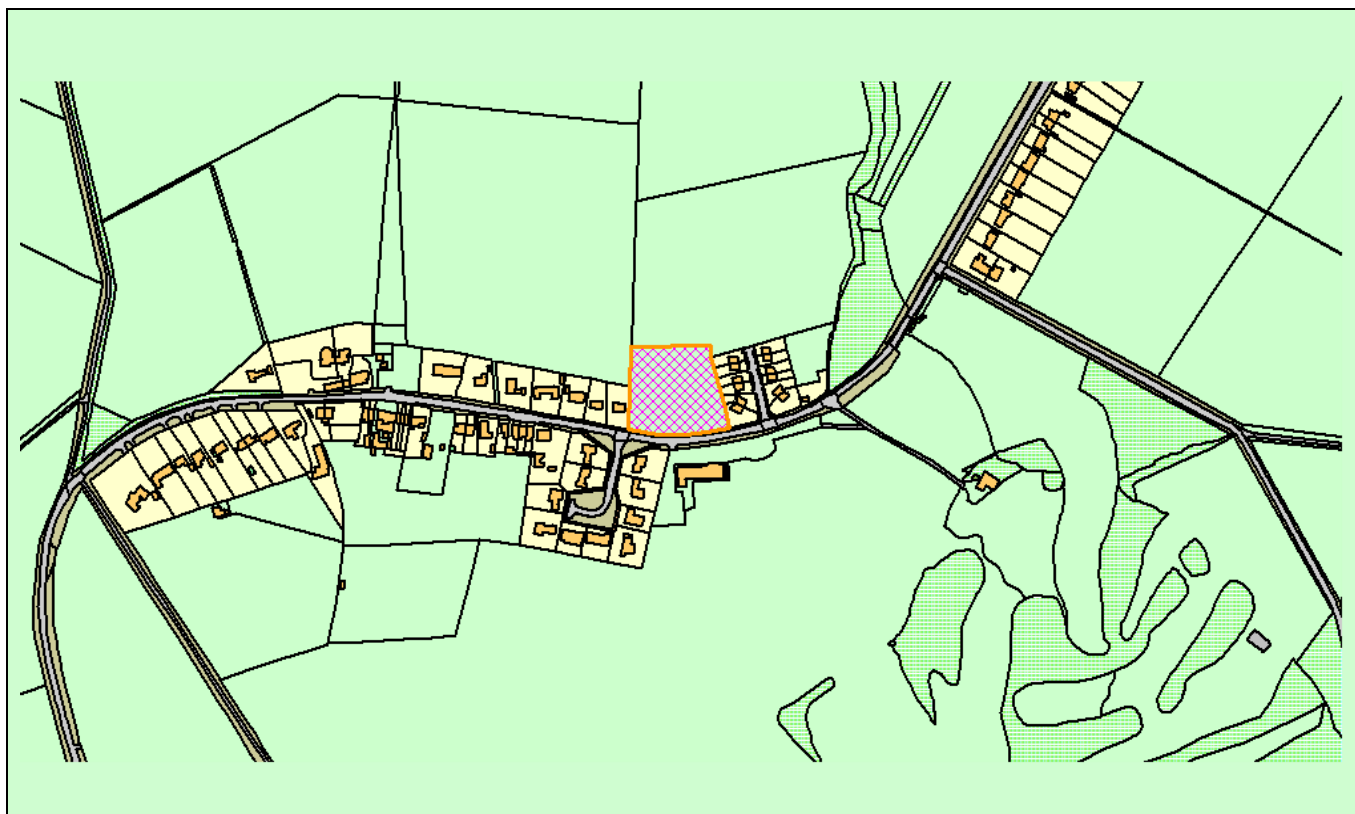


# NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

## AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE WEST : 18 JUNE 2014

<b>Application No:</b>	14/00871/FUL		
<b>Proposal:</b>	Proposed residential development consisting of 16 affordable houses and associated landscaping (resubmission application ref: 12/03471/FUL)		
<b>Site Address</b>	Land West Of The Grove, New Ridley Road, Stocksfield,		
<b>Applicant</b>	Mr Geoff Woodcock, Esh Developments Ltd Esh House, Bowburn, Co Durham, DH6 5PD	<b>Agent</b>	Mr Ian Cansfield Cundall Horsley House Regent Centre Newcastle Tyne And Wear NE3 3LU
<b>Valid Date</b>	11 February 2013	<b>Expiry Date</b>	13 May 2013
<b>Case Officer Details</b>	Name: Mr Graeme Robbie Job Title: Principal Planning Officer Tel No: 01670 625541 Email: graeme.robby@northumberland.gov.uk		



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## **1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 The application is recommended for approval, contrary to the views of a statutory consultee and more than 5 sustained written objections. Under the Council's current Scheme of Delegation, the application falls to be determined by the Area Planning Committee West.
- 1.2 The Committee will recall that an earlier application for planning permission (application reference 12/03471/FUL) to develop 22 affordable dwellings on this same site was considered by the Committee in 2013. A Committee site visit was carried out on 1 July 2013 to allow Members to familiarise themselves with the application site, the immediately adjoining area, the settlement of New Ridley and its relationship with the village of Stocksfield.

## **2. Description of the Proposals**

- 2.1 Detailed planning permission is sought for the construction of 16no affordable dwellings, access road, open space and landscaping on a greenfield site at New Ridley Road, New Ridley.
- 2.2 The proposed development comprises of 16no. affordable dwellings, comprising the following mix of types and tenures:-
  - 4no 3-bedroomed terraced houses
  - 8no 2-bedroomed terraced houses
  - 4no 2-bedroomed semi-detached bungalows

of which 13 would be made available as social rented properties managed by Two Castles Housing Association with the remaining 3 units available as "shared ownership" properties.

