

Application	3
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Application Number:	20/00334/FULM
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Application Type:	Planning FULL Major
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Proposal Description:	Crematorium with Ceremony Hall, memorial areas, garden of remembrance and associated parking and infrastructure, including new access off Sheffield Road.
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At:	Land Off Sheffield Road Conisbrough Doncaster
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For:	Mr Stephen Byfield - Horizon Cremation Ltd
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Third Party Reps:	14 letters of representation.	Parish:	Conisbrough Parks Parish Council
		Ward:	Conisbrough

SUMMARY

Planning permission is sought in full for the construction of a crematorium, with ceremony hall, memorial areas, garden of remembrance and associated parking and infrastructure, including new access off Sheffield Road on land allocated as Green Belt, as defined by the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan.

The site lies within an allocated Green Belt whereby crematoria development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. Great weight must therefore be attached to this harm. Consent should not be granted unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and another harm. It is only if that test is met that the necessary very special circumstances exist to grant consent.

The 'need' for another crematorium could count as very special circumstances. An external consultant has confirmed that there is an existing unmet need for an additional crematorium in the borough other than Rose Hill, but has advised that by developing the site at Barnby Dun would meet most of that need. It would also meet with planning policy and it is not located within Green Belt. The Barnby Dun application is therefore recommended for approval.

In the assessment of any residual need (ie more than one crematoria); the external report concludes that by developing any one of the 2 Green Belt sites would make the Barnby Dun site unviable therefore providing no issue of need that would count as very special circumstances to outweigh development in the Green Belt. The application is therefore contrary to Doncaster Core Strategy (Adopted May 2012) Policy CS 3, Doncaster Unitary Development Plan (Adopted July 1998) Policies ENV 2 and ENV 3 and paragraphs s 143-145 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE planning permission.



1.0 Reason for Report

- 1.1 The application is being presented to Planning Committee for determination on account that the application site lies within an area designated as Green Belt and is therefore a departure from the Development Plan.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought in full for a crematorium with ceremony hall, memorial areas, garden of remembrance and associated car parking and associated infrastructure, including new access off Sheffield Road.
- 2.2 The crematorium would be operational 252 days per year between 09:00am to 17:00pm.
- 2.3 This application is one of 3 applications submitted for crematoria in the Borough. They are submitted independently by three different operators, Dignity, Horizon and Memoria and in 3 different areas of the borough. The application should be considered concurrently with the other 2 crematorium applications and each should not be considered in isolation of the others. Each must be considered on its own merits but the consideration of need is common to all three.

3.0 Site Description

- 3.1 The site is located on the southwest side of Doncaster, between Conisbrough and New Edlington. It is bounded on the north by predominantly hedgerow along the A630 Sheffield Road and on the other three sides by open countryside. The site is situated in farmland between the settlements of Conisbrough and Warmsworth, extending to approx 3.4 hectares in total and forming part of a large agricultural field.
- 3.2 An existing field entrance and path forms part of the eastern boundary which then extends further east to provide an access and egress point to the site.
- 3.3 This site is part of an existing agricultural field graded Agricultural Land Classification 3b within open countryside. There is a large area of mature trees and roadside hedgerow defining the boundary to the north west of the site. The western boundary abuts a deciduous wood. It is worthy to note that a small proportion of the overall site will be developed whilst the remainder will be green and largely left in its original natural condition with a landscape and ecology management plan in place to both retain and improve all aspects of the site.
- 3.4 The site is initially set approximately one metre lower than the adjacent road with the ground gently sloping downwards to the southwest of the site, with the lowest area being 3-4 metres lower than Sheffield Road.
- 3.5 To the south of the site is a redundant railway track with a line of trees and hedgerow. Further south the landscape is varied with trees and Crookhill Golf Course in the distance.
- 3.6 There is currently no public access to the site but a footpath runs along the former railway line to the south.

4.0 Relevant Planning History

- 4.1 Application site;

Application Reference	Proposal	Decision
19/01603/PREAPP	Crematorium with Ceremony Hall, memorial areas, garden of remembrance and associated parking and infrastructure..	Closed 29.08.2019

5.0 Site Allocation

- 5.1 The site is designated as Green Belt, as defined by the Proposals Maps of the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan (adopted in 1998).
- 5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)
- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework

is a material consideration in planning decisions and the relevant sections are outlined below:

- 5.4 Paragraph 2 states that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.5 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
 - a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
 - b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
 - c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 5.6 Paragraphs 54 - 56 state local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. The tests are:
 - a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) directly related to the development; and
 - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 5.7 Planning decisions should mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new developments and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life (para 180).
- 5.8 Paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or if the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 5.9 Paragraph 117 states that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 5.10 Paragraph 127 states that good design criteria should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are sympathetic to local character and history and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 5.11 Paragraph 133 states that the fundamental aim of green belt policy in the NPPF is to keep 'land permanently open' (para 133) where 'inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances' (para 143).
- 5.12 At paragraph 144, the NPPF further states that 'when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given

to any harm to the Green Belt. '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.'

- 5.13 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt' (para 145). An exception is made for the 'provision of appropriate facilities ... for cemeteries and burial grounds ... as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it' in paragraph 145b.
- 5.14 Core Strategy 2011 - 2028
- 5.15 In May of 2012 the LDF Core Strategy was adopted and this replaced many of the policies of the Unitary Development Plan; some UDP policies remain in force (for example those relating to the Countryside Policy Area) and will continue to sit alongside Core Strategy Policies until such time as the Local Plan is adopted. Core Strategy policies relevant to this proposal are:
- 5.16 Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy is concerned with Quality of Life, covering a range of issues and criteria. Related to this application, the policy seeks to ensure that proposals are place specific in their design and protect and enhance the built and natural environment, are accessible by a range of transport modes, protect amenity and are well designed.
- 5.17 Policy CS 3 of the Core Strategy sets out the overarching policy for development in the Green Belt and within the countryside.
- 5.18 Policy CS4 requires all development to address the issues of flooding and drainage where appropriate. Development should be in areas of lowest flood risk and drainage should make use of SuDS (sustainable drainage) design.
- 5.19 Policy CS9 states that new developments will provide, as appropriate, transport assessments and travel plans to ensure the delivery of travel choice and sustainable opportunities for travel.
- 5.20 Policy CS14 relates to design and sustainable construction and states that all proposals in Doncaster must be of high quality design that contributes to local distinctiveness, reinforces the character of local landscapes and building traditions, responds positively to existing site features and integrates well with its immediate and surrounding local area.
- 5.21 Policy CS16 states that nationally and internationally important habitats, sites and species will be given the highest level of protection in accordance with the relevant legislation and policy. Proposals will be supported which enhance the borough's landscape and trees by including measures to mitigate any negative impacts on the landscape, include appropriate hard and soft landscaping, retain and protect appropriate trees and hedgerows and incorporate new tree and hedgerow planting.
- 5.22 Policy CS17 seeks to protect, maintain, enhance and where possible, extend Doncaster's green infrastructure.

5.23 Saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies (Adopted 1998)

5.24 Saved Policy ENV 3 of the UDP is the general development control policy for development within the Green Belt and states that development will not be permitted, except for purposes as set out in criteria a-f.

5.25 Saved Policy ENV 37 relates to sites of archaeological importance and with a presumption for their physical preservation.

5.26 Saved Policy ENV 38 acknowledges where development is to be allowed on an archaeological site opportunities for preservation can be achieved by conditions.

