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Planning Statement

Proposed Community and Café Development

Land at Mortimer Road, Midhopestones S36 4GW

March 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Plande has been appointed to submit a supporting statement for a community and café development at land at Mortimer Road, Midhopestones
- 1.2 This statement, which should be read in conjunction with the supporting information submitted with the application, aims to give an appraisal of the planning issues and merits in context with planning and other policies, guidance, and material considerations.
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2. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 The existing site is a slightly sloping section of open land, surrounded by traditional stone walling with a small storage structure. The site is located close to a small cluster of existing buildings of a variety of scales and designs and adjacent to the disused railway line and Barnsley Boundary Footpath.
- 2.2 The site currently has no direct access for pedestrians or vehicles and is bounded by a range of mature landscaping (including hedges and trees) providing a large amount of screening.
- 2.3 The immediate surrounding area comprises open countryside and a range of agricultural and rural buildings, including residential houses. The main A616 runs in close proximity to the site.
- 2.4 The Environment Agency maps illustrate that the application site is not within a known flood risk area. The building is located not located within any particular local plan designations but is located within Green Belt.

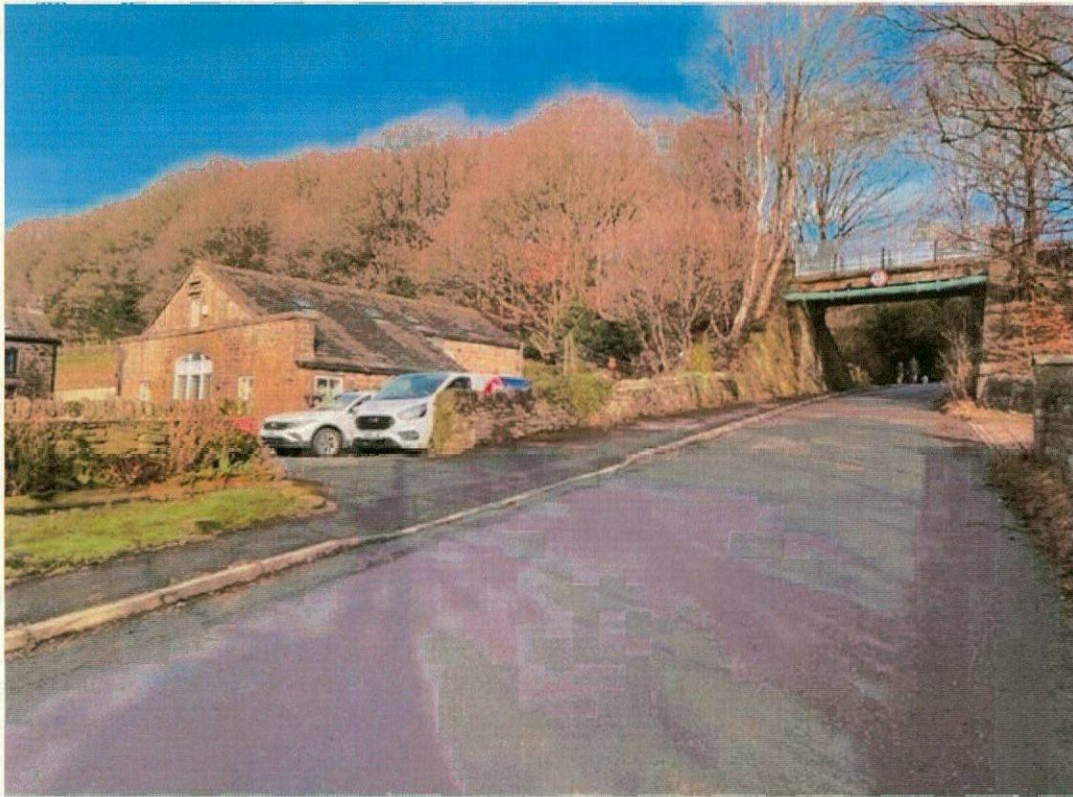


Figure 1. View from the road. The proposed site is on the left on the other side of the bridge on the left. The bridal way is on the bridge