- 2.3 The development would take the form of a cul-de-sac development served by a central estate road leading to a turning head at the northern site boundary. The existing roadside hedgerow would be retained in part but, to either side of the proposed access road, would be removed. Unlike the previous application, the existing footway would be retained along its current alignment, linking into footways on both sides of the proposed residential cul-de-sac. Two pairs of semi-detached bungalows would be located on either side of the access road, with two rows of 6 terraced properties on each side of the access road (each row of terraced properties would be split into two blocks of 3 dwellings). A total of 32 car parking spaces (including 2 allocated disabled parking bays) would be provided within the site. The proposed dwellings would be constructed of light and dark buff coloured bricks under brown roof tiles.
- 2.4 The application site is located towards the eastern end of New Ridley, a small village located just to the south of Stocksfield and the Painshawfield Estate. The village is a broadly linear settlement extending east – west along New Ridley Road. A public house is located at the approximate centre of the village, with older more traditional stone-built dwellings extending in both

directions and both sides of the road, away from this central point. Two, more recent, residential estate developments are located next to (The Grove – a cul-de-sac development of 12no 1930's semi-detached dwellings) and opposite (Winston Way – a 1970's cul-de-sac development of 10no detached dwellings) the application site towards the eastern end of the village. Stocksfield Golf Club clubhouse, car park and entrance is located directly opposite the application site.

- 2.5 The application site is located within the “smaller village” of New Ridley which is a “washed over” settlement within the Green Belt. The larger village of Stocksfield and parts of the Painshawfield Estate are located approximately 200 metres north east of New Ridley along New Ridley Road. The main services and facilities of Stocksfield are located approximately 2.4 kilometres along New Ridley Road / A695 to the north.

### 3. Planning History

3.1 **Reference:** 12/03471/FUL

**Description:** Proposed residential development for 22no. dwellings and associated landscaping.

**Status:** Refused

**Reasons for Refusal:**

- 1. The proposed development, by virtue of its scale and location within the Green Belt does not constitute "limited" infilling in New Ridley or "limited" affordable housing for local community needs, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposed development is therefore inappropriate development within the Green Belt for which the applicant has not demonstrated that very special circumstances exist. The proposal is therefore contrary to the provisions of the NPPF in this respect, and also the provisions of Local Plan Policies NE7 and H23 which are considered to align in principal with the provisions of the NPPF.*
- 2. The proposed development, by virtue of its location within a smaller settlement poorly served by services / facilities and which has limited access to the public transport network, is not a sustainable location for new housing development, contrary to the sustainability objectives of the NPPF and to the provisions of Core Strategy Policies GD1, H1, H3 and H7 and Local Plan Policy H23.*
- 3. The proposed development, by virtue of its internal highway layout as shown on the submitted amended plans would encourage the parking of vehicles on the public highway in a location which would adversely affect both the visibility splays from the proposed development and visibility in a forward direction for vehicles passing the development necessary for highway safety and would also interrupt the free flow of traffic and prejudice the safety of all road users of the highway, contrary to the provisions of Core Strategy Policy GD4 and Local Plan Policy GD4.*
- 4. There is a deficiency in the amount of outdoor sports facilities across the former District area of Tynedale. There is not appropriate provision in place to secure a contribution towards outdoor sports facilities arising from this development as required by the Council's Supplementary Planning Document "New Housing : Planning Obligations for Sport and Play*

*Facilities", and the proposal is therefore contrary to the provisions of Core Strategy Policy GD6 and Local Plan Policy LR11 and the Supplementary Planning Document "New Housing : Planning Obligations for Sport and Play Facilities".*

### 3.2 Appeals

**Reference:** APP/P2935/A/14/2213838

**Description:** Appeal against refusal of planning permission

**Status:** Appeal currently pending consideration. Local Planning Authority, Appellant and 3<sup>rd</sup> Party comments all submitted. Waiting for confirmation of date for the Inspector's Site Visit

### 4. Consultee Responses

<p><b>Broomley And Stocksfield Parish Council</b></p>	<p><b>Original Submission</b>  <b>Comments:</b> The Parish Council support the reasons for refusal cited by the Area Planning Committee West when the previous application was considered. The Parish Council's previous objections still stand because, other than a reduction from 22 units to 16 units, the proposal is largely identical.</p> <p>The Parish Council are not opposed per se to the provision of affordable housing in Stocksfield but in respect of the current proposal:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal is within the Green Belt, which is still afforded protection by the provisions of the NPPF as well as the Tynedale Core Strategy;</li> <li>• The site is located within an Area of High Landscape Value;</li> <li>• The proposal does not satisfy the criteria set out in Policy H3 of the Tynedale Core Strategy in terms of location of development;</li> <li>• The proposal is not within walking distance of any of the facilities cited as being within Stocksfield;</li> <li>• References made to facilities by the applicant appear to include facilities in Mickley and Hedley on the Hill, as well as Stocksfield and New Ridley;</li> <li>• The village is not a sustainable settlement and should be seen as a separate entity, not part of Stocksfield. In this context, the additional dwellings would represent a significant increase in the size of New Ridley;</li> <li>• The proposal does not meet an identified local need, as required by the Northumberland Local Development Plan Core Strategy Preferred Options document;</li> <li>• Concerns over traffic generation, visibility at proposed junction and highway capacity on New Ridley Road; capacity of infrastructure and services; and</li> <li>• The submitted documents contain inaccuracies regarding the status of sites within the 2009 Parish Plan</li> </ul> <p><b>Amended Submission</b>  <b>Comments:</b> Awaited</p>
<p><b>Highways</b></p>	<p><b>Original Submission</b></p>

	<p><b>Comments:</b> In respect of the originally submitted scheme for 16 units, the proposal raises highway safety concerns. The layout of the proposed development would encourage the parking of vehicles on New Ridley Road, interfering with the free flow of traffic and forward visibility. Other comments are provided in terms of the number of parking spaces proposed, the mix of communal and allocated parking bays, the alignment of certain footways within the scheme and traffic calming provision within the site.</p> <p>The principle of the development is, however considered to be acceptable in highways terms and the local highway network is capable of accommodating the level of additional traffic and trips likely to be generated.</p> <p><b>Amended Submission</b> <b>Comments:</b> Awaiting</p>
<b>Public Protection</b>	<b>Comments:</b> No objection, subject to condition construction hours
<b>County Ecologist</b>	<b>Comments:</b> Support, subject to conditions. The proposed landscaping scheme would represent a net-gain to biodiversity
<b>Trees And Woodland Officer WEST</b>	<b>Comments:</b> The submitted landscaping plan appears to be appropriate with suggestion of a change of species around the edge of the proposed public open space (swap spikey for non-spikey species)
<b>Waste Management</b>	<b>Comments:</b> No response received.
<b>Environment Agency</b>	<b>Comments:</b> No comment. The application falls outside the scope of matters on which the EA is a statutory consultee.
<b>Housing Enabling Officer</b>	<b>Comments:</b> In principle support. Northumberland County Wide and Sub-Area Housing Needs Assessments from 2012 and the Northumberland Homefinder register confirms local need. The proposed housing type, size and tenure mix would satisfy local needs and, in particular, the provision of 2-bed bungalows is welcomed.
<b>Northumbria Water LTD</b>	<b>Comments:</b> No objections subject to the proposal being carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment

