

Planning Referrals Committee 20th June 2019

Update sheet

Item 5: 18/2410/FUL Caldecote Farm, Caldecote Lane, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 4EF

Penniwells Riding Centre For The Disabled, near Elstree

Since the agenda was published the Officer has been contacted and made aware that there is another equestrian centre in the locality which was not mentioned in either the original report to the Planning Committee of 11th April 2019, nor in the additional report to the Planning Referrals Committee this evening. This is the **Penniwells Riding Centre For The Disabled** on Edgewarebury Lane, Elstree, WD6 3RG. That is located 3.5km from the application site, which is a 6 minute drive (according to Google Maps). Its website is <http://www.penniwellsrda.com/> The reason why Penniwells was not mentioned in either of the reports was that the Planning Officer had been unaware of its existence.

On Tuesday 19th June 2019 the Planning Officer visited Penniwells Riding Centre For The Disabled to confirm that it is open, met the manager, was given a demonstration of their scissor lift, and saw a group of disabled children from a special school who were finishing a riding lesson. The centre is open six days a week (every day except Tuesday). It has an indoor arena, an outdoor arena with a scissor lift, and stabling for 16 horses.

Netherwylde Equestrian Centre, near Radlett

This morning the Planning Officer has been made aware that there is another equestrian centre in the locality. This is the Netherwylde Equestrian Centre near Radlett. It is located 9.6km and 18 minutes' drive (according to Google Maps) from the application site. It has an outdoor arena, an indoor arena and livery stables. Its website is netherwyldeequstrian.com

It is mentioned in a table on page 27 of the submitted Needs Assessment, but with no comments.

Letters received from the applicant's agent on Monday 17th June 2019

On the evening of Monday of this week (17th June 2019) the Planning Officer and the Head of Planning received a letter from the applicant's agent, in which he took issue with some aspects of the reports to the Planning Committee of 11th April and the Planning Referrals Committee of 20th April. Appended to his letter was an opinion by the applicant's legal Counsel and also a document by the applicants' planning

consultants. These have been sent to the Council's Senior Legal Officer. The agent sent the same documents directly to members of the Planning Referrals Committee.

An issue that the applicant's planning consultants raised in their document is the issue of **drive times and the catchment area**. They have asked that it be made clear that the catchment area that they have chosen in their Needs Assessment is 35 minutes' drive time for local training (as is mentioned in the officer's report) but 25 minutes' drive time for livery. They ask that it be made clear to members that some equestrian centres were discounted from their Needs Assessment document because they were outside the catchment areas that they have defined, and that some were discounted because they were considered to be small.

Amended drawings received today: 20.06.2019

Amended drawings have been received on the day of the meeting, including changes such as the inclusion of a storage room on the first floor, and the relabelling of the first floor flat to indicate that it would be for a member of staff, rather than being specifically for a vet. Although these changes are considered by officers as unlikely to cause additional harm, their submission on the day of the meeting has allowed insufficient time for them to be properly assessed by Members, and therefore they will not be considered. The drawing numbers that are to be considered this evening remain as were listed in the report: 1150.103C and 1150.104E (whereas the drawings that were submitted this morning were numbered 1150.103E and 1150.104G).

Green Belt Review

The application makes reference to preliminary studies into the borough's Green Belt that were commissioned by the Council to inform the early stages of work towards the development of a new Local Plan. The following comments on this have been provided by the Planning Policy Team Leader to aid the committee in its consideration of this issue:

The council is carrying out a Local Plan review and in its consultation undertaken to date has recognised that there will be a need to consider the release of some green belt land in order to meet the housing and employment needs. Arup were commissioned to undertake a two stage green belt assessment; the stage 1 report assessed the green belt across entire borough which was divided up into a number of large parcels. The stage 2 report was a more fine grained assessment, focusing on sub-areas within the green belt which might contribute to the 'five potential development approaches' identified in the Local Plan Issues and Options public consultation document (September 2017), particularly around the Borough's existing towns and larger villages.

It should be noted that this study was commissioned as part of the Local Plan evidence base. The suitability of a site in terms of its sustainability, deliverability, infrastructure and wider planning considerations was not taken into account. The green belt assessment recommendations will ultimately need to be balanced against the findings of other technical work and the Council's preferred spatial strategy as part of the wider site selection process.

In the stage 2 report, the site at Caldecote Farm forms part of an area between Bushey and the M1/A41 recommended for further consideration as strategic cluster RS-3. RS-3 was not considered likely to harm the performance of the wider Green Belt if removed, with opportunities existing to ameliorate the impact of any such change.

Although the site is located within a cluster of small of small sites which have been promoted, small scale promotions are unlikely to lead to deliver the scale of development required for sustainable master planning with supporting infrastructure and services. A review of our Green Belt boundaries will be done as part of the Local Plan review in accordance with the NPPF and paragraph 136 and 137 (emphasis added).

*Para. 136 NPPF. The supply of large numbers of new homes can **often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development**, such as **new settlements or significant extensions** to existing villages and towns, provided they are **well located and designed**, and **supported by the necessary infrastructure** and facilities.*

*Para 137 NPPF. Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has **examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need** for development. This will be assessed through the examination of its strategic policies, which will take into account the preceding paragraph, and whether the strategy:*

- a) makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;*
- b) optimises **the density of development** in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies **promote a significant uplift in minimum density** standards in town and city centres and **other locations well served by public transport**; and*
- c) has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.*

The report is a technical study and should not be seen as a statement of current or future policy in the area. Its status as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications is considered to be very limited given that its scope and purpose is to inform the preparation of the Local Plan, which is presently still at the Regulation 18 stage (i.e. a draft Local Plan has not been published), rather than the assessment of individual planning applications.