

Application Number	20/00234/OUT		
Site Address	Land Adjacent, Common Hill Manor, Northwick Road, Bevere, Worcester		
Description of Development	Erection of an 80-bedroom unit care home (Class C2), together with associated infrastructure, parking and access		
Case Officer	Gillian McDermott	Applicant	Northwick Developments Ltd and Landowners
Parish	North Claines	Agent	David Barnes
Ward Member(s)	Cllr N Wright Cllr Tony Miller		
		Expiry Date	5 May 2020 EOT 29.01.2021
Key Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principle of the development - Design - Landscape character and visual impact - Impact on trees - Historic environment - Access and highway issues - Biodiversity - Flooding and drainage - Planning obligations 		
Recommendation	Refusal		

1. SITE DESCRIPTION AND DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application site comprises 0.78 ha of agricultural land to the west side of Northwick Road adjacent to the boundary with Worcester City. To the north of the site is Common Hill Manor, a Grade II listed building and TPO designation. The pond area to the south is also part of Worcester City's Riverside Conservation Area, within Character Area 1: Northwick. This pond is within the ownership of the applicant. To the west is agricultural land with the village of Hallow further west and to the east is existing residential development.

On land adjacent to the west of the site are Flood Zones 2 (medium risk) and Flood Zone 3 (High risk). The site lies within the Neighbourhood Plan area of North Claines.

This outline planning application proposes the erection of an 80 bedroomed unit care

home (Class C2 use), together with associated parking, access and infrastructure with access only to be considered. Vehicular access to serve the development would be off Northwick Road.

The application site includes land for parking provision and communal garden areas.

The following documents have been submitted as part of the application:

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Ecological Appraisal
- Reptile Survey Report
- Noble Chafer Survey Report
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Heritage Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Road Safety Audit
- Framework Travel Plan
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Archaeology Desk Based Assessment
- Health Impact Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal
- Renewable Energy Statement
- Feasibility Study
- Water Management Statement

Constraints

NEIG - Neighbourhood Plan: NPA Boundaries
NEWS - Paper: Droitwich Advertiser - Thursday
FLO2 - Flood Zone 2: Medium
FLO3 - Flood Zone 3: High
LAN1 - Landfill Consultation
SAND - Minerals: Sand & Gravel Area
ODB - Outside SWDP Development Boundary
CIL - CIL008 - Non-Urban Area
SWLO - Surface Water: Low 1 in 1000 extent
TPO - Tree Preservation Order - 61/91/001/TPO
SWDP - SWDP 24: Archaeological Sensitive Areas (ASA)
SWDP - SWDP 6: Conservation Area
SWDP - SWDP 2: Development Boundary
SWDP - SWDP 38: Green Space
SWDP - SWDP 5: Protect and Enhance
SWME - Surface Water: Medium 1 in 100 extent - Distance: 0.59
SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest - Distance: 408.01

2. PLANNING POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

2.1 The Development Plan

The determination of a planning application is to be made pursuant to section 38(6)

of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which is to be read in conjunction with section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Section 38(6) requires the local planning authority to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless there are material circumstances which 'indicate otherwise'. Section 70(2) provides that in determining applications the local planning authority "shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations."

The development plan consists of the South Worcestershire Development Plan 2016, the Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire - Adopted Waste Local Plan 2012-2027 and North Claines Neighbourhood Plan.

South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)

Wychavon, in partnership with Worcester City and Malvern Hills District Councils, adopted the SWDP in February 2016. The following policies are relevant to the application:-

Policy SWDP 1 - Overarching Sustainability Principles
Policy SWDP2 – Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy
Policy SWDP 3 - Employment, Housing and Retail Provision Requirement and Delivery
Policy SWDP 4 - Moving Around South Worcestershire
Policy SWDP 5 – Green Infrastructure
Policy SWDP 6 – Historic Environment
Policy SWDP 7 – Infrastructure
Policy SWDP 8 - Providing the Right Land and Buildings for Jobs
Policy SWDP 13 - Effective Use of Land
Policy SWDP 20 – Housing to Meet the Needs of Older People
Policy SWDP 21 – Design
Policy SWDP 22 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy SWDP 25 - Landscape Character
Policy SWDP 26 - Telecommunications and Broadband
Policy SWDP 27 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
Policy SWDP 28 - Management of Flood Risk
Policy SWDP 29 - Sustainable Drainage Systems
Policy SWDP 30 – Water Resources, Efficiency and Treatment
Policy SWDP 31 – Pollution and Land Instability
Policy SWDP 33 – Waste

The Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire - Adopted Waste Local Plan 2012-2027

The Waste Local Plan was adopted by Worcestershire County Council on 15 November 2012 and is a plan outlining how to manage all the waste produced in Worcestershire up to 2027. The following policies are relevant to this application:

WCS1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)
WCS17 (Making provision for waste in new development)

2.2 Government Policy

National Planning Policy Framework
Planning Practice Guidance

2.3 Other Material Planning Considerations

Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 4 – Streetscape Design Guide
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment
Worcestershire Extra Care Strategy 2012-2026
Five Year Housing Land Supply Report
South Worcestershire Infrastructure Delivery Plan
Housing and Support Needs of Older People within Worcestershire
Supporting People Strategy

2.4 Relevant Legislation and regulations

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)
Human Rights Act 1998
Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
Planning Act 2008
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)
Equality Act 2010
Flood and Water Management Act 2010
Localism Act 2011
Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013

2.5 Local Information

North Claines Neighbourhood Plan (NCNP), adopted April 2017. Relevant policies:

- Policy NCT1 – Transport and Development
- Policy NCT 2 – Sustainable Transport Routes
- Policy NCLE1A – appropriate landscape provision
- Policy NCD1 – development and design principles
- Policy NCD2 – detailed design elements
- Policy NCD3 – incorporation of energy efficiency measures of proposed buildings

The Riverside Conservation Area Appraisal (Worcester City)

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

19/00021/PA Outline proposal for C2 Care Home Land Adjacent Common Hill Manor
Northwick Road Bevere ADV Feb 1 2019

Pre-application Engagement

A pre-application enquiry was made with no plans provided apart from that indicating the site boundary. General advice was therefore provided in respect of the

constraints of the site and relevant SWDP policies.

Public Consultation

The Planning Statement confirms that information leaflets were distributed to 46 residential and commercial properties located close to the site on 7th January 2020. The Ward Councillors for Wychavon District and Worcester City Councils were also contacted with the same leaflet. A presentation was due to occur to North Claines Parish Council on 6th January 2020 but was postponed by the Parish Council.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

North Claines Parish Council: Objection

- The access is very poor down a single-track road and the pathway does not connect to any other PROWs.
- There is known flood risk in the area
- Unsustainable location with local buses 400 m away
- Impact upon amenity
- Insufficient parking and no provision for overspill parking
- The type of care home provision is not provided, and evidence of need should be provided
- The proposal should be in accordance with the North Claines Neighbourhood Plan

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (contaminated land): The application site is recorded to be situated within a ground gas buffer zone in close proximity to unknown filled ground. As a result, in order to ensure that the site is suitable for its proposed use, conditions are recommended.

County Highways Authority: no objection subject to conditions and financial obligations

The Highway Authority previously recommended to the Local Planning Authority that this application be both deferred and refused in 2020, relating to insufficient pedestrian access and visibility concerns, due to the position of trees within the visibility splay. Since these recommendations, the applications consultants - Mode Transport Planning (Mode) have continued discussions with the Highway Authority have significantly amended the sites frontage onto Northwick Road and the proposed access junction, to provide a design that now overcomes previous highway concerns.

As an outline planning application, internal site design and car parking will require consultation with the Highway Authority as part of a future Reserve Matters Application. These do not form part of the application submission at this time.

Vehicle Access - In the Highway Authorities previous planning responses, it was stated that *'along the (site) frontage are 3 large trees and the access is cited between these, the visibility splay drawing show that the trees are located within the*

splay lines. It is permissible for trees to be in the visibility splay so long as they do not completely obscure an approaching vehicle. In this instance given the girth of the trunks and proximity to the access it is considered that they would result in a significant obstruction to visibility which would conceal a vehicle or bicycle. The proposed access point is therefore not considered to represent a safe access and the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on Highway Safety’.

