

COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: 15 December 2011 **Ward:** Osbaldwick
Team: Major and **Parish:** Osbaldwick Parish
 Commercial Team Council

Reference: 11/02305/FULM

Application at: OS Field 3022 Metcalfe Lane Osbaldwick York

For: Erection of 58 polytunnels in association with use of land as allotments with associated facilities including reception building, toilet block, parking area and alterations to Metcalfe Lane (revised scheme)

By: Mr James Metcalf

Application Type: Major Full Application (13 weeks)

Target Date: 9 January 2012

Recommendation: Refuse

1.0 PROPOSAL

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.1 The applicant seeks planning permission to erect 58 polytunnels on agricultural land to the east of Metcalfe Lane. The proposed tunnels are 27.5m long by 5.5m wide and would be 2.6m high. Next to each tunnel it is intended to be located a small timber shed. The sheds are proposed to have a mono-pitch roof and be 3.4m in height.

1.2 In addition to the polytunnels it is proposed to provide a reception and a small shop. Showers and toilets are also provided in a separate building. The current application did include a cafe, but this has now been removed. The proposal includes a balancing lake towards the entrance to the site. The pond is oval in shape and approximately 60m in length. A crushed gravel track is proposed to run the length of the site. 12 car parking spaces and 4 mini bus spaces are proposed adjacent to a large gravel turning area close to the reception/shop. It is understood that occupiers of the polytunnels will typically park adjacent to each structure.

1.2 The access point to the site is around 160 metres from the junction of Metcalfe Lane with Osbaldwick Village. It is proposed to retain Metcalfe Lane in its current form with the exception of the creation of a point for two cars to pass adjacent to the application site. The applicant intends to introduce a 20mph speed limit and oncoming vehicle priority on the lane.

1.3 The site is intended to be open from 'dusk to dawn'. The polytunnels would be available for charities, educational groups, businesses and individuals to rent. The

applicants have not put forward any information in respect to what the likely split in occupation of the tunnels would be.

1.4 The applicant has referred to the polytunnels as 'eco tunnels' and included environmental friendly elements such as solar panels on the sheds and ancillary buildings. A small shop is proposed where producers can sell produce to the visiting public. Although the desire to create a fully accessible 'covered allotment type' facility with a 'social emphasis' is noted there is no agreement in place to restrict the occupation of the tunnels either in respect to the nature of occupiers or the number they can hire. The applicant has stated that he is not aware of a precedent elsewhere for a similar proposal.

APPLICATION SITE

1.5 The land has previously been used for grazing and haymaking, it is not part of a working agricultural unit. The total site area is approximately 3.3 hectares and comprises three fields divided by hedgerows. The land is around 350 metres in length measured from north to south. Approximately 50 metres of the site immediately adjoins Metcalfe Lane. There are hedges and trees running around the perimeter of much of the site. Overhead power lines run over part of the area. Eastern House and Langton House are located off Metcalfe Lane and are in close proximity to the proposed development.

LAND USE ALLOCATIONS

1.6 The land is within the Green Belt. A small strip of land (approximately 12 x 50m) at the south of the site is located within Osboldwick Conservation area. Land to the west of Metcalfe Lane has outline consent for residential development. The residential scheme indicates that a park/landscaped strip approximately 50m wide is proposed to the west of Metcalfe Lane.

PLANNING HISTORY

1.7 In August 2010 a similar application (10/00529/FULM) was refused. The main differences between the refused scheme and the current application were:

- *90 polytunnels were proposed rather than 58.
- *Sheds were not proposed adjacent to the polytunnels.
- *The proposal did not include balancing ponds.
- *It was proposed to widen 60m of Metcalfe Lane to 4.5m.

The application was refused for the following (summarised) reasons:

1. Concerns that the improvements to Metcalfe Lane would not avoid conflict with the safety and enjoyment of pedestrians and cyclists.

