

Item No. 8

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/17/05480/FULL
LOCATION	Staples Wholesale Nursery, Fordfield Road, Millbrook, Bedford, MK45 2HZ
PROPOSAL	Change of use of land from garden centre, to a Sui Generis use for the storage, refurbishment and hire of temporary and portable buildings, including erection of office, workshop and formation of open storage area, parking, improvements to access and landscaping, following the demolition of existing structures.
PARISH	Millbrook
WARD	Cranfield & Marston Moretaine
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Morris, Matthews & Mrs Clark
CASE OFFICER	Matthew Heron
DATE REGISTERED	13 November 2017
EXPIRY DATE	12 February 2018
APPLICANT	Forte Developments
AGENT	Kirkby Diamond
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Referred to Committee by Assistant Director for Development and Infrastructure
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Recommend approval

Summary of Recommendation

The development would result in harm to the Green Belt through representing inappropriate development. Further, the proposal would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The above carries substantial weight against the development.

Furthermore, the proposal would also introduce industrial form and operations to a more rural setting that would harm the character of the area. This adds to the above mentioned weight against the scheme.

However, balanced against this harm, the enhanced office and workshop facilities at the site would allow the workforce of the business to expand to approximately 30 people within an initial 18 month period. Overall, the net increase in terms of jobs at the site would be 26.

Further, on discussion with Business Investment Officers, it is considered that the existing location for this business is not suitable for expansion and that there are no realistic alternative sites within Employment Areas or in other areas outside of the Green Belt for this particular proposed use.

The proposal would afford considerable social and economic benefits – to which significant weight is attached in line with national policy. Though the development would result in some environmental harm, when viewed in the round, it is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development.

In the overall balancing exercise required, it is considered the very special circumstances required exist and that the matters in favour of this scheme clearly outweigh the cumulative harm that arises.

Site Location:

The application site comprises an existing Garden Centre and associated structures and parking. It is approximately 1.7ha in size and is within the South Bedfordshire Green Belt. To the rear of the site is the Centre Parcs holiday resort.

The Application:

This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the existing site to storage and distribution and industrial use. Operational development, including demolition of existing structures and the construction of new office/workshop buildings is also applied for. Proposals include engineering operations (a new car park layout) and seek permission for the transient open storage of modular buildings.

Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that the industrial element of this proposal would comprise of the re-servicing of buildings which includes processes such as; adding extra insulation, altering mains water supply and respraying.

On discussion with Environmental Health Officers, it is considered that the industrial type activities proposed could be carried out within a residential area without resulting in harm to living conditions in terms of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit. Accordingly, it is considered that this development proposed an element of light industrial activity (B1(c)) rather than general industry (B2). The applicant has agreed to this and the proposal has been assessed on this basis.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies - North 2009

Policy CS1 – Development Strategy

Policy CS2 – Developer Contributions

Policy CS9 – Providing Jobs

Policy CS11 – Rural Economy and Tourism

Policy CS13 – Climate Change

Policy CS14 – High Quality Development

Policy CS16 – Landscape and Woodland

Policy CS18 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Policy DM2 – Sustainable Construction of New Buildings

Policy DM3 – High Quality development

Policy DM4 – Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes

Policy DM14 – Landscape and Woodland

Policy DM15 – Biodiversity

Local Plan

The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan has reached pre-submission stage. The consultation ran between 11 January and 22 February 2018. The comments will now be forwarded to the independent planning inspector alongside the Local Plan when the Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State.

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 216) stipulates that from the day of publication, decision-takers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The apportionment of this weight is subject to:

1. the stage of preparation of the emerging plan;
2. the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies;
3. the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework.