As part of the Transport Statement, surveys identified the 85th percentile speed past the proposed access is 23.9mph in the northbound direction and 24.1mph in the southbound direction. Northwick Road is also subject to a 30mph speed limit. Based on the design guidance within Manual for Streets (MfS), a visibility splay of approx. 31.4 metres would be required in both directions from a setback distance of 2.4m, based on the 85th percentile speeds recorded.

Mode have shown both visibility splays based on 85th percentile speeds and those which reflect a 30mph speed limit. This information is shown in the Mode Drawing Ref: J32-4454-PS-005.

To overcome visibility issues, the applicant has agreed to bring forward the sites frontage into Northwick Road, whilst maintaining the Northwick Road carriageway width. This has been achieved by encroaching into the wide highway verge provided on the opposite side of the carriageway. With the site frontage and access junction brought forward, visibility from the proposed access junction can now be achieved in front of the trees with no obstructions.

The highway verge is used as an extension to some resident’s driveways, but this does fall within Highway Authority owned land.

Pedestrian Access - Pedestrian access to the site and in general along Northwick Road has now also been provided. A new 1.8m footway is provided along the full length of the site, connecting to existing footway provision to the south. A 2m footway was requested, although Mode advise that due to tree constraints and to limit the land take of the grass verge opposite, a 1.8m footway is the best that can be provided. Mode advise that the existing footway is 1.8m in width, so this footway will tie into that existing to the south. This is an improvement on existing provision, which requires pedestrian to walk with traffic within the Northwick Road carriageway.

A tactile cross is provided to the north of the site, allowing pedestrians to cross to the opposite side of the carriageway, which will connect to existing footways provided on Willowslea Road, and the bus stop nearby on Grange Avenue.

To the south of the site, a continuous lit footway is provided to further bus stops on Old Northwick Lane and wider local amenities of Northwick and Worcester City Centre beyond.

Public Transport - The nearest stop on Grange Avenue is approximately 240 metres from the proposed development. The Highway Authority would seek to formalise / upgrade this bus stop. This stop is served by the 37 bus, which currently operates

in a one way loop via Beckett Road, Northwick Road, Hillcrest Rise and Grange Avenue, with two stops recorded on Naptan.

Related to another development, the Highway Authority has already agreed a contribution to improve the stop at Old Northwick Lane.

The Highway Authority also requests a contribution to develop a Community Transport service in the area given the nature of the development and there is a precedent with the Care Home development on the former DEFRA site, where a contribution has been achieved for purpose of community transport services towards provision of vehicle, driver, ancillary procurement and administrative costs for Worcester Wheels Service.

Traffic Generation - Vehicle trip generation has been presented from trips rates derived from TRICS. The Highway Authority believes the trip rates presented by Mode underestimate the vehicle trip generation potential of the site, and the proposals for 80 bedrooms, are more likely to generate approx. 15 two-way vehicle trips in each weekday peak hour, based on the Highway Authorities own TRICS comparisons. Less traffic will be generated by the proposals at all other times. It is accepted that this level of traffic would not have a severe / significant impact on the operation of the local highway network.

Summary

The Highway Authority has undertaken a robust assessment of the planning application. Based on the analysis of the information submitted and consultation responses from third parties the Highway Authority concludes that there would not be a severe impact and therefore there are no justifiable grounds on which an objection could be maintained subject to conditions.

Planning Obligations - The applicant should provide the following planning obligations through a suitable legal mechanism (S106/CIL).

Bus Stop Infrastructure

Specific Purpose - There are implications for employee and visitor access to public transport in this location. An existing bus is operation, although bus stops are not formalised. A contribution is requested to provide a bus stop (pole and flag) on Grange Avenue.

Contribution - We would seek a contribution of £3,000 towards this infrastructure provision.

Trigger – Prior to occupation

Community Transport

Specific Purpose – There is a need for a Community Transport service to meet the transport needs of the elderly and disabled. The County council has specific duties under the 1985 Transport Act to take account of the transport needs of elderly and disabled residents and also further duties to residents protected characteristics that include the elderly and disabled under the Equalities Act 2010. There will be residents with mobility impairments who are unable to access conventional public

transport, it is this group that will require access to a door to door transport service such as that provided by Community Transport.

Contribution - £11,350 contribution to be paid prior to first occupation of any Extra Care Units

Trigger – Prior to occupation

Traffic Regulation Order

Specific Purpose – A fee to process a TRO application is requested in this location, believing that parking restrictions are likely to be required given the nature of the proposals, and to ensure that access visibility can be achieved.

Contribution - We would seek a contribution of £4,500 for processing a TRO in this location.

Trigger – Prior to occupation. If the TRO is not required, the contribution would be returned to the applicant after a set timescale.

Conditions:

- Conformity with submitted details as shown on DWG No. J32-4454-PS-005
- Vehicular visibility splays
- Employment Travel Plan
- Off-site highway improvements
- CEMP

Informatives:

- Section 278 agreement
- Drainage details for section 38
- CEMP
- Travel Plan requirements
- Lighting

Environment Agency: No response received

LLFA: The previous holding objection has now been addressed. Recommend conditions

Severn Trent Water: No response received

Council's Drainage Engineer: The application site is in flood zone 1 and in an area at low risk of surface water flooding. The proposed means of surface water disposal will be via underground attenuation tanks before discharging to an adjacent watercourse at a reduced rate. Hard standing areas will be surfaced with permeable materials. It should be noted that the proposed outfall headwall, within

the adjacent watercourse, may require Ordinary Watercourse Land Drainage Consent.

Worcestershire Public Health : supports the installation of electric vehicle charging points for at least 10% car parking spaces, the installation of renewable energy production.

The location of the cycle parking does not support behaviour change to active travel.

The landscaping proposal includes the planting of replacement fruit trees which is supported.

Recommend conditions.

Council's Conservation Officer: recommends refusal

The southern part of the application site contains part of a line of historic fish ponds which are within the Riverside Conservation Area (Worcester City Council). To the immediate north of the site is Common Hill Manor, a grade II listed building.

The Heritage Statement has assessed the relevant heritage assets in the vicinity. This has shown that two heritage assets would be affected by the proposals: the Riverside Conservation Area and Common Hill Manor. However outside the study area lies the Church of St Philip and St James at Hallow, a grade II* listed building. This heritage asset has a particularly high spire that can be seen from the application site and is widely used as a landmark and orientation point.

The site forms part of the rural setting for Common Hill Manor. The setting to the east has seen the encroachment of housing estates and to erode the rural setting further would cause less than substantial harm to the heritage asset.

The provision of a large building on the application site would effectively remove the appreciation of the rural setting of Common Hill Manor when viewed from Northwick Road. It would mean that the view over to the river and to Hallow Church spire beyond would be largely blocked. The scheme would also adversely impact the setting and part of the actual Riverside Conservation Area by placing a large building in the setting and by formalising the landscaping in the southern area of the site, within the conservation area. The proposed building would increase the sense of containment by built form along Northwick Road which would again be detrimental to the character of Northwick Road and the setting of heritage assets.

In addition to the impact of the built form on the heritage assets, the traffic generated by the proposed scheme would adversely affect the setting and experience of the heritage assets by altering the character of Northwick Road.

Conclusion:

In principle it is considered that the impact upon the setting of a grade II* building and a grade II building would cause less than substantial harm. This harm is considered to be of a higher level than that stated in the Heritage Statement. This is considered to be contrary to SWDP 6 and SWDP 24 and is not supported

Further comments in response to rebuttal from applicant

The rebuttal misses the point that the rural setting of Common Hill House is extremely important, particularly because in the other directions the fields have been developed in the 20th Century. There may be mature vegetation between the application site and the listed building but that is part of a rural setting.

The rebuttal admits that the proposed building will be seen in conjunction with the listed building from Hallow across the river valley. Therefore, it will have an impact on the setting of the listed building and conversely with the church in Hallows wider setting.

The artists impression is welcomed however the actual design with accurate scale drawings are a completely different thing. The drawings suggest that the end of the building nearest the listed building will be close up to the screening, made so much of in the heritage statement.

It is clear from the visibility splay drawings that the parking will dominate to the front of the proposed building. This will increase the urban feel of the site causing additional damage to the setting of the listed building.

The rebuttal comments that the development will have a negligible impact on the rural character of the Riverside Conservation Area and the proposals allow for a small open space between the pond and screening vegetation. This is not a sufficient assessment of how the proposals will impact on the conservation area and its setting.

Conclusion - The proposal to place a building of this bulk and scale will cause substantial harm to the setting of both Common Hill House, the Riverside Conservation Area and the wider setting of the church at Hallow.

