

Name of Applicant	Proposal	Expiry Date	Plan Ref.
Mr Dan Rickett	<p>Outline application (matters of access and scale to be considered) for the development of up to 10 two storey dwellings and alterations of existing access</p> <p>Land To Rear Of 1-6 Smedley Crooke Place, Redditch Road, Hopwood, Worcestershire,</p>		17/01290/OUT

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be REFUSED

Consultations

Highways England

No objection

Worcestershire County Council Countryside Service

Consulted 3rd October 2018 No Comments Received To Date

Ramblers Association

Consulted 3rd October 2018 No Comments Received To Date

Arboricultural Officer

No objection subject to conditions.

- All trees and hedge lines retained
- No storage of plant/materials within the RPAs of any retained trees
- Any excavations within the RPAs must be carried out by hand and in accordance with BS5837:2012
- Arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan

WRS - Noise

The submitted noise assessment appears satisfactory and can be applied to the revised site plan. All of the recommended noise mitigation measures relating to glazing, ventilation and acoustic fencing should be implemented.

Leisure Services Manager

The development is under the threshold that would require a contribution

Education Department at Worcestershire

The development is under the threshold that would require a contribution

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeological Service

No archaeological factors that would require mitigation on this site.

North Worcestershire Water Management

No objection subject to surface water drainage condition

Highways - Bromsgrove

The proposed access arrangements are considered to be substandard and as a result fail to ensure a safe and suitable access for all users is provided. The applicant proposes to utilise the existing access which is close to the roundabout with the A441 and B4120, and as a result a ghost lane has been provided to address right turning movements but this does not and cannot comply with the nationally accepted design standard for a junction of this nature.

The matter of existing or potential traffic generation has been considered, the applicant has pointed out that a certificate of lawful development exists for the land covered by this application. The Highway Authority's view is that the fall-back position does not have any weight in this instance as the movement profile is very different. The application will generate new peak hour trips on to an access that is not considered to be suitable which would be detrimental to highway safety.

The application fails to accord with Paragraph 108 and 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Highway Authority has undertaken a robust assessment of the planning application. Based on the analysis of the information submitted and consultation responses from third parties the Highway Authority concludes that there would be a detrimental impact and therefore recommends that this application is refused.

Alvechurch Parish Council

The application was considered at the Parish Councils Planning meeting of 5th November 2018, after discussion Councillors unanimously agreed to object to this application.

The Parish Council have prepared a detailed response and conclude the following regarding the site:

This site has always been in the Green Belt, any HLS deficit is irrelevant to this application and the land cannot be deemed to be a 'brownfield'. In addition, the likely formal adoption of the Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan, supports the Green Belt policy and its Village Envelope criteria. The proposal would be served by an inadequate access to and from the highway. Therefore, for all these reasons, and that there are no very special circumstances, this application should be rejected.

Public comments

13 comments received for the 21 and 10 dwelling schemes, these are summarised as appropriate:

Green Belt

Harm to openness and visual amenity, the site is not brownfield. Previous applications have been refused, no very special circumstances

Highway matters

Safety of access/egress onto the site in the context of prevailing traffic speed
Capacity of the existing roundabout to take additional demand

Other matters

Prematurity due to the review of the Bromsgrove District Plan

Lack of school/healthcare capacity

Anti-social behaviour

Impact on wildlife

Noise, smell and pollution.

Flooding/Drainage

Unnatural elevated levels of site

Secure boundary fencing

Other issues which are not material planning considerations have been raised, but are not reported here as they cannot be considered in the determination of this application.