2. Concerns that drainage works and proposals to widen Metcalfe Lane would adversely affect the biodiversity of Metcalfe Lane and its rural character.
3. Inadequate evidence was submitted to show that the proposal would not cause surface water flooding.
4. Concerns that the proposal would detract from the openness of the Greenbelt and that any harm caused would not be outweighed by proven agricultural or recreational benefits.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

Conservation Area GMS Constraints: Osbaldwick CONF

City Boundary GMS Constraints: York City Boundary 0001

DC Area Teams GMS Constraints: East Area (1) 0003

2.2 Policies:

CYGP1
Design

CYGB1
Development within the Green Belt

CYGB13
Sports facilities outside settlements

CYGP14
Agricultural land

CYGP15
Protection from flooding

CYNE1
Trees, woodlands, hedgerows

CYNE7
Habitat protection and creation

CYT2
Cycle pedestrian network

CYHE2

Development in historic locations

CYHE3

Conservation Areas

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

3.1 It should be noted that on 1 December 2011 the applicant amended the application to remove the refreshments building from the site and slightly modify the layout of the remaining buildings. The consultation comments below pre-date these changes. It is not considered however, that the amendments are of a scale or nature that they have a significant bearing on the merit of comments received such that reconsultation is warranted.

INTERNAL

3.2 Highway Network Management - Metcalfe Lane is a private road but carries a public footpath. The lane is apparently in the ownership of Langton House but the applicant "has the full right of way for any users of the land."

3.3 Despite the reduction in the number of polytunnels the applicants still expect to generate 55 vehicle movements a day at weekends. Metcalfe Lane is relatively narrow and is a popular route used by walkers and cyclists. The proposal may generate some trips by minibus. The adjoining Derwenthorpe development is likely to increase the use of the lane by cyclists and pedestrians. With only a single width currently available it remains the view of officers that the proposed development would introduce conflict between vehicular and pedestrian movements along Metcalfe Lane and as such have a detrimental effect on public safety. For this reason it is recommended that the application be refused.

Conservation Officer - No comments.

3.4 Nature Conservation Officer - The grassland here is species poor and largely improved, although there is prominent ridge and furrow present which is of interest historically and much has already been lost within this area as well as nationally. To facilitate this scheme the fields will need to be levelled. The mature hedgerows present on site are also of interest both ecologically as well as historically, there is one section of hedgerow along the western boundary which is more species rich and contains some species which are of interest within this locality. For the most part these hedgerows are being retained and will not be affected by the scheme, although some small sections may need to be removed in order to make way for the new vehicular accesses. All polytunnels should be moved 3m from the hedgerow for maintenance and ecological reasons.

3.5 The proposed mulch/compost area at the north-east of the site is poorly positioned as it could contaminate a nearby ditch and wetland area. As Metcalfe Lane is very narrow there are concerns as to whether increased usage of the route will damage protected hedgerows.

3.6 Landscape Architect - The site lies within character type 10 of the 'York Landscape Appraisal'. Pastoral farming, hedgerows and traditional field patterns are identified within this character type. It is considered that the development threatens this. The proposal will be visually intrusive and could lead to gradual degradation of the site. During the winter the site will be exposed to view through the lattice work of bare hedges. The site is close to existing housing and areas where new housing is proposed. The damage to the landscape conflicts with policy GP1 of the Local Plan. Concerns in respect to the visual landscape could be outweighed if there was public support for a community initiative. Need to be convinced of the business case (could the scheme be phased?). The polytunnels need to be further from perimeter hedges.

3.7 Lifelong Learning and Culture - With regard to the demand for allotments in Osbaldwick state they have no specific data for the Parish and immediate surrounding communities. However, anecdotal evidence from the nearest allotments surrounding Osbaldwick suggests that there is unmet demand. The nearest sites are Heslington, Low Moor, Glen, Hempland and Dunnington which are all full. Undertook a post code mapping exercise in 2009 for Low Moor tenants found that several of whom were residents of Osbaldwick. Where new allotments have been opened in Knapton and Wheldrake both sites were full before they opened.