Worcester City Heritage team: Although the site as defined by the red line boundary is entirely in Wychavon district, a small area of land under the same ownership/control (ie blue line), at the southern end of the site, is in Worcester City. This is shown as within the site boundary in some of the submitted documents, while plans show illustrative landscaping proposals extending into this area. It might be more appropriate for this area to be included within the development boundary.

Conservation area

The site is immediately adjacent to the Worcester City Council Riverside Conservation Area (on the northern edge of the Northwick character area). The blue line land is in the conservation area. Part of the significance of the Northwick character area is its recreational value as an area of rural character which encompasses mature, dominant landscaping on the edges of the conservation area which screens modest development on the edge of the built-up area of Worcester (including the consented but as yet unbuilt development at Old Northwick Farm). This provides a backdrop for open, rural views through and to outside the area.

The current proposals overdevelop the site and provide little screening of the western elevation from the conservation area, creating an obtrusive form in views of an otherwise rural character. The scale and visibility of the proposed development

is incongruous to the character of this part of the conservation area, would harm open views through the area and impact on the recreational experience of users. The proposed development would therefore have a less than substantial impact on the conservation area, but significantly more than the 'less than substantial (lower end of the scale)' impact described by the applicant in the Heritage Statement.

Archaeology

The application affects an earthwork monument within Worcester City, comprising the remains of a fishpond documented as being part of the Bishop of Worcester's estate at Northwick. The fishpond is currently being considered for local listing.

An archaeological desk-based assessment has been submitted with the application, and an evaluation by trial trenching undertaken. The fishpond area is not within the development boundary shown on the application, and it is understood that the evaluation has not addressed this area.

The area of the fishpond would form part of an amenity area for the residents of the complex. However, proposals for this area (both inside and beyond the red line) seem insufficiently developed and do not address the archaeological and historic interest of the site, or interpretation of this. This should be more fully developed at reserved matters stage.

The building and car park will impact on the setting of the fishpond but this can be suitably mitigated through planting and screening.

Dependent on potential reconsideration of the site boundary, it may be appropriate to attach a condition to control groundworks in the area of the fishpond. Watermill remains are particularly sensitive and could include preserved timber structures.

Recommendation: Objection due to the impact on the setting of the Riverside Conservation Area.

Landscape design to address the archaeological and historic interest of the fishpond, interpretation, and screening, at reserved matters stage

Control of groundworks in the fishpond area (currently blue line area)

Council's Archaeological Planning Advisor: The proposed development may affect heritage assets of known archaeological significance (WSM91051). A desk based assessment has been supplied in support of the current application and correctly notes that trench evaluation will be required. Recent trench evaluation of the site located several features which appeared to be grave cuts along an historic field boundary. Although some remains were identified it appeared as though single limbs may have been buried and is believed that they relate to the post-medieval period.

A field evaluation report has not yet been produced but given the scale of development and the anticipated archaeological potential, the likely impact on the historic environment may be offset by the implementation of a conditional programme of archaeological works.

Council's Landscape Officer: comments in response to the landscape rebuttal

dated 11th June 2020:

- the fact that there is built form to the north, south and east and the approved development to the south for 62 units at Northwick Farm would, to my mind, make this particular site *significantly* important in providing and maintaining a visual green link to the river corridor and the spire of Hallow church beyond. It is the only point between the separate settlements of Worcester and Bevere that these views are available to the public and which aid legibility of the wider landscape.
- I still question the retention of the three chestnut trees given the Highway comments. Their loss would be most regrettable as they are significant landscape features which contribute greatly to the character of the street scene.
- I concur that there is variation of sensitivity within the Landscape Character Type (LCT) but I remain of the view that the scale of the proposals is not appropriate when considered alongside adjacent development. Whilst the greatest effects might be to the site and its immediate setting, I have also expressed concern regarding impact on views from the river corridor and the public footpaths alongside the river and whilst the effects would diminish to some degree with distance from the site there would, nonetheless, still be an adverse visual impact.
- The views are more than glimpsed and the care home would also be visible as a large building, albeit from only certain locations along the riverside. Even if the roof line of the care home is the same height as the houses opposite, it's bulk and the lack of space to provide any tree planting of any significance to the western boundary to soften it would make it more conspicuous. The development would result in a narrow funnelled view and any views to Hallow church as a landmark would be lost.
- I do not agree that views towards Hallow church are incidental and not as significant as I suggest. As for any landmark, it aids legibility in the wider landscape and adds to the sense of place.
- Details of the planting could be agreed at the Reserved Matters stage. However, given the close proximity of much of the proposed building to the western boundary it would not allow space for trees to be planted that would achieve a sufficient size at maturity to adequately soften the proposed building in views from the west.
- I acknowledge the flats at Severn Grange and Bevere Court but the extent of the proposed building and open parking would appear to be greater within the proposed scheme than at either of those.
- it is often the case that sites contribute to the local landscape character but are not protected by policy. Not all sites can be protected in this way. The site possesses a number of characteristics identified for the Landscape Type within which it is located.
- Policy SWDP25 is clear. It requires that development proposals must demonstrate that they take into account the latest LCA and its guidelines. Also that they are appropriate to, and integrate with, the character of the landscape setting and that they

conserve, and where possible enhance the primary characteristics defined in character assessments. The proposed development fails on all counts and would, therefore, be contrary to Policy SWDP25.

WDC Natural Heritage Officer: The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal states:

“Following the completion of the recommended further surveys (see below) formal Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) is recommended for this site. EclA is required in order that the planning authority can make a robust assessment of potential development impacts in line with planning policy (e.g. NPPF, ODPM Circular 06/2005) and current best practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2018).” As it stands at the moment we do not have the necessary impact assessment relating the ecological assets of the site to the proposed development.

The PEA does not provide a clear assessment of the impacts from the proposed development on receptors. The site features some habitats of ecological value, such as the woodland and stream to the south, semi-improved grassland and a traditional orchard. The grassland and traditional orchard habitat would be lost pretty much completely whereas the woodland and stream, though outside the red line area could potentially be adversely affected by runoff or other pollution during and after construction and from the creation of an access through the wood.

The NPPF requires developments to minimise impacts on biodiversity and to provide net gains. The PEA makes recommendations for enhancements, but this will be difficult here with a lack of space for planting alongside the requirements of the care home setting. I would suggest that even a ‘no net loss’ may be difficult to achieve.

It is therefore crucial that we have a thorough EclA which also clearly demonstrates biodiversity losses and gains (if applicable) and provides a measure on whether and how a net gain for biodiversity can be achieved for this development. Without this I have strong reservations that the proposed development will meet the requirements of the NPPF in terms of biodiversity impacts and achieving biodiversity net gain.

I can confirm that the trees have been inspected as part of the survey and no evidence of roosting bats was found at the time. Precautionary measures are recommended which are appropriate.

Further comments on the Ecological Impact Assessment and Noble Chafer Survey, 20.01.2021

The noble chafer survey did not identify any frass attributable to noble chafer. It is therefore unlikely that this species is present in the fruit trees. Fruit trees with decay features are nevertheless probable to support a variety of other invertebrates. I welcome the recommendation in the PEA report that as much of the deadwood resulting from the felling of these trees is retained in suitable locations around the site to retain some of this valuable resource. However, it has not been demonstrated that they can indeed be achieved in a satisfactory way within the proposed development.

The EclA only highlights 2 habitats of concern: the traditional orchard and the broadleaf woodland. Most of the orchard, a UK priority habitat, would be lost with only 2 out of 9 fruit trees to be retained. The EclA identifies the impact on this habitat as being 'major negative' at a local level with no real mitigation or compensation.

In respect of the broadleaf woodland the EclA suggests that there will be an initial 'neutral' to minor negative' impact but with mitigation the residual impact on this habitat is likely to be 'neutral' or potentially 'minor positive' in the long term following the implementation of a positive woodland management plan.

It is also worth pointing out that the loss of a UK priority habitat, also known as a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, should only be permitted if the need for and the benefits of the proposed development outweigh the loss. (SWDP 22 D)

The semi-improved grassland habitat present across the majority of the site was considered "sufficiently common" not to be included in the impact assessment although it is considered that it has some biodiversity value which would be lost.

It has not been demonstrated how these losses can realistically be compensated and if and how appropriate enhancements can be achieved, contrary to SWDP 22 D and F as well as paragraphs 170, 174 and 175 of the NPPF. I have therefore come to the conclusion that I cannot support this application.

