

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan Ref. Expiry Date
<b>Mercury Health 'B'</b>	Additional use of land (in part) for temporary mobile health facilities (temporary 2 year permission) - Stoke Prior Sports and Country Club, Weston Hall Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove	GB	<b>B/2007/1037</b> 08.11.2007

**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 15.10.07 (minded to refuse).

### Consultations

Stoke PC	Consulted 14.09.2007, views awaited.
Highways Partnership	Consulted 14.09.2007, views awaited.
British Waterways	Consulted 14.09.2007. No objection 26.09.2007
Health & Safety Executive	Consulted 14.09.2007, views awaited.
Planning Policy	Consulted 14.09.2007, views awaited.
Publicity	Two site notices posted 24.09.2007 (expires 15.10.2007)

### The site and its surroundings

This application relates to the rough surfaced car park associated with a single storey brick built sports club, with a bowling green to the front, and playing fields to the RHS and rear. There is a driveway from the main road, leading to the car park to the RHS of the site, and there is an existing pavilion building to the rear LHS of the sports club. At the time of the site visit, there was one lorry trailer parked on the car park, and a number of mobile homes parked to the left hand end of the clubhouse. The site is located within the defined Green Belt. This application is a resubmission of the previously withdrawn submission referenced B/2007/0643.

### Proposal

This is a full application proposing the siting of temporary mobile health facilities on the existing car park of Stoke Prior Sports and Country Club. 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 location plans that accompanies the planning application identifies the area within the car park that would be occupied by the units, with the remainder of the car park still available for normal use by the Stoke Prior Sports and Country Club. The applicants are seeking a temporary permission for two years.

Members should note that two other application for similar proposals are being considered on this agenda - B/2007/1035 at Hurrans Garden Centre, Kidderminster Road, Hagley, and B/2007/1036 at The Bromsgrove Hotel, Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove.

## 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/1991/0696	New club premises following total loss by fire. Granted 09.09.91.
B/2005/0518	Stationing a caravan for key worker's living accommodation. Withdrawn 31.07.05
B/2005/0830	Stationing a caravan for key workers weekend rest accommodation. Refused 07.10.05. Appeal dismissed 13.02.06
B/2007/0643	Additional use of land (in part) for temporary mobile health facilities. Withdrawn 29.08.07

## 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 that state a maximum of four trailers would be on site at any time. The location plan accompanying this application identifies an area (coloured in yellow) measuring 15 metres by 15 metres within which the mobile units would be located. Each trailer can measure 6.2 metres wide by 13.3 metres long, with the Endoscopy unit measuring as much as 13.5 metres long by 6.4 metres wide. Therefore the units would occupy 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.

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 (PCT) Area, which covers a significantly larger area than just Stoke Prior. However details of the exact boundary of the Bromsgrove PCT have not been provided.

The applicants' agent has set out a number of reasons why they consider this proposal in such a location to be suitable. I will take each of the points in turn:

<b>Reasons set out by applicants agent</b>	<b>Council response</b>
<p>Proposed development is mobile and temporary in nature and located on a previously developed site. Therefore no additional urban sprawl, as the proposals are entirely contained within an existing car park</p>	<p>Although the site is acknowledged as being 'brownfield', it is located within the Green Belt and therefore has to be tested against Green Belt policy.</p> <p>Whilst the application states that a two year consent is sought, it is noted that the supporting information mentions a 'temporary planning permission on a <b>7 year basis.</b>'</p>
<p>No permanent development is being proposed and the application site is located on an existing car park where there is no risk of neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<p>It is considered that the cumulative effect of up to four trailer units would have as much visual impact as a proposed building in this location. There is a general presumption against development in the Green Belt unless the proposed development falls within certain defined exceptions or unless very special circumstances have been provided that would overcome the perceived harm to the Green Belt. This proposal does not fall within any of the exceptions, and the Council is of the opinion that sufficient very special circumstances have not been provided.</p>
<p>Vehicles are currently able to park without restriction other than at the discretion of the landlord. There is nothing that would restrict a similar type of vehicle parking on this site for an unrestricted length of time. No further encroachment upon the Green Belt will result from the proposed development as it is entirely restricted to the existing car park.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that any vehicle can currently park on the car park at the application site. However, the proposal before the Committee is for the siting of up to four large trailers that would become a destination in their own right, therefore having a negative impact upon the openness of the Green Belt, which conflicts with the provisions of PPG2, policies D.38 and D.39 of the WCSP, and DS2 of the BDLP.</p>
<p>A number of sites have been considered when assessing where would be the best sites for the units, however due to the complex requirements of the units to enable them to be used a number of sites have been discounted</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges that a number of alternative sites have been considered and dismissed. However, had the applicants and their agents asked for pre-application advice, Officers could have advised them of the Green Belt policies and that planning permission would be unlikely to be granted in this Green Belt location. The Princess of Wales Hospital site has not been considered at all in the supporting evidence sent by the applicants' agent. This site would be more suitable as it is located within the Residential area of Bromsgrove and is considered a sustainable location, as it can be reached via public transport.</p>

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. This is supported by Policy T.1 of the WCSP, which seeks to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car.

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.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the applicants have submitted a 'Green Travel Plan' in support of this application. The Travel Plan states that 'numerous bus services run near to the site', but only identifies two bus routes that run close to the site - 141 and 940, and provides no further details of the regularity or frequency of these services. The Green Travel Plan also states that the applicants will 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 as this proposal would create a destination in its own right, 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.

### **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 sports and country club. 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.

There is a 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. 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.

An additional supporting letter was received from Worcestershire NHS Primary Care Trust on 18.09.07 which states that this application (and the two other sites being considered by this Committee) is *'Adding essential local capacity for NHS patients in Bromsgrove and district by delivering local advanced diagnostic technology that would otherwise only be accessed by a journey to an acute hospital in the county. In doing so, Mercury are enabling Bromsgrove GPs to refer patients quickly for investigations that will lead to rapid treatment if this is indicated.'*

Whilst it is acknowledged that the provision of the mobile facilities would appear to be for the benefit of the community, the Green Belt location proposed is not suitable for this type of development, and insufficient evidence has been provided to satisfy the Council as to why no suitable location exists within the Residential area of Bromsgrove, and no suitable very special circumstances have been provided that would outweigh the harm that this proposal would have upon the openness of the Green Belt.

**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).