Relevant Policies

Bromsgrove District Plan

BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles

BDP2 Settlement Hierarchy

BDP4 Green Belt

BDP7 Housing Mix and Density

BDP8 Affordable Housing

BDP16 Sustainable Transport

BDP19 High Quality Design

BDP21 Natural Environment

Others

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance

APNP Draft Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan

APDS Alvechurch Parish Design Statement

Relevant Planning History

12/1040	Residential development of 21 dwellings (outline)	Refused Dismissed at Appeal	10.01.2014 14.10.2014
08/1038	Nursing home and associated offices - OUTLINE	Refused	26.08.2011
B/2007/0261	Office development (outline)	Withdrawn	30.11.2007
B/2006/0080	Office development (outline)	Withdrawn	10.05.2006

B/1995/0862	Erection of public house and associated Parking and area for social housing and /or public open space	Refused	15.01.1996
B/1991/0966	Proposed B1 development comprising 2 No. blocks of 15,000sq ft each	Withdrawn	09.12.1991
COU/1/85	Established Use Certificate relating to the storage of plant	Granted	06.02.1995

Assessment of Proposal

Members should note that a previous application for 21 residential dwellings (12/0140) was refused by Planning Committee in 2014 and the proposal was dismissed at appeal on the 14th October 2014 (the appeal decision is attached as Appendix 1 for reference). The planning history is relevant to the consideration of the application.

This outline application (17/01290/OUT) has been amended during the application process by the applicant. The original submission proposed up to 21 dwellings on the site, this revised submission now proposes up to 10 dwellings.

The application is submitted in outline form, however, given the Green Belt location and access onto the A441, the matters of scale and access are being considered at this stage. The application is supplemented with proposed streetscenes and a detailed schedule of accommodation.

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, Planning Update Statement, Second Planning Update Statement and Third Planning Update Statement, Transport Assessment, Ecology Appraisal update, Noise Assessment and Arboricultural Survey.

Site Description

The application site relates to a 0.9ha parcel of land located to the east side of the A441 Redditch Road adjacent to the roundabout junction with the B4120. The site is predominantly open scrubland although some areas are covered with a thin layer of crushed stone and discarded rubble. The site is bounded by some semi mature tree specimens. The rear gardens of residential dwellings located in Smedley Crooke Place back onto the northern site boundary and the Woodpecker Close development (B/2007/0495) adjoins the site to the north east. An existing vehicular access is located to the north-west corner of the site leading off Redditch Road. The site is located in the Green Belt as defined in the BDP, is within the Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan area and is located adjacent to but outside of the defined Village Envelope of Hopwood.

Assessment

The main considerations in the determination of the application are the following:

- Whether the proposal represents appropriate development in the Green Belt; and if not, whether any very special circumstances exist to outweigh the harm caused
- The impact of the proposal in relation to highways and access
- The impact of the proposal on residential amenity

Whether inappropriate development

Paragraph 133 of the NPPF identifies that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

The NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should be refused planning permission unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated which clearly outweigh this harm. The NPPF also emphasises that when considering an application, a Local Planning Authority should ensure that substantial weight is given 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, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF allow for some exceptions to inappropriate development, one of which is:

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 reuse previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.*

The starting point is to consider whether the site constitutes previously developed land, which is defined by the NPPF (Annex 2 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.*

The proposed development does not fall into any of the exceptions which define appropriate development as set out in policy BDP4 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and paragraph 145 of the Framework. Therefore the proposal amounts to inappropriate development, which is, by definition, harmful. The extent of the harm can be established from the plans and supporting documents accompanying the application. The application proposes up to 10 dwellings would comprise a total of 998sqm of floorspace consisting of two storey properties. The scale would have a significant and demonstrable harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The applicant has put forward a number of considerations in numerous Planning Statements which need to be assessed. There has been reference made to policy

BDP4.4(g) of the Bromsgrove District Plan which allows for the limited infill or complete redevelopment of previously developed land which would not have any greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The planning status of the land has been extensively covered in the previous application 12/1040 and the Council accepts that an Established Use Certificate was granted in 1985 allowing for the storage of plant and machinery on the land. During the course of the previous appeal, the Inspector held that:

'In relation to the guidance in the Framework, having regards to the planning history of the site that has been submitted, I find that even if the lawful use is disputed, it is clear that, at least, the site is 'redundant' and the proposal would involve the complete redevelopment of the land. However, within this exceptional category defined by the Framework, it is also necessary to consider whether the new development would have a greater impact on openness'.