Design Out Crime Officer: No objection in principle, but comments on the indicative drawings:

- The cycle stand be moved to gain better surveillance from the reception area (swap with refuse storage space)
- How will the extra exit entrance points be managed?
- The drawings provide no detail of boundary treatments to prevent access to the site
- Hedging alongside a post and rail fence to the rear would provide a more robust and secure environment for residents.

Policy team (Wychavon): we cannot attach any weight to the potential allocation in the SWDPR. Therefore the most relevant development plan policy is SWDP20, B it states:

Where housing for older people falling into Class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) is proposed, permission will be granted provided that:

- i. There is an evidenced requirement for that type of accommodation;
- ii. The scheme has good access to public transport, healthcare, shopping and other community facilities or, where the proposed scheme lacks such access, it can be demonstrated that there would be significant benefits to the local community from the scheme in its proposed location and the scheme would

provide on-site services and facilities and tailored transport services to meet the needs of residents; and

iii. Where a mix of use classes C2 and C3 is proposed on a single site, the affordable housing requirements of policy SWDP15, are met in respect of the C3 element.

Criterion i. will need to be evidenced in order to gain support.

Criterion ii. would be hard to argue against given the potential housing allocation and therefore it should be considered a sustainable location.

Criterion ii. is not relevant to this application.

Given the proximity to a listed building, the views of the Council's heritage team are required in determining the application.

Housing Solutions and Enabling Officer, Worcester City Council: the development would be over-intensification of development in its current format on the site. I am also concerned that the location is not the most sustainable for such a development and agree with comments made by both Highways and Residents that parking, access are both limited and without improvements to the current largely single track highway would present accessibility issues. I also have concerns of the scale of this development, given that Worcester City have four similar use class c2 properties used as extra care housing both Registered Provider and privately operated within a 2 mile distance from the site, and also a fifth planned at Whittington. These developments were in response to the needs assessment undertaken by the County Council for the Extra Care Housing Strategy

5. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

Objectors

162 communications of objection have been received
A petition with 1095 signatures has been received

Supporters

1 communication of support has been received

6. Representations Made

The issues raised have been summarised by the Officer as follows:

Flooding and drainage

- Flooding – the development would put residents and properties at risk
- Additional sewerage demand on an already overloaded service
- There will be an increased rate of run-off of rainwater
- The justification for designed drainage is not in line with SWDP 29

Traffic/highway safety

- The road is too narrow and unsuitable for extra traffic with no streetlighting or footway
- There is insufficient road width for two cars to pass each other
- Northwick Road will require significant improvement causing disruption and stress to local residents
- Impact upon pedestrians and horse riders, speeding vehicles
- Lack of infrastructure and no bus service
- The lack of local facilities will result in further withdrawal of older residents from public life
- Is within a mile of at least two other care homes
- Insufficient parking
- Insufficient safe road access for HGV's to supply the development and no parking nearby for construction workers or visitors
- Access for emergency vehicles
- The bus service in Bevere Close referred to in the Planning Statement no longer exists

Recreation

- Is part of a nature trail and is used for exercise
- The development would result in a reduction in traditional recreation land

Landscape/ecology

- Insufficient untouched green space for wildlife
- Impact on one of the last remaining greenbelts in the area
- Loss of open space, views, fields and trees and visual amenity
- The grassland indicate that the site qualifies for Special Wildlife Status and veteran trees are present. It is a valuable ecological asset and supports lowland unimproved grasslands, traditional orchard and wet woodland habitats
- The site supports three habitat types: wet woodland, grassland and orchard. Wet woodland is a rare habitat type in Worcestershire and is a priority UK BAP habitat, is of ecological value and worthy of conservation in its own right. The orchard and grassland is also worthy of conservation in its own right.
- Loss of wildlife corridor
- Development will destroy a distinctive landscape and is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- It forms a strategic open site/vista along the Northwick Heritage Trail and provides views to Hallow Church.
- The building would be too high and out of context with the residential environment
- The ground is not suitable to be built upon

Heritage assets

- The scheme will impact on the setting and significance of the heritage, ecology and Riverside Conservation Area. The scheme does not offer significant benefits which would outweigh the massive loss of ecological, landscape and environmental benefits and the proposal should be rejected.
- It is next to a historic site and is intrinsic to the Bevere Conservation Area
- It is close to the historically important and last remaining medieval fish pond which was part of the Bishop of Worcester's palace complex

- Bevere Conservation Area includes Common Hill House which is very visible from the river
- Development would disrupt the nucleated aspect of this Bevere Green satellite development. Its separate quality and rural appearance depends in large part on the open aspect presented by Common Hill orchard and it provides a sense of space and allows extensive views over the natural river corridor landscape to the west
- The juxtaposition of two geological formations and three major soil types is uncommon and has both intrinsic and educational value
- The site is one of the last sites of archaeological and scientific interest in Northwick, Claines
- As the occupier of Common Hill Manor I advise that the donkey field originally belonged to this property and the historic garden runs parallel to the field

Residential amenity

- Impacts upon noise and disturbance
- Loss of privacy
- Detrimental impact on amenity and community in the neighbourhood
- Air pollution from extra traffic and light pollution
- Concern about the impacts during construction

Policy and need for the development

- The land was removed from the SWDP on the grounds of biodiversity in 2012 when an application was submitted for Old Northwick Farm
- Does not accord with the SWDP in the area to provide housing and would be contrary to the NPPF
- Wychavon has sufficient 5 years housing land supply to meet local need
- From the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2019 Wychavon requires almost 50% more care home provision than Worcester.. It would not meet the need in the area
- With covid related deaths, existing care homes have been forced to close down
- The development is not needed as a 74 bed care home has been approved on the old park and ride site

Other issues

- My home will be devalued and quality of life affected
- This area is becoming overdeveloped
- Local health services are already unable to cope with the current demand
- The development would be aimed at those who can afford high quality care and not affordable
- The site is significant within Worcestershire's Green Infrastructure
- Worcester City Residents have no democratic control over the proposal and there is no regard or due diligence to provision cross boundary
- Nursing homes have proved to be a hot spot with regard to the pandemic
- The application should be determined by Planning Committee
- An agricultural rights of way exists across the site and it is unclear as to whether the development would provide the necessary space to maintain the access. We recognise that land rights are a Civil Matter however, it is something that should be considered . The established access into the land from Northwick

- Road will need to be maintained
- Other land is available in Wychavon and any development will affect Worcester City residents

Support

- this area of Worcester has a large proportion of an aging population.
- the Council should make sure the roads, general infrastructure is agreed and timescales for completion are agreed before granting permission.
- Northwich Manor Primary School should be given a lump sum of profits of perhaps 10%. This would help Worcester achieve the quota of houses needed.
- The area should gain from the development and local people should have a say/vote on where the money is to be spent.

7. OFFICER APPRAISAL

The following material planning issues are relevant to this application:

- Principle of the development
- Design
- Landscape character and visual impact
- Impact upon trees
- Historic environment
- Access and highway issues
- Biodiversity
- Residential amenity
- Flooding and drainage
- Renewable and low carbon energy
- Planning obligations
- Planning balance and conclusion

7.1 Principle of the Development

Policy SWDP 2 and SWDP 4

Policy SWDP 1 seeks to take a positive approach when considering development proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy SWDP 2 sets out the development strategy and settlement hierarchy, which is based on a number of principles, including safeguarding and (wherever possible) enhancing open countryside; encouraging the effective use and re-use of accessible, available and environmentally acceptable land; and focusing most new development on the urban areas, where both housing needs and accessibility to lower-cost public services are greatest.

The application site is located within Wychavon District, beyond but adjacent to the development boundary of Worcester City as defined in the SWDP. It is not an allocated site, nor is it an agreed urban extension, or a brownfield site, nor it is within a defined development boundary where windfall development may be appropriate. As a consequence, the site lies within the open countryside where new development is strictly controlled by Policy SWDP 2.

Policy SWDP 4 seeks to manage travel demand by ensuring development offers genuinely sustainable travel choices.