3.8 The Section states that Osbaldwick is specifically mentioned in the PPG 17 LDF study as an area of potential demand which needs researching and it is queried whether the applicant has researched the demand. It also queried whether if road traffic is an issue could it be a condition that the plots can only be let to people living within a close catchment.

3.9 The section would prefer that the site was developed for "traditional" allotments rather than polytunnels as more land could be brought into cultivation and more demand met.

3.10 York Consultancy – States the development is in Flood Zone 1 and should not suffer from river flooding. Insufficient information has been provided by the developer to determine the potential impact the proposals may have on the existing drainage systems including the downstream watercourse. Details should include a topographical survey showing ground levels of the site and adjoining land. Further details in respect to the balancing lake are also required. A verbal response was given by York Consultancy that it is not considered that elements relating to drainage are at a level of advancement that it is appropriate to deal with further details by condition.

3.11 Environmental Protection Unit – No objections, stating according to records part of the site was formally used as a railway. If contamination is discovered when the site is developed the developers should make the Council's contaminated land officer aware of this.

EXTERNAL

3.12 Foss Internal Drainage Board – The site is close to Osbaldwick Beck which is at capacity. The site is in an area where drainage problems exist and development should not be allowed until the Authority is satisfied that surface water drainage has been satisfactorily provided for. If the Authority are satisfied that surface water issues have been addressed conditions are suggested.

3.13 York Natural Environment Panel – The proposal will lead to the loss of meadow habitat and open countryside which could be a pre-cursor for other development. There could be a degree of visual intrusion. The development should be set back further from hedgerows. Road traffic will harm the rural character and road widening will lead to the loss of hedgerow. The elevated computer drawings downplay the height of the polytunnels.

3.14 Parish Council - Object to the proposal. The Parish Council re-instate their objections to the previous application:

- * The area is an attractive landscape. Metcalfe Lane is attractive in its own right and an important buffer to built development.
- * The area should remain free from development as it is Green Belt.
- * Development will cause conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists.
- * The junction with Osbaldwick village is a known accident black spot.
- * Issues need to be addressed in respect to the applicant's right to maintain or alter Metcalfe Lane.
- * The proposal will conflict with a paddock owners right of access across the field.
- * The ridge and furrow should be protected.
- * The proposal will harm wildlife and biodiversity.
- * The polytunnels and loss of hedgerows associated with the access/road widening will detract from the conservation area.
- * There are flooding concerns in respect to Eastern House and nearby grazing land.
- * The increased use of the site and associated traffic will detract from the living conditions of properties adjacent to the site.
- * Question the demand for the facilities by the 'community' and request that if it is approved it is conditioned that the buildings are removed when no longer needed.

3.15 In addition the following additional concerns are raised by the Parish Council specifically in respect to the current application:

*There is no viable business plan, indication of demand and no end users identified. In this context it is not possible to assess the number and type of vehicles that will use Metcalfe Lane.

*The supporting buildings are not necessary and are inappropriate in the Greenbelt.

*Regard should be given to the January 1994 comments referring to the land made by the Inspector in respect to the York Greenbelt Local Plan (page 73 c61.5).

*Previously the Council's Highway Network Team indicated that any permission should be subject to the widening of Metcalfe Lane to 5m. Alterations to the lane would not be acceptable because of the impact on wildlife and the conservation area. Metcalfe Lane is a private road and alterations will not be permitted by the landowner.

NEIGHBOURS

3.16 Letters of objections have been received from the occupiers of 4 properties. Objections have also been received from the chair of Meadlands Area Residents Association and The Open Place Society (based in Henley on Thames). The following concerns are raised:

*The quiet rural character of Metcalfe Lane should be protected as a valuable part of the conservation area.

*Because of its narrowness and lack of a significant verge, cars using Metcalfe Lane do present genuine problems to horse riders, pedestrians, dog walkers and cyclists.