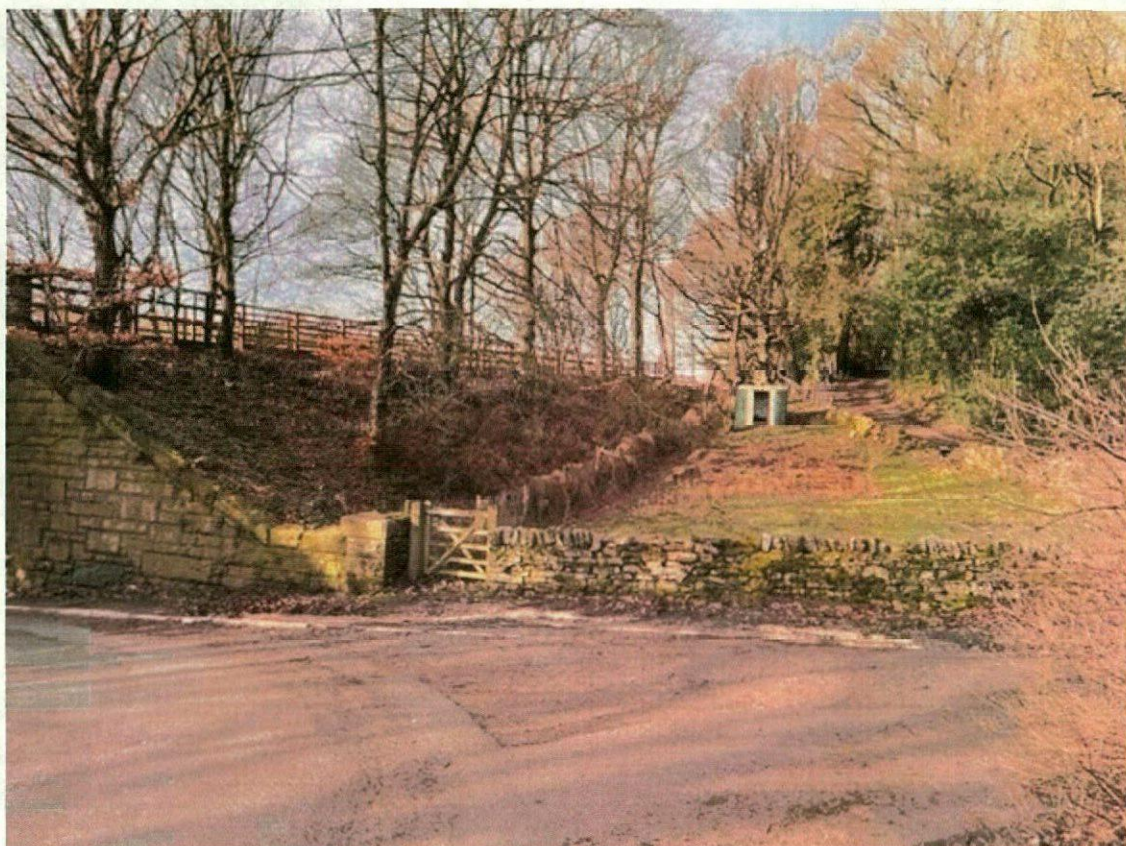


Figure 2. Showing site with the bridge to the left and Bridleway where the fence is. To the right is a farm track leading to a farm and to the bridal way.