## 5. Public Responses

### 5.1 Neighbour Notification

Number of Neighbours Notified	37
Number of Objections	35
Number of Support	1
Number of General Comments	0

### 5.2 Notices

Site Notice – Major Application / Departure from Local Plan : 01/04/2014 – 22/04/2014

Press Notice – as above : 04/04/2014 – 25/04/2014

### 5.3 Summary of Responses:

At the time of writing a total of 35 letters of objection and 1 letter of support have been received in response to this application, raising the following points of objection:-

- The site is within the Green Belt and is not identified as an “infill settlement” in the Tynedale Core Strategy;
- The Green Belt should be protected from development;
- The proposal does not meet the criteria set out in Policy H3 of the Tynedale Core Strategy for locations for new residential development;
- There are no services or facilities within New Ridley, as required in the Core Strategy;
- New Ridley is not an appropriate sized settlement for development of the scale proposed;
- New Ridley is not an integral part of Stocksfield;
- There is previously developed land available in Stocksfield which is more appropriate;
- Highway safety, visibility at junction and capacity of highway network are all concerns;
- Concern over capacity of infrastructure and services to cope with a proposal of this scale;
- The proposal is over-development in a rural area;
- The applicant has demonstrated a need for affordable housing of the scale proposed;
- Availability of public transport is limited;
- The proposal is an unsustainable form of development in an unsustainable location.

The letter of support states that:-

- There is a huge need for affordable housing in Northumberland;
- Providing affordable homes in rural areas is extremely important;
- There are very few affordable dwellings in Stocksfield, so consequently there is only a slim chance of getting an affordable unit;
- The proposed development appears to be in keeping with the local surroundings, within the hamlet of New Ridley and would begin the process of meeting current housing needs within Northumberland

### 5.4 Other Representations

In addition, whilst not specifically relating to the current iteration of the proposal a 56 signature petition and 33 “pro forma” objection slips opposing proposals to build 55 dwellings in New Ridley were submitted following the applicant’s pre-application public consultation exercise and prior to submission of the current proposal, which proposes a reduced number of dwellings (now 16 as opposed to the 55 referred to in the petition / pro-forma letters).

## 6. **Planning Policy**

### 6.1 National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (27<sup>th</sup> March 2012)

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)

6.2 Development Plan Policy

Tynedale Core Strategy

GD1 The General Location of Development

GD2 Prioritising Sites for Development

GD3 The Green Belt

GD4 Principles for Transport and Accessibility

GD5 Minimising Flood Risk

GD6 Planning Obligations

NE1 Principles for the Natural Environment

BE1 Principles for the Built Environment

H1 Principles for Housing

H2 Housing Provision and Management of Supply

H3 The Location of New Housing

H4 Housing on Green Field Land

H5 Housing Density

H7 Meeting Affordable Housing Needs

EN3 Energy Conservation and Production in major new developments

Tynedale Local Plan

GD2 Design Criteria for development, including extensions and alterations

GD4 Range of transport provision for all development

GD6 Car parking standards outside the built up areas of Hexham, Haltwhistle, Prudhoe and Corbridge

NE7 New buildings in the Green Belt

NE8 New dwellings in the Green Belt

NE27 Protection of Protected Species

NE33 Protection of trees, woodlands and hedgerows

NE37 Landscaping in developments

H23 Affordable housing rural exceptions sites

H32 Residential design criteria

LR11 Outdoor sport facilities for new residential development

LR15 Play areas in new residential developments

CS27 Sewerage

6.3 Other Documents/Strategies

Northumberland Five Year Housing Land Supply 2012 – 2017 (July 2012)

Northumberland Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (May 2012)

Supplementary Planning Document : New Housing :Planning Obligations for Sport and Play

Northumberland Core Strategy : Employment, Housing and Green Belt (October 2013)

**7. Appraisal**

7.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:-

Principle of Development

Scale, Design and Appearance

Impact on Residential Amenity

Highways Matters

Ecology

## Impact on Trees and Hedges Drainage and Flood Risk

### Principle of Development

#### *Principle of Residential Development*

- 7.2 The application site is a greenfield site within the built up area of New Ridley. New Ridley is identified in the Tynedale Core Strategy as a smaller village, albeit one which is “washed over” by the Green Belt – the site (and indeed village as a whole) is therefore located within the Green Belt.
- 7.3 Core Strategy Policies GD1 and H3 set out a settlement hierarchy and, depending upon where a settlement lies within that hierarchy, go on to outline general principles relating to the scale of development that will be appropriate within those settlements. In the case of New Ridley, the settlement is identified as a smaller village. Core Strategy GD1 identifies such villages as being capable of accommodating small scale development, and Policy H3 as being capable of accommodating new build housing only where they have “adequate services”. Whilst New Ridley has a pub, it does not have a school or shop and does not have a regular public transport service. In the parlance of the Core Strategy, it is an unsustainable settlement and so not appropriate for new build housing.
- 7.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and is a material consideration. After a period of 12 months from its publication due weight can still be given to the provisions of development plan policies, but only according to the degree of consistency with the NPPF – the closer the development plan policies align with the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given to them.
- 7.5 The NPPF sets out, as a “golden thread” running through decision making, the principle of “sustainable development”. It states that for decision making this means that “where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date” that permission should be granted, unless material considerations indicate otherwise and any adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF as a whole or where specific policies in the NPPF seek to restrict development. As a “core planning principle” the NPPF states that the planning system should “proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes.....that the country needs”. It goes on to state that housing applications should be considered in the context of “the presumption in favour of sustainable development” and that policies for housing supply “should not be considered up to date” if the Local Planning Authority is unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Where there has been persistent under-delivery an additional 20% buffer should be added to provide “a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply”.
- 7.6 Current housing supply figures for Northumberland set out in the “Northumberland 5 year Housing Land Supply 2013-2018” (published October 2013), with particular reference to the former District of Tynedale, confirms that there is not currently a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Whilst it does note that there was oversupply in the plan period to 2004-2011, this