Whilst the views of Alvechurch PC are noted regarding brownfield land and it is evident that the extent of the use of the land has varied considerably over time, the Inspector accepted that the site comprised redundant brownfield land. However, he concluded that the proposal for 21 dwellings would significantly detract from the openness of the site to a far greater extent than the established use and therefore breached this criterion of policy BDP4 and paragraph 89 of the NPPF.

Whilst the current proposal has been reduced in scale and now comprises up to 10 dwellings and associated infrastructure. It is considered that there would still be an adverse impact on openness, resulting in inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Therefore, the proposal is unacceptable in principle. However, the decision maker must consider if there are any matters of equal or greater weight which would be required to clearly outweigh the substantial identified harm.

Thereby, notwithstanding the previously developed status of the land, the construction of up to 10 dwellings would have a far greater impact on the openness of the site and the wider area than occurs with the established lawful use. Thereby it follows that the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is, by definition, harmful and should only be approved in very special circumstances.

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that:

Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development...for decision making this means:

- *Approving development proposals which accord with an up to date development plan without delay*
- *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date⁷, granting permission unless:*
 - i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed⁷, or*
 - ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole.*

An important aspect to note however are footnotes 6 and 7. Footnote 6 notes that:

The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those listed in paragraph 176) and/ or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt....

Footnote 7 notes that:

This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites...

The Council considers that the relevant policies in the adopted development plan are in conformity with the NPPF and should be given significant weight in decision making. However, even if this were a matter of contention, NPPF Policy 11 d) makes provision where such policies may be considered out of date to include land designated as Green Belt in its provision to protect certain assets against the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Council considers that in principle the proposals would therefore not trigger the presumption in favour of sustainable development and be contrary to national policy including national Green Belt policy even if the adopted Local Plan Green Belt policy was deemed out of date.

Five year housing supply

The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to significantly boost the supply of housing and planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

If a Council is found to lack a five year housing land supply, the NPPF 'tilted balance' in favour of the presumption in favour of sustainable development would normally be engaged (i.e. paragraph 11(d) of NPPF 2018) this would not be the case in relation to this proposal. As noted in 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' above the NPPF also stipulates that where restrictive policy is relevant (as set out under footnote 6 of the revised NPPF 2018), the 'tilted balance' does not apply. This position is referred to and supported in the Forest of Dean V SSCLG {2016} EWHC 421 (Admin). It is therefore clear that the NPPFs 'tilted balance' toward the presumption in favour of sustainable development is not engaged in this case because the proposed development is deemed to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which, in accordance with paragraph 11(d)(i) of NPPF 2018, is one of the '*...protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.*'

The Council has published its 5 Year Housing Land Supply Report with a base date of 1st April 2017. This concludes that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply being able to demonstrate 4.57 year supply of deliverable land for Housing. This document concludes that the Council falls short of a 5 Year Supply of Land for Housing.

The Council being found to be unable to demonstrate a current five year housing land supply does not constitute very special circumstances to relax the protection of the Green Belt and does not outweigh the material harm that would be caused by the application

site to the Green Belt by virtue of its impact on openness. In any case, it has been made clear in both the Ministerial Statement of 1 July 2013 and paragraph 034 of the Planning Practice Guidance that *'unmet housing need (including for traveller sites) is unlikely to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm to constitute the 'very special circumstances' justifying inappropriate development on a site within the Green Belt.*

In conclusion with respect to the five year housing land supply, in this case any lack of five year supply neither engages the 'tilted balance' in favour of the presumption in favour of sustainable development nor constitutes very special circumstances to approve inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Very Special Circumstances

Very special circumstances are required to clearly outweigh the harms identified in this report; however they will not exist unless the material planning considerations advanced by the applicant clearly outweigh both the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.