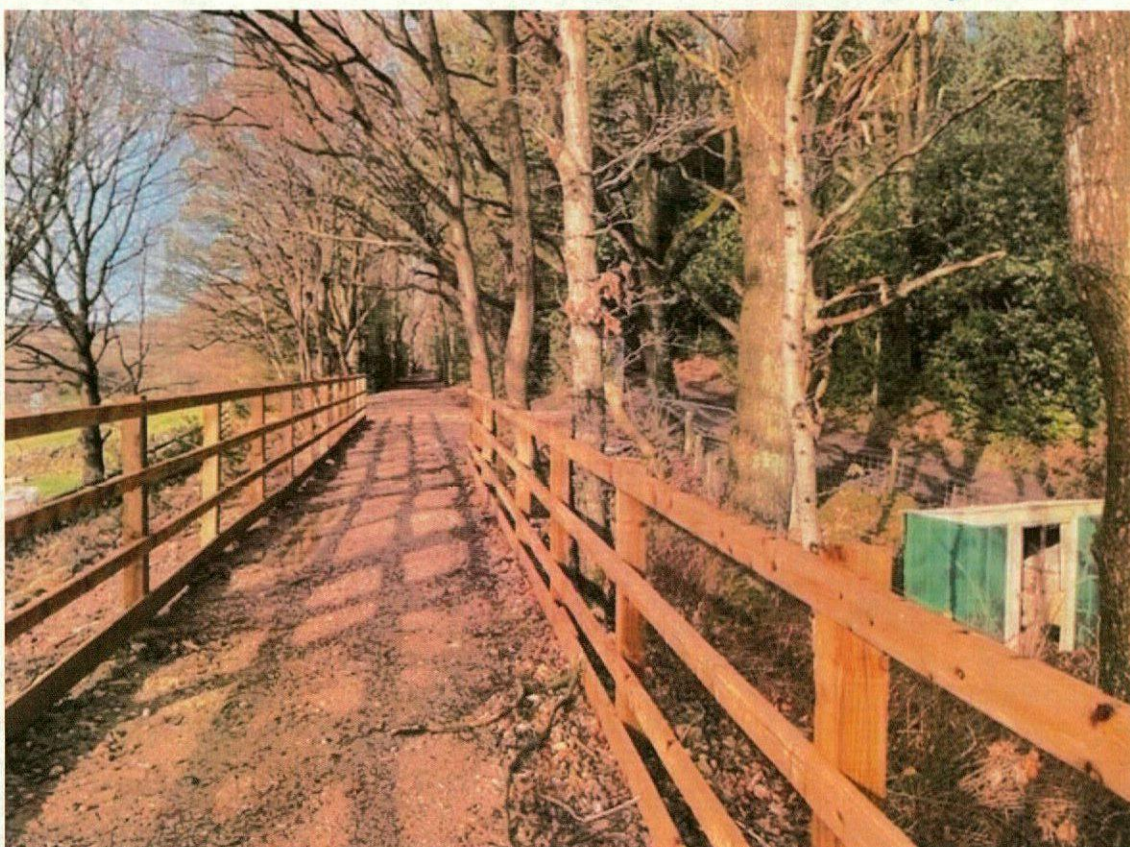


Figure 3. Bridal way towards Langsett with site on the right.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 A planning history search, on the Council website, illustrates no relevant applications for the site as a whole:

4. USE AND AMOUNT

- 4.1 This planning application is for a single storey pitched roof building with associated access, servicing, and landscaping.
- 4.2 The development is to include a community facility and café which would also provide toilets and riding facilities. It is intended that there will be an inside area with seating, and an outside area with a lightweight canopy and a grassed area with picnic tables. The development would provide a meeting place for the residents of Midhopstones.
- 4.3 It is suggested that the use of the site, particularly providing a community facility, will remain in keeping with and complementary to the vitality and mix within the area and will not have a negative impact on the amenity of any surrounding properties.
- 4.1 It is suggested that the density, scale, and amount of accommodation are appropriate for the site, the wider area and that the neighbourhood services can support the proposals.

- 4.2 The Design & Access Statement accompanying the application provides further detail and sets out the design concepts, rationale, features, configuration, layout, scale, massing and appearance.
- 4.3 To summarise, the proposed construction would be insulated to the highest standards and consideration will be made for a ground air heat source pump to provide heating. The development would be to the most sustainable standards possible. A septic tank would be required for toilet and washing facilities.

5. ARBORICULTURAL & LANDSCAPING

- 5.1 The landscaping on-site will predominantly remain as existing, other than to facilitate the building, hardstanding and soft landscaping areas around the building.
- 5.2 It is suggested that there are no arboricultural constraints or issues affecting development and the perimeter mature boundary treatment is located a substantial distance away from the construction works.