oversupply was attributable entirely to the first half of that plan period, with persistent under-supply in the second half which, combined with an insufficient 5-year deliverable supply, means that the additional 20% buffer requirement, set out in the NPPF, is applicable. It is therefore considered that, in the absence of a 5-year +20% deliverable supply of housing sites and having regard to the NPPF, relevant development policies concerning housing land supply are “out of date”, and can therefore only be given limited weight in this instance.

- 7.7 The NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development : economic, social and environmental. Of these, within the social dimension, the role of “strong, vibrant and healthy communities” is noted, as well as the part that the “supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations” can play in that. It is acknowledged that New Ridley does not have much in the way of services or facilities, nor a regular public transport service. The presence of a pub in a village can often provide an important community focus, but the NPPF advocates a wider view be taken regarding the provision of housing in rural areas. It notes that, in cases where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Such an approach was a key factor in a recent Planning Inspector’s decision in relation to a post-NPPF planning appeal for residential development in Medburn, near Ponteland (ref APP/P2935/A/2176272 – 11/01959/OUT). In that instance the Inspector noted that Medburn had a lack of facilities, in a similar manner to New Ridley, and that it was not a “remote rural location”. The ability to access the services and facilities of Ponteland by cycle (along un-lit country lanes with no footpaths) and limited public transport meant that the site offered potential for access by means other than a private car. Assessment of whether the proposal is acceptable or not, in Green Belt terms, is set out separately below, but in terms of whether new Ridley can be considered to be a “sustainable settlement” comparisons with Medburn are material to the current application site.
- 7.8 In the case of New Ridley, the public transport service is limited to the point of non-existent. A limited “dial-a-ride” service does exist but it would be stretching a point to refer to this as a wider “public transport service”. Whilst New Ridley therefore has no services other than a public house (and the bar at the golf course clubhouse) and no public transport network, it is reasonably well located in relation to Stocksfield and its services and facilities. The application site is located approximately 1.4 miles (2.24km) from the shops and services at the far end of New Ridley Road in Stocksfield, accessed along a continuous footpath with street-lighting along its length, and only approximately 320 metres from the southern-most extent of Stocksfield. Adopting the approach taken by the Inspector in considering the Medburn appeal, and the content of paragraph 55 of the NPPF, it is considered that the development of the application site for residential development would help support services in Stocksfield which can be capable of being accessed by means other than the private car. Having regard to the provisions of the NPPF, the lack of a 5-year deliverable housing land supply within the former Tynedale District and the limited weight that may now be given the housing supply policies in the development plan it is considered that New Ridley cannot be considered to be an unsustainable location for new housing development.

### *Principle of Residential Development in a Green Belt Location*

- 7.9 The application site, and New Ridley as a whole, is located within the Green Belt where development is tightly controlled. The provisions of Local Plan Policy NE7 align closely with those of the NPPF in terms of control over Green Belt development. Whilst the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is considered to be inappropriate (and by definition therefore, harmful to the Green Belt), both the Local Plan and the NPPF identify “limited infilling” and “limited affordable housing” as being appropriate development, as an exception to general Green Belt restraint. The NPPF does however also state that:

*“as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”.*

It goes on to state that Local Planning Authorities 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”.*

- 7.10 The proposal before Members is for the development of 16 dwellings, all of which would satisfy the definition of “affordable dwellings”, meaning that the proposal is for a 100% affordable housing scheme as an “exception” site. The nature and location of the site within the village and between existing residential development is such that it is also a form of infill development. The key area of assessment therefore in the context of the development plan and the NPPF is whether the development can be considered to be “limited”.
- 7.11 New Ridley is a small settlement. Objections to the proposal put the number of households within New Ridley as being between 50 and 60 households. The development of a further 16 units would equate to an increase in the size of the village of between 26% and 32% - this compares with figures of between 36% and 44% that would have arisen from the previous proposal for 22 units. Whilst the previous proposal was not considered to be limited in scale by either Officers or the Committee, the current reduced scheme is considered to shift the balance somewhat in this respect. The adjoining “Grove” development is similar in its form and scale – a 12-dwelling cul-de-sac – to the current proposal, and occupies a broadly similar site area. The more recent residential development opposite - a 10-dwelling Winston Way cul-de-sac – whilst different in its layout, density and house type and with a larger site area would have represented a significant change in the character of New Ridley at the time of its development. In this context, it is considered that the development of a further 16 dwellings as proposed in this instance would neither be out of character or scale with the most closely located residential developments and, more importantly, would on balance represent a “limited” form of affordable housing development.
- 7.12 The applicant has, in submissions for both the on-going appeal against refusal of the 22-unit scheme and in respect of the current proposal, referred to New

Ridley and Stocksfield as being one settlement for the purposes of assessing scale of development. It remains the Local Planning Authority's view that New Ridley has to be considered as a settlement in its own right and not combined with Stocksfield for ease, as appears to be the applicant's case, based on the fact that they lie within the same Parish boundaries.