The submitted Transport Statement identifies that Northwick Road provides a pedestrian connection to a number of retail and commercial units to the south of the site. It is noted that there is a Co-op store less than 700 m from the site to the east and there are bus stops along Old Northwick Lane and Ombersley Road which provide regular bus services to Worcester and Kidderminster. The nearest bus stop is approximately 350 m from the site. There are also relatively good connections to the National Cycle Network Route 46. Given these factors and its proximity to the Worcester City boundary, it is considered that the site has relatively good access to facilities, services and public transport and offers some sustainable travel choices for employees and visitors to the development.

Policy SWDP 20 and benefits of the proposal

The application site lies adjacent to the Worcester City District and lies outside of any settlement boundary as designated by the SWDP where in accordance with Policy SWDP 2 development is strictly controlled unless it falls within one of the exceptions set out in SWDP 2 C. One exception is where development is specifically permitted by other SWDP Policies which in this case is Policy SWDP20, whereby at B it states:

Where housing for older people falling into Class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) is proposed, permission will be granted provided that:

- i. There is an evidenced requirement for that type of accommodation;*

The Planning statement refers to SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) for Wychavon which states that the older person group is expected to increase in number by around 6,048 households during 2016-2030. For the same period in Worcester City the number is expected to be around 2,460 households. The Worcestershire Extra Care Housing Strategy 2012-26 sets out the framework for the future development of extra housing in Worcestershire, including those in Class C2.

Table 5.10 of Wychavon SHMA indicates a need for 1,171 additional units up to 2030 including 347 Class C2 units of residential care provision (29 per year). In Worcester there will be a need for 208 additional C2 units for the same period (17 per year).

The CBRE Feasibility Report demonstrates that there is a requirement for a C2 care home in this particular location:

- Within 3 miles of the site the demand for care beds will increase from 528 today to 700 by 2028
- Within the local area there is an undersupply of 162 market standard en-suite bedrooms to meet the current demand which is expected to increase to 287 bedrooms by 2028 (taking into account the existing supply with known proposals for new accommodation).

It is commented that there are two existing Care Homes in the area and that due to the Covid pandemic existing care homes are closing down, although no evidence has been provided to back up this statement. It is considered that there is evidenced need for C2 accommodation in the local area and the proposal would help to address this need and therefore be of benefit in that regard.

ii. The scheme has good access to public transport, healthcare, shopping and other community facilities or, where the proposed scheme lacks such access, it can be demonstrated that there would be significant benefits to the local community from the scheme in its proposed location and the scheme would provide on-site services and facilities and tailored transport services to meet the needs of residents; and

The submitted Transport Statement states that the care home would have 16 members of full-time staff along with some part-time members of staff. Facilities such as a café, hairdressers and accommodation of physical activities would be provided within the development for the use by residents. The proposal is also likely to create indirect jobs such as ground maintenance staff which would also be of benefit.

Currently the site does not have any footways or footpaths along the boundary of the site, although there is a footway to the south of the site on the western side of Northwick Road. The submitted Transport Statement identifies pedestrian connections to retail and commercial units, bus stops and cycle routes. Given these factors and its proximity to the Worcester City boundary, it is considered that the site has relatively good access to facilities, services and public transport, although future residents are likely to have to use the private car to access facilities and services which are further afield.

iii. Where a mix of use classes C2 and C3 is proposed on a single site, the affordable housing requirements of policy SWDP15, are met in respect of the C3 element.

This criterion is not relevant to this application.

7.2 Design

SWDP 21 expects all development to be of a high-quality design and should complement the character of the area, respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features and qualities that contribute to the visual and heritage interests of the area. Policy NCD1 of the North Claines Neighbourhood Plan requires development to integrate into the existing area in terms of landscape, character, design and density and to meet a number of criteria.

The proposed indicative site plan shows how the proposed care home could be accommodated within the site with the car parking to the front and the building to the rear. The Design and Access Statement points to the benefits this would achieve:

- The building would be less imposing on neighbouring properties and would allow it to be positioned at the lowest part of the site, reducing the sense of scale.
- The set back building line would sit in the streetscene
- The building would avoid RPAs on the street frontage

- Access to parking facilities would be direct with hard surfacing minimised.

Although layout, scale and appearance are reserved matters it is necessary to consider whether the proposal would integrate successfully with its surroundings. The proposed site plan shows that the building would comprise different roof forms and the DAS points to the use of a system of narrow building forms interspersed with a strong landscape plan. The northern part of the development would also incorporate small, intimate amenity areas. With regard to the southern part of the site, this would contain the primary access and inclusion of substantial verge and hedgerows along the frontage. The building entrance would be marked with a flat roofed canopy and this part of the site would contain further amenity areas and landscaping.

Illustrative ground, first and second floor plans have been submitted to show that the proposal would use a typical 18 square metres residents' bed/sitting room with wheelchair accessible en-suite. Primary communal facilities would be contained within the central area of the building along with a central stair and lift-core to provide access to upper levels. There would be a similar arrangement at upper levels but with less shared communal space, but provision for assisted bathing spaces and secondary sitting rooms. The second floor would be limited to the central part of the building, so that the majority of the building would be two-storey and 1.5 stories in form.

An illustrative site section has been submitted to show the development in relation to the two storey dwellings opposite. On the basis of the information provided, the building would be set back from Northwick Road and due to the lower ground levels, it would be some 2 m below street level.

Based on the proposed site plan and the indicative siting of the building, it would project significantly westwards compared with the existing buildings on the western side of Northwick Road. The closest parts of the building to the west boundary would be 1.5 and 3.7 m away (the latter being the 2.5 storey element.) The positioning of an 80 bedded care home is restricted by the three mature trees along the front boundary and the illustrative layout shows that a number of parking spaces would be within the RPAs, which represents a constraint. It is therefore of concern that the accommodation of an 80 bedded care home would appear cramped within the site and present overdevelopment which would be at odds with the character of the area, contrary to Policy SWDP 21 and Policy NCD 1 of the NCNP.

7.3 Landscape Character and Visual Impact

Policy SWDP 25 states that "development proposals and their associated landscaping schemes must demonstrate that they take into account the latest Landscape Character Assessment and its guidelines; they are appropriate to and integrate with the character of the landscape setting; and that they conserve and where appropriate enhance the primary characteristics defined in character assessments and important features of the Land Cover Parcel, and have taken any available opportunity to enhance the landscape." Policy NCLE1A of the North Claines Neighbourhood Plan states that appropriate landscape provision on the boundary of proposal within the countryside or at the edge of settlements should provide a strong and defensible buffer to enhance the interface of the development on the visual appearance of the area.

Concerns are raised from third parties with regard to the loss of open space, views, trees, visual amenity, the impact upon the distinctive landscape, AONB and greenbelt. However, the site is not designated as an AONB or greenbelt.

In terms of landscape character, the site lies within the Riverside Meadows Landscape Type and the River Severn-Ombersley to Worcester Riverside Meadows Landscape Description Unit. The landscape guidelines for this landscape type is to retain the unity of the linear form of landscape, conserve existing areas of permanent pasture, conserve and enhance continuous tree cover along hedgelines, ditches and watercourses, and avoid building or road construction works. The submitted LVIA states that the settlement edge at Northwick Road has a discordant character compared with the immediate riverside areas, due to the presence of historic buildings, modern housing, commercial buildings and pylons and is therefore considered to be of medium value. Whilst it is agreed that there is a variation in sensitivity within the Landscape Character Type and that effects would be less to a certain extent with the distance from the site, the impact on views from the river corridor and public footpaths are more than glimpsed and would result in an adverse visual impact. Further, the likely siting of such a building as shown on the indicative site plan towards the western part of the site, would result in an increased prominence from the public vantage points to the west. It's bulk and lack of space to provide meaningful landscaping along the western boundary (based on the indicative plan) would also result in a more conspicuous development than the existing residential development and other development in the vicinity of the site.

The conclusions of the LVIA is that the proposal would preserve some visibility by setting the development back from Northwick Road and from the medieval fish pond. Existing mature trees on Northwick Road would be retained, roadside planting enhanced, and new tree planting along the western boundary of the site. The LVIA states that the "effects on the characteristics of the site and its immediate setting would be of moderate significance and on balance adverse. The effects to the characteristics of the Riverside Meadows LCA would be considered to be of low significance and on balance neutral." This is disagreed with as the accommodation of an 80 bed care home would likely to result in a large scale of development which would not be appropriate when considered alongside adjacent development and the site is considered to be particularly important in providing and maintaining a visual green link to the river corridor and the landmark of Hallow Church.