6. BIODIVERSITY

- 6.1 From the pre-planning application, the Biodiversity Officer commented that
 - 6.1.1 *"I have no objection in principle to the proposal: the current vegetation would appear to be relatively low ecological value grassland. Furthermore, the proposal would support the adjacent new public bridleway which, in itself, will sustain an important wildlife corridor."*
 - 6.1.2 *"A simple green roof on the proposed building would be welcome as one way of offering No Net Loss of biodiversity (Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPD)."*
- 6.2 A Preliminary "walkover" Ecological Survey has been carried out and accompanies the planning application.
- 6.3 The report considers the relevant key ecological features including habitats, vegetation, bats, other terrestrial mammals, bats and herptiles in accordance with the Biodiversity and Geodiversity policy B101.

8. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 8.1 In accordance with S.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, this application should be determined in accordance with the relevant Development Plan policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of this determination, the Development Plan of relevance comprises:

Barnsley Local Plan, Adopted January 2019 (Local Plan), the relevant supplementary guidance (SPD)
 Residential amenity and the siting of buildings
 Biodiversity and geodiversity

Sustainable travel
Parking

8.2 It is suggested the relevant policies of the UDP are as follows:

SD1 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development'.
 GD1 'General Development'
 LG2 'The Location of Growth'
 E5 'Promoting Tourism and encouraging Cultural Provision'
 E6 'Rural Economy'
 T3 'New Development and Sustainable Travel'
 T4 'New Development and Transport Safety'
 T5 'Reducing the impact of Road Travel'
 DI 'High Quality Design and Place Making'
 LCI 'Landscape Character'
 HE1 'The Historic Environment'
 HE3 'Developments affecting Historic Buildings'
 BIO1 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity'
 GB1 'Protection of Green Belt'
 CCI 'Climate Change'
 CC2 'Sustainable Design and Construction'
 CC4 'Sustainable Urban Drainage'
 CLI 'Contaminated and Unstable Land'
 Poll1 'Pollution Control and Protection'

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 7.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012 and revised in July 2021. The aim of the NPPF is to ensure there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that positive planning solutions are found to ensure development is brought forward. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions as outlined in Paragraph 2 of the NPPF and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 7.4 Sustainable development is broadly defined in Paragraph 8 of the NPPF as having three overarching objectives:
- a) An economic objective – to 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;
 - b) A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - c) An environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

- 7.5 The NPPF sets out Government planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. For decision taking this means:
- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
 - Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, grant planning permission unless:
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the framework as a whole; or
 - Specific policies in the framework indicate development should be restricted.
- 7.6 Paragraph 20 outlines that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for community facilities, such as health, education and cultural infrastructure.
- 7.7 Paragraph 38 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and should work proactively with applicants to secure development that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
- 7.8 Paragraph 47 states that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.9 Paragraph 55 states that local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions.
- 7.10 Paragraph 81 states that decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 7.11 Paragraph 84 states that local plans should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new building.
- 7.12 Paragraph 85 states that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
- 7.13 Paragraph 92 requires that decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places including

those which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs. Paragraph 93 also encourages social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs.

7.14 Paragraph 130 requires planning policies and decisions will function well, add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, establishing or maintaining a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of sites as well as creating places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

7.15 The NPPF provides the following information in relation to Proposals affecting the Green Belt:

“137. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

138. Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

147. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

148. 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.

149. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*

9. SCHEME ASSESSMENT – PRINCIPLE & GREEN BELT

- 9.1 The following section will consider the compliance of the proposal with the Development Plan policies and material considerations for the erection of a community and café development on the site. It provides an analysis of the main planning matters related to the principle of the proposed development and a more detailed, policy-orientated assessment of matters examined in greater technical depth in other submission documents.

