

URBANA

TOWN PLANNING

Burntwood Court

Brierley, Barnsley

**Planning Statement**

Prepared by: MB  
Checked & approved by: CD  
Client: Saul Homes  
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Submission to: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

# DEVELOPMENT OF SITE IN THE GREEN BELT TO FORM HOLIDAY PODS AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING

*Land at Burntwood Court, Brierley Common, Brierley, Barnsley, S72 9ET*

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Urbana Town Planning Ltd on behalf of the applicant, Saul Homes, in support of a