Views from Northwick Road as indicated by the submitted LVIA would be of moderate significance and adverse due to the partial loss of views into the River Severn Valley. From the remaining locations such as next to the River Severn from the west, the proposed development would present an additional building and roofline in front of those existing on Northwick Road with the proposed tree planting on the western boundary softening and filtering views in time. It is concluded by the LVIA that the effects on views would be of minimal magnitude, negligible magnitude and neutral and that the site has the ability to accommodate the proposals without unprecedented significant and adverse effects.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would fail to integrate with and harm the character of the landscape setting and fails to demonstrate that account it taken of the latest LCA and its guidelines, contrary to Policies SWDP 21 and SWDP 25 and Policy NCLE1A of the NP.

7.4 Impact upon trees

Policy SWDP 21 states that development should respond to the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the visual and heritage interest of the townscape, frontages, streets and landscape quality of the local area.

Of principle interest are three mature horse chestnut trees along the frontage of the site which contribute to the visual interest and landscape quality of the area. Other smaller trees are present within the site and along the boundaries. There is also a broadleaved woodland to the south of the site and a TPO designation adjacent to the northern boundary.

The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) identifies the removal of 5 category C and 5 category U trees to facilitate the development. The three trees, T2, T3 and T6 along the frontage would be retained as part of the development and are classed as Category A, B and C trees respectively. However, crown lifting of all three trees would be required to 2.5 m in height to provide clearance for tree protective fencing. Crown lifting is also proposed on the north side of the woodland area to the south, where low hanging branches would conflict with tree protective fencing.

It is evident from the indicative plan showing how the building could be accommodated within the site, that excavation works would be required within the RPAs of T3, T6, T11 and T14. The AIA states that the access road, parking bays, footpaths, cycle storage area and refuse/recycling areas should be constructed on a cellular confinement system using no-dig techniques as part of an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), which may be acceptable subject to a condition requiring further details if the application was recommended for approval.

Excavation works required for the foundation of the building within T14's RPA would also need to be controlled by an AMS.

As this is an outline application with access only to be considered, it would be possible in any subsequent reserved matters application to lessen the impact upon the three mature chestnut trees with the siting of car parking and hard surfaced areas away from root protection areas. Whilst there is concern about the impact of the development upon the three horse chestnut trees along the site's frontage, they would not longer be affected by the required visibility splays and given the indication of the weaknesses as described in the tree report, a refusal reason on the potential adverse impacts on T6 or the other trees cannot be justified.

7.5 Historic Environment

Paragraph 185 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities, when determining applications, to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. Paragraph 193 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, the more important the asset the greater the weight should be. Further, Paragraph 196 states that "where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum use."

Policy SWDP 21 is relevant in that they seek to permit development where the layout, scale, massing, density, materials and design of the proposal respects the character and quality of the area. Further, Policies SWDP 6 and 24 require development proposals to conserve and enhance heritage assets.

To the north of the site is Common Hill House, a Grade II Listed Building and which lies approximately 26 m from the northern boundary of the site at its closest point. Approximately 350 m to the south of the site is Northwick Grange, which is also Grade II listed. The site lies adjacent to the Riverside Conservation Area (Worcester City) which includes a large designation of open space along the river.

Concerns from local residents are that the development would impact the setting of heritage assets including the Riverside Conservation Area, medieval fish pond and would not offer significant benefits that would outweigh the impacts.

Common Hill House

The submitted Heritage Statement (HS) states the majority of Common Hill House is not visually evident due to the screening provided by mature trees and therefore the proposal would result in some limited harm to the wider setting of the heritage asset. This is not agreed with in that the development would increase the sense of containment by built form along Northwick Road. Although all matters are reserved apart from access, the accommodation of the proposal would result in the building being significantly further westwards compared with Common Hill House which would also impact upon its setting.

In consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer, it is considered that the proposal would erode Common Hill Manor's rural setting and cause less than substantial harm to the heritage asset.

Northwick Grange

Given the distance between the site and this heritage asset and that there is no inter-visibility, no harm is identified by the HS. This is generally agreed with.

Riverside Conservation Area

The HS states that the retention of natural screening along its south boundary, in particular, would ensure that the development would not be visually prominent, and the building and car park would be sited away from the conservation area boundary. In conclusion, the HS identifies that there would be less than substantial harm to the setting of the adjoining conservation area, which would be outweighed by public benefits.

Based on the indicative siting of the proposal as shown on the proposed site plan, the conservation area boundary to the west would be approximately 13-14 m from the nearest part of the building and car parking areas. Despite the findings of the submitted HS, the scheme would result in the placement of a large building close to its boundary and therefore adversely impact the setting of the Riverside Conservation Area.

Church of St Philip and St James, Hallow

The submitted HS does not refer to the Church of St Philip and St James at Hallow, a grade II* listed building. This heritage asset has a particularly high spire that can be seen from the application site and is widely used as a landmark and orientation point. The Council's Conservation Officer expresses concern that the development would harm its setting. However, given that the church is over 1 km from the site, it

is considered that it would prove difficult to substantiate harm in this instance.

Archaeological impacts – it is considered that the proposed development may affect heritage assets of known archaeological significance. To the south of the site outside of the application site boundary lies a medieval fish pond. The submitted Written Scheme of Investigation identifies that further archaeological investigation is required to confirm the absence of significant archaeology from the site and that this will be achieved by archaeological evaluation trial trenching. Further, the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment concludes that the southern part of the site (outside the site boundary) has moderate to high potential for Medieval remains comprising a fish pond and possibly relating to the below-ground remains of a Medieval mill. A low to moderate potential is identified for Prehistoric artefacts and a low potential for Roman, Saxon, Post-Medieval and Modern remains. The conclusions of the Assessment are that archaeological remains are unlikely to be of more than local significance. Given the scale of development and the anticipated archaeological potential, the likely impact can be offset by a conditional programme of archaeological works if the application was recommended for approval.

Overall, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the Grade II listed building, Common Hill Manor and the setting of the Riverside Conservation Area and is considered to be of a higher level than that stated in the Heritage Statement. This counts against the scheme and will be weighed up in the overall balance of the application.

7.6 Access and Highway Safety

Policy SWDP4 requires proposals to demonstrate that: the layout of development will minimise demand for travel, they offer genuinely sustainable travel choices, they address road safety and they are consistent with the delivery of the Worcestershire Transport Plan objectives. A further requirement is for new development to have regard to the design criteria and principles set out in Manual for Streets, Worcestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan, and Worcestershire County Council's Highways Design Guide.

All matters are reserved apart from access with this outline application. Vehicular access would be provided off Northwick Road with a visibility splay of 2.4 m x 65.7 m to the north and 2.4 m x 65 m to the south. A pedestrian access is also proposed to the south of the vehicular access, a new 2 m wide footway to the south and on the opposite side of Northwick Road within existing adopted highway land and a 2m wide footway to be constructed within the existing adopted highway to link the existing footway on Willowslea Road opposite the site along with tactile paving.

A Transport Statement and Travel Plan has been submitted as part of the application and the former identifies the following:

- The care home would have 16 members of full-time staff and 37 units which would house 80 residents.
- Following a review of personal Injury Records, there is no evidence of a highway safety issue that would need to be mitigated as part of the scheme.
- The site is accessible by a range of sustainable modes of transport.
- On site car parking and cycle parking would be provided as part of the development
- A new priority junction off Northwick Road is proposed.

- The site is forecast to generate 8 and 7 two-way total vehicle trips across in the weekday and weekend peak hours respectively which equates to an average of an additional trip every 7 to 9 minutes on the highway network across both peak hours. This would result in a negligible impact on highway safety.
- A capacity assessment has been undertaken on this junction for the proposed 2024 future year and proposed development scenario, which shows it is forecast to operate well within capacity.

The conclusion of the Transport Statement is that the proposed development would be acceptable in transport terms and meets with local, regional and national policy criteria.

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit Report is also submitted, which identifies the problems associated with the proposed development along with recommendations. An access road realignment and footway improvement scheme drawing No. J32-4454-PS-005 shows the required vehicle and pedestrian visibility splays, provision of the 1.8 m wide footway, pedestrian tactile crossing and amendments to Northwick Road.

Concerns from local residents include the narrow width of Northwick Road and its unsuitability, no streetlighting or footway, highway and pedestrian safety, disruption of any improvement works to the road, insufficient parking and no parking for construction workers or visitors.