In summary it is therefore considered that reference should be made to the emerging plan but limited weight should be applied to the Central Bedfordshire Pre-Submission Local Plan taking into account its stage of preparation, the level of consistency with the Framework and acknowledging that the draft site allocations have now been subject to statutory public consultation. The following policies are relevant to the consideration of this application:

Relevant Emerging Plan Policies

Policy SP1: Growth Strategy

Policy SP2: National Planning Policy Framework - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy HQ1: High Quality Development

Policy HQ2: Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy

Policy T1: Mitigation of Transport Impacts on the Network

Policy T2: Highway Safety & Design

Policy T3: Parking

Policy EE2: Enhancing Biodiversity

Policy EE4: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

Policy EE5: Landscape Character and Value

Policy EE6: Tranquillity

Policy EE12: Public Rights of Way

Policy CC1: Climate Change and Sustainability

Policy CC3: Flood Risk Management

Policy CC6: Water Supply and Sewerage Infrastructure

Policy CC7: Water Quality

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Other Documents

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (March 2014)

Relevant Planning History:

MB/96/1074 - FULL: CHANGE OF USE TO SALE OF HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES. Granted.

MB/97/1003 - FULL: ERECTION OF NEW GLASSHOUSE FOR NURSERY USE. Granted.

MB/2000/1439 - FULL: ERECTION OF POLYTHENE PLANT PROTECTION AND DISPLAY AREA. Granted.

MB/02/1508/FULL - Full: Erection of extensions to existing sales area, use of existing building for garden machinery sales and maintenance, retention of use as retail garden centre. Granted.

MB/03/2095/FULL - Full: Erection of storage building. Granted.

Consultees:

Millbrook Parish Council

No objection received.

Consultees

Highways Team – No objection subject to relevant conditions.

Trees and Landscaping – No objection, subject to relevant conditions.

Internal Drainage Board – No objection.

Environmental Health – No objection, subject to relevant conditions.

Ecology – No objection, subject to relevant conditions.

Rights of Way – No objection.

Fire Protection Officer – No objection, subject to the building conforming to relevant sections of Building Control regulation.

SuDS Officers – No objection subject to relevant conditions.

Comments from surrounding addresses

One letter of objection has been received from an adjacent address. Objections are summarised as:

- The proposal fails to accord with Green Belt policy.
- The proposal fails to accord with relevant local policy.
- The proposal is an incompatible neighbour and is detrimental to the peaceful operation of an important economic asset.
- No identified need for the employment use.
- Harm to the character of the area.
- The existing use has not been demonstrated as redundant.
- Harm in terms of traffic generation.

Determining Issues:

1. The principle of the development within the Green Belt
2. The quality of the design and the impact upon the character of the area
3. The impact upon living conditions
4. Highway safety and parking provision
5. Other material considerations
 - i. Flooding and drainage
 - ii. Ecology
 - iii. Rights of Way
 - iv. Sustainability

Considerations

1. The principle of the development within the Green Belt

- 1.1 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. In the Green Belt, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 1.2 The main issues to consider in terms of Green Belt policy, therefore, are the appropriateness of the development; effect on the purpose of including land in the Green Belt; effect on the openness of the Green Belt and the impact on the visual

amenity of the Green Belt; if it is inappropriate development are there any very special circumstances to justify its approval.

Appropriateness

- 1.3 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF (henceforth referred to as the Framework) states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt, unless it falls within one of the exceptions set out.
- 1.4 One exception under paragraph 89 of the Framework for new buildings in the Green Belt is partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites, which would not have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt or the purposes of including land within it than the existing development. As such, an assessment in terms of impacts upon the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it now follows.