- 7.13 Whether the proposal is considered to represent "limited" infilling is also central to the current proposal. Whereas the previous proposal for 22 dwellings was not considered to be "limited" for infill or affordable housing purposes, it is considered on balance that 16 dwellings more reasonably satisfies this assessment. Another factor to consider in whether the proposals can be considered "limited" is the physical and visual "presence" of the proposed development within its Green Belt "context". The aims of Green Belt designation, and the subsequent protection of designated Green Belt land, as set out in the NPPF remains largely unchanged from PPG2. The five purposes of the Green Belt set out in the NPPF include the aim of "preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another" and "to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment". The application site is approximately 320 metres from the green Belt boundary as it is drawn around Stocksfield (293 New Ridley Road at the junction with the C259 to Hedley-on-the-Hill). Although the existing development at The Grove, New Ridley and the application site are situated relatively close to the Green Belt boundary around Stocksfield, the development of the application site would not cause New Ridley and Stocksfield to merge with one another for two reasons. Firstly, the application site is located between The Grove and existing development to the west within New Ridley, hence why the development is also considered to be a form of "infill". Secondly, the heavily wooded and steeply sloping dene leading to the Bat Burn provides a strong defensible boundary to further development in a south-westerly direction from Stocksfield, or in a north-easterly direction from New Ridley. The proposed development would not therefore lead to a merging of settlements and would not therefore compromise one of the five aims of Green Belt designation.
- 7.14 In terms of whether the proposal would encroach into the countryside, or otherwise harm the openness of the Green Belt, it is located between and opposite existing residential development within an existing settlement. Although development within New Ridley has traditionally been linear in form, more recent development in the shape of Winston Way to the south of the site and The Grove to the northeast has taken the form of cul-de-sac development. The built element of the development proposed in this instance would extend to a point broadly level with the northern-most part of The Grove (the landscaping and landscape buffer strip would extend further but in terms of the built element of the proposal, the houses would be level with the end of The Grove, the turning head and parking spaces extending approximately 14 metres beyond and the landscaping a total of 22 metres beyond). The form and layout of the proposed development is broadly in keeping with more recent development within the settlement. Whilst the infilling of the "gap" between The Grove and houses to the west would reduce openness, this should be seen in the context of the existing pattern of development within the settlement on the north side of the road, and the substantial presence of the golf club clubhouse and car park, and Winston Way, directly opposite the site. In considering the previous proposals, the Committee expressed the view that, whether a proposal was for 50, 22, or less, dwellings development on

this site would close the gap, reduce openness, run contrary to Green Belt aims, and would therefore be harmful to the Green Belt. It is considered in this instance however that the proposed form of development, which for the reasons set out above would be “limited” in its scale, would satisfy one of the key exceptions to Green Belt restraint. As such, the issue of whether the proposal would materially affect openness becomes a less defining issue. Nonetheless, it is considered on balance, that the impact on openness that would undoubtedly occur would be outweighed by consideration of the surrounding context to the application site and, significantly, by the contribution that the proposal would make towards boosting both housing and affordable housing, supply.

#### *Principle of Affordable Housing*

- 7.15 The current proposal is for the development of 16no affordable dwellings, comprising of 4no 3-bed dwellings and 12 2-bed units (8no 2-bed terrace and 4no 2-bed bungalows), the tenure of which would be made up of 16 units for social rent (Two Castles Registered Social Landlord (RSL)) and 3 units in shared ownership. The Council’s Housing Enabling Officer supports the proposal, noting that New Ridley is in the commuter pressure area where there are affordability issues. Reference is also made by the Housing Enabling Officer to the Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Plan (2009) which identifies a shortage of appropriate housing for older people and a shortage of affordable homes.
- 7.16 Across the County as a whole, the 2012 Northumberland Housing Needs Assessment identifies a required level of affordable housing provision of 242 units per annum to address current backlog of demand over a 10 year period. Within the Broomley and Stocksfield postal address area there were a total of 23 applicants on the Northumberland Home-finder waiting list further confirming a local need for affordable housing. The Council’s Housing Enabling Officer has confirmed that the mix of house types, sizes and tenures would be supported, particularly welcoming the inclusion of 2-bed bungalows within the scheme and that it would be expected that occupation would be secured via an appropriately worded section 106 planning obligation giving priority to local residents with a strong local connection to the Parish. Finally, with regard to the 3 shared ownership units, there would be no provision for occupants to “staircase” up to 100% ownership, as at least 20% equity would have to remain with the RSL. Members may recall that with previous schemes involving shared ownership property they have been required to consider amendments to the section 106 planning agreement in respect of nomination rights, or to time periods for cascading to eligible persons arising from difficulties obtaining mortgage products. The applicant has confirmed that, should that arise in the case of the 3 units proposed in this instance, they would support the conversion of the units to affordable rental after an agreed period of time. As affordable rental is recognised as the tenure in greatest need, this approach seems reasonable and such flexibility could be incorporated into the detail of a section 106 planning obligation.
- 7.17 In conclusion therefore, whilst finely balanced, New Ridley is considered to be an acceptable and sustainable location for new residential development. There is an identifiable local need for affordable housing, expressed through a variety of sources, which the proposed development would address. The site

is within the Green Belt, and the current proposal for 16 affordable dwellings is on balance considered to be a “limited” form of infilling and affordable housing provision. In this respect the proposal would accord with the provisions of NPPF paragraphs 89 (5<sup>th</sup> bullet point), 50 and 55, and these provisions outweigh those of Core Strategy Policies GD1, H1, H3 and H7 in this instance. The site is a greenfield site but, subject to an appropriately worded section 106 planning obligation to ensure that the properties are retained as affordable housing to address the identified local need, the proposal would accord with the provisions of Core Strategy Policies H4 and GD6, and with Local Plan Policy H23 (having regard to the provisions of the NPPF in terms of the relationships and dependencies between closely neighbouring settlements).

- 7.18 Secondly, it is considered that the proposed development whilst impacting on the openness of the Green Belt would nonetheless satisfy one of the key areas of exception to Green Belt restraint and, due to the site being bookended by The Grove to the east and the main body of the settlement to the west, with the developed golf course clubhouse building and car park to the south would not appear out of character or context with, the built form of the village. The benefits arising from the provision of affordable housing to meet an identified local need in a sustainable location, given the site’s proximity to other sustainable settlements, is considered to outweigh any limited harm arising from the scheme reducing the openness of the Green Belt at this particular point of the washed over settlement of New Ridley.
- 7.19 A number of the objections received raise the concept of sites “sequentially preferable” to the current application site, including sites within Stocksfield. These include sites at Burnside Yard, the snooker club site at Guessburn and the public toilet site at Branch End, Stocksfield. Whilst Core Strategy Policy GD2 requires a sequential approach to site selection for meeting development needs, the recent revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy removes a policy base for restricting development on the basis of a sequential approach. Whilst the NPPF encourages such an approach, the weight that can be given to this as a requirement via development plan policy is now reduced. It is considered that there would not therefore be any justification for restricting the development of a sustainable but greenfield site on the basis of there being sequentially preferable sites elsewhere that were readily available. For the reasons set out above, the general principle of New Ridley as a sustainable location for new housing development is accepted.