PRINCIPLE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 9.2 At Paragraph 7, the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 further states that, 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.
- 9.3 At Paragraph 11, the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which requires decision makers to approve applications that accord with the Development Plan without delay. Policy SD1 has similar aims and sets out that the proposals in principle, that improve the economic, social and environmental are acceptable.
- 9.4 It is suggested that the proposals accord with Policy GDI in that there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents, that the proposals are compatible with neighbouring land and will not significantly prejudice the current or future use of the neighbouring land. In addition the proposals will not adversely affect the potential development of a wider area of land which could otherwise be available for development and safeguards access to adjacent land.
- 9.5 As stated above and in the supporting information, the proposals include landscaping to provide a high quality setting for the proposed building and incorporate existing landscape features and will ensure that plant species and the way they are planted, hard surfaces, boundary treatments and other features appropriately reflect, protect and improve the character of the local landscape. The proposals have considered, minimised and mitigated any adverse impact on the environment, natural resources, waste and pollution. It is suggested that the proposals provide adequate access and provide appropriate vehicular and pedestrian links throughout the site.
- 9.6 It is suggested that the proposals should be considered in the context of providing appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation and are therefore appropriate development on the basis that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The section below sets out the relevant justification for this.
- 9.7 It is suggested that the proposals would make a positive contribution to the economy, in the short term during the construction stages but also long term in providing an ongoing economic function which would also help to benefit the area as a whole.
- 9.8 With regards to the social aspects, the proposals will help to improve the community facilities in the area and provide a useful service, to encourage locals to lead a healthier lifestyle.

- 9.9 Environmentally, the proposals make an effective and efficient use of land as well as enhancing and protecting the built environment and will not materially harm the overall character and appearance of the area as well as being in keeping with the surrounding uses. The proposals as a whole seek a sustainable method of construction to reduce the impact on the environment, including green roofs and SUD's
- 9.10 As such it is proposed that the proposals achieve "net gains" across each of the three objectives and on balance meet the objectives of sustainable development and as such, the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" applies. This effectively means that planning permission should be granted as there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The following sections set out further justification in relation to the other matters and policies.

NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT

- 9.11 The proposed development is located about 1.5 miles from the towns of Penistone and Stocksbridge. Both of these towns have footpaths and bridal ways leading to and beyond the application site. Barnsley Council are making a substantial investment upgrading the Barnsley Boundary footpath to a bridal way which is an old disused railway line and is elevated above the application site. The next similar development is about 1.5 to 2 miles away.
- 9.12 The site location is at the junction of the Stocksbridge to Langsett bridal way (which it is understood is planned to be much longer for example from Sheffield to Dunford Bridge) and Cubley/ Penistone Footpath. It is also convenient for people walking the Underbank reservoir. With the new bridal way they can now walk along the reservoir from Stocksbridge and come onto the new bridal way to walk back. It is suggested that the only place to get onto the bridal way is where the proposed development is.
- 9.13 It is suggested that the development, with toilet and information facilities, would support the Local Authority's development of the Bridal way. It would be at a 4-way junction (Bridal Way, Footpath to Cubley and Route from Underbank reservoir. It would be the only access onto the bridal way for considerable distance. The footpath to Cubley was apparently a bridal way and over the years has reverted to a footpath.
- 9.14 As part of the scheme development, the applicant consulted a range of local people, including horse riders who generally supported the proposals, particularly welcoming the opportunity to have a corral and mounting block as they would be able to go riding further and for a full day.
- 9.15 The proposed development is intended to be for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and would provide the following:
- 9.15.1 The unique location would provide a place for people from Stocksbridge, Penistone and the surrounding areas to walk, run, ride and cycle to and therefore encourage more exercise promoting good mental health and well-being and a healthy lifestyle.
- 9.15.2 The development would sell a variety of good quality locally produced food, snacks, and beverages to support local business and to suit a range of tastes.