Vehicle access and visibility - Following discussions between the applicant's consultant- Mode Transport Planning and the Highway Authority, the frontage onto Northwick Road has been amended along with the access junction which has overcome previous highway concerns. Mode have shown both visibility splays based on 85th percentile speeds and those which reflect a 30mph speed limit. This information is shown in the Mode Drawing Ref: J32-4454-PS-005. Further, the sites frontage would be brought forward whilst maintaining the Northwick Road carriageway width by encroaching into the wide highway verge provided on the opposite side of the carriageway. It has been demonstrated that visibility would be achieved in front of the three mature trees with no obstructions.

With regard to concerns raised of insufficient parking, the scale and layout of development are reserved matters and whilst the illustrative layout shows parking arrangements, this would be the subject of a subsequent application if planning permission was granted in outline. Site operative parking would be required to be provided as part of a CEMP condition if the application was recommended for approval. Disruption cause by the development to existing residents would be temporary and not be a reason to refuse planning permission.

Pedestrian access – a new 1.8 m wide footway would be provided along the full frontage of the site, connecting to existing footway provision to the south. This would be an improvement on the current situation of no footways causing pedestrians to walk in Northwick Road. Further, a tactile crossing would be provided to the north of the site, allowing pedestrians to cross to the opposite side of the carriageway, which will connect to existing footways provided on Willowslea Road, and the bus stop nearby on Grange Avenue.

To the south of the site, a continuous lit footway is provided to further bus stops on Old Northwick Lane and wider local amenities of Northwick and Worcester City Centre beyond.

Public transport – the Highway Authority seeks to formalise/upgrade the nearest bus stop on Grange Avenue and also requests a financial contribution to develop a Community Transport service in the area given the nature of the development.

Traffic generation- The Highway Authority believes the trip rates presented by Mode underestimate the vehicle trip generation potential of the site, and the proposals for 80 bedrooms, are more likely to generate approx. 15 two-way vehicle trips in each weekday peak hour, based on the Highway Authorities own TRICS comparisons. Less traffic will be generated by the proposals at all other times. It is accepted however, that this level of traffic would not have a severe / significant impact on the operation of the local highway network.

Summary - In consultation with the Highway Authority it is concluded that there would not be a severe impact and therefore there are no justifiable grounds on which an objection could be maintained subject to conditions and the following financial contributions which would need to be secured via a S106 agreement:

Bus stop infrastructure - £3,000

Community transport - £11,350

Traffic Regulation Order - £4,500 for the processing a TRO

The proposed development would be acceptable in highway terms in accordance with Policies SWDP 4, SWDP 21 of the SWDP and Policy NCT1 of the North Claines Neighbourhood Plan. However, in the absence of a S106 agreement to secure the financial contributions required, this would amount to a refusal reason.

7.7 Biodiversity

Policy SWDP 22 of the SWDP seeks to protect wider biodiversity and Policy NCLE 5 of the North Claines Neighbourhood Plan (NCNP) requires all new major development to enhance biodiversity. Where a proposed development is likely to affect species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulation 1994, or the Badgers Act 1992, an up to date Protected Species Survey and Assessment should be submitted with the application. In addition, paragraphs 174 and 175 of the Framework set out measures for protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

Ecology impacts are raised by third party residents, that the site should qualify for Special Wildlife status and would result in the loss of a wildlife corridor. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal dated July 2019 has been submitted as part of the application which identified that the site consisted of semi-improved grass land, woodland with stream and metal corrugated donkey shelter structure. It is noted that a SSSI lies to the west of the site approximately 400 m away. The conclusions of the Appraisal are as follows:

- The collection of fruit trees on the site meet the definition of a 'traditional orchard' and are considered a UK Priority Habitat.
- The grassland on the site is long and provides suitable habitat to support common reptile species such as slow worm, common lizard and grass snake.
- Four fruit trees (T7, T9, T13 and T17) are identified as having limited opportunity for roosting bats but no features within the donkey shelter.
- The broadleaved woodland and off-site trees to the north provide high quality foraging and commuting habitat for bat species.
- The mature trees and hedgerows provide suitable nesting habitat for bird species.
- There is no suitable breeding habitat for great crested newts on-site.
- No badger setts or evidence of badger activity was observed.
- The small area of woodland provides suitable habitat for hazel dormice.
- Several invertebrate species were observed during the survey.
- It is considered highly unlikely that riparian mammals are present on site.

The Appraisal's recommendations are as follows:

- Following the completion of a further presence/absence of reptile survey, formal Ecological Impact Assessment is recommended to enable the planning authority can make a robust assessment of potential development impacts.
- Inspections of fruit trees should be undertaken by a licensed ecologist immediately prior to their removal.
- Existing mature trees should be retained where possible and where fruit trees cannot be retained, they should be retained as monoliths to provide continuous deadwood habitat for invertebrates. If this is not feasible habitat piles should be retained for use but may be relocated by hand to more discrete locations.
- Control over artificial night lighting
- Unnecessary silt disruption must be minimised, and soil erosion measures implemented during site excavation works to prevent run-off of sediment and nutrients into the stream within the woodland.
- Notwithstanding the results of further survey work, a detailed Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy should be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

A Reptile Survey has been submitted dated November 2019 which has not recorded any evidence of reptiles. Further, a report of survey findings in respect of noble chafer has also been submitted dated 22.10.2020. All tree decay cavities were inspected, and no evidence of noble chafer was found.

An Ecological Impact Assessment dated October 2020 identifies the following:

- The loss of six fruit trees and traditional orchard habitat from the development would have a major negative impact at local level. No mitigation/compensation is proposed and most of the orchard, a UK priority habitat would be lost.
- The broadleaved woodland - habitat to be retained and protected during construction phase. A Woodland Management Plan to be implemented at the site to secure the long-term management and enhancement of this habitat. The impact is therefore found to be neutral at a local level.

The loss of a UK priority habitat, also known as a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, should only be permitted if the need for and the benefits of the proposed development outweigh the loss. (SWDP 22 D)

The noble chafer survey identified that this species is unlikely to be present in the fruit trees, but that fruit trees with decay features are likely to support a variety of other invertebrates. It is unclear how realistic the recommendation in the PEA report to retain as much of the deadwood from the felling of these trees is and therefore it has not been demonstrated that it could be achieved in a satisfactory way.

Overall, it is concluded that the accommodation of an 80 bedroomed car home within the site would result in the loss of fruit trees and traditional orchard habitat, a UK priority habitat and a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. This would result in a major negative impact at local level. Further, whilst it is acknowledged that this is an outline application with access only to be considered, it has not been demonstrated how mitigation/compensation measures for the loss of the orchard habitat and the retention of the deadwood from the felling of fruit trees could be accommodated by the development along with enhancement measures. In this case the development would be contrary to Policy SWDP 22, Policy NCLE5 of the NCNP and paragraphs 170, 174 and 175 of the NPPF.

7.8 Residential amenity

Policy SWDP 21 requires development to provide an adequate level of privacy, outlook, sunlight and daylight, and should not be unduly overbearing.

The scale and layout of the proposed development are reserved matters and therefore can not be considered as part of this outline application. Concerns from local residents on loss of privacy and amenity are noted, however, given the distance of the site from neighbouring properties to the east and north, it is considered that development could be suitably designed to avoid amenity impacts as part of a reserved matters application.

Noise and disturbance impacts are also raised; however, it is considered that conditions would be imposed to control affects during construction if the application was recommended for approval.

With regard to air pollution from extra traffic, the proposed development, due to its nature, is likely to result in less vehicular trips than a development of residential development, for example and this impact would not be so severe as to amount to a refusal of planning permission.

Amenity areas are indicatively shown, and a reserved matters application would be required to provide further detail if the application was recommended for approval.

Overall, subject to the details of a reserved matters scheme, it is considered that the development would comply with SWDP 21 in relation to residential amenity.

7.9 Flooding and Drainage

The Framework and associated National Planning Policy Guidance require that any development in areas subject to flood risk will need to demonstrate that adequate

flood protection has been incorporated and that effects elsewhere have been fully assessed. Development should wherever possible, incorporate sustainable drainage systems to help retain water at or near its source, helping to prevent flooding, recharging groundwater resources, treating water pollution and enhancing the environment. In terms of flood risk, the application site is classified as Flood Zone 1 (low risk).