5.27 Local Plan

5.28 The Local Plan has been formally submitted for examination on 4th March and an Inspector has been appointed therefore the Local Plan is now under examination. Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that the LPA may give weight depending on the stage of the Local Plan and the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given). When the local plan was published under Regulation 19 in August 2019, all of the policies were identified as carrying 'limited weight' for the purposes of determining planning applications. Taking into account the remaining stages of the local plan process, it is considered the following levels of weight are appropriate between now and adoption dependant on the level of unresolved objections for each policy the level of outstanding objections has been assessed and the resulting appropriate weight noted against each policy:

- Substantial
- Moderate
- Limited

The Council has now sent out the notice of examination (regulation 24 stage) and is aiming to adopt the Local Plan by winter 2020. The following policies are considered appropriate in assessing this proposal and consideration has been given to the level of outstanding objections resulting in appropriate weight attributed to each policy:

5.29 Policy 1 reinforces the guidance within the NPPF in that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This policy is considered to carry limited weight at this time.

5.30 Policy 2 focuses on delivering sustainable growth, appropriate to the size of individual settlements, meeting needs for new homes and jobs, regenerates places and communities, and supports necessary improvements to infrastructure, services and facilities. This policy is considered to carry limited weight at this time.

5.31 Policy 26 states that new development in the Countryside will be supported if in accordance with policy criteria. Part 4: Non Residential Development is relevant in the consideration of this application. This policy is considered to carry limited weight at this time.

5.32 Policy 14 seeks to promote sustainable transport within new developments. This policy is considered to carry limited weight at this time.

- 5.33 Policy 17 seeks to consider the needs of cyclists within new developments. This policy is considered to carry moderate weight at this time.
- 5.34 Policy 18 seeks to consider the needs of pedestrians within new developments. This policy is considered to carry moderate weight at this time.
- 5.35 Policy 30 seeks to deliver a net gain for biodiversity and protect, create, maintain and enhance the Borough's ecological networks. This policy is considered to carry limited weight at this time.
- 5.36 Policy 31 deals with the need to value biodiversity. This policy is considered to carry limited weight at this time.
- 5.37 Policy 33 seeks to protect the loss of woodlands, trees and hedgerows when considering new developments. This policy is considered to carry substantial weight at this time.
- 5.38 Policy 34 supports proposals that take account of the quality, local distinctiveness and the sensitivity to change of distinctive landscape character areas and individual landscape features. This policy is considered to carry limited weight at this time.
- 5.39 Policy 43 deals with the need for good urban design. Moderate weight can be attached to this policy.
- 5.40 Policy 49 seeks a high standard of landscaping in new developments. This policy is considered to carry limited weight at this time.
- 5.41 Policy 56 deals with the need to mitigate any contamination on site. This policy is considered to carry limited weight at this time.
- 5.42 Policy 57 requires the need for satisfactory drainage including the use of SuDS. This policy is considered to carry moderate weight at this time.

5.43 Neighbourhood Plan

5.44 There is no Neighbourhood Plan for this area.

5.45 Other material planning considerations

- The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)
- Development Requirements and Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2015)
- Supplementary Planning Document: Development and Flood Risk, Adopted Sept 2010
- South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide (SYRDG) (adopted 2015)
- National Planning Policy Guidance
- Cremation Act 1902

6.0 Representations

6.1 This application has been advertised in accordance with Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2015 by

means of site notice, press advertisement and being published on the Council's website.

6.2 14 letters of representation have been received. However this equates to 10 households as there have been multiple representations from the same household. Overall the representations appear to show support for this proposal, however the need for another facility is questioned in 5 of these representations. It is also noted that most of the representations received make the point that they are happy with the service provided at Rose Hill and if extra capacity is required DMBC should be responsible for both building and managing it as opposed to a private sector provider. However this is not a material planning consideration.

6.3 Interested parties have outlined the following benefits of the scheme in comparison with the other 2 concurrent applications at Brodsworth and Barnby Dun;

- Conisbrough will benefit as a community by creation of new jobs in the area as well as Horizon's funding of local causes
- Site is on a main arterial route with good links to Doncaster/Rotherham and Barnsley
- An appropriate location for a new crematorium
- Site not a flood zone
- The green roof of the proposed building makes it more environmentally friendly
- Frequent bus services on the A630
- Better location than Green Lane site
- Site is on Green Belt so other sites might have to be looked at

6.4 The Applicant has also carried out public consultation by way of press release to local newspapers and a public exhibition which took place at the Ivanhoe Community Centre in Conisbrough on 25th and 27th January 2020. The event was attended by over 100 residents. The submitted information states that overall the consensus of opinion was that people were supportive of a new crematorium and were happy with the proposed design and layout of the site.

7.0 Parish Council

7.1 Consibrough Parks Parish Council has made comment on the application and raised concerns with regards to the following issues;

- The statistics presented would seem to indicate that in Doncaster the waiting time for a service is becoming unreasonable and will only increase if there is no action taken.
- The site is currently green belt land and therefore there would need to be clear evidence that there is no alternative site available,
- The tree and hedge screening around the site is welcomed, but a guarantee that they will be properly cut and maintained regularly is seen as a necessity.
- The A630 is already a busy road and access or egress when turning right will pose significant risks. The Parish Council would support the proposed reduction in the speed limit from 50mph to 40mph along this section of the road.
- The opportunity for people from the local community to gain employment within the facility, including those with a disability.

- The possibility of the Parish Council gaining some benefit from the proposal, such as a section 106 agreement or other conditions attached to the planning permission if granted.
 - The operating times. Will it be 7 days a week? What will be the daily start and finish times? Are the operators aware that off road biking is a popular activity in the vicinity of the proposed site on a Sunday morning?
- 7.2 The site lies on the border between parish councils therefore the neighbouring Warmsworth Parish Council and Edlington Town Council have also been consulted.
- 7.3 Edlington Town Council raise no objections however have expressed reservations regarding road safety on accessing the development and would like to see appropriate measures addressed should consent be granted, also to ensure a reduction of the speed limit from 50 to 40mph.
- 7.4 Warmsworth Parish Council has raised objection to the application raising the following issues of concern;
- Historically concerns have been raised at the volume of traffic on Doncaster Road especially the speeding which has resulted in many fatalities on this stretch of road. The development will add to and increase the volume of traffic causing more congestion.
 - At peak times of the day traffic queues on High Road and Doncaster Road, from the traffic lights at junction 36 and traffic lights at Warmsworth crossroads cause a backup of traffic so the proposal would add more hold ups
 - The plans state the crematorium is to be built in the parish of Conisbrough, but it is the parish of Warmsworth that would be mainly impacted by adding more traffic and pollution to the already busy roads which would not be welcomed or beneficial for the wellbeing of Warmsworth residents.
 - Entry and exit onto the A630 is also a problem, and without traffic management it will still be a dangerous exercise to access the services at the crematorium.
 - Concerns that building on a greenfield site again compromises the environment and although the case for a new crematorium is compelling there is concern that consideration has not been given to a brownfield site.

8.0 Relevant Consultations

- 8.1 **South Yorkshire Architectural Liaison Officer:** Advice provided on elements of the scheme's design of windows and doors, and an intruder alarm which have been given full consideration and as such advisory informative notes are included. Overall no objections in principle.
- 8.2 **National Grid:** No objections raised.
- 8.3 **Environment Agency:** Has raised no objections to the proposal.
- 8.4 **Area Manager:** No comments received.
- 8.5 **Ecologist Planning Officer:** Is satisfied with the submitted ecology report and associated biodiversity net gain assessment. As such recommends conditions for a Biodiversity Impact Assessment to be submitted along with a 30 year management and monitoring plan to be agreed.

