

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan. Ref Expiry Date
Mercury Health 'B'	Hurrans Garden Centre, Kidderminster Road, Hagley - Additional use of land for mobile temporary health facilities (2 year temporary permission)	GB	B/2007/1035 08.11.2007

Members should note that two other application for similar proposals are being considered at this Meeting - B/2007/1036: The Bromsgrove Hotel, Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove; and B/2007/1037: Stoke Prior Sports and Country Club, Weston Hall Road, Stoke Prior.

RECOMMENDATION: that the determination of the application be **DELEGATED** to the Head of Planning and Environment Services upon the expiry of the publicity period on 15.10.2007 (minded to refuse).

Consultations

Clent PC	Consulted on 14.09.2007. No response to date.
WCC(HP) Policy	Consulted on 14.09.2007. No response to date.
CEHO	Consulted on 14.09.2007. No objection received 24.09.2007, subject to condition mitigating potential noise to neighbouring residents.
Publicity	2 Site notices posted 24.09.2007 (expires 15.10.2007)

The site and its surroundings

This application is a resubmission of the previously withdrawn submission under plan reference B/2007/0834 and relates to a garden centre car park on the south-east side of Kidderminster Road, Hagley which is located within the Green Belt.

Proposal

This is a full application proposing the siting of temporary mobile health facilities on the existing car park of Hurrans Garden Centre, Hagley. Each unit, in the form of lorry with trailer, would be located on site between 1 and 3 continuous days per week, which equates to a total of between 52 and 156 days per year. There would be a maximum of 4 trailers on site at any one time. The units would be located within the red edge area shown on the submitted location plan, with the remainder of the car park still available for normal use by the garden centre. The applicants are seeking a temporary permission for two years (unlike the previous proposal for seven years).

Relevant Policies

WMSS	QE3, QE6
WCSP	SD.2, SD.3, SD.4, SD.5, SD.7, SD.8, CTC.1, D.38, D.39, T.1
BDLP	DS1, DS2, DS13
Others	PPS1, PPG2, PPS7

Relevant Planning History

B/2007/0834 Additional use of land for mobile temporary health facilities (7 year temporary). Withdrawn: 11.09.2007

Notes

The main issue to consider for this application is whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and whether any very special circumstances exist that may outweigh the harm caused.

Green Belt

Policies within BDLP are in general accordance with the provisions of WCSP and PPG2 in stating that inappropriate development should not be allowed in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh the harm caused.

The applicants' agents have submitted supporting documents (see appendix 1) that state a maximum of four trailers would be on site at any time. Each trailer can measure 6.2 metres wide by 13.3 metres long, and therefore occupies approximately 16 conventional car spaces. These trailers would be used for 1-3 days per week, remaining on site overnight if required on consecutive days. By definition, the proposal is considered inappropriate development within the Green Belt and the agents have made the following comments in response:

<u>Green Belt Policy</u>	<u>Response from Tribal (agents)</u>
Purposes of including land within Green Belts include: 1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Existing developed car park, temporary use for 2 years but site used only 3 days per week, no additional urban sprawl as use required on an existing car park.
2. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging in together.	No permanent development being proposed.
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	The parking of vehicles on the existing car park is unrestricted. A vehicle of similar size could park there for an unrestricted amount of time. No further encroachment into the Green Belt would occur as use is on an existing car park.
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.	The proposed intensity of the units on the site will result in there being negligible affect upon the special character of the area.

<u>Green Belt Policy</u>	<u>Response from Tribal (agents)</u>
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	A number of sites have been considered, however due to the complex requirements of the units, a number of sites have been discounted. The proposed site is the only available site which was found within the defined area by the Department of Health.
PPG2 states that 'inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt'.	As demonstrated above, the development is not considered to be harmful to the Green Belt when considered in relation to national policy.

The most important point to consider when assessing this proposal is the fact that it is considered inappropriate development within the Green Belt and would therefore cause harm to this. Due to the fact that the health facilities proposed are temporary, this still does not result in the proposal being any less harmful to the Green Belt or the fact that they would not be in place for more than 3 days per week. Other sites may have been considered and I am aware that there are two other applications being considered at this meeting, however these sites are also within the Green Belt and I do not believe that satisfactory VSC's have been demonstrated to mitigate the potential harm to the Green Belt. The bulk and massing of the trailers in themselves would have a detrimental affect on the visual amenity of the Green Belt.

