

The application is for full planning permission for a new storage container at Audley Community Centre.

The application site lies in the Green Belt and an Area of Landscape Enhancement as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

**The 8 week period for the determination of this application expired on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017.**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Permit, subject to conditions relating to the following: -**

- 1. Standard Time limit for commencement of development**
- 2. Approved plans**

### **Reason for Recommendation**

Although the proposed development is inappropriate in Green Belt and would have some impact upon the character and appearance of the landscape, such impact would be small scale and limited to a relatively small area. No demonstrable substantiated harm to other interests exists in this case. Weighing the harm of the proposal arising by definition from inappropriate development against the very small scale of the container in terms of its height and capacity and the benefits arising for this community facility in providing storage, it is considered that the very special circumstances exist to justify the proposal. The proposed development would accord with the overarching aims and objectives of both local and national policy in this regard.

### **Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority has worked in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with the planning application**

This is considered to be a sustainable form of development and complies with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Key Issues**

This is an application for full planning permission for a new storage container at Audley Community Centre, which is located within the Green Belt and an Area of Landscape Restoration as indicated by the proposals map.

The storage container would be sited to the side of the Centre, adjacent to an existing storage unit.

The proposed storage container would be sited approximately 30 metres outside of the Conservation Area boundary. Given this distance, coupled with the fact that the storage container would be sited adjacent to existing storage containers, and separated from the Conservation Area by the community centre car park, it is considered that the storage container would have no impact upon the character and appearance of the adjacent Audley Conservation Area.

The main issues to be considered with this proposal are:

- Is the proposal appropriate or inappropriate development in the Green Belt and if inappropriate, do the required very special circumstances exist to justify approval?
- Would there be any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area of the surrounding landscape?

Is the proposal appropriate in the Green Belt?

Policy S3 of the Local Plan presumes against any form of development with certain exceptions. The proposals sought do not fall within any of the categories outlined.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that new buildings within the Green Belt are not appropriate, unless for one of the exempted development types specified in the framework. The new storage container does not fall within any of the categories that are identified as appropriate, therefore the development is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Consideration will be given to whether there are very special circumstances that justify approval of the development, below.

Would there be any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area of the surrounding landscape?

The NPPF states that although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design go beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

The site is within an Area of Landscape Enhancement. In these areas, the Council will support, subject to other plan policies, proposals that will enhance the character and quality of the landscape.

The new storage container would be single storey in height and would be of steel construction and painted green to match the existing unit. The unit would be sited to the side of the community centre adjacent to the existing unit and as a result, it would not be widely visible from the landscape beyond the community centre. It is considered therefore that the impact of the development on the character of the landscape would be minimal even when taken the existing storage containers are taken into consideration.

Do the very special circumstances exist to outweigh any harm to the openness of the Green Belt?

Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

A case for very special circumstances has provided by the applicant. Their submission states that the storage space is required for fund raising activities of the Community Centre, which the Centre relies upon to remain active. The storage unit would be used to store goods donated by the public, and then offered for sale at various fund raising activities organised by the Centre. The funds raised play a vital part in maintaining the activities provided by the Community Centre, providing a valuable service to the local community.

The unit is relatively small and it would be sited behind two existing containers so would not be fully visible from most vantage points. It is considered that, because of the level of inconspicuousness and size, the storage container would have a limited impact upon the wider landscape and Green Belt area.

Weighing the harm of the proposal arising by definition from inappropriate development against the very small scale of the container in terms of its height and capacity and the benefits arising for this community facility in providing storage, it is considered that the very special circumstances exist to justify the proposal.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Policies and proposals in the approved development plan relevant to this decision:-**

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy \(CSS\) 2006-2026](#)

Policy SP1: Spatial Principles of Targeted Regeneration  
Policy ASP6: Rural Area Spatial Policy  
Policy CSP1: Design Quality  
Policy CSP2: Historic Environment  
Policy CSP3: Sustainability and Climate Change  
Policy CSP4: Natural Assets

[Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan \(NLP\) 2011](#)

Policy N17: Landscape Character - General Considerations  
Policy N20: Area of Landscape Enhancement  
Policy S3: Development in the Green Belt  
Policy T16: Development – General Parking Requirements

### **Other Material Considerations include:**

[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) \(2012\)](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\) \(2014\)](#)

[Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents](#)

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document \(2010\)](#)

[Planning for Landscape Change - SPG to the former Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan](#)

### **Relevant Planning History**

09/00713/FUL	Proposed repositioning of existing storage unit & new storage unit	Approved
12/00203/FUL	New metal storage container	Approved
15/01022/FUL	Retention of existing storage unit and proposed new storage unit	Approved

### **Views of Consultees**

The **Environmental Health Division** makes no comment.

**Audley Parish Council** has no objections.

The **Conservation Officer** has no objections.

### **Representations**

None received

### **Applicant's/Agent's submission**

The application forms and plans have been submitted. These documents are available for inspection at the Guildhall and searching under the application reference number 17/00260/FUL on the website page that can be accessed by following this link

<http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/17/00260/FUL>

**Background papers**

Planning files referred to  
Planning Documents referred to

**Date report prepared**

24<sup>th</sup> May 2017