

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES

- 12.1 As referred to in paragraph 6.5 under Policy H2 on previously developed land (PDL), development interest has been shown in redeveloping two sites within the Neighbourhood Area.
- 12.2 Because the redevelopment of either of these two sites could have a significant impact upon the character of the area and upon the amenity of surrounding residents, it is important that this Plan sets out the criteria against which any proposal to redevelop part or all of these sites should be assessed.

BRANDON STADIUM

- 12.3 Brandon Stadium was first used for speedway in September 1928 and has had a long and celebrated history of staging speedway, stock car and other sporting events. It is an established sporting and community facility that is valued by large numbers of the local community as evidenced by the replies to the resident's survey.
- 12.4 In 2016 the new owners of the site presented plans at Binley Woods Village Hall showing the proposed redevelopment of Phase 1 of the site (5.6 hectares) to provide around 124 dwellings. This part of the site was principally used for car parking associated with the use of the Stadium but is presently vacant open land following the closure of the Stadium in late 2016. The Exhibition also referred to Phase 2 of the planned redevelopment of the site which was also shown for housing for an unspecified number of dwellings.
- 12.5 In October 2017 a second public consultation was held at Brandon Hall Hotel showing the redevelopment of the former Stadium complex to provide approximately 137 houses spread across most of the site. The plans did not show the retention on the site of any sports or community facilities nor was there any mention of how the loss of the sporting use would be compensated.
- 12.6 In the survey circulated to residents for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, residents were asked what uses they would like to see included as part of the future redevelopment of the Stadium site. An overwhelming majority of responses wanted to see the site retained for sporting use or for the development of community facilities. There was some support for the development of small business uses, but only a handful of responses supported any form of residential development with those responses favouring either affordable housing or specialist housing for the elderly.
- 12.7 The site is wholly within the Green Belt and the adopted Development Plan does not contain any policy that is specific to its existing or future use. Similarly the emerging Rugby Local Plan contains no policy that is specific to the site's existing or future use other than general policies for the redevelopment of PDL within the District.

- 12.8 The Government’s planning policies as contained in the NPPF contain policies on the redevelopment of PDL within areas of Green Belt and on the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational facilities and buildings. Paragraph 74 states that:

“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a. an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b. the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c. the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss”.

On Green Belt, paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that one of the listed exceptions to regarding the construction of buildings as inappropriate within the Green Belt is:

“limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development”.

- 12.9 Within this context it is appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to consider what form of redevelopment of the Stadium site would be appropriate having regard to the character of the area, to the amenity of adjoining residents and to the needs and aspirations of the local community.

POLICY PDS 1 BRANDON STADIUM

As a long established and valued sports stadium, preference will be given to the continued use of the site either in whole or in part for sports purposes. Support will be given to proposals which would allow the site to remain in its current use as a sporting facility subject to acceptability with other policies in the Plan and to adopted Development Plan policies.

Redevelopment of part or all of the site will only be supported:

- a. **If the proposals are in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 74 in the NPPF.**
- b. **The redevelopment will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.**
- c. **The amenities of residents of the neighbouring properties will be respected and protected.**
- d. **There will be no adverse visual impact on the character of the landscape.**
- e. **In any redevelopment of the site for uses other than its current sports facilities, preference will be given to the inclusion of community facilities, specialist accommodation for the elderly and infirm in accordance with Policy H4 together with the provision of public open space.**
- f. **Any redevelopment of the site should maintain the open character to the frontage of the site relating to the area that has historically been used for car parking for the Stadium so as to prevent the consolidation of built development as viewed from Rugby Road.**
- g. **Provision of a comprehensive onsite green infrastructure network, utilising existing habitats and where possible linking to adjacent networks.**
- h. **The proposals accord to other relevant policies in The Plan**

Explanation

- 12.10 The site has played an important role as a sports stadium for almost 90 years and is an established and valued facility within the Parish. Alongside the local and wider sporting value it has delivered to generations of people, the stadium has provided local employment and has become a valued landmark in the area. The survey of residents showed that there was overwhelming support for the retention of the site as predominantly a sporting facility whether in total or as part of the site's redevelopment.
- 12.11 Residential development would act to consolidate the existing cluster of housing on Brandon Hill and would not reflect the established settlement pattern whereby Brandon Hill is clearly apart from and subordinate to the main

village of Brandon. Accordingly new housing must be of a scale that does not exceed the current built form and located so as not to visually consolidate the existing cluster of housing on Brandon Hill as experienced from Rugby Road.