*The proposal goes against York's aim to be a cycling friendly city.

*The route is an important link between Meadlands and Osbaldwick and part of the Sustrans route to the City.

*There is insufficient information to properly assess the number of visitors that will come to the site and what mode of transport they will use.

*The changes to the scheme do not overcome the previous reasons for concern.

*The proposed traffic measures will not overcome concerns in respect to conflict between cars and other users of Metcalfe Lane.

*The proposal does not include an acceptable flood risk assessment which is required for sites over 1 hectare in size. The use of infiltration and rainwater re-use systems must be considered to limit discharge from the site.

*No calculations are included to show that the balancing lake will function adequately in respect to addressing drainage issues.

*The concentration of polytunnels in one area would conflict with Greenbelt policy.

*The concerns of the Council's Landscape Architect are noted.

*Screening of development does not justify the proposal in respect to Greenbelt policy and the screening could be removed by a third party.

*The Derwenthorpe development will increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists using the Lane.

*The owner of Langton House has been requested not to allow road widening, street lighting and so forth on Metcalfe lane.

- *Users of the polytunnels would be likely to travel by car as they would typically be lugging gardening equipment, peat and so forth.
- *The junction of Osbaldwick Village with Metcalfe Lane is an accident black spot.
- *New road signs on Metcalfe Lane will detract from its rural character.
- *Allotment holders may innocently feed horse's potentially dangerous food.
- *Security concerns.
- *The proposal is further encroachment into the countryside.

4.0 APPRAISAL

4.1 Key Issues:-

- Acceptability within Greenbelt and Visual Impact
- Access and Highway Safety
- Drainage
- Wildlife
- Impact on neighbours

KEY NATIONAL GUIDANCE

4.2 Planning Policy Statement 1 sets out the Government's overarching planning policies. It sets out the importance of good design in making places better for people and emphasises that development that is inappropriate in context or fails to take the opportunities available for improving an area should not be accepted.

4.3 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 relates to Green Belts it outlines the presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt. One of the key functions of the Green Belt is to retain attractive landscapes near where people live. They also fulfill a role of providing opportunities for outdoor recreation near urban areas.

4.4 Planning Policy Statement 7 relates to sustainable development in rural areas. In respect to land on the urban fringe it states (paragraph 26) that: "While the policies in PPG2 continue to apply in green belts, local planning authorities should ensure that planning policies in Local Development Document's address the particular land use issues and opportunities to be found in the countryside around all urban areas, recognising its importance to those who live or work there, and also in providing the nearest and most accessible countryside to urban residents. Planning authorities should aim to secure environmental improvements and maximise a range of beneficial uses of this land, whilst reducing potential conflicts between neighbouring land uses. This should include improvement of public access (e.g. through support for country parks and community forests) and facilitating the provision of appropriate sport and recreation facilities."

4.5 Planning Policy Statement 25 relates to Development and Flood Risk. It seeks to ensure that local planning Authority fully consider current and future flood risk associated with new development.

KEY LOCAL PLAN POLICES

4.6 Local Plan Policy GP1 (Design), GB1 (Development in the Green Belt), GB13 (Sports Facilities Outside Settlement Limits), GP14 (Agricultural Land), GP15a (Development and Flood Risk), NE1 (Tress, Woodlands and Hedgerows), NE7 (habitat Protection and Creation), T2a (Existing Pedestrian/Cycle Networks), HE2 (Development in Historic Locations) and HE3 (Conservation Areas).

ACCEPTABILITY WITHIN THE GREENBELT AND VISUAL IMPACT

4.7 One of the key objectives of the Greenbelt is to safeguard the countryside from encroachment and prevent neighbouring settlements merging into one another. Greenbelt policy does, however, allow agricultural development and essential facilities for outdoor sport or recreation providing the proposal does not detract from the open character of the Green Belt, does not conflict with the purpose of keeping the land as Green Belt and does not harm the setting of the city of York.