- 8.6 **Trees and Hedgerows Officer:** No objections on arboricultural grounds subject to conditions for a hard and soft landscaping scheme, implementation and tree protection measures during construction.
- 8.7 **Internal Drainage:** Has commented that insufficient details are submitted however a condition is included for full details of the proposed on-site drainage to be submitted and agreed prior to any works commencing on site.
- 8.8 **Local Plans Policy Team:** This application is one of 3 applications submitted for crematoria in the Borough. They are submitted independently by three different operators. In summary, the application should be considered concurrently with the other 2 crematorium applications and that each should not be considered in isolation of the others. Each must be considered on its own merits but the consideration of need is common to all three.
- 8.9 **Highways Development Control:** No objections, subject to conditions.
- 8.10 **Highways Safety (Safer Roads):** No objections raised on highway safety.
- 8.11 **Transportation Team:** No objections raised.
- 8.12 **Design Officer:** Has commented that the proposal has been thoughtfully designed. No objections raised subject to conditions for details of external materials to be submitted and agreed, details of hard and soft landscaping and the building to meet BREEAM and renewable energy standards.
- 8.13 **Pollution Control (Land Contamination):** No issues of concern, no conditions.
- 8.14 **Pollution Control (Air Quality):** No objections are raised subject to conditions for EV charging and an air quality mitigation plan to be submitted and agreed prior to the opening of the facility.
- 8.15 **South Yorkshire Archaeology:** The site has archaeological implications, however no objections are raised subject to pre commencement condition for a Written Scheme of Investigation that sets out a strategy for archaeological investigation.
- 8.16 **Natural England:** Initially raised concerns as insufficient information was submitted to assess the potential impacts on Sprotbrough Gorge Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and which is sensitive to air pollution. As such an addendum to the air quality assessment was submitted and natural England has confirmed that the proposed development will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the site has been notified and has no objection.
- 8.17 **Yorkshire Water:** No objections raised subject to condition for measures to protect the public water supply infrastructure that is laid within the site boundary.
- 8.18 **Yorkshire Wildlife Trust:**
- 8.19 **Northern Gas Networks:** No objections raised.
- 8.20 **Coal Authority:** Standing advice for developments within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining hazards.

- 8.21 **Public Health:** A Health Impact Assessment has been submitted that identifies issues such as air quality and sustainable travel measures. These are picked up with other consultee responses.
- 8.22 **Environmental Health (Noise):** No objections raised.
- 8.23 **Public Rights of Way:** No objections raised, no public rights of way are affected.
- 8.24 **Ward Members:** Local Ward members for Conisbrough Parks have expressed support for speed restriction measures on the A630. This is detailed and addressed in paragraphs 9.78-9.81 of this report.
- 8.25 No comments have been received from the **Ramblers Association** or **Area Manager**

9.0 Assessment

9.1 The principal issues for consideration under this application are as follows:

- Principle of development in Green Belt
- Very Special Circumstances - Need for the development
- Impact on residential amenity
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
- Agricultural Land Classification
- Design and Appearance
- Impact on highway safety and traffic
- Air pollution and contaminated land
- Ecology
- Flood risk and drainage
- Trees and landscaping
- Archaeology
- Overall planning balance

9.2 For the purposes of considering the balance in this application the following planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale:

- Substantial
- Considerable
- Significant
- Moderate
- Modest
- Limited
- Little or no

Principle of Development in Green Belt

9.3 The site lies within the Green Belt so regard should be given to the appropriateness of a crematorium development and the impact on the openness of the Green Belt. National Policy (NPPF) advises that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping 'land permanently open' (NPPF paragraph 133); the essential characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and their permanence.

- 9.4 National Policy (NPPF) advises of appropriate developments in the Green Belt and paragraph 143 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 9.5 When considering any planning application the NPPF (para 144) advises that LPA's 'should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. '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.'
- 9.6 The NPPF, paragraph 145 further states that local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt; then goes on to list a set of criteria as exceptions to this. An exception is made for the 'provision of appropriate facilities for cemeteries and burial grounds ... as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it' in paragraph 145b.
- 9.7 In terms of this application proposal, the construction of a new build crematorium is not an appropriate use in the Green Belt as defined by the NPPF. This is on account that the NPPF only allows for the provision of additional facilities for an existing cemetery not a new one. The list of exceptions in paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF is a "closed" list – there is no general test that development is not inappropriate if it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purpose of including land within the Green Belt. The emphasis of national policy is that 'very special circumstances' need to be demonstrated.
- 9.8 Local policy contained within core strategy CS 3 and saved Doncaster UDP Policy ENV 3 also seeks to protect and enhance Doncaster's countryside and when considering land within Green Belt, national policy will be applied.
- 9.9 In summary, the NPPF is clear that substantial weight should be given to harm to Green Belt and the construction of new buildings (except for the limited list included in the NPPF) is inappropriate as such development causes harm to openness. It is therefore necessary for the applicant to demonstrate that this harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations that would count as 'very special circumstances' to justify development in the Green Belt.
- 9.10 The applicant asserts that there is a 'need' for another crematorium in the Borough and has submitted an assessment of the need which it is argued satisfies this test and counts as 'very special circumstances.' The issue of 'need' is discussed in the section below.
- 9.11 Very Special Circumstances – Need for the Development
- 9.12 There is no national planning policy or guidance, or local (Doncaster) development plan policy, specific to the consideration of planning applications for crematoria. However the NPPF at paragraph 92 (e) requires that planning decisions should 'ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services'. Crematoria are clearly essential cultural facilities and services and planning decisions should be taken with the aim of supporting proposals that meet identified demand. Crematoria are a rare form of development with specific unique requirements. It is therefore particularly unusual that three independent proposals have been submitted concurrently.

- 9.13 The need for crematoria is therefore a material consideration and which has been accepted by all 3 applicants as evidenced with the need assessments submitted to accompany the respective applications. All three applications claim there is both a quantitative and qualitative need for a new crematorium to meet existing and future demand for cremations in Doncaster. They claim that there is insufficient capacity provided by the Borough's existing facility at Rose Hill, Cantley, and by other crematoria in neighbouring local authority areas.
- 9.14 The Council instructed an expert to carry out an assessment of Doncaster's current need in order to establish whether there was an existing unmet need within the borough. The consultant was also tasked with assessing where this need was best met and to evaluate the need assessments of the three separate planning applications for new crematoria.
- 9.15 The resultant report concludes that there is a compelling quantitative and qualitative need for a new crematorium in Doncaster. Between the years of 2016-2019 the existing Rose Hill Crematorium in Doncaster operated at 155% of practical capacity in peak months. A crematorium operating above 80% of its practical capacity makes it difficult to offer a cremation service that meets an acceptable quantitative standard, which in turn adversely affects a crematorium's ability to offer a quality service to bereaved families. Rose Hill is clearly working well above their capacity to provide funerals at the core times generally preferred by bereaved people, particularly during periods of high demand. Evidence from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicates a significant and sustained growth and ageing in the population, leading to increased numbers of deaths within the local authority areas served by the existing crematoria. Annual deaths in Doncaster are projected to increase by 23% between 2020 and 2043.
- 9.16 In terms of where the most suitable location would be, the consultant advises that any one of the 3 application sites would bring a benefit to residents by;
- Proximity- reducing their funeral travel times.
 - increasing capacity - reducing delays between death and being able to hold a funeral at a convenient time and date.
 - providing new capacity and choice of crematorium - reducing demand and thus reducing congestion at Rose Hill Crematorium
 - contemporary design and longer funeral services - giving more privacy to each group of mourners.
- 9.17 The consultant's report provides a summary of conclusions based on the drive-time catchment analysis undertaken and which indicates that:
- Within a constrained 45-minute drive-time catchment, the development of any of the three new crematoria does not increase overall calculated cremations (10,162) within the wider area, apart from the Barnby Dun site, which brings in an extra 64 cremations per year.
 - Within a constrained 30-minute drive-time catchment, all three sites attract more than the minimum 800 cremations per year required for viability.
 - Within a constrained 45-minute drive-time catchment, the Barnby Dun site attracts the highest number of cremations (1,210), albeit only 34 more than the Brodsworth site (1,176) and 123 more than the Conisbrough site (1,087).