Openness

- 1.5 With regards to openness this is about the physical permanence at the application site and the sense of visual openness at the site.
- 1.6 With regards to the visual sense of openness, given the established vegetation bounding the site, views are restricted to certain vantage point along the access road – particularly through the existing access. Though there would be some views of proposed permanent buildings, given the set back nature of the storage areas, it is not considered that there would be a discernible impact in this regard compared to the existing development.
- 1.7 Turning to physical presence, the proposed development would result in the loss of the existing buildings at the site which would be replaced by a single storey office and a workshop with a ridge height of approximately 7.8m. In total, the development would result in a reduction of physical presence, in terms of the footprint of permanent structures, of approximately 2,237m².
- 1.8 Notwithstanding that there would be a significant decrease in terms of the footprint of permanent structures, the proposed development includes considerable sections of hardstanding to the rear of the site for the open storage of modular buildings. These buildings would be stacked on top of each other to a maximum height of 6m and it is estimated that there would be capacity for a maximum of 300 modular buildings. Though temporary and transient in nature, the scale of this storage would significantly increase built physical presence towards the rear of the site and across the width of the site.
- 1.9 Though the reduction in permanent physical presence is acknowledged, it is considered that the overall physical permanence throughout the site would increase compared to the existing development. The first pre-condition of paragraph 89 of the Framework is therefore not met.

Purposes of including land in the Green Belt

1.10 It is necessary to consider whether the proposal would result in harm in terms of the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Paragraph 80 of The Framework states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

1.11 Though adjacent to Centre Parcs, given the dispersed nature of built form in this adjacent use, it is not considered to represent a large built-up area. Further, the development would not result in the merging of two towns, make urban regeneration any less likely nor would it harm the setting or special character of a historic town.

1.12 It is acknowledged that the proposal would not result in the loss of open countryside outside of the previously developed site. However, it would spread built presence into areas of the site currently absent from built form – particularly towards the north western and north eastern areas of the site. Further, the proposal would introduce a more industrial feature to the site. In this sense, the development would also introduce a use one would not usually associate with a more rural setting. Accordingly, the development would fail to safeguard the countryside from encroachment, contravening one of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

Conclusion on Green Belt

1.13 Though the application site is considered to represent previously developed land, the development would result in greater harm to the openness of the Green Belt and in terms of the purposes of including land within it compared to the existing development at the site. Accordingly, neither of the pre-conditions associated with the exception identified under paragraph 89 of the Framework are met and the proposal represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

1.14 As with previous Green Belt policy inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and paragraph 87 of the Framework states that it should not be approved except in very special circumstances. As the recent Redhill Aerodrome judgement (Redhill Aerodrome Ltd [2014] EWCA Civ 1386, Sullivan, Tomlinson, Lewison LJJ) has identified that very special circumstances can outweigh ‘any other harm’, not just Green Belt harm, the consideration of very special circumstances may be found at the end of this report – when all other planning matters have been considered

2. The quality of the design and the impact upon the character of the area

2.1 Policies CS14, DM3, DM4 and DM14 seek to ensure proposals are of a high quality of design, respect the local context in which they are in, are appropriate in terms of scale and have an acceptable impact upon the landscape. Chapter 7 of

the Framework emphasises the importance of good design in context and, in particular, paragraph 64 states permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

- 2.2 The site itself is located within the Greensand Ridge Landscape Character Area (LCA), where in this location the aim is to conserve and enhance the wooded character and also to try to create more heathland or acidic grassland habitats, to maintain the traditional enclosed character of this landscape.
- 2.3 As discussed above, the site is well contained visually with mature hedges and established trees and views of the site are restricted to certain vantage points along the access road (mainly through the site access). Views of the proposed office building and the open storage areas are likely to be available from this access road.
- 2.4 The proposed office building would be single storey in scale and would have a ridge height of approximately 3.5m. This would be a modular building, constructed of colourcoated wall panelling (Mushroom 10B19) under grey roof sheeting, positioned adjacent to the access to the site.
- 2.5 The workshop building would be positioned adjacent to the eastern boundary of the application site and would again be functional in nature. It would have a ridge height of approximately 7.8m and would be constructed of cladding (Mushroom 10B19) under roof sheeting.
- 2.6 Overall, given the considerable amount of established screening vegetation, it is not considered that these buildings would appear visually dominant or cramped within the immediate streetscene.
- 2.7 It would not appear that any vegetation of significant amenity value would be removed from the site as a result of the proposed development. Further, no objection has been raised from Landscape Officers and it is considered that suitable landscaping at the site could be achieved through conditions requesting a Landscape Plan and a Tree Protection Plan. Suitable materials for the workshop (given there is no identification of roofing materials for this building) and appropriate lighting at the site could also be managed conditionally.
- 2.8 Notwithstanding the above, given the nature of the activities proposed at the site (which may also result in an increase of more industrial type vehicular movements to/from the site) and the functional form of the proposed buildings, it is considered that the development would introduce a more industrial activity to the site than that which currently exists. This would be somewhat incongruous with this rural setting.
- 2.9 Though identified conditions could mitigate the identified harm to an extent and the site is heavily screened, the loss of a use one would typically associate with a more rural setting to be replaced by this type of industrial activity would result in harm to the character of the immediate streetscene and the visual interests of its surroundings. This harm is afforded moderate weight against the grant of permission.