4.8 In respect to the development's 'footprint' the proposal is still undoubtedly large in scale. The polytunnels are however relatively low. At their highest point the polytunnels would be 2.6m high. It is the case however, that sheds are located next to each of the polytunnels. These are of timber construction. Despite their modest footprint of 4.5sq m it is considered that their height (3.4m) and frequency is such that are likely to appear out of place in the open countryside.

4.9 The area of the site that is most visible from Metcalfe Lane and areas to the south, have been enhanced from the previous application through the removal of polytunnels, additional landscaping and the provision of a balancing lake. The scheme has been slightly revised since it was submitted by removing the refreshments/cafe building. A single storey shop/reception is proposed. This would be relatively large being 7.2m high and 23.3m long. The toilet block is 6.1m high and 8.8m in length. It is questionable, given the Greenbelt location and low height of the polytunnels whether there is justification for the ancillary buildings to be so tall. It is noted that the large roof slope is to be used for solar panels. The applicant's state in their design and access statement that support and service buildings will be portable structures that can be easily removed should the site use change in the future.

4.10 It is considered that the proposed polytunnels fall into the agricultural and/or outdoor recreation category. However, it is important the tunnels and supporting buildings are not unduly prominent, do not detract from openness and do not harm attractive views or landscapes. It is also considered important that priority is given

to structures and development that can be easily removed if and when no longer required.

4.11 Land to the east of Metcalfe Lane is arguably an appropriate location for the polytunnels. This is flat land which has a reasonable screen of hedgerows around most of the site. There would not appear to be a large number of significant public views into or across the area. Part of the development will be visible from Metcalfe Lane, however, much will be set off the lane and partly screened by the garden of Langton House and additional trees and hedgerows. It is recognised that the screening value of vegetation will be significantly less in the winter and it may be beneficial introducing some new planting, however, because of the terrain and relatively low profile of the structures they will not be unduly prominent. Polytunnels are clearly associated with agriculture and horticulture and such structures would not necessarily appear out of place in open countryside providing they are not unduly prominent. The supporting buildings and sheds are more prominent and their scale, number and size do potentially raise issues in respect to their acceptability. The shop and numerous sheds would not seem to be essential facilities for commercial horticultural or agriculture. There is also a substantial spine road proposed through the site and a large surfaced area for car parking/vehicle turning. This is considered essential to support use of the polytunnels through the year. It is important however, that there is scope to remove the track if necessary. No hard surfacing is shown for car parking adjacent to the polytunnels, however, it is likely that this will also be a requirement if the application were approved.

4.12 In the process of consulting on this revised scheme new objections have been raised in respect to the short distance between the polytunnels and adjacent hedgerows. It is the case that in some locations the polytunnels are less than 2 metres from the hedgerows. If the scheme were to be approved it would be necessary to modify the size and/or position of the tunnels slightly to ensure that the adjacent hedgerows are not damaged and can be adequately maintained.

4.13 The small section of the application site that is within the Osbaldwick Conservation area is free from development. Although the proposals will have some impact on the setting of the conservation area most parts will be reasonably well screened. The section of Metcalfe Lane south of the application site is located within the Osbaldwick Conservation Area. It is likely that the proposals will have a relatively limited impact on the appearance of the lane, however, a substantial increase in car, lorry or commercial traffic would harm the character of a route that currently has the feel of a quiet rural lane.

ACCESS AND HIGHWAY SAFETY

4.14 Metcalfe Lane is a private road. However, it is a well-used route for pedestrians and cyclists travelling between Osbaldwick and Heworth Without. There is a significant degree of uncertainty in respect to the envisaged level of traffic

generation associated with the application. It is unclear how intensively the polytunnels will be used and whether users will use them for a commercial or recreational purpose

4.15 The previous scheme proposed to widen Metcalfe Lane to address concerns in respect to conflicts between vehicles and other users of the Lane. This however, raised concerns in respect to the impact changes would have in respect to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the wellbeing of wildlife.