- Within a constrained 45-minute drive-time catchment, the Barnby Dun site diverts the highest number of cremations away from Rose Hill: 806 compared with 526 at the Brodsworth site and 546 at the Conisbrough site.
- Within a constrained 45-minute drive-time catchment, the Conisbrough site diverts less cremations away from Rose Hill, but diverts more cremations from Rotherham, reflecting its location about halfway between Doncaster and Rotherham.
- 30-minute drive-time catchment calculated cremations at the Brodsworth site (1,160) do not significantly increase within its constrained 45-minute drive-time catchment (1,176).
- 30-minute drive-time catchment calculated cremations at the Conisbrough site (1,058) do not significantly increase within its constrained 45-minute drive-time catchment (1,087).
- However, 30-minute drive-time catchment calculated cremations at the Barnby Dun site (825) do significantly increase within its constrained 45-minute drive-time catchment (1,210), reflecting fewer constraining catchments of other crematoria in that particular area leading to a larger overall catchment.

- 9.18 The report advises that any one of the proposed crematoria potentially diverts cremations away from existing crematoria. This is a desirable outcome in terms of reducing overcapacity working and enabling improvements in qualitative provision at existing crematoria, including the Council operated Rose Hill.
- 9.19 Whilst a 30-minute drive-time population is often seen as evidence of need, in reality people living beyond that limit still require cremation facilities and will travel up to 45 minutes or more to reach their nearest crematorium. Purely in terms of its location relative to both population and to existing crematoria, the Barnby Dun site would be the consultants preferred choice as it has a larger constrained 45-minute drive-time catchment than the other two sites.
- 9.20 The consultant's preference is based purely upon current and potential future drive-time catchments and potential cremations at existing and proposed crematoria. It is not influenced by detailed consideration of any other planning related factors, nor any appraisal of each site, including the design and layout of buildings and grounds.
- 9.21 The report assesses a number of scenarios for comparison of each of the 3 proposed crematoriums; for instance if they were operational individually ie just one crematorium was developed and alternatively more than one crematorium ie two or all three crematoriums were developed.
- 9.22 The report evidences that the majority of areas within Doncaster with higher population densities lie within a 30-minute drive-time of Rose Hill or Barnby Dun. If only Barnby Dun was operational it would bring the highest number of people within a 30 minute drive time of a crematorium for the first time (33,123). Developing this site would also result in the greatest population loss to Rose Hill at 64,926 or -32% of the current population for Rose Hill. Developing this crematorium alone would therefore provide the greatest impact on the current over capacity at Rose Hill. This would improve the qualitative service at Rose Hill, without affecting its viability. It would also bring the highest number of people within a 30 minute drive time catchment of a crematorium for the first time.

- 9.23 The report is clear in that there is an overall need for another facility in Doncaster and in the consultant's opinion, by developing the site at Barnby Dun would meet most of that need. Nevertheless any one of the 3 sites would impact on the current over capacity at Rose Hill.
- 9.24 The expert report concludes that if only Conisborough were consented, then it would bring 15,922 people within a 30 minute drive time of a crematorium. It would result in a loss to Rose Hill of 60,598. It would have less of an impact on Rose Hill than would the Barnby Dun scheme. The Barnby Dun scheme has a greater impact on need and is less constrained by planning policy as it is not in the Green Belt. That site is therefore preferred.
- 9.25 If the Barnby Dun scheme is assumed to be consented, then sufficient unmet need may clearly outweigh the harms to the Green Belt and other harms, meeting the Very Special Circumstances test. The issue for consideration therefore is whether or not there is a residual unmet need for another crematorium in the borough after consent is granted for Barnby Dun.
- 9.26 If there is a residual unmet need, is it sufficient, along with other benefits, to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harms.
- 9.27 As part of the consideration of whether or not there is a residual unmet need for another facility, an important factor for consideration is to ensure the viability of the development and operation of the new crematorium, as developing more than one crematorium could undermine viability. Simply put, a minimum of 800 cremations per year is required, with 1,000 or more per year being preferred, to ensure the viability of the development and operation of the new crematorium.
- 9.28 Within a constrained 30-minute drive-time catchment, all three sites attract more than the minimum 800 cremations per year required for viability if developed on their own. However the report commissioned by the council further assesses scenarios whereby more than one crematorium is developed and makes comparable variable commutations of all 3 proposed sites. This is essential to assess any residual unmet need on the assumption that the Barnby Dun scheme is permitted.
- 9.29 If both Conisbrough and Barnby Dun were developed Barnby Dun would not be viable; if Brodsworth and Barnby Dun were developed Barnby Dun would not be viable. However the point of issue here is that the Barnby Dun site is the least constrained in policy terms in that it is not located within the Green Belt; Barnby Dun is located within CPA and is therefore the preferred location that would address the borough's need for a new crematorium.
- 9.30 It is clear therefore that there is not sufficient need to support two new crematoria once Barnby Dun is consented. If there were sufficient need, then it would be possible for two viable new crematoria to be consented.
- 9.31 In summary, there is a clear and expected need for another crematorium within the borough which could be met by any one of the 3 proposed application sites. However 2 of those sites are located within the Green Belt whereby crematoria development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. Great weight must therefore be attached to this harm and whether or not there are any other issues that would count as very special circumstances to outweigh that harm. The 'need' for another facility could count as very special circumstances. However the Barnby Dun site would meet that need, it would meet planning policy and it is not located within Green Belt.

- 9.32 In the assessment of any residual need, the report concludes that by developing any one of the 2 Green Belt sites would make the Barnby Dun site unviable therefore providing no issue of need that would count as very special circumstances to outweigh development in the Green Belt. As such the application is contrary to both local and national Green Belt policies.
- 9.33 The applicant has responded with a critique of the external consultant's report and raises a number of points with regards to errors in the data in the assessment of over trading in existing crematoria; viability and error in the baseline data for calculating catchment areas and drive time and catchment size
- 9.34 The critique asserts that no single one of the applications will resolve capacity issues in all the existing crematoria – Rose Hill and those outside the Doncaster MBC area. It argues that developing either Brodsworth or Conisbrough would have a significantly greater impact on overtrading in existing crematoria than just development of Barnby Dun. The critique also asserts that there is clearly scope for two crematoria to be built and that either the development of either Barnby Dun and Conisbrough or Barnby Dun and Brodsworth would have greater impact on overtrading of existing crematoria.
- 9.35 In response, the Council disagrees with this and whilst it is recognised that crematoria development will have an impact on the existing crematoria outside of the borough it is acknowledged the applications have been submitted and are being assessed on the basis that there is a need for a new facility in Doncaster and that a proposed new facility will impact on the current over capacity at Rose Hill, not the over capacity at neighbouring authorities. There is no policy basis that requires an assessment of cross boundary impact. The purpose of another facility would be to bring an improved service to residents by providing another accessible facility, whilst also relieving the strain on Rose Hill. The cross boundary impact of the proposed development would therefore carry limited/moderate weight in the consideration of the applications. It certainly carries less weight than the impact in policy terms of either one, or combination of both, the proposed crematoria sited in the Green Belt. As the response sets out, Barnby Dun has the greatest impact on capacity at Rose Hill, the other crematorium in the Borough's area.
- 9.36 The external consultant's report produced by the Council assesses the potential for development of two crematoria, and particularly the scenarios of developing Barnby Dun and either one of the two Green Belt sites. Whilst developing two sites would bring a higher population number within the 30 minute drive time of a crematorium for the first time Figure 44 of the consultant's report referred to in the critique shows 30 minute drive time deaths at 1,322 and 1,450 respectively for Conisbrough and Brodsworth, Figure 44 also shows the drive time deaths for Barnby Dun in scenarios 6 and 7 where both Barnby Dun and either Conisbrough (scenario 6) or Brodsworth (scenario 7) as 937 and 688 respectively. The drive time figures for Consibrough in scenario 6 is 1,312. These results show that where another crematorium is developed alongside Barnby Dun, then Barnby Dun, the sequentially preferable site, becomes unviable.
- 9.37 The conclusion of the report prepared for the Council is that if only one of the three proposed new crematoria were developed, cremation numbers would fall at Rose Hill, but there would still be sufficient to ensure viability. However, if two or more of the three proposed new crematoria were developed, cremation numbers would fall more significantly at Rose Hill, sufficient to compromise its continuing viability.