Existing Use/Fall-Back

Information has been submitted within supporting planning statements regarding the current use of the site. In this it is argued that the current usage of the site is constrained by the ongoing planning situation and length of lease that has been offered. Therefore the fall-back position against which the application must be assessed is that of a use with substantially greater visual and environmental impact and that the site could be operated on a 24/7 basis. The applicant has referred to specific case law in making this case (*Zurich Assurance v North Lincolnshire Council*).

In order to be a material consideration, a fall-back only has to have *'more than a merely theoretical prospect'*. While the likelihood of the fall-back occurring may affect the weight to be attached to it, its status as a material planning consideration is unaffected. The Council should therefore have regard to the 'unfettered' LDC but afford it such weight as is appropriate in the determination of any future planning application on the site.

As indicated in the planning history, there have been planning applications on this site dating back to 2008 (albeit not by this applicant) and most recently an application for 21 dwellings in 2012 and subsequent appeal (by this applicant). Therefore it is evident that there has been a clear aspiration to redevelop the site and maximise its value through the erection of dwellings or other development for well over 10 years. Furthermore in the interim period between 2012 and the present time, the Local Planning Authority is not aware of the substantial use of the site for storage of plant and machinery on the land. Therefore while the intensification of the site is a material consideration, the likelihood of the fall back occurring and to the extent described by the applicant is considered unlikely, and therefore the weight this can be given is low.

Other Very Special Circumstances

The other matters put forward by the applicant are housing need, the adjoining development at Woodpecker Close, lack of previously developed land in the District, community benefit, harm arising to openness from the existing use of the land and the layout/arrangement of the proposal compared with the existing use, visual amenity, comparative increase in openness, improvement in living conditions, design benefit, highway safety and sustainability. They have also referred to other planning cases in the authority and elsewhere which they consider support their case. In terms of the Bromsgrove cases this includes an appeal decision at Houndsfield Lane (16/0999) which was dismissed at appeal in April 2018 and the redevelopment of Mumbersons Transport Depot on Scarfield Hill, Alvechurch (16/1190), where a delegated planning permission was granted in July 2017 for 9 dwellings following the demolition of the numerous buildings on the site.

However, these matters put forward do not cumulatively and clearly outweigh the substantial harm arising from the proposed development of up to 10 dwellings and I therefore conclude that the very special circumstances do not exist to justify the proposal.

Affordable Housing

NPPF (2018) paragraph 63 requires the provision of affordable housing for residential developments that are major developments (major development definition is outlined in Annex 2 – 10 or more homes or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more). The site is 0.9 hectares (without access) and 1.25 hectares with access and therefore under the revised NPPF the site would require to make an affordable housing contribution.

The Council's current affordable housing policy is set out in Policy BDP8 Affordable Housing of the District Plan and establishes that:

Contributions will not be sought from developments of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1000 sq m. Where there is a net increase of 11 or more dwellings affordable housing provision will be expected on-site and will be calculated against the net number of new dwellings as follows:

- *Up to 40% affordable housing (or a higher % if proposed) on greenfield sites or any site accommodating 200 or more dwellings;*
- *Up to 30% affordable housing (or a higher % if proposed) on brownfield sites accommodating less than 200 dwellings*

This policy remains the legal starting point for the consideration of planning applications under Section 38(6) PCPA 2004, which requires that the Council determines applications in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Revised NPPF 63 is a material consideration. The weight to be given to it is a matter for the decision maker when determining each planning application.

Having regard to the NPPF as a material consideration of significant weight, officers' view is that the continued local evidence of unmet demand for affordable housing (as most recently outlined in Bromsgrove District Plan Review – Issues and Options Document (September 2018)) deserve significant weight in deciding whether, for the purposes of

Section 38(6), the revised Framework policy weigh sufficiently against the Policy BDP8 and whether the threshold for affordable housing should be expanded to assist with meeting this unmet demand for affordable housing. As such proposals for residential development of 10 or more homes or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more should now make a contribution towards the provision of affordable housing.

No provision for affordable housing has been made for this proposal, it is therefore contrary to paragraph 63 of the NPPF and in line with BDP8, there should be provision of affordable housing of 30% of the new dwellings.