3. The impact upon living conditions

- 3.1 Policy DM3 aims to preserve neighbouring amenity. Furthermore, guidance in paragraph 17 of the Framework is to always seek to secure high quality design and good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupiers of land and buildings.
- 3.2 As well as the open storage and distribution of stacked modular buildings, the activities at the site include a light industrial process comprising re-servicing these modular buildings. This primarily includes; adding extra insulation, altering mains water supply points and respraying. This will be carried out within an enclosed workshop area.
- 3.3 The closest sensitive receptors to the application site are those within lodges at the adjacent Centre Parcs development. On discussion with Environmental Health Officers, it is considered that the industrial type activities proposed could be carried out without resulting in harm to living conditions in terms of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.
- 3.4 Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in this regard and complies with identified policy. However, to ensure that activities take place at appropriate times, it is considered reasonable to impose a condition requiring development to operate between 07:30-18:00 Monday to Saturday only and at no time on Sundays or Bank or Public Holidays.

4. Highway safety and parking provision

- 4.1 Parking is to be provided at 1 space per 47sqm which is considered appropriate. Further, there is space within the site should demand for on-site spaces increase in the future.
- 4.2 Turning to highway safety, it is likely that there would be some HGV movements with the existing use and Fordfield Road is approximately 5.5-6m wide and a good link exists to the A507 roundabout located just to the north of the site. Further, it is proposed to amend the site access to accommodate the maximum legal length of a HGV by making adjustments to the northern corner radii (shown on drg 1707-74 PL01). This is considered acceptable and can be dealt with by a small works Section 278 Agreement.
- 4.3 Taking the above into account, subject to relevant conditions (including a request for a Construction Management Plan) no objection has been raised by Highways Officers and the proposal would not prejudice vehicular or pedestrian safety.

5. Other material considerations

(i) Flooding and Drainage

- 5.1 Policy CS13 seeks to ensure proposals incorporate suitable drainage infrastructure. The application site is not located within Flood Zones 2 or 3 – indicating a low probability of flooding. Furthermore, there are no identified critical drainage issues at the site. Accordingly, subject to the imposition of a condition

requesting a detailed Surface Water Drainage Plan, no objection is raised by SuDS Officers and the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.

(ii) Ecology

- 5.2 The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 118-119), Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 as well as Circular 06/05. Furthermore, Policy CS18 seeks to support the maintenance and enhancement of habitats and states that development that would fragment or prejudice the biodiversity network will not be supported.
- 5.3 On discussion with Ecology Officers, subject to a condition ensuring that development is in accordance with measures identified within the submitted Ecological Report, the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.

(iii) Rights of Way

- 5.4 On discussion with Rights of Way Officers, given that Environmental Health Officers do not consider that this development would impact deleteriously upon any nearby receptors in terms of noise and disturbance, and as Landscape Officers have raised no objection to this proposal, the development is not considered to result in harm to the enjoyment of the adjacent Rights of Way Network.