- 9.38 If Brodsworth and either Barnby Dun or Conisbrough were developed, Brodsworth would appear to still attract sufficient cremations to be viable, but the viability of the other is doubtful. If both Conisbrough and Barnby Dun were developed, Conisbrough would appear to still attract sufficient cremations to be viable, but the viability of Barnby Dun is doubtful. If all three proposed crematoria were developed, it is unlikely that any one of them would attract sufficient cremations to be viable.
- 9.39 The proposed crematorium development therefore represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt and therefore harmful to the Green Belt. The Barnby Dun proposal is less constrained in policy terms and delivers the greatest benefit in terms of individual impact on the capacity of Rose Hill and brings the most residents within 30 minutes of a crematorium, it is considered the first choice site for meeting the need for a new crematorium in the borough. There is insufficient residual need within the borough to support a second crematorium. The benefit of an additional crematorium on capacity of crematorium outside the borough weighs in favour of the scheme but receives no more than limited/moderate weight.

Sustainability

- 9.40 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019) sets out at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 9.41 There are three strands to sustainability, social, environmental and economic. Para.10 of the NPPF states that in order sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

9.42 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

9.43 Impact on Residential Amenity

- 9.44 Policy CS 14 (A) of the Core Strategy states that 'new development should have no unacceptable negative effects upon the amenity of neighbouring land uses or the environment'.
- 9.45 With regards to the impact on any neighbouring land use or properties; there are key standards set out for new crematoria development within the 1902 Cremations Act. This Act prevents a crematorium being located within 200 yards of any dwelling house (except with the consent of the owner) nor within 50 yards of a public highway. As such, the proposed siting of the building has taken this into due consideration and there are no residential dwellings within 200 yards of the proposed building therefore no loss of residential amenity for any nearby residents. In terms of any negative effects on the environment this is discussed later in the report under consideration of other issues including landscape visual impact, ecology, air pollution and trees/landscaping,
- 9.46 The application is thereby deemed to accord with policy CS14

9.47 Conclusion on Social Impacts.

9.48 In conclusion of the social impacts of the development, it is not considered that the impact of residential amenity will be adversely affected by the proposal.

9.49 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

9.50 Landscape Visual Impact Assessment

9.51 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to keep land permanently open (NPPF Paragraph 133); the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The NPPF at paragraph 141 encourages LPA's to 'plan positively to enhance their beneficial use...looking for opportunities to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity.' Doncaster Core Strategy Policy CS 16 also reflects national policy and seeks to enhance the borough's landscape and trees.

9.52 An assessment of the landscape character, a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted by the applicant as part of the submitted documents and which states that the site is initially set approximately one metre lower than the adjacent road with the ground gently sloping downwards to the southwest of the site, with the lowest area being 3-4 metres lower than the A630 (Sheffield Road).

9.53 The LVIA takes into account the objectives of the scheme design and landscape proposals and assesses the predicted effects of the proposal at year 1 and then at year 10 following establishment of the proposed landscape mitigation. The assessment concludes that the potential landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed crematorium and memorial park would be of 'slight significance'.

9.54 An external Landscape consultant has been employed by the Council to independently assess the landscape visual impact of the proposed development. The consultant has commented that the LVIA provides a comprehensive description of the proposed development and the masterplan layout. The siting of the crematorium building appears to have been developed in response to the nature of the topography and availability of existing vegetation, which will serve to provide localised screening. The discussion of siting of the proposed building appropriately makes reference to the design guidelines contained within the published landscape character assessment (LCA) for Doncaster.

9.55 The assessment of landscape effects does not provide a distinction between construction, year 1 and year 10/15 effects. Whilst at year 10, proposed planting may be effective in helping with screening of views, effects at year one may be greater and the differences are not brought out.

9.56 Many elements of the predicted landscape change are judged to be beneficial to the landscape. The loss of a section of hedge at the site access is recorded as a minor adverse effect, which would be mitigated by new planting around and within the site. The visual effects are all reported as minor or negligible, and neither adverse nor beneficial.

9.57 The LVIA suggests that woodland planting will reduce the effect of the building on openness. However, the site is relatively prominent, adjacent to a main road. Currently, open views are available across the site from the A630 Sheffield Road,

and introduction of woodland could be interpreted as a loss of openness, as it grows in the long term.

- 9.58 In summary, the consultant concludes that the landscape and visual effects of the three sites are likely to be similar. All three LVIA's conclude that the woodland and landscape proposals associated with the developments would be beneficial to the landscape and visual amenity to some degree, albeit it would take some considerable time for planting to mature in practice. Of the two sites located in Green Belt, this application site may have a greater effect on visual openness, due to the existing long open views across the site and agricultural land from the A630. This would relate to the effect of planting more than buildings.
- 9.59 It is considered that the development, will result in some harm to the character and appearance of the landscape and as such is contrary to Policy CS 3 of the development plan.
- 9.60 The applicant has provided a response to the external consultant's report which overall acknowledges the comments that the applicant's LVIA is sound and based on good practise. The response also notes the consultant's assessment of the proximity of the site and visibility of Edlington that forms a conclusion that the site has a settlement edge character, similar to Armthorpe Lane. The response raises issue with two points; firstly the phrase 'relatively prominent adjacent to a main road' and secondly that the site is 'likely to be the most visible due to its location next to the A630.'
- 9.61 The applicant's response claims that these comments are not appropriate in the context of the review, as it has not considered the way the development responds to the landscape in terms of form, materials etc. In response to this, whilst the proposed materials and design will assist the building's assimilation into the landscape, any amount of built form on a current open landscape and located near to a main road will impact on openness of the Green Belt and also result in minor harm to the landscape.
- 9.62 Agricultural Land Classification
- 9.63 Policy CS 18 of the Doncaster Council Core Strategy is concerned with conserving, protecting and enhancing Doncaster's air, water and land resources, both in terms of quantity and quality. Part C relates to agricultural land and states that proposals will be supported which facilitate the efficient use of Doncaster's significant agricultural land and soil resources, including proposals which protect high quality agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) in so far as this is consistent with the Growth and Regeneration Strategy (as set out in Policy CS 2).
- 9.64 The applicant has submitted an Agricultural Land Classification Report with the application and a later addendum to this report. Within the main document it is stated that a soil resource and agricultural land classification survey has been carried out on the land. It is stated that the land comprises of shallow well drained medium loamy soils over limestone with deeper calcareous colluvial soils. The report states that as a result there are significant restrictions to the range of crops that can be grown, restrictions on the cultivations that can be used and on crop yields.
- 9.65 At the time of the survey, the land is an arable field (in oilseed rape). In total 58.5% of the site cannot be graded higher than 3b, with restrictions both on range of cropping (due

to depth) and of yield (due to droughtiness). 41.5% of the site has deeper soils which area sub grade 2.

- 9.66 Whilst the NPPF advocates and encourages preserving the best and most versatile agricultural land, there is no definition of the term 'significant' of best and most versatile agricultural land. However, the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order (2010) requires Local Planning Authorities to consult DEFRA on any development that would involve the loss of 20 hectares of more of high quality agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 or 3a). This can therefore be used as a good indication as to what is considered significant. National Planning Practise Guidance (NPPG) also advises that the Development Management Procedure Order 2015, Natural England is a statutory consultee and must therefore be consulted before granting permission for large scale non-agricultural development on best and most versatile land that is not in accordance with the development plan. This proposal would involve the loss of only 41.5% (less than 2 hectares of sub grade 2 land. Natural England has nevertheless been consulted and has raised no objections or issues of concern.
- 9.67 Whilst it is recognised that there will be a loss of agricultural land, 41.5% of this is grade 2 and whilst policy CS 18 seeks to protect high quality land, it would involve the loss of less than 2 hectares of land, and should therefore not be considered a significant loss. It is not considered that the proposal is contrary to policy CS 18.