#### Scale, Design and Appearance

- 7.20 The proposed dwellings within this residential scheme would be a mix of single story bungalows along the site frontage, with a further mix of two storey terraced and semi-detached properties located on either side of a central access road culminating at a hammerhead cul-de-sac. The general scale of the proposed dwellings largely reflects that of existing dwellings in the vicinity, ranging from the 1970’s bungalows on the Winston Way estate opposite (as well as other similar period bungalows further west along New Ridley Road) to the 1930’s semi-detached properties to the east. In this respect they are considered to be in keeping with the general range of dwellings within the New Ridley settlement

7.21 The mix of house types within the development would result in a mixed but balanced form of development. The adoption of bungalows along the site frontage would create a softer-edged development than would perhaps have been the case with 2-storey dwellings in this location, whilst the range of new landscape planting along the site frontage would mitigate in the medium to long term the proposed removal of the existing mature hedgerow. There are a range of materials evident in existing dwellings, from the beige “harle” render on properties The Grove, to the buff-coloured brickwork of the golf course clubhouse building and Winston Way opposite the site, the white painted render of the house immediately to the west of the site and the traditional stone under slate of the village’s historic “core”. The proposed palette of materials, comprising a combination of light and darker buff brickwork and slate (anthracite) grey tiles, is considered to be appropriate within this general mix, although the exact details of the materials would be subject to agreement by way of appropriately worded conditions. The proposal would accord with the general provisions of Core Strategy Policy BE1 and Local Plan Policies GD2 and H32 in this respect, and with the wider aims of the NPPF in terms of seeking to ensure high quality development.

#### Impact on Residential Amenity

7.22 The proposed residential development of the application site has been laid out in such a manner as to ensure that adequate provision is made for outdoor amenity space for each dwelling in line with the provisions of the Tynedale Local Plan. Notwithstanding concerns that have been raised through neighbour notification the proposed development has also been laid out in such a manner as to ensure that adequate separation distances between habitable room windows of dwellings within the site, and also between proposed and existing dwellings have largely been achieved as set out and required by Local Plan Policy H32. There are distances of approximately 23 metres from the rears of the plots on the eastern side of the access road to the rears of The Grove, and distances of approximately 18 meters to the side elevation of Harei Mai to the west. Rear garden depths of 10 meters to the plots on the east side of the road would also ensure adequate outdoor amenity space and, whilst 23 metres would be slightly below the 25 metre threshold set out in the Local Plan, it is considered that the proposal would nonetheless generally ensure that the privacy, and therefore the amenity, of new and existing residents would not be unduly compromised as a result of the proposed development. The NPPF states that design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and instead concentrate on general guiding principles relating to (for example) overall scale, density, massing, etc, and, whilst the provisions of the Local Plan Policy H32 come close in some respects to a prescriptive approach, they are nonetheless considered to generally align with the NPPF’s aims of ensuring always seeking to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and building. The development would therefore accord with the provisions of Local Plan Policies H32 and GD2 and, in turn, with Core Strategy Policy BE1 in this respect. As these policies generally align with the NPPF and one of its “core planning principles” appropriate weight may still be given to these policies.

#### Highways Matters

- 7.23 In highways terms the proposed development is relatively simple in form. A single, centrally located access road would run into the application site at right angles to the site frontage, serving dwellings on either side and culminating in a turning head with further shared car parking spaces at its head.
- 7.24 The application site is however located on the inside of a long constant radius bend at the entrance to New Ridley which has a mature field hedge boundary along the back edge of the footpath. Consequently forward vision around the corner is limited, particularly when heading north out of New Ridley towards Stocksfield. The proposed development, in seeking to create a suitable access point to the proposed development also attempts to remedy the visibility shortcomings in the area by partially removing the existing hedgerow. Unlike the previous application (and the initially submitted proposals for the current application) which sought to create a large verge area as visibility splay and the re-alignment of the boundary hedge to the rear, the current proposal seeks to achieve the necessary visibility splays by retaining a (slightly wider) footway along its existing alignment, with a replanted hedge at the rear of the footway. In so doing, the applicant has attempted to address one of the Highway Authority's previous concerns; namely the layout potentially encouraging residents / visitors to park on the verge and the New Ridley Road roadside, impairing visibility and flows on the main road.
- 7.25 The Council's Highways team acknowledge that the existing highway network is capable of accommodating development of the scale proposed. It is also acknowledged that the resulting works would provide benefits in terms of forward visibility around the existing corner at this point in New Ridley, as well as providing a new junction that incorporates adequate visibility splays to ensure highway safety is not compromised. However, the originally submitted scheme has drawn objection from the Highway Authority, stating that the layout would still encourage parking on the verge and highway, potentially limited views around the inside of the corner and impairing flows on the main road. The layout has subsequently been amended to remove the heavily re-aligned footway and boundary hedge, and also the triangular verge within the visibility splays. Further concerns were expressed in terms of the parking layout within the scheme, the number of parking spaces, the layout and alignment of the footways within the site and the type and nature of traffic calming features. The further comments of the Highway Authority are still awaited but it is anticipated that, having been subject to discussions with the Highways Authority, the revised proposals should overcome the originally stated concerns and objection. Members will be provided with a full and detailed update on the Highway Authority's comments at the Committee meeting.

### Ecology

- 7.26 The application site is referred to in the applicant's Habitat Survey as being closely grazed "poor semi-improved grassland". The Council's Ecologist concurs with the findings of the habitat survey in that the proposal would present only a low risk to protected species, in addition to a "small potential risk" to breeding birds within the site. The landscaping scheme submitted with the previous application was strongly supported by the Council's Ecologist as providing a well worked scheme that would have resulted in a net gain in terms of biodiversity. The applicant has adopted the principles behind that

scheme and applied them to the current application site. Whilst a smaller site than previously, the current proposals make provision for a similarly well worked landscaping and planting scheme that would again, in the words of the Council's Ecologist "result in a net gain for biodiversity". The proposal would therefore accord with the provisions of Core Strategy Policy NE1 and Local Plan Policy NE27, the collective aims of which broadly align with the NPPF.