Draft Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan (APNP)

The applicant in their Second Planning Statement outline the reasons which they consider the Draft APNP to be not sound as it fails to show consistency with the Development Plan and the NPPF and that it relies on existing settlement boundaries and consideration should be made of what the development boundary is in reality rather than put forward in an out of date development plan.

In terms of its soundness, it is worthwhile to note that an examination of the Draft APNP has been completed and as outlined in the Examiners Report, (dated 7th November 2018) subject to a number of recommendations to modify policies and text, the plan would meet the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans and that once modified the plan should proceed to referendum. It has now been confirmed that the plan is legally compliant and meets the Basic Conditions, one of which is general conformity with the NPPF.

A referendum was held on the Draft APNP on Thursday 10th January 2019. 97% of residents that voted, voted in favour of the plan being used to in the decision making process. The APNP will now be taken to the District Council's Cabinet and Full Council meetings in February to recommend the neighbourhood plan is formally 'made'. To clarify for Members, the plan is not currently part of the development plan, however given its advanced stage it is considered to carry significant weight.

In terms of the village boundary, the site is within the Green Belt and lies beyond, but immediately abutting the village of Hopwood as defined on the Bromsgrove District Council Proposals Map.

The boundaries of diverse rural settlements such as Hopwood can in many instances be subjective. The applicant has outlined a Court of Appeal decision which it considers relevant. The Court found that the Inspector was required to consider whether, as a matter of fact on the ground, the site appeared to be in the village; further, that he misdirected himself by accepting the Local Plan as being conclusive as to whether or not the site appeared to be in the village (*Julian Wood v. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Gravesham Borough Council* [2015]). In this case the boundaries of diverse rural settlements such as Hopwood are in many instances subjective. However, after visiting the site, neighbouring properties and surrounding fields, it is considered that the site does not appear to be in the village envelope.

It is correct that due to the absence of a 5 year housing supply, the policies in the Neighbourhood plan relating to housing are out of date. However, Paragraph 11 of the

NPPF does not state that where relevant policies are out of date, the plan must therefore be ignored. This does not prevent the decision maker giving as much weight as they judge to a proposals conflict with the neighbourhood plan and the shared vision for the area. It does not remove the general presumption against planning permission being granted for development which is in conflict with the draft neighbourhood plan which is considered to carry significant weight.

The proposal is considered to conflict with Policy H2: Housing for Hopwood and Rowney Green of the Draft Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan. This policy states the following:

New housing developments that are well designed will be supported if they show consideration for the Alvechurch Parish Design Statement, meet the other requirements set out in the APNP and the Bromsgrove DP and where development:

- a) *Is limited to small residential infill development and maintains the continuity of existing frontage buildings, or is on brownfield land within the built up area of the village where the site is closely surrounded by existing buildings*
- b) *Is not considered to be back garden development*
- c) *Is consistent with the character of the locality as outlined in the Alvechurch Parish Design Statement on its pages 29-32*
- d) *Provides at least one small home with two or fewer bedrooms for every one large dwelling with three or more bedrooms*
- e) *Is in suitable locations, on small infill plots giving opportunities for some well-designed self-build homes*
- f) *Is within the built up area and does not involve the outward extension of the village envelope as shown on the adopted Bromsgrove District Plan policies map.*

It is considered that the proposal conflicts with points a) as it is not considered to be within the built up area of the village, where the site is closely surrounded by existing buildings and secondly it conflicts with point f) on the basis that development of 10 dwellings would expand the village envelope in this location.

Policy H6: Providing a Mix of Housing Types and Sizes of the Draft Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan, outlines that proposal for 10 or more dwellings should seek to achieve the following mix unless viability, market requirements at that time or other material considerations show a robust justification for a different mix:

- a. *Overall up to 10% of new dwellings should aim to have 1 bedroom*
- b. *40% should aim to have 2 bedrooms with an element of ground floor single level dwellings to meet the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities*
- c. *40% should aim to have 3 bedrooms*
- d. *Up to 10% should aim to have 4 or more bedrooms.*

The proposal does not meet this requirement in its illustrative form regarding the mix of housing sizes. However, as the scheme is in outline, it is considered that this element is still to be considered as part of any reserved matters submission.