9.68 Design and Appearance

- 9.69 Policy CS 14 of the Doncaster Council Core Strategy sets out the Council's policy on the design of new development. It states that all proposals in Doncaster must be of high quality design that contributes to local distinctiveness, reinforces the character of local landscapes and building traditions, responds positively to existing site features and integrates well with its immediate and surrounding local area. This will be achieved through a set of design principles and quality standards as set out.
- 9.70 The siting of the building has been dictated by existing topography and ecology of the site, and also the requirements of the Cremation Act that dictates required distances from dwellings. This has resulted in the building being located in the south western part of the site.

The building, which provides a gross external area of totals 526 sqm, is divided into three elements; the reception and waiting room area, the Ceremony Hall and the cremator room and associated offices. The building has been designed for each of these separate elements with mono-pitch roofed sections linked by connecting flat roofed spaces providing ancillary accommodation.

- 9.71 The mono pitch design has been chosen to minimise the impact on the existing landscape. Each pitched roof segment will be finished in sedum (ie green roofs). It is intended that these planted roofs will be seen as green wedges prised up from the existing landscape.
- 9.72 The external materials have been chosen to reflect the semi-rural location and comprise of extensive use of larch cladding to the walls as this will naturally weather to a natural silver/grey tone and will blend with the surrounding countryside over time. Windows and doors will be in silver grey powder coated aluminium, to tie in with the smaller areas of linking flat roofs that will be finished in grey waterproof membranes.

The roofs will also be sedum clad as already stated in para 9.69 above. A condition has also been included for details and samples of the proposed external materials to be agreed. The accompanying Design and Access Statement states that 'by keeping to this restricted palette of materials it is intended that a simple but striking building will be created which will reflect the rural nature of the site.' Additionally, resin bonded gravel will be used on all access driveways and paths. This is also a porous paving adding to the drainage sustainability. A 3D visualisation of the proposed building can be seen at Appendix 2.

- 9.73 The Council's Urban Design Officer has provided guidance and advice throughout the pre application process, and has been consulted with the subsequent application commenting that there are 'no major design concerns with this proposal it has been thoughtfully designed.' The Officer is therefore satisfied with the scheme subject to conditions relating to final materials, details of a hard and soft landscaping scheme to be agreed and 10% renewable energy requirement.
- 9.74 The South Yorkshire Police Architectural Liaison Officer has also been consulted on the application and has recommended that all windows and doors comply with Secured by Design standards. It is also recommended that a suitably designed intruder alarm is fitted. An advisory informative note is therefore included.
- 9.75 As such, the proposed redevelopment is therefore considered to meet with policy CS14 and the NPPF.
- 9.76 Impact upon Highway Safety
- 9.77 'Quality, stability, safety and security of private property, public areas and the highway' and 'permeability - ease of pedestrian movement with good access to local facilities and public transport services' are listed as qualities of a successful place within policy CS 14 (A). The NPPF in para 109 states that 'development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on road safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe'.
- 9.78 Part (G) of policy CS 9 states that 'new development will provide, as appropriate, transport assessments and travel plans to ensure the delivery of travel choice and sustainable opportunity for travel. A Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan has been submitted in support of this application. The nature of the development will mean that a high proportion of people visiting the site will do so by private car.
- 9.79 As part of the Transport Assessment, the most recent 5 years of Traffic Collision data has been reviewed. Two scenarios have also been tested for the site access; an 'average' attendance and a 'worst case' where it is assumed 2 fully occupied services take place back to back. The average occupancy is assumed to be 2 persons per vehicle. The 'worst case' scenario is expected to generate 50 arrivals and 50 departures (100 2-way). A future +10 year assessment has also been included and the Council's Transport Officer is satisfied that the junction will operate within capacity in 2031.
- 9.80 An issue of concern has been raised by local residents, Parish Council's and Local Ward Members regarding the speed of traffic travelling on the A630 Sheffield Road between Warmsworth and Conisbrough, and who have requested a speed reduction on this section of the road. This has been supported by the applicant who has offered

to fund this re-designation along with road side gates at the entrances to Warmsworth and Conisbrough, and also road signage.

- 9.81 The Council's Safer Roads Team in conjunction with South Yorkshire Police have considered this request and have commented that whilst it is understandable there are concerns given 2 accidents that have occurred. However these were over 5 years ago and occurred on the outskirts of Conisbrough which is some distance from the site and on what was then a 40mph speed limit zone. As a consequence of these accidents HM Coroner ultimately asked the Council to investigate an improvement scheme intended to address concerns, and this was finally implemented during 2016 after extensive consultation including with the affected Parish Councils. This project entailed the eastward extension of the existing 40 mph speed limit, together with a reduction to 50 mph along the section between Conisbrough and Warmsworth previously subject to the National Speed Limit (in this case 60 mph).
- 9.82 The scheme also included an extensive range of additional supporting measures, including enhanced signs and road markings, coloured surface treatment and an electronic Vehicle Activated Sign, all of which were intended to manage vehicle speeds to ensure compliance with the revised speed limits. The route is also a designated mobile safety camera route which is subject to regular enforcement activity by SYSC, a situation which might be reviewed should any proposal be brought forward to reduce the speed limit. Subsequent monitoring has shown not only that this have good levels of compliance achieved, but that there have been no further concerns regarding road traffic casualties in the area, and it should be noted that specifically relating to the application site there were no concerns in this particular area previously.
- 9.83 The Council's Safer Roads Team and South Yorkshire Police remain satisfied that the level and extent of the existing speed limits are set correctly with good levels of compliance and in view of the acceptable outline design agreed for the access, and the absence of safety problems in the area since the improvement scheme was implemented some years ago, there is no requirement to consider further changes to speed limits along this section of road.
- 9.84 With regard to the layout of the scheme and the design of the access, the Highways Development Control Officer raises no objection to the scheme following amendment to the proposal and subject to conditions. There is a single point of vehicular access proposed via the A630 (Sheffield Road) and a separate pedestrian access that will utilise the existing field access to the site. There are a number of bus stops along the A630. A pedestrian refuge crossing is also provided within the confines of the proposed ghost island that will provide a right turn manoeuvre for vehicles accessing the site from Sheffield Road. The exact location of the pedestrian refuge will be agreed with the highway authority. See the proposed access arrangement at Appendix 4.
- 9.85 The scheme provides car parking for 100 vehicles (including disabled spaces and 20 overspill spaces), and cycle parking. The site is therefore easily accessible by car, cycle and on foot.
- 9.86 The proposal is therefore considered to meet with policies CS 14 and CS 9 of the Doncaster Council Core Strategy.

9.87 Air Pollution and Contaminated Land

9.88 Policy CS 18 (A) states that 'proposals will be supported which contribute to improvements in air quality'. The size of development is sufficient to trigger the need for an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) and as such this has been submitted to accompany the application. The Pollution Control (Air Quality) Officer has commented that the development will not have the potential to result in an exceedance of the existing air quality objectives or unduly exacerbate existing conditions. Whilst the proposal will not result in an exceedance, the AQA does acknowledge there will be an increase in concentrations. Therefore the Officer recommends a condition for 1 no. dual electric charging point and an air quality mitigation plan via conditions as compensation mitigation.

