) in a household's accommodation are behind a single door which only that household can use. It may include homes where an element of care is provided as in this instance.

Within the southwest of the city, the requirement is 30% of the gross internal floor area.

A full financial appraisal has been submitted for the proposed scheme and assessed independently by CP Viability, which concludes that whilst the scheme would be able to generate some level of profit for the developer, the scheme could not deliver any contribution towards affordable housing provision in this instance.

A suggestion has been made that the Council may wish to consider a Review Mechanism for this scheme, which would allow viability to be re-assessed.

Therefore, the proposal is policy compliant on viability grounds, having undergone a full financial review. A section 106 legal agreement could ensure that viability is re-assessed should members be minded to grant permission.

### Public Art

UDP Policy BE12 'Public Art' encourages the provision of works of public art as an integral part of the design of major developments. A condition is recommended to secure provision of public art within the proposed development if members are minded to grant the application.

## **SUMMARY AND PLANNING BALANCE**

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site / site clearance, and the erection of 63 Extra Care units (C2) comprising of the Village Centre, the means of access; landscaping and open space; and all other associated works and infrastructure; and then outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except for access) for up to 62 Extra Care units (C2) with ancillary communal space, landscaping and all other associated works and infrastructure.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Council's Development Plan comprises the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (1998) and the Core Strategy (2009).

Paragraph 213 of the NPPF states that existing policies in a development plan should not be considered out of date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the NPPF and that due weight should be given to existing policies in a development plan, according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

The site is identified on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map as being within the Green Belt, and an Area of High Landscape Value.

Sheffield has updated its 4 year housing land supply position to reflect the local housing need figure at that date taking account of the 35% urban centres uplift. Using up to date evidence, Sheffield can demonstrate a 3.01 year deliverable supply of housing land.

Therefore, because the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a four-year supply of deliverable housing sites, the relevant policies for determining applications that include housing should be considered as automatically out-of-date according to paragraph 11(d) of the Framework. Furthermore the Green Belt policies are not fully consistent with the NPPF and as such it is concluded that the most important policies for determining the application are those contained in the NPPF.

In this instance Paragraph 11d(i) is triggered as the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusal.

The site is within the Green Belt and does not fall within any of the exceptions set out in paragraphs 154 or 155 of the Framework. As such the development is inappropriate development which is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (Paragraph 152). Very Special Circumstances must demonstrate that harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness plus any other harm is outweighed by the special circumstances. It is highlighted that all harm must be considered not just harm Green Belt harm caused by inappropriateness.

As such it is considered necessary to consider all the harm arising from the proposal vs the benefits and if any of these amount to Very Special Circumstances.

The proposal would deliver a number of benefits, with the NPPF emphasising the importance of delivery of housing. Firstly, the provision of 125 additional homes will make a good contribution to meeting the overall current shortfall. Furthermore, these homes are Extra Care Retirement homes, of which there is also a shortage. In addition, there would be economic benefits through expenditure in construction, in the supply chain, and in local spending from residents. Significant weight is attached to the economic, NHS and social care benefits, with substantial weight given to the lack of 4 year housing supply and the provision of elder person accommodation. It is however noted that there is a degree of overlap between a number of benefits set out in the planning statement, and some of the benefits such as social care benefits go hand in hand with the benefit of providing specialist housing for older persons.

The proposal is not considered to create any significant or severe highway safety issues and exceeds the 10% increase requirement for biodiversity net gain in both habitats and hedgerows. Highways would weigh neutral in the balance, Biodiversity enhancement is a policy requirement, although exceedance of 10% would be of some benefit.

The other considerations which have been put forward by the applicant in their supporting statements are cumulatively of limited weight. These include the lack of alternative sites and the provision of services to the wider community.

Turning to the harm caused by the proposal, the site is a prominent Green Belt site in an Area of High Landscape Value, close to the boundary with the Peak District National Park, and within its setting. In this instance, the development would amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt that fails to meet any of the exceptions set out in 154 and 155. The proposal would substantially and adversely impact on the openness, through urbanisation of this parcel of land and encroachment of urban sprawl into the Green Belt. This would present a tight knit high-density development with increased activity which would impact on the visual character and openness of the Green Belt. Further, the proposal would be contrary to the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Substantial harm is attributed to these elements, notably the inappropriateness of the development, impact on the openness of the Green Belt and harm to the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

Furthermore, the scale and mass of the proposals are wholly out of character with the surrounding area, creating a prominent urbanised development in this Green Belt location on the gateway to the Peak District National Park. The proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area, the Area of High Landscape Value and the setting of the Peak District National Park. This would cause substantial harm.

In addition, there are instances where there is simply an unacceptable outlook afforded to future occupiers, particularly to those units which are positioned close

to the site boundary, but also from the ground floor units of the some of the apartment blocks. This happens on multiple occasions and demonstrates fundamental issues, and poor and unacceptable living conditions afforded to future residents. The density of the development exceeds the guidelines set out in relevant policies. When viewed in combination with the design issues including unacceptable scale and grain of development and the poor amenity provided it is concluded that the proposal represents clear overdevelopment of the site. These issues would amount to substantial harm.

Paragraph 105 of the NPPF seeks to place significant development in sustainable locations which limit the need to travel and offer a genuine choice of transport modes, with the objectives of reducing congestion and emissions and improving air quality and public health. There is a moderate degree of harm to weigh in the balance for the location of the site and its sustainability, however this would not in itself render the scheme unacceptable.

The scheme would also result in some harm to the nearby locally listed heritage asset. Although in the absence of a suitable assessment, it is difficult to accurately quantify this harm.

No affordable housing is being provided, and whilst this is policy compliant through a viability clause, this does the reduce the scale of the benefits of the scheme, and furthermore, no CIL is applicable.

These issues taken individually and collectively demonstrate that the proposal will result in substantial and irreversible harm. The nature of the identified harm goes to the very heart of the principle of development and cannot be adequately mitigated or controlled through reserved matters applications or conditions.

The benefits of the scheme do not amount to very special circumstances and do not clearly outweigh the substantial weight that the NPPF requires to attach to the harm to the Green Belt through inappropriateness and loss of openness, nor the harm to the character and appearance of the area, Area of High Landscape Value, setting of the National Park, or the harm caused by overdevelopment of the site and impact on amenity. The very special circumstances that are necessary to justify this inappropriate development in the Green Belt simply do not exist.

Therefore, overall although paragraph 11 of the NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, other sections of the NPPF as listed above provide a clear reason for resisting the development. The adverse impacts of granting development significantly outweigh the benefits.

This application is recommended for refusal.