Policies SWDP 28 and SWDP 29, together with the Framework and associated PPG, require that any development in areas subject to flood risk demonstrate that adequate flood protection has been incorporated and that effects elsewhere have been fully assessed. Development should, wherever possible, incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to help to retain water at or near its source, helping to prevent flooding, recharging groundwater resources, treating water pollution and enhancing the environment.

Concerns are raised by local residents of flooding, increases rainwater run-off, increase in sewage demand and that justification for designed drainage is not in line with SWDP 29.

The submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) confirms that the site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low flood risk) with the exception of the southwestern corner which forms part of the existing pond and watercourse. Given this, the FRA states that it is anticipated that some flood risk may be present, although the levels at the top of the existing pond is at the lowest part of the site. It is therefore anticipated that flood risk would not pose a risk to the proposed development from rivers and watercourses.

The FRA states that based on the Surface Water Maps available, surface water flooding in the southern part of the site is identified. However, the pond and ordinary watercourse would be retained at existing levels. Groundwater flooding is identified as a risk should any of the site be lowered as part of the development. With regard to the potential for sewer flooding, it would be located within Northwick Road and exceedance routes should be considered within the layout of the development.

Flood risk management measures are put forward under the FRA's section on mitigation as follows:

- The finished floor levels of the development is set above existing levels at least by 150 mm.
- The external ground profile in the development will ensure that surface water is directed away from the building
- The incorporation of a positive surface water drainage systems – the installation of porous pavements and attenuation storage tanks is proposed to be used.

The FRA sets out that a new drainage system for the development will collect all rainwater from the site with a new connection formed to the ordinary watercourse at the south west corner of the site. It is proposed that the maximum discharge rate up to 100 year storm plus 40% allowance for climate change is restricted to 5l/s with the use of a flow control device. A Drainage Strategy drawing is included within Appendix E of the FRA.

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) is now satisfied with the proposal subject to conditions for the submission of infiltration tests, a SUDS Management Plan, and detailed drawings and calculations for surface water drainage.

With regard to foul drainage, the Water Management Statement confirms that there is a 225 mm adopted sewer in Northwick Road and by reason of the differences in level a private package pumping station is proposed. No response has been received from Severn Trent, however, a condition would be recommended for further details to be provided if the application was recommended for approval.

7.10 Renewable and low carbon energy

Adopted Policy SWDP 27 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan requires all new developments for one or more dwellings to incorporate the generation of energy from renewable or low carbon sources equivalent to at least 10% of predicted energy requirements.

A Renewable Energy Statement has been submitted as part of the application which confirms that energy efficiency measures, such as low energy light fittings and the use of large windows to maximise solar gain would be adopted but no specific details are provided with this outline application at this stage. The Statement identifies that a Combined Heat and Power system would be technically and economically viable for the proposed development due to the year round demand for hot water for residents and the use of photovoltaics as the most suitable technology for the development. Further details and implementation of such would be secured by condition.

7.11 Water Management

Adopted Policy SWDP 30 requires all development to demonstrate that there are or will be adequate water supply and water treatment facilities in place to serve the development. For housing proposals, it is required to demonstrate that the daily non recycled water use per person will not exceed 110 litres per day. A Water Management Statement has been submitted as part of the Design and Access Statement, however, further details would be required by condition.

7.12 Broadband

Policy SWDP 26 requires new development to be provided with superfast broadband or alternative solutions where appropriate. No information has been submitted with regard to this issue, however, it is considered that a condition would be appropriate to secure this.

7.13 Other issues

Concern is raised that the site forms part of a nature trail, is used for exercise and would result in the loss of recreational land. The part of Northwick Road which adjoins the site forms part of the Northwick Manor Heritage Trail but would not be directly affected by the development proposed. There are no public rights of way within the site and therefore is not used for recreation space.

Devaluation of property is raised as an issue, however this is not a material planning consideration.

Comment is made that local health services are already unable to cope with the current demand, however, due to the current Covid pandemic, many services are under pressure but this should not prevent the consideration of a planning application. Furthermore, a Health Impact Assessment is submitted as part of the application which acknowledges an effect on healthcare. However, the Assessment explains that many of the residents will be older people who already have access to local health services. An increase in GP visits is likely and other health care providers, but nursing care would be provided within the care home reducing the demands on healthcare facilities.

Concern is raised that Worcester City Residents have no democratic control over the proposal and there is no regard or due diligence to provision cross boundary. Neighbouring residents in Worcester City have been notified on the application and have had the opportunity to raise objections and make comments. Further, the Council has consulted Worcester City Council's Heritage Team during the consideration of the application.

Comment is made that an agricultural rights of way exists across the site, however this would be a private matter.

7.14 Planning Obligations

Planning obligations secured under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act are required in order to make the development acceptable and provide the necessary infrastructure provision in accordance with Paragraph 56 of The Framework and Policy SWDP 7. The following Heads of Terms have been identified:

Worcester Transport Strategy

Bus stop infrastructure - £3,000 to provide a bus stop on Grange Avenue

Community transport - £11,350 to meet the transport needs of the elderly and disabled

Traffic regulation order - £4,500 for likely parking restrictions given the nature of the proposal and to ensure that access visibility can be achieved.

In the absence of a S106 agreement to secure the above contributions, the development would fail to provide the necessary infrastructure provision and amounts to a refusal reason.

CIL Regulations

The above requests comply with Regulation 122 (2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) and paragraph 56 of the Framework in that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. In addition the above planning obligations comply with the provisions of regulation 123 relating to the pooling of planning contributions.

7.15 Human Rights

Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (as amended) states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life. A public authority cannot interfere with the exercise of this right except where it is in accordance with the law and is necessary (amongst other reasons) for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. Article 1 of Protocol 1 of the Act entitles every natural and legal person to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions.

The law provides a right to deny planning permission where the reason for doing so is related to the public interest. Alternatively, having given due consideration to the rights of others, the local planning authority can grant planning permission in accordance with adopted policies in the development plan.

All material planning issues raised through the consultation exercise have been considered and it is concluded that by approving this application the council will not detrimentally infringe the human rights of an individual or individuals.

7.16 Planning Balance and Conclusion

Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

The Development Plan for Wychavon District comprises the South Worcestershire Development Plan. The key policies of relevance are policies SWDP2, SWDP 4, SWDP6, SWDP 20, SWDP 21, SWDP 22, SWDP 24 and SWDP 25.

Policies SWDP 6 and SWDP 24 require development proposals to conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets. Policy SWDP 20 allows housing for older people in C2 use class provided certain criteria are met. Policy SWDP21 requires development to integrate effectively with its surroundings and respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the visual and heritage interest of the townscape, frontages, streets and landscape quality of the local area. Further, Policy SWDP 22 refers to biodiversity and Policy SWDP 25 requires development to integrate with the landscape setting and conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the primary characteristics.

There would be some short-term economic objectives associated with construction jobs arising from the proposed development for the development, as well as future job opportunities for employees upon the completion of the development. Future occupiers would also contribute to the longer term social and economic dimension of sustainable development and this would be of benefit. However, there are significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the development proposed. Firstly, the development would result in a cramped form of development and result in harm to the character and visual amenity of the area, contrary to Policies SWDP 21 and SWDP 25. Secondly, the proposal would erode the rural setting of Common Hill House, a Grade II listed building and harm the setting of the Riverside Conservation Area, contrary to Policies SWDP 6 and SWDP 24.

It is considered that the public benefit arising from the development in contributing to the local economy and the housing provision for older people does not outweigh the harm to the character of the area and heritage assets.

Thirdly, the development and accommodation of an 80 bedroomed care home within the site would result in the loss of traditional orchard habitat resulting in a major impact at local level. This impact would not be outweighed by the need and benefits associated with the proposal.

In addition, in the absence of a S106 legal agreement, the development would fail to secure financial contributions for transport infrastructure, which would count against the scheme.

It is concluded that in light of the above considerations the proposal does not constitute a sustainable form of development and fails to accord with the development plan when read as a whole, which is not outweighed by any other material considerations in this case. It is considered that the proposal would not accord with the policies of the South Worcestershire Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework and therefore planning permission should be refused.

8. RECOMMENDATION - refusal

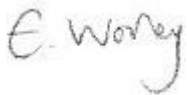
Member Involvement/Consultation: telephone discussion with Cllr Miller and to explain that the agent was trying to address some of the consultee responses with the submission of further information and advised that the application was likely to be recommended for refusal.

CIL Liable ? : NO

Case Officer Initials :



Date: 22.01.2021



Emma Worley
Date: 27 January 2021