

**Runnymede Borough Council**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday 18.12.2024 at 7.00 pm**

**A D D E N D U M**

**Item 5A Bellbourne Nursery, Hurst Lane, Egham**

**Update Date on Planning Policy Position and Updated NPPF**

- 1.1 The Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 after the above officer report was published. Paragraph 231 of the NPPF confirms that the policies in the updated Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication.
- 1.2 In relation to Chapter 13 and the Green Belt the government still attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy remains the same which is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. (NPPF 2024 Paragraph 142). The five purposes of the Green Belt also remain unchanged but are now set out in Paragraph 143 of the NPPF (2024).
- 1.3 Paragraph 152 and 153 NPPF (2023) as referred to in paragraphs 7.2 and 7.3 of the officer report are now contained in paragraph 153 NPPF (2024). The advice however remains the same “Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘Very Special Circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”
- 1.4 Paragraph 7.4 of the officer report refers to paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2023) and lists the construction of new buildings which should be considered as inappropriate development a) to g). This list with alterations is cited under paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2024). Importantly given that officers do not consider that the site when taken as a whole constitutes previously developed land, the proposed development still fails to fall within any of the exceptions listed in this paragraph.
- 1.5 The NPPF (2024) still confirms in paragraph 153 that substantial weight needs to be given to any harm to the Green Belt.
- 1.6 For all the above reasons, the updated version of the NPPF Chapter 13 Green Belt, which needs to be given significant weight in the decision-making process, does not alter the officer’s planning balance or materially change the recommendation.

**Update on Development Plan Policies**

- 1.7 Officers have reviewed the officer report in light of the amendments to the NPPF and are of the view that none of the changes would result in a change to the planning balance or the officer recommendation in this case. For completeness the policies relevant are listed below.

EE1	Townscape and Landscape Quality
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EE2	Environment Protection
EE7	Archaeology
EE9	Biodiversity
EE11	Green Infrastructure
EE12	Blue Infrastructure
EE13	Managing Flood Risk
SD3	Active and Sustainable Travel
SD4	Highway Design Considerations
SD7	Sustainable Design
SD8	Renewable Energy

**Conditions**

1.8 Amend planning condition 3 -Demolition of buildings to read as below:

**Demolition of existing buildings and structures**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted the existing buildings **and structures** shown for demolition as identified upon **the existing site plan received 25.10.2024** shall be completely demolished and all materials removed from the site.

Reason: In order to accord with the terms of the application and the applicant’s package of 'very special circumstances' and to protect the Green Belt to comply policy within the NPPF

**Update to Recommendation (see italics and bold)**

It is recommended the Planning Committee authorises the HoP to:	
A.	Grant permission subject to <b><i>his approval that the development does not fall under paragraph 155 of the NPPF (2024)</i></b> , the referral to the Secretary of State and the prior completion of a S106 Legal Agreement to secure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The removal of the existing buildings and structures across the wider Bellbourne Nursery site.</li> <li>ii) The creation of a new Ecological Area to the north of the wider Bellbourne Nursery site.</li> <li>iii) To secure a Travel Plan and monitoring fee.</li> <li>iv) To rescind any previous approvals if necessary.</li> </ul> and relevant conditions  (Link to paragraph 155 NPPF (2024) <a href="#">National Planning Policy Framework - 13. Protecting Green Belt land - Guidance - GOV.UK</a> )
B	Or to refuse planning permission at the discretion of the Head of Planning should the s106 Agreement not progress to their satisfaction