4.16 The applicant now intends to retain the section of Metcalfe Lane and the application site as existing with the exception of signage stating that speed limits are restricted to 20mph and setting out vehicle priority. To allow vehicles to pass a short section to Metcalfe Lane adjacent to the site is to be widened to 5.4m.

4.17 The Council's Highway Officer has objected to the proposal because development would significantly increase vehicle movements and this would conflict with the safety of pedestrians and cyclists using the route. A main problem assessing the traffic impact of the proposal is that the applicants have not clarified what the mix of users of the polytunnels would likely to be. It is possible that all of the polytunnels could be let to a single commercial grower, or all could be occupied on a 'hobby' basis by individuals. Clearly each would have a very different impact in respect to the nature and frequency of vehicle movements. The applicant's have also not shown any clear local demand for the facility from any possible future users, this again makes it uncertain what traffic would be generated. Clearly if the polytunnels were occupied by individuals it could be the case that there would be a large number of car borne users arriving at weekends and on weekday evenings - this could also be a peak time for visitors to the shop. A commercial use would be expected to generate less vehicle movements, but could cause greater concerns in respect to the size of vehicles using Metcalfe Lane.

4.18 This application as submitted included a shop and cafe available for visitors to use. No restrictions were offered in respect to what could be sold. Following the objections raised by neighbours and consultees the cafe has been removed. This is likely to reduce visitor numbers, however, it is not considered to be such to overcome concerns in respect to the impact on Metcalfe Lane. In addition, in the absence of any business plan it is hard to provide certainty in respect to the shop being a very low key part of the overall initiative.

DRAINAGE

4.19 Engineers of York Consultancy consider that the drainage proposals are not sufficiently detailed to properly assess the implications of the scheme. This is of significant concern given the very considerable footprint of the structures proposed on site. The land is not at risk of river flooding, however, it does appear that surface water flooding occurs on land in the area and that the nearby Osbaldwick

Beck is often at capacity. It is also understood that Eastern House at the south of the site has previously suffered from internal flooding caused by surface water run-off.

4.20 Drainage measures needed to avoid problems from surface run off could potentially have implications on the design and layout of the site, including the balancing lake. It would be unacceptable to approve the application without surface water issues being more fully investigated.

WILDLIFE

4.21 The applicant has submitted a biodiversity assessment of the site. This concludes that the site is of limited value for wildlife and that there is little indication that the site contains grassland of significant conservation value. The assessment states that it is highly unlikely that development would breach laws that protect, badgers, water voles and bats. There are some ditches and areas of water around the site that intermittently hold water, however, as they are dry for part of the year they are not considered suitable breeding grounds for great crested newts.

4.22 The assessment states that a buffer strip should be retained at the base of existing hedgerows and that opportunities should be taken to re-enforce areas of hedgerow. The small flood area at the north west of the site should be retained if possible. The area of hedgerow fronting Metcalfe Lane is of limited value for wildlife. If it were removed it would be preferable to replant a new hedge.

4.23 The Council's nature conservation officer has visited the site on several occasions. He does not oppose the current scheme on conservation grounds. He considers that the most significant element of the site is the ridge and furrow landform. It is the case however, that to be acceptable additional improvements to drainage may have to occur - the implications of these on wildlife may be significant and will need careful consideration.

4.24 At present a number of the proposed polytunnels would be sited an unacceptable distance from adjacent hedgerows. Possible harm to hedgerows would be a reason to refuse the application. It is, however, a matter that could easily be overcome were Members minded to approve the application. Minor issues relating to the siting of mulch and compost would also need addressing.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURS

4.25 The neighbouring properties close to the development are Eastern House to the south, Langton House to the west and properties on the north side of Osbaldwick village.