### Impact on Trees and Hedges

- 7.27 The application site is bounded to the southern boundary (the most visible boundary currently forming the highway frontage) by a continuous hedgerow backed by a post-and-rail fence along its length. The hedgerow is identified in the submitted ecology report as being "species poor", comprising mainly of hawthorn with occasional dog rose, sycamore and holly. A small field gate entrance providing access to the existing pasture is located at the south-western corner of the site frontage. Elsewhere, the northern site boundary is open and currently unmarked, whilst that to the east comprises sporadic hedgerow and more domestic garden fences of varying styles.
- 7.28 The proposed development, in order to create a highway junction with appropriate visibility splays, proposes to partially remove the existing highway frontage hedgerow along its entire length, to widen the existing pedestrian footway and to plant a new hedge along the back edge of the revised footway. The new hedge would be a mixed species hedge to reflect the retained elements of the existing mixed native species hedge, and would continue around the inside of both sides of the junction into the development, extending up to the footpath entrances to the pairs of semi-detached bungalows.
- 7.29 There are no other landscape features within the site in terms of trees, hedges or shrubs so, in that respect, the proposal would provide an opportunity to enhance the general diversity of planting within the immediate area. The application has been submitted with planting details across the entire application site, including the creation of a landscaped earth bund and landscape buffer strip (including areas of wildflower meadow planting) to the north of the developed site which, if Members are minded to approve the application, would be controlled via condition with appropriate wording to ensure adequate establishment and maintenance. The Council's Ecologist is supportive of the proposed landscaping measures, recognising the longer term benefits of proposed improvements to the species mix of the frontage hedgerow. In this respect the proposal would, subject to the imposition of suitably worded conditions, enhance biodiversity within the site and its immediate surroundings in accordance with relevant provisions within the NPPF, and in accordance with Core Strategy Policies BE1 and NE1, and Local Plan Policies GD2, NE37.

### Drainage and Flood Risk

- 7.30 The application site lies within the Environment Agency's flood zone 1, which equates to an annual probability of river (or sea!) flooding of less than 1 in 1000. The application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) which confirms the intention to connect to the existing combined sewer for foul drainage, and that surface water would be discharged into an existing



watercourse located to the east of the site. Northumbrian Water have confirmed that, subject to appropriately worded conditions they have no objections to the proposed development. Subject therefore to those conditions, the proposal would accord with the provisions of Core Strategy Policy GD5 and Local Plan Policy CS27.

### Sport and Play

- 7.31 At present there is a deficiency in the amount of both children's play provision and outdoor sports facilities within the area in which the application site is located. Local Plan Policies LR11 and LR15 and the Council's Supplementary Planning Document "New Housing : Planning Obligations for Sport and Play" (adopted March 2006) require on-site provision of open space and equipped children's play within schemes of 10 units or more, and a contribution towards off-site sports facilities. Core Strategy Policy GD6 sets out the Council's principles in terms of the use of section 106 planning obligations whilst the NPPF recognises the importance of securing "access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation" as a means to contribute towards health and well-being. In this sense, the Council's approach to seeking appropriate provision for sport and play facilities aligns closely with the broader aims of the NPPF.
- 7.32 There are not currently any play facilities within New Ridley. The proposed site layout makes provision for areas of public open space within the scheme, albeit not to the exact level set out in the SPD for on-site provision. The applicant does, however, propose to incorporate open space and play provision within the site and make improvements to the biodiversity of the meadows beyond the application site. Most significantly, however, a suitably worded section 106 planning obligation would ensure appropriate provision of, and split between, areas of informal open space and equipped children's play, and ensure a level of financial contribution in line with the requirements of the SPD to make up the shortfall in terms of on-site provision, in addition to contributions to off-site sports provision. Subject therefore to the satisfactory completion of a section 106 planning obligation and appropriately worded conditions, the proposal would accord with the provisions of Core Strategy Policy GD6, Local Plan Policies LR11 and LR15, the Council's SPD and with the broader aims of the NPPF.

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 New Ridley is considered to be an acceptable and sustainable location for new residential development. There is an identifiable local need for affordable housing, expressed through a variety of sources, which the proposed development would address. There is an identifiable local need for affordable housing, expressed through a variety of sources, which the proposed development would address. Whilst the previous proposal was not considered to be limited in scale by either Officers or the Committee, the current reduced scheme is considered to shift the balance somewhat in this respect. The nearby developments at The Grove and Winston Way are broadly similar in form and scale and would have represented a significant change in the character of New Ridley at the time of its development. In this context, it is considered that the development of a further 16 dwellings as proposed in this instance would neither be out of character or scale with the most closely

located residential developments and, more importantly, would on balance represent a “limited” form of affordable housing development. Whilst finely balanced therefore, New Ridley is considered to be an acceptable and sustainable location for new residential development. The site is within the Green Belt, and the current proposal for 16 affordable dwellings is on balance considered to be a “limited” form of infilling and affordable housing provision. In this respect the proposal would accord with the provisions of NPPF paragraphs 89 (5<sup>th</sup> bullet point), 50 and 55, and these provisions outweigh those of Core Strategy Policies GD1, H1, H3 and H7 in this instance. The site is a greenfield site but, subject to an appropriately worded section 106 planning obligation to ensure that the properties are retained as affordable housing to address the identified local need, the proposal would accord with the provisions of Core Strategy Policies H4 and GD6, and with Local Plan Policy H23 (having regard to the provisions of the NPPF in terms of the relationships and dependencies between closely neighbouring settlements).