9.89 The Contaminated Land team have also been consulted on the proposal and has commented that as the development is not a sensitive end use, not on a former industrial site, with no closed landfills in the vicinity no issues of concern are raised. As such, there are no issues on air quality or contaminated land grounds that weigh against the development that cannot be dealt with by condition.

9.90 Ecology

9.91 The NPPF at paragraph 170 d) where it states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by "minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity." This is reflected in Policy CS 16 states that Doncaster's natural environment will be protected and enhanced in accordance with a number of principles. Part (A) states that "proposals will be supported which enhance the borough's Ecological Networks by (1) including measures that are of an appropriate size, scale and type and have regard to both the nature of the development and its impact on existing or potential networks; (2) maintaining, strengthening and bridging gaps in existing habitat networks".

9.92 The Council's Ecologist and also Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has noted that there is a lack of survey information particularly with regards to bat survey details which may be a result of surveying ecologists and clients not communicating over the need and timing of surveys. Notwithstanding this, it was considered that hibernation surveys carried out (just outside of the recommended survey window) identified the use of the air vent and tunnel by hibernating bats. Active period surveys identified no bats emerging from the air vent south of the site. The ecologist planner considers that further surveys in the active period would not be required as the air vent and tunnel would be unsuitable as a maternity roost site. Overall, and taking into account the ecologist planners' knowledge of the disused railway gorge and the surrounding area which he has surveyed in the past, it is considered that that most bats emerging from the air vent would disperse to the west where there is suitable vegetation and then north along the gorge. This would be similar for bats returning to the air vent. This would be in preference to a flight path over the proposed crematorium and across the busy Sheffield Road. It is therefore considered that the siting of the proposed crematorium would not pose a significant disturbance effect on bats.

9.93 However, paragraph 170 of the NPPF requires development to deliver a net gain in biodiversity. A biodiversity net gain assessment has been carried out that clearly indicates that a 10% biodiversity net gain can be achieved through on-site delivery of enhanced and created habitats types. Following discussion and amendments a final approach has been agreed with the applicant. The delivery of an agreed Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) is therefore recommended by condition to

demonstrate how a 10% net gain in biodiversity will be delivered on the site based on the landscape masterplan, and a 30 year maintenance plan. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with policy CS 16 and the NPPF in relation to ecology and more specifically bio diversity matters.

9.94 Flood Risk and Drainage

9.95 The site falls within a Flood Risk Zone 1 (FRZ1) area on the latest Environment Agency Flood Map. National planning policy, and Policy CS4 of the LDF Core Strategy, normally requires that for proposals in Flood Risk Zone 1 and over 1 hectare in size should consult with the Environment Agency. As this site is well over 1 hectare at 3.4hectares the Environment Agency has been consulted and has raised no objections or issues of concern.

9.96 With respect to the drainage of the site, full foul surface water and land drainage details are requested via condition. In addition, Yorkshire Water has requested a condition for measures to protect the public water supply infrastructure that is laid within the site boundary to be submitted and agreed prior to any works commencing on site. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with policy CS 4 and the NPPF in relation to drainage and flood risk matters.

9.97 Trees and Landscaping

9.98 Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy states that Doncaster's natural environment will be protected and enhanced. A landscape scheme and a landscape strategy has been submitted to accompany the application which seeks the creation of a setting for the building that suits its purpose with serenity and dignity. It proposes two distinct aspects to the landscaping; the more formal area around the building and the memorial garden and then the wider site area which will encourage the regeneration of the native grassland and new woodland areas. The wider site will be allowed to develop its full potential as a site of bio diverse value with good management.

9.99 The landscape strategy for the site makes use of the adjacent woodland and hedgerow pattern to screen the site and from which additional woodland and boundary planting can be developed. Therefore, the entire site is to be contained within a combination of woodland and hedgerows.

9.100 The Council's Trees and Hedgerows Officer has commented that the site is not heavily constrained by existing trees and hedgerows. The main constraints being the emerging woodland/regeneration area of trees to the south west of the site beside the road, the trees/shrubs that are in the centre of the field and a 120m section of hedgerow that is to the east of the proposed site access. The Officer has commented that the main constraint to the site is the removal of a large section of hedgerow on the eastern boundary of the site for the required site lines for the proposed access, and suggests moving the access to avoid the need for this. On discussion with the Highway Officer this access has been amended previously and agreed with the applicant. The officer has advised he would not support moving it as this could be hazardous on account of the land levels and the bend in the road.

9.101 Overall, the Trees and Hedgerows Officer raises no objection to the proposal, and notwithstanding the landscape plan suggests a number of conditions including tree protection fencing, and a hard and soft landscape scheme to be submitted and agreed. The proposal is therefore deemed to accord with policy CS 16.

9.102 Archaeology

9.103 The NPPF at paragraph 189 states “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting...Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.” UDP Policies ENV 37 and ENV 38 also requires consideration of archaeological sites of significant interest.

9.104 The South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS) has commented on the application, stating that there are potential archaeological implications. An archaeological desk-based assessment, by Rathmell Archaeology, was submitted as supporting information for the proposal. This identified a high number of known archaeological sites in the vicinity, mainly findspots of flint tools, but no known sites within the proposed site boundary. The site is also bordered to the north and west by the probable course of a Roman road. Just north of the road is the probable site of the medieval settlement of Butterbusk and features may have extended across the road to the south. There is, then, potential for hitherto unrecorded archaeological remains to exist within the application area. Groundworks associated with this scheme could, therefore, destroy finds and features of archaeological importance and as such, a scheme of archaeological investigation is required. Given the small footprint of the development within the application area and potential to preserve any important remains *in situ*, SYAS recommend that the necessary investigation be secured by attaching a condition for a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that sets out a strategy for archaeological investigation. The proposal is therefore deemed to accord with policies ENV 37 and ENV 38.

9.105 Energy Efficiency

9.106 Policy CS 14 (C) requires proposals to meet or exceed the following minimum standards (1) all new housing must meet all criteria to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes of at least Level 3 and (2) all new development must secure at least 10% of their total regulated energy from decentralised and renewable or low carbon resources. This is now included within building regulations, therefore there is no longer a need to specifically condition this to meet planning policy requirements.

9.107 Conclusion on Environmental Issues

9.108 Para.8 of the NPPF (2019) indicates, amongst other thing, that the planning system needs to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

9.109 In conclusion of the environmental issues, it is considered that issues in relation to trees, ecology, landscaping, highways, air and pollution have been overcome subject to suitably worded conditions. However, issues in relation to landscape visual impact and the impact of the openness of the Green Belt have not been overcome, great weight must be attached to the impact on the openness of the Green Belt as set out in NPPF paragraph 144. This weighs against the proposal carrying significant weight. Overall therefore, the proposal is considered to balance negatively in relation to environmental matters.

9.110 ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

9.111 As part of the submitted information it is stated that there will be 6 employees at the crematorium; 4 full time and 2 part time, therefore there is some economic long term benefit. It is also anticipated that there would be some short term economic benefit to the development of the site through employment of construction workers and tradesmen connected with the build of the project however this is restricted to a short period of time and therefore carries limited weight in favour of the application.

9.112 Conclusion on Economy Issues

9.113 Para 8 a) of the NPPF (2019) sets out that in order to be economically sustainable developments should help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

9.114 Whilst the economic benefit of the proposal is slight and afforded only limited weight, it does not harm the wider economy of the borough and for that reason weighs in favour of the development.

10.0 PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSION

10.1 In accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF (2019) the proposal is considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

10.2 The site lies within an area designated as Green Belt in the Core Strategy and UDP, whereby national local policies crematoria development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. Great weight must therefore be attached to this harm. Consent should not be granted unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and another harm. It is only if that test is met that the necessary very special circumstances exist to grant consent.