4.26 The nearest properties are Langton House and Eastern House. Both properties have very large gardens.

4.27 It is considered that the proposal will increase traffic on Metcalfe Lane and will create some additional noise through the use of the site. It is the case, however, that the new internal road and entrances to buildings are away from the garden boundaries and that noise associated with the polytunnels (including plastic blowing in the wind and rain hitting the surface) would not be such to cause significant disturbance within the two houses. There may be a little additional noise that could be heard when occupiers use their gardens, however, it is not considered that this would be excessive, even taking account of the semi-rural location.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 It is considered that the proposal as submitted does not satisfactorily address issues of drainage or clearly indicate that the site can be accessed without detracting from the safety and convenience of users of Metcalfe Lane - particularly cyclists and pedestrians.

5.2 The proposals are quite a novel initiative and the applicant has undertaken considerable work to prepare the proposal. The potential job creation benefits are recognised. It is not clear, however, what the final mix of users of the proposed polytunnels would be. In addition, it is unclear how many daily users would visit the site to cultivate plants or attend the proposed shop.

5.3 Green Belt policy seeks to protect the countryside from development, though does allow some agricultural buildings and recreational uses. The scale of the development is still very large and it could possibly be argued that as a whole the buildings are still almost commercial and alien in form and number. If ran largely as a 'community initiative' the location on the fringe of the urban area is beneficial in that it would allow residents in east York to easily access the countryside for growing plants and food.

5.4 Issues relating to drainage have not been fully addressed. Although it should be possible to overcome concerns that surface water run-off would cause flooding, it is necessary for adequate exploratory work to be done prior to approving the application. This is because drainage measures could have implications in respect to wildlife habitat and the layout and levels of the site.

5.5 The main difficulty in assessing the scheme has been the lack of certainty in respect to the final mix and number of users and visitors to the site. The applicant wishes to 'keep his options open' and has submitted no specific information in respect to who will grow plants there. Although the application is put forward partly as a community scheme, there would seem to be no significant evidence of community support for it. If the site were run on a purely commercial business it is

unlikely that buildings other than a certain number of polytunnels and a small portable staffroom could be justified and the impact of the commercial traffic on Metcalfe Lane would need very careful consideration. If it were a community/recreational facility there would be more justification for the 'ancillary' elements of the development, however the traffic impact would still need careful consideration and a viable and sustainable business plan showing community support for the initiative would be very beneficial.

5.6 Taking into account the above matters and all other material considerations, it is recommended that the application be refused.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

1 The proposed development would be accessed off a private road. It is considered that increased vehicle movements associated with the proposal would be likely to generate conflict with the safety and enjoyment of cyclists and pedestrians who use the route. As such the proposal conflicts with policy T2a of the City of York Draft Local Plan (fourth set of changes) approved April 2005 and Central Government advice relating to traffic safety in Planning Guidance Note 13 (Transport).

2 The application fails to indicate how improvements to drainage will be implemented without adversely affecting the biodiversity of the area. In addition, a number of the proposed polytunnels are located unduly close to hedgerows to allow for their future maintenance and wellbeing. As such the proposal conflicts with policy GP1, NE1 and NE7 of the City of York Draft Local Plan (fourth set of changes) approved April 2005 and Central Government advice contained in Planning Policy Statement 9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation).

3 The application provides insufficient information to determine the potential impact the proposals will have on the existing drainage system. These concerns are particularly significant given the history of surface water flooding in the area. As such the proposal conflicts with policy GP15a of the City of York Draft Local Plan (fourth set of changes) approved April 2005, The City of York Flood Risk Assessment (September 2007) and Central Government advice relating to flood risk contained in Planning Policy Statement 25 (Development and Flood Risk).

4 The application fails to show that the proposals are economically sustainable and any recreational benefits to residents from the use of the site will outweigh the impact the development will have on the loss of openness of the Greenbelt and the character of Osbaldwick Conservation Area. As such the proposal conflicts with policy GB1, GB13, HE2 and HE3 of the City of York Draft Local Plan and Central Government advice relating to development in Green Belts contained in Planning

Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts) and Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) and Planning Policy Statement 15 (Planning for the Historic Environment).

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