Within the supporting documents there appears to be some inaccuracies. It is stated that the proposal site is located close to the Ryemarket Shopping Centre which is wholly untrue as this centre is in Stourbridge. Large vehicles cannot be parked on the site without the express consent of the landlord as confirmed during the case officer's site visit. Even though the vehicles would be parked on an existing car park, it does not alter the fact that the area is allocated within the Green Belt and would always be considered as inappropriate development when considering national and local planning policy. The area outlined in red on the location plan would not be large enough to accommodate up to four trailers as specified within the application and therefore this is considered misleading.

The purpose of the units is to provide rapid treatment on behalf of the NHS, and carry out tests such as MRI scans, CT scans, X-rays, endoscopy and the fitting of hearing aids. These facilities are intended to be in addition to existing facilities, and to provide local community health facilities. However, it is understood that the proposed facilities are intended to serve the residents of the Bromsgrove Primary Care Trust area. The applicants' agent states that the proposed development would not impact upon the openness of the Green Belt, by being mobile and temporary in nature.

Policy SD.7 of the WCSP describes the sequential approach that should be taken for the location of new development. The preferred location is within existing town centres, but if this is not available then edge-of centre sites, a district or local centre and finally out-of-centre locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport. This site does not fall within any of those locations, and therefore I find this proposal contrary to SD.7. I do not consider that sufficient very special circumstances have been provided that would overcome the harm to, and the loss of openness within this Green Belt location.

Sustainability and reducing the need to travel by car

Paragraph 6 of PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas states that Local Authorities should facilitate and plan for providing a range of services and facilities to meet community needs, particularly where they would benefit those rural residents who would find it difficult to use more distant service centres. However, it then goes on to emphasise that these local facilities should be located within or adjacent to existing villages and settlements where access can be gained by walking, cycling and (where available) public transport.

This is reinforced by Policy PA1 of the West Midlands Spatial Strategy, which states that wherever possible, economic growth should be focused on the Major Urban Areas (MUA's). Policy PA14 of the WMSS states that, even where development helps provide a sustainable rural economy, most development should be concentrated in towns and other large settlements accessible to their hinterlands. Policy T.1 of the WCSP, which seeks to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, supports this.

Policies SD4 and T1 of the WCSP both state that proposals for development will normally only be allowed where they are located so as to minimize the need for travel, particularly travel by private car. However, policy D.29 states that proposals, which are likely to result in a significant increase in numbers and length of journeys to work by car, are unlikely to be acceptable since they would conflict with the aim of moving towards a more sustainable pattern of development.

Conclusions

The proposed siting of the commercial vehicles and opening trailers would involve a material change of use of the land and would entail greater harm on the openness / visual amenity of the Green Belt in relation to the current use as a customer car park for the garden centre. Circumstances have been put forward to the Local Planning Authority but it is not considered that these would constitute 'very special circumstances' which would clearly outweigh the harm caused to the openness / visual amenity of the Green Belt. The proposals would also reduce the amount of available parking provision for the customers of the Hurrans Garden Centre which would be to the detriment of the existing establishment.

Concern has also been raised regarding the lack of sustainable means of transport to the site which is located away from the main town centre, with limited means of sustainable transport to and from the site. However a 'Green Travel Plan' has also been submitted in conjunction with this application to encourage staff and patients to use sustainable modes of transport for their journeys to and from the site. Unquestionably the promotion of sustainable means of transport should be encouraged but there is no guarantee that patients and staff will adhere to such initiatives and given the limited current public transport available, the most likely option will be reliance on the car as the primary mode of transport to access the site. Therefore it is concluded that the proposed use of the site would not be in a sustainable location and would cause greater harm than its existing use.

RECOMMENDATION: that the determination of the application be DELEGATED to the Head of Planning and Environment Services upon the expiry of the publicity period on 15.10.2007 (minded to refuse).