- 8.2 A number of objections that have been received raise the concept of sequentially preferable sites to the current application site, identifying a number of such sites within Stocksfield. These include sites at Burnside Yard, the snooker club site at Guessburn and the public toilet site at Branch End, Stocksfield. Whilst Core Strategy Policy GD2 requires a sequential approach to site selection for meeting development needs, the recent revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy removes a policy base for restricting development on the basis of a sequential approach. Whilst the NPPF encourages such an approach, the weight that can be given to this as a requirement via development plan policy is now reduced. It is considered that there would not therefore be any justification for restricting the development of a sustainable but greenfield site on the basis of there being sequentially preferable sites elsewhere that were readily available. For the reasons set out above, the general principle of New Ridley as a sustainable location for new housing development is accepted.
- 8.3 The form of development proposed is considered to be generally in keeping with the style, scale, nature and appearance of the surrounding area, and in a form that would not harm the amenities of existing occupants of residential properties adjoining the application site. Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of the mature roadside hedgerow in order to facilitate the laying out of a junction arrangement with suitable visibility splays, it is accepted that the proposal makes adequate medium and long term provision for mitigation of the loss of this hedgerow. There are no other features of interest within the application site and, subject to minor revisions to the proposed landscaping proposals and the use of appropriately worded conditions, the proposal would result in an overall enhancement of the ecological diversity of the site. The proposal would accord with the provisions of Core Strategy Policies BE1, NE1 and H1, with Policies GD2, H32 and NE37 of the Local Plan, and with the general provisions of the NPPF.
- 8.4 The site layout is such that the proposal would provide adequate private amenity space within each plot for the size and type of dwellings proposed whilst also making provision within the site layout for provision of public open space and, subject to appropriately worded conditions, equipped children’s play. A level of financial contribution towards off-site sport and play facilities would be secured by way of section 106 planning obligation in line with the

Council's SPD on "New Housing : Planning Obligations for Sport and Play". The proposal would accord with the provisions of Core Strategy Policies GD6, BE1 and NE1, Local Plan Policies GD2, H32, LR11 and LR15, the Council's SPD and with the wider provisions of the NPPF in this respect.

- 8.5 The highway network in the area is considered to be capable of accommodating development of the level and scale proposed in this instance whilst the proposed junction arrangements would ensure adequate visibility splays are established. Concern exists regarding the layout and location of some of the car parking spaces within the application site and the implications that this may have for encouraging on-street car parking at or close to the entrance to the site, thereby negating the benefits of the proposed junction improvements. The further views of the Highways team have been sought, and an update provided to Members, accordingly.
- 8.6 The proposal would make adequate provision for connection to existing services for foul and surface water drainage, in accordance with the provisions of Local Plan Policy CS27 and Core Strategy Policy GD5.

## **9. Recommendation**

Authority to the Head of Development Services to GRANT CONDITIONAL PLANNING PERMISSION subject to no new issues being raised by Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council within the consultation period, subject to a section 106 planning obligation to secure the provision of affordable housing to meet an identified local housing need and to retain as such in perpetuity, and to secure the provision of financial contributions towards off-site sport and play facilities, to the receipt of comments from the Highways Authority and subject to the conditions set out below

### Conditions/Reason

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
02. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans. The approved plans for this development are:-
1. NDC-2012-008 - A-101 Rev E - Proposed Site Layout Plan
  2. NDC-2012-008 - A-201 - House Type A - Plans and Elevations Proposed
  3. NDC-2012-008 - A-202 - House Type B - Plans and Elevations Proposed
  4. NDC-2012-008 - A-203 - House Type C - Plans and Elevations Proposed
  5. NDC-2012-008 - A-301 - Rev B - Proposed Site Sections
  6. 847/PA/01DB - Landscape Proposals
  7. NDC-2012-008 - A-099 - Rev B - Existing Conditions Site Plan
  8. Flood Risk Assessment : New Ridley Road, Stocksfield N12067 Rev B February 2014 - Patrick Parsons Consulting Engineers
  - 9 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey – January 2014 - BSG Ecology

Reason: To ensure that the approved development is carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans.

03. Notwithstanding any indication of materials which may have been given in the application, before development commences a schedule and samples of the materials and finishes for the dwellings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall not be constructed other than in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason : In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion and in accordance with the provisions of Local Plan Policies GD2 and H32, Core Strategy Policy BE1 and the provisions of the NPPF.

04. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until such time as a scheme for surface water management has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The scheme shall be fully implemented and subsequently maintained, in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

Reason : To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of/disposal of surface water from the site.

05. No development shall take place unless in accordance with the mitigation measures detailed in the submitted phase 1 habitat survey report "Stocksfield Social Housing : Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report" BSG Ecology.

Reason : To conserve protected species and their habitat and to ensure an appropriately ecologically diverse habitat, in accordance with the provisions of Policy NE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy, Policies GD2, NE27 and NE37 of the Tynedale Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

06. Before development commences approval shall have been given for detailed landscaping proposals showing the hard and soft landscaping of the site. This shall include, where required, the planting of trees and shrubs including the provision of a species list, and details of tree and hedgerow protection measures for any trees/hedgerows on the site that are to be retained. Thereafter, the scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings before the end of the year in which the development starts, or within such other time period as may be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in writing beforehand. The landscaped areas shall be subsequently maintained to ensure rapid and complete establishment of the agreed scheme including watering, weeding and the replacement of any plants which fail. The installation of fencing for the protection of the retained trees and hedgerows shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans and particulars before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development and 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, without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason : In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion and in accordance with the provisions of Core Strategy Policies BE1 and NE1, Local Plan Policies GD2, H32 and NE37, and the provisions of the NPPF.

07. The landscaping of the site is to be fully implemented in full accordance with drawing number 847/PA/01D during the first full planting season (November – March inclusive) following the commencement of development. Management of the tree planting and grassland areas should be carried out in accordance with the plan for no less than 10 years from completion of the development.

Reason: To maintain and protect the landscape value of the area and to enhance the biodiversity value of the site, in accordance with the provisions of Core Strategy Policies BE1 and NE1, and Local Plan Policies GD2 and NE37.

08. No development shall be carried out other than in accordance with the guidance set out in '*Pollution Prevention Guidance: Works or Maintenance in or Near Water PPG5*, Environment Agency, 2007.'

Reason: To ensure that a watercourse is not polluted or contaminated during development works in accordance with the provisions of Core Strategy Policy NE1.

**Date of Report :** 06.06.2014

**Background Papers:** Planning application file(s) 14/00871/FUL