10.3 Whilst this application is considered on its individual merits, it has also been necessary to consider two other crematoria applications concurrently on account of the exceptional circumstance of having three applications for this rare form of development that all seek to meet the same need. An independent external consultant has established that there is a clear and expected need for another crematorium within the borough which could be met by any one of the 3 proposed application sites. The consultant's report advises that developing Barnby Dun, not Brodsworth or Conisbrough would bring the greatest impact on the current over capacity at Rose Hill. Therefore neither the Brodsworth site nor the Conisbrough site are considered suitable alternative sites that would outweigh Green Belt policy. As such the application at Barnby Dun is recommended for approval.

10.4 In the assessment of any residual need, the external report concludes that by developing any one of the 2 Green Belt sites would make the Barnby Dun site unviable therefore providing no issue of need that would count as very special circumstances to outweigh development in the Green Belt. The harm to the Green Belt by virtue of inappropriateness therefore carries substantial weight and as such the application is contrary to both local and national Green Belt policies.

- 10.5 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted, and which has been assessed by the Council's external consultant which concludes that there will be some impact on openness of the Green Belt. This therefore carries substantial weight against the proposal. Nevertheless the applicant does disagree with the council's consultant's conclusions.
- 10.6 The Transport Statement shows that the site can accommodate the extra traffic generated particularly when considering the mitigation measures highlighted as part of the TA. The ecological value of the site has been assessed and will be able to provide 10% net gain and this weighs moderately in favour of the application.
- 10.7 There are potential archaeological implications on the site and as such the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS). SYAS recommend that the necessary investigation can be secured by attaching a condition for a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that sets out a strategy for archaeological investigation.
- 10.8 A landscape scheme and a landscape strategy has been submitted to accompany the application. The main constraint to the site is the removal of a large section of hedgerow on the eastern boundary of the site for the required site lines for the proposed access. Although the Council's Trees and Hedgerows officer initially suggested moving the access, on discussion with the highway Officer this has been amended previously and agreed with the applicant. As such has advised he would not support moving it as this could be hazardous on account of the land levels and the bend in the road.
- 10.9 Overall, mitigation via conditions for tree protection fencing, and a hard and soft landscape scheme to be submitted and agreed will render the scheme in accordance with local plan policy.
- 10.10 The positive impact on the quantitative need for a new crematorium in neighbouring authorities is given moderate weight.
- 10.11 The benefits of the scheme do not clearly outweigh the harms to the Green Belt and any other harms and so very special circumstances have not been demonstrated. Overall, on account of the above balancing exercise, the proposal is recommended for refusal.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION

11.1 REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the following reasons:

1. The proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt for which very special circumstances have not been demonstrated. The proposal is therefore contrary to Doncaster Core Strategy (Adopted May 2012) Policy CS 3, Doncaster Unitary Development Plan (Adopted July 1998) Policies ENV 2 and ENV 3 and paragraphs s 143-145 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

The above objections, consideration and resulting recommendation have had regard to Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention for Human Rights Act 1998. The recommendation will not interfere with the applicant's and/or objector's right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence

APPENDIX 1: Proposed Site Layout



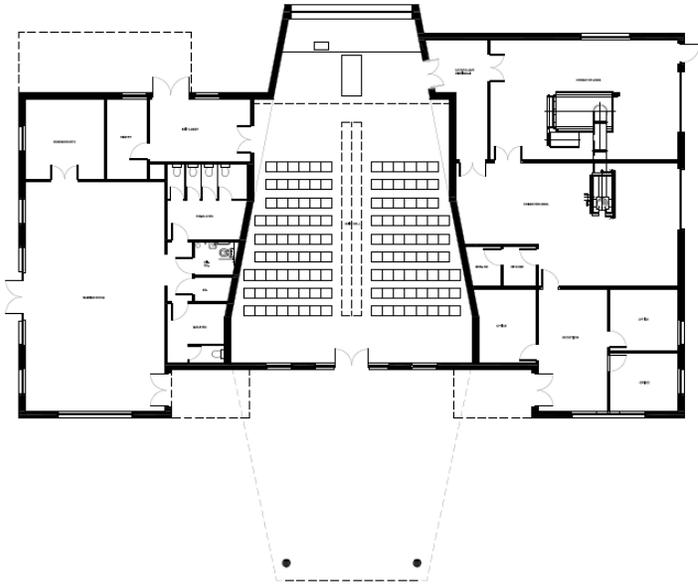
KEY

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| <p>1 Access Avenue
A tree lined avenue with native hedgerow guides visitors into the site whilst providing a gentle visual screen of the memorial gardens from the access road.</p> <p>2 Memorial Terraces
Three terraces step down towards the building, using local dolomite stone. The stone retaining walls define each memorial space allowing for places of private reflection and natural screening from the road. The southern facing aspect and walls provide a sheltered space and unfiltered views over the countryside.</p> <p>3 Reflecting Ponds
Two reflecting ponds form a connection between both sides of the building. The southern pond will be a natural pond with native reed and wetland planting and will link with the sustainable drainage design. The northern pond is set in a formal paved space with garden and seating.</p> <p>4 Native Woodland
Native woodland will be planted to extend and enhance the existing adjacent woodlands. A path through the woodland allows for informal memorialisation and reflection.</p> <p>5 Wildflower Meadow
A low stone wall and wildflower meadow with informal mown walking paths.</p> <p>6 Native Hedge & Woodland Screen
Native hedge, woodland and scrub planting form a screen along the eastern and southern boundary.</p> | <p>7 Site Entrance
Native woodland, native hedging and low shrubs with wildflowers provide a natural buffer from the road as visitors enter the site.</p> <p>8 Wildflower Mounds
Landscape mounds planted with wildflowers creates a pleasant route through the site enabling easy pedestrian access to the carpark and bus stop. This also creates a subtle visual screen from the access road.</p> <p>9 Access Path
Paved pedestrian path connecting the crematorium to the bus stop.</p> <p>10 Existing Hedgerow
To be bolstered and extended with more native hedgerow and tree planting.</p> <p>11 Crematorium
Proposed crematorium building with angled sedum roof.</p> <p>12 Carpark
Paved carparks with space for 80 cars.</p> <p>13 Carpark Overflow
Grass paver cells allow overflow space for 20 cars.</p> <p>14 Drop Off Zone
Two areas to drop off visitors prior to parking.</p> <p>15 Accessible Parking
Five accessible parking spaces close to the building entrance.</p> |
|--|---|

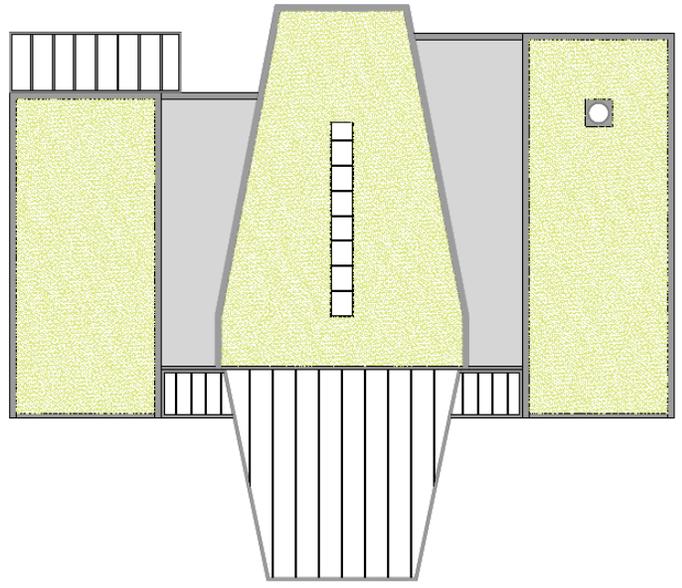
APPENDIX 2: Proposed 3D visualisation



Appendix 3: Proposed Floor Plans



GROUND FLOOR PLAN AS PROPOSED 1/100



ROOF PLAN AS PROPOSED 1/100

Appendix 4: Proposed Access Arrangement