(iv) Sustainability

- 5.5 The Framework adopts a broad definition of sustainable development in that it states that the policies in paragraphs 18 – 219, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice. The Framework also establishes that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which includes economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Economic

- 5.6 Sustainable economic growth is one of the key aspects of the current planning system. Paragraph 19 of the Framework states:

'The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.'

- 5.7 Paragraph 20 then goes on to state:

'To help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.'

The proposed development

- 5.8 The applicant has illustrated that the proposed occupiers of the site currently employ eight people at the depot in Ampthill. However, the lease on this site comes to an end in July 2018 and, in any event, it is stated that the existing site is not suitable for expansion.
- 5.9 It is also stated that the new site, with its enhanced office and workshop facilities, would allow the workforce to expand to approximately 30 people within an initial 18 month period. The new jobs would be a mixture of additional office staff plus both skilled and semi-skilled tradespeople in the yard. These would be a mixture of carpenters, painters, electricians, plumbers and general operatives who would be required for the preparation of the cabins for hire.
- 5.10 Overall, the net increase in terms of jobs at the site would be 26. This weighs significantly in favour of the proposed development.

The impact upon adjacent economic assets

- 5.11 It is acknowledged that the application site lies adjacent to Centre Parcs – a considerable economic asset within the area. Specific concern has been raised with regards to the proposal impacting deleteriously upon this asset, in terms of the harm to the peaceful enjoyment of the countryside and the Green Belt (including adjacent Public Rights of Way).
- 5.12 Green Belt matters are considered throughout this report. However, on discussion with Environmental Health Officers, it is not considered that, subject to the imposition of the condition identified in Section 3 of this report, the proposal would result in harm to any sensitive receptors, including those at the adjacent Centre Parcs, in terms of noise and disturbance. Technical Highways Officers consider the development acceptable viewed in context with adjacent facilities and, on discussion with Public Right of Way Officers, it is not considered that the proposed development would impact upon the enjoyment of the adjacent Right of Way network.
- 5.13 Overall, though it is acknowledged that the development would introduce a more industrial use compared to that which currently exists – possibly altering the perception of the area upon entering the Centre Parcs site, it is not considered that the proposal would result in adverse impacts upon the operation of any existing nearby business.

Social

- 5.14 The economic benefits outlined above would in turn provide social benefits. Job creation often promotes healthy local government budgets, improves income distribution, reduces inequality and results in decreased crime rates.

Environmental

- 5.15 Though the proposal would be located within close proximity of an appropriate transport network, the development would result in an urbanisation of the site – introducing industrial activity to a rural location.

6. Overall Planning Balance

- 6.1 There are no exceptions within Section 9 of the Framework for this type of development. As such, it represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- 6.2 As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and paragraph 87 of the Framework states that it should not be approved except in very special circumstances. This is now considered by the Local Planning Authority.

Very Special Circumstances and Balancing Exercise

The need for the use at this site

- 6.3 On discussion with Business Investment Officers (BIO), it is acknowledged that the applicant represents a well-established national business, currently located on the Ampthill Business Park, looking to expand its local presence.
- 6.4 The applicant has stated that the current lease for the business expires shortly, that the current site for the business is not suitable for expansion and that there are no realistic alternative sites within the area. Internal Officers have indeed confirmed that they are aware that the business' agents have looked extensively for other suitable sites for a considerable period of time without success. Further, Internal BIO also consider that there are no realistic alternative sites for this proposed use within existing Employment Areas and that the business' current location does not afford space for expansion.
- 6.5 Though no specific assessment has been submitted for alternative sites, with regard to all of the above, it is reasonable to conclude that there are limited, if any, available alternative sites to cater for the proposed use within the settlement envelopes of nearby Towns and Villages.
- 6.6 The application site would therefore offer a rare opportunity for this business to stay within the Unitary Area and provide continuity of employment to current staff. This weighs in favour of the proposal.