- 9.15.3 The site is within easy walking distance from public transportation (bus stop at Midhopestones on Manchester Road) to attract visitors to the area from further afield.
- 9.15.4 Access for disabled people with toilets and charging facilities for disability scooters.
- 9.15.5 To provide a toilet stop for all people.
- 9.15.6 A horse corral with hitching rail, drinking water, and mounting block would be provided allowing horse riders to ride a little further afield and dismount safely.
- 9.15.7 Limited parking would be available for access (due to nature of location close to Mortimer Road) on the road however it is encouraged that visitors to the site will be via the bridleway and encourage users of the bridleway to access from Stocksbridge or Penistone where parking is plenty.
- 9.16 It is suggested the proposed development would include:
 - 9.16.1 Provide tourist information for the local area in the form of maps, leaflets and advice about the local area thus supporting local business and the local economy in terms of local shops and holiday cottages.
 - 9.16.2 A minimum of 10 jobs will be created for full time and part time employment.
 - 9.16.3 Promote sustainable tourism to the area and encourage people to use the bridleway where facilities currently do not exist.
 - 9.16.4 Give confidence to mobility impaired people to get out and go further afield.
 - 9.16.5 Encourage horse riders to use the bridle way rather than roads promoting safety for both road users and horse riders.
 - 9.16.6 Would give people more opportunity for exercise and enable users to meet new people (encourage walking groups and cycling teams).
 - 9.16.7 It would promote the area and all the works done and money spent upgrading the Public Right of Way.
- 9.11 It is suggested that the proposals reflect the aspirations of Policy E5 in that it will help to promote and encourage the growth of tourism and will provide an appropriate cultural facility. Furthermore the proposals are supported by Policy E6 which encourages a viable rural economy and allows for sustainable development which is related to tourism or recreation and improves the range and quality of local services. It is suggested that the proposals are of a scale proportionate to its location and is directly related to the needs. As elsewhere in this statement and supporting information it is suggested the proposals will not have a harmful impact on the countryside, biodiversity, Green Belt, landscape or local character of the area. It is suggested that the land is no of the best quality or most versatile.
- 9.12 Whilst building on Green Belt is restricted, the café would enhance and encourage recreational activities through use of the public bridleway.
- 9.13 It is suggested that the development would accord with Policy GW3 of the "Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Barnsley" that specifically allows for "small-scale tourism and leisure development along the greenway network, e.g. Cafes, bike hire centres, art or sculpture trails" as part of an overall plan to improve access and development the network.
- 9.14 This is in direct refence to the fact that *"One in four of the Barnsley population report a limiting long term illness, health problem or disability which limits their daily activities or the work they can do. This is the 4th highest proportion in England. Fit for the Future seeks to improve levels of physical activity, promote a healthier lifestyle, better diet and reduce smoking to help address the large numbers of diseases triggered by poor lifestyles such as*

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and coronary heart disease. Rights of Way can help meet the physical activity objectives and others such as a reduction in obesity especially childhood obesity". The report acknowledges that the Council cannot fund all of the works and therefore this development, financed without public money should be encouraged to help meet the aspirations of the Council.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 9.15 It is suggested that the relationship with the existing properties and the scale of the proposals mean that the proposals will not materially affect neighbouring amenity, by virtue of overlooking, overbearing, overshadowing or loss of privacy.

ACCESS & PARKING

- 9.16 It is suggested that the vehicular and pedestrian access will provide appropriate access to the site and area as a whole. It is proposed that the on-street parking provision is appropriate for its location and scale of accommodation and complies with the relevant local standards particularly in relation to the nature of the adjacent sustainable transport way.

- 9.17 As part of the recent pre-planning application the following comments were received from the Public Rights of Way Officer:

- 9.18 *"In principal it would seem like a good idea and anywhere that provides toilets for users is great. Positive idea to include hitching rails and horse places given the bridleway status for riders passing by along the Lt Don Trail. The existing footpath coming down from the north to Mortimer Road is under consideration for upgrading to a bridleway. The ROWIP does want to build the PROW network to benefit and encourage tourism as landowners diversify."*

- 9.19 In relation to the existing Rights of Way, as part of the recent pre-planning application the following comments were received:

- 9.20 *"there is a permissive bridleway running along the disused railway line to the south of this site and a public footpath to the north. These do not appear to be directly affected by the proposals. If planning permission was to be granted, both routes should remain safely open throughout construction."*

- 9.21 By the very nature of the purpose of the proposals, it is suggested that scheme complies with Policies T3, T4 and T5. The proposals are directly sited in relation to the Barnsley Boundary Footpath and as such inherently are located and designed to reduce the need to travel and are accessible by public transport (the nearest bus stop is c. 1 min walk away) and will specifically meet the need of pedestrians and cyclists. It is suggested that the development provides safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

- 9.22 Access internally and externally will be fully compliant with the Building Regulations, including Part M.

HERITAGE

- 9.23 The accompanying Heritage Statement and supporting information addresses the issues of the proposals on the surrounding heritage assets. The statement and proposals illustrate a

sympathetic design and materials, that are typical to the location, are incorporated which help preserve the setting of the heritage assets.