- 12.12 The site is located in the green belt and surrounded by bridleways and footpaths which are extensively used and therefore it is appropriate to both enhance and protect local green networks.

FORMER OAKDALE NURSERIES SITE

- 12.13 The site of Oakdale Nursery is located on the west side of Rugby Road opposite the cluster of housing and the stadium site at Brandon Hill. Historically the site has been used as a garden nursery with much of the 26 acres being used to grow and display plants and trees with poly tunnels, glass houses, display areas and a bungalow and associated car parking areas sited towards the Rugby Road frontage. The historic use ceased many years ago since when the site has become neglected and the open areas overgrown.
- 12.14 In 2015 planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of the site to a garden centre. The permission is extant until October 2018 however the owners are understood to have since entered into an agreement with a party to pursue the redevelopment of the site for principally residential development.
- 12.15 The whole site is within the Green Belt and neither the adopted Development Plan nor the emerging Local Plan contain policies specific to the existing or future use of the site and no alterations to its Green Belt status are proposed. As such any redevelopment of the site would have to be considered in a similar way to the redevelopment of Brandon Stadium given that the Oakdale Nursery site is classed as containing previously developed land and therefore the final bullet point as set out in paragraph 12.8 above will be a material planning consideration to any redevelopment proposal.
- 12.16 The Landscape Sensitivity Study produced in 2016 by Warwickshire County Council on behalf of Rugby District Council assessed the Oakdale Nursery Site and found that all of the site, beyond the small triangular shaped frontage housing the derelict bungalow and nursery buildings, was classed as being of high landscape sensitivity to housing development and would be inappropriate for development due to its rural character and its historic associations as part of the grounds to Brandon Hall. It also provides a degree of separation between Binley Woods and Brandon which is important to retain.
- 12.17 In considering the site's redevelopment as a garden centre, Rugby Council found that the significant increase in built footprint (127% if the existing polytunnels were excluded) meant that the proposal would be classed as inappropriate development in the Green Belt because it would have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt than the existing built form. However, planning permission was still granted for the garden centre because

the Council accepted that very special circumstances existed to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. These very special circumstances related mainly to the garden centre being a similar use to the historic use of the site, to the opportunities the site would create for local employment, to the significant claw back of consumer expenditure in the local area and to the creation of an 18 acre nature reserve to act as a substantial buffer to help separate the settlements of Binley woods and Brandon.

- 12.18 It is considered that the permitted use of the site as a Garden Centre based upon the approved plans and the very special circumstances that were cited by Rugby Council, represents the most appropriate redevelopment of the site and it is hoped that the site will be developed in accordance with the planning permission. However, should this not come about and the current or future owners seek to redevelop the site for other purposes, it is appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to consider what form of redevelopment would be acceptable having regard to the character of the area, to the amenity of adjoining residents and to the needs and aspirations of the local community.

POLICY PDS 2 OAKDALE NURSERIES SITE

Support will be given to the redevelopment of the site as a garden centre in accordance with the proposals first approved in March 2015 (Planning reference R11/0786.)

Redevelopment of any part of the site for uses other than as a garden centre will not be supported unless:

- a. The redevelopment will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.**
- b. No residential or ancillary development will encroach into areas assessed as having a high sensitivity to development as depicted by the Landscape Sensitivity Study commissioned by Rugby Borough Council in 2016.**
- c. Provision of a comprehensive onsite green infrastructure network, including nature reserve enhancing existing habitats and where possible linking to adjacent networks.**

Explanation

- 12.19 The very special circumstances which existed to persuade Rugby Council to grant planning permission are only considered to apply to the redevelopment of the site as a garden centre in accordance with or similar to the scheme as first approved in March 2015. In particular the local employment opportunities

generated by the garden centre and benefits of a local retail and associated restaurant facility together with the formulation of a nature reserve are considered to be of positive benefits to the local community.

- 12.20 The redevelopment of the site for uses other than as a garden centre is unlikely to bring a similar package of benefits that would constitute very special circumstances. As such any other form of redevelopment will need to be considered against Green Belt policy as set out in paragraph 89 of the NPPF. Should any acceptable form of redevelopment accord with the principles set out in paragraph 89 it should be confined to the areas of previously developed land so as to not impinge upon the open areas of the site which help to maintain the separation of the Brandon Hill area with the village of Brandon to the south. In addition the creation of a nature reserve within the site would be seen as a positive benefit especially given the adjoining ecologically important area of Brandon Little Wood.