Employment Strategy

- 6.7 The emphasis of the strategy and objectives in the employment sections of local policy is on managing reserves of employment land to ensure that there continues to be enough land and floorspace in the District, in the right locations and of the right quality, to provide jobs for local people and ensure that the District maintains a diversity of employment uses which accommodates for the requirements of local businesses and firms seeking to locate in the area.
- 6.8 It is noted that objections have been raised with regard to the development contravening this existing employment strategy – with particular regard to Policies CS9 and CS11.

- 6.9 Policy CS9 seeks to ensure that there are sufficient employment opportunities in the area for the plan period. This development does not conflict with this aim. Further, Policy CS11 seeks to safeguard existing rural employment sites and also supports the diversification of the rural economy - including the conversion of redundant uses to commercial and industrial use. As discussed above, it is not considered that it has been evidenced that this site is redundant. However, Policy CS11 does not dictate that this should weigh against the proposal – rather it applies weight in favour to developments proposing the re-use of a redundant building for certain uses. Accordingly, the proposal would not contravene the aims of this particular policy.
- 6.10 Finally, it is noted that objections state that the development fails to comply with Policy DM4. This policy applies weight in favour to certain developments within settlement envelopes to provide for the broad protection of the countryside. Impacts on the character of the area have been considered within this report and it has been identified that the proposal would conflict with this policy. This harm is to be factored into the overall balance.
- 6.11 Overall, it is not considered that the development would contravene the current overarching employment strategy for the area.
- 6.12 Additionally, it is noted that objections raise concern with regard to the development contravening the emerging employment strategy illustrated within the emerging Single Local Plan. Though the aims within this emerging Plan are broadly consistent with the current employment strategy, it should first be noted the final Submission Version of this Plan is to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate before 30 April 2018. At this point, this Plan has not been examined in full and limited weight is afforded to this document.
- 6.13 Notwithstanding the limited weight afforded to this emerging Plan, it is noted that objections state that this scheme would contravene the aims of emerging Policies SP3, EMP5 and DC1. Policy SP3 relates specifically to strategic sites brought forward through the Plan process and is therefore not engaged. Policy EMP5 specifically relates to development concerning ‘significant facilities’ in the countryside and the Green Belt. Given the scale of the application site and the proposed operation, this development is not considered to represent a ‘significant facility’ and this policy is not engaged. Finally, Policy DC1 concerns the re-use of buildings. This development represents a complete redevelopment rather than the re-use of existing structures. This policy is again not engaged.
- 6.14 Overall, for reasons identified throughout this report, it is not considered that the development would conflict with the adopted, or indeed the emerging, employment strategy.

Overall Balance

- 6.15 The development would result in harm to the Green Belt through representing inappropriate development. Further, the proposal would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The above carries substantial weight against the proposal.

- 6.16 Furthermore, the proposal would also introduce industrial form and operations to a more rural setting that would harm the character of the area. This adds to the above mentioned weight against the scheme.
- 6.17 Balanced against this harm, the enhanced office and workshop facilities at the site would allow the workforce of the business to expand to approximately 30 people within an initial 18 month period. Overall, the net increase in terms of jobs at the site would be 26.
- 6.18 Further, on discussion with Business Investment Officers, it is considered that the existing location for this business is not suitable for expansion and that there are no realistic alternative sites within Employment Areas or in other areas outside of the Green Belt for this particular proposed use.
- 6.19 The proposal would afford significant social and economic benefits – to which significant weight is attached. Though the development would result in some environmental harm, when viewed in the round, it is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development.
- 6.20 In the overall balancing exercise required, it is considered the very special circumstances required exist and that the matters in favour of this scheme clearly outweigh the cumulative harm that arises.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following:

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans; 1889/1 & 9910/1/001 E & 17029-LP & 17029-05 & 17029-03 & 17029-01 & details contained in Part 6 of the August 2017 Ecological Survey as already submitted with the planning application.