Highways

Policy BDP16: Sustainable Transport taken from the Bromsgrove District Plan requires that *'Development should comply with the Worcestershire County Council's Transport policies, design guide and car parking standards, incorporate safe and convenient access and be well related to the wider transport network'*.

As outlined in the consultation comments above, the proposed access arrangements are considered to be substandard and as a result fail to ensure that safe and suitable access for all users is provided. The applicant proposes to utilise the existing access which is close to the roundabout with the A441 and B4120, and as a result a ghost lane has been provided to address right turning movements. However, this does not and cannot comply with the nationally accepted design standard for a junction of this nature.

The matter of existing or potential traffic generation has been considered, the applicant has pointed out that a certificate of lawful development exists for the land covered by this application. The Highway Authority's view is that the fall-back position does not have any weight in this instance as the movement profile is very different. The application will generate new peak hour trips on to an access that is not considered to be suitable which would be detrimental to highway safety.

The application fails to accord with Policy BDP16 and Paragraph 108 and 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The impact of the proposal on residential amenity

The matters of design and layout are reserved for future determination. However, it is evident from the proposed plans will appear to be able to achieve an adequate separation from the rear of the properties on Smedley Crooke Place and Woodpecker Close to the north. It is not considered that the proposal would result in a loss of residential amenity with respect to these adjoining properties.

Other matters

Issues relating to trees, ecology, noise and drainage are all considered to be acceptable.

The Parish Council in their objection also raise the issue of prematurity due to the review of the Local Plan Review. Bromsgrove District Plan Review - Issues and Options Consultation ended on 19th November 2018, however the plan is still in its early stages of review. Paragraph 014 of the Planning Practice Guidance indicates that refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft Local Plan has yet to be submitted for examination.

In terms of other comments received regarding the application, the proposal is too small to require an education contribution and it is considered to be of a scale that would have a significant impact on local healthcare provision. Furthermore a private residential

development is not considered to create anti-social behaviour or create undue smell or pollution. A survey of levels could be undertaken to ensure that that this was satisfactory compared to surrounding site levels and a condition could be added regarding future boundary treatments.

Conclusion

The proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt which carries substantial weight in respect of the determination of the application. The matters put forward by the applicant have been fully considered including the absence of a five year housing land supply but these neither singularly or cumulatively clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt arising from the construction of up to 10 dwellings.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be Refused.

Reasons for Refusal

- 1) The proposal comprises the erection of up to 10 residential dwellings which would have a significant and demonstrable impact on the openness of the Green Belt and would conflict with the purpose of including land within the Green Belt. Whilst the matters put forward by the applicant in support of the application are noted, they do not amount to very special circumstances which would outweigh the identified harm. Therefore, it is not considered that any very special circumstances exist. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies BDP1 and BDP4 of the Bromsgrove District Plan 2017 and the provisions of the NPPF.
- 2) The proposed access arrangements (including the proposed ghost lane) are considered to be substandard and as a result fail to ensure a safe and suitable access for all users is provided. The application will generate new peak hour trips onto an access that is not considered to be suitable and which would be detrimental to highway safety. It is considered that as a result, the development would be contrary to policy BDP16 of the Bromsgrove District Plan 2017 and the provisions of the NPPF.
- 3) The proposal makes insufficient provision for affordable housing. In the absence of evidence to justify the reduced provision, the proposal would be contrary to the provisions of policy BDP8 of the Bromsgrove District Plan 2017 and paragraph 63 of the NPPF.
- 4) The application site is neither in the built up area of the Hopwood where it is closely surrounded by existing buildings and is outside the current settlement limit boundaries of the village of Hopwood. A development in this location of the size proposed would therefore be contrary to Draft Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan Policy H2 criteria a and f.

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