- 9.24 As part of the recent pre-planning application the following comments were received from the Heritage Officer:
- 9.25 *"From the perspective of the heritage setting which mainly relates to that of the listed Lower Hand Bank Farmhouse and the other historic buildings at Midhope Court on Manchester Road I think the potential for harm is low. This is mainly due to the lack of intervisibility between the site and Midhope Court and the presence of the elevated former railway line and bridge to the south. However, even though direct views are not possible I would still suggest the site is within the setting of the historic buildings to the south, being viewed and appreciated when walking or travelling north / south. As a result, ... I would not object in principle"*

DESIGN AND PLACE MAKING

- 9.26 The accompanying Design Statement and supporting information provide detailed information to help justify the proposals comply with the relevant policies and SPD's including Policy DI. They illustrate that the proposals are for a high quality design, reinforcing the distinctive, local character and features of there area. It is suggested that the proposals will contribute to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment.

GREEN BELT

- 9.27 As above, it is suggested that the proposals represent appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and/ or outdoor recreation. For this to be appropriate development the facilities need to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 9.28 Taking each of the five purposes of the Green Belt in turn, it is suggested that the proposals do not materially affect the purposes that it serves and therefore are not fundamentally harmful to the Green Belt.
- 9.29 The proposals are generally for a small development on a small and generally isolated plot which is not attached or in close proximity to any established settlement. The site is heavily constrained and the development of the adjacent site would not lead to the development of other sites. It is therefore suggested the proposals should not be seen in the context of unrestricted sprawl and will not lead to neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- 9.30 While the proposals are on a generally undeveloped site, the site is heavily screened and has been used, for many years and therefore could be seen as not being open countryside and brownfield. As such it is suggested that the proposals do not encroach into the countryside.
- 9.31 It is suggested that the proposals would not have a negative material impact on the setting and special character of the historic town.
- 9.32 By improving the community facilities to meet the demands and needs of the residents, the proposals are making best use of previously developed, brownfield site and as such can be

seen in context of urban regeneration. In any case it is suggested the proposals have no negative material impact on urban regeneration and the refusal of such proposals would not encourage urban regeneration in other places.

- 9.33 It is suggested that the visual perception of the loss of the openness is limited by its setting (the existing buildings, the substantial screening, and dominant railway line) with the spatial loss of openness is limited by virtue by this context.
- 9.34 As such it is suggested when viewed from the front of the site it is suggested , the proposals have no material detrimental impact on the openness of the green belt particularly when compared to the surrounding context, including the railway structures. It is suggested that the proposals, when viewed obliquely, from the road or bridleway, have a limited change to the existing scenario but would not seem visually disproportionate when comparing the area as a whole.
- 9.35 In conclusion it is suggested that, in accordance with the relevant Local Plan Policies and the NPPF, the proposals are for a use which preserved the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of, including land within it.
- 9.36 Notwithstanding the above, if it is considered that the proposals represent inappropriate development, this statement sets out that very special circumstances exist to justify the development, in terms of providing a complementary development to build on the works undertaken by the Council to provide outdoor sports and recreation facilities for their residents and tourists.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The proposals seek permission for a community and café development, with associated access, servicing, and landscaping.
- 10.2 The proposed scheme has been developed to create a high quality and energy-efficient building, reflecting the needs and requirements of the applicant and in direct response to the adjacent Barnsley Boundary Footpath.
- 10.3 The location and design of the proposed building has been influenced by the existing context, including the variety and scales of adjoining buildings.
- 10.4 The overall scheme does not materially impact on the 5 purposes of the Green Belt and would not result in any demonstrable harm to the openness of the Green Belt. In any case Very Special Circumstances are demonstrated.
- 10.5 It is also proposed that the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development applies to this application and as such, it is proposed that any perceived adverse impacts do not outweigh the benefits of the proposals.
- 10.6 It is further suggested that the density, scale, and amount of accommodation are appropriate for the

site, and the historic context, as well as the wider site and area as a whole. It is therefore suggested that the proposals are generally in accordance with planning policy and the relevant supplementary planning guidance.

- 10.7 As such it is suggested that planning permission be granted for the scheme, as if the proposals are inappropriate development, very special circumstances have been demonstrated in accordance with the NPPF.