Reason: To identify the approved plans, to avoid doubt and in the interests of biodiversity in accordance with Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 3 The development hereby approved shall not be used other than for mixed light industrial (B1(c)) and storage and distribution (B8) purposes and for no other uses.

Reason: To ensure that the Local Planning Authority can appropriately manage the uses at the site, in the interest of the principle of the development and the Green Belt, in accordance with the provisions of the Framework.

- 4 Prior to the construction of the workshop hereby permitted, as identified on drawing no. 1889/1, full specifications of the materials to be used for its external surfaces must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsequently, the development shall be carried out and retained in accordance with approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with Policies CS14, DM3 and DM14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 5 The combined height of modular buildings stored within the site shall not exceed 6m.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with Policies CS14, DM3 and DM14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 6 Prior to the first operation of the development hereby approved, a scheme for external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Subsequently, the development shall be carried out and retained in accordance with approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with Policies CS14, DM3 and DM14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 7 Prior to the first operation of the development hereby approved full details on a suitably scaled plan of both hard and soft landscape works must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsequently, these works shall be in addition to those shown on the approved plans and shall be carried out and retained as approved. The landscaping details to be submitted shall include:-

- a) means of enclosure;
- b) existing and proposed finished levels and finished floor levels.
- c) planting plans, including specifications of species, sizes, planting centres, planting method and number and percentage mix;
- d) details for all external hard surface within the site, including roads, drainage detail and car parking areas.

Reason: The landscaping of this site is required in order to protect and enhance the existing visual character of the area and to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policy DM14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 8 All planting, seeding or turfing and soil preparation comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following first occupation of the building; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species. All landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the guidance contained in British Standards.

Reason: The landscaping of this site is required in order to protect and enhance the existing visual character of the area and to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policy DM14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 9 No equipment, machinery or materials shall be brought on to the site for the purposes of development hereby approved until details of substantial protective fencing for the protection of any retained tree(s), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the fencing has been erected in accordance with approved details. The approved fencing shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made.

Reason: To protect and enhance the existing visual character of the area and to reduce the visual and environmental impacts of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policy DM14 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 10 The development hereby approved shall not operate other than between 07:30 hours and 18:00 hours Monday – Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: In the interest of amenity and noise protection, in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Development Management Core Strategy 2009.

- 11 No development shall commence until the junction radii improvements, shown on drawing 1707-74 PL01, of the existing vehicular access with the highway have been constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and the premises, in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 12 No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Management Plan, associated with the development of the site, has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which will include information on:

- The parking of vehicles
- Loading and unloading of plant and materials used in the

development

- Storage of plant and materials used in the development
- The erection and maintenance of security hoarding / scaffolding affecting the highway if required.
- Measures on site to control the deposition of dirt / mud on surrounding roads during the development.
- Footpath/footway/cycleway or road closures needed during the development period
- Traffic management needed during the development period.
- Times, routes and means of access and egress for construction traffic and delivery vehicles (including the import of materials and the removal of waste from the site) during the development of the site.

The approved Construction Management Plan associated with the development of the site shall be adhered to throughout the development process.

Reason: In the interests of safety, protecting the amenity of local land uses, neighbouring residents and highway safety, in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 13 Any gates provided shall open away from the highway and be set back a distance of at least 18 metres from the nearside edge of the carriageway of the adjoining highway.

Reason: To enable HGV's to draw off the highway before the gates are opened, in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

INFORMATIVE NOTES TO APPLICANT

1.
 - The applicant is advised that in order to comply with some conditions of this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Central Bedfordshire Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. Further details can be obtained from the Highways Agreements Officer, Highways Contract Team, Community Services, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ
 - The applicant is advised that the requirements of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 will apply to any works undertaken within the limits of the existing public highway. Further details can be obtained from the Highways Help Desk tel: 0300 300 8049.

Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Part 6, Article 35

Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively to secure a sustainable form of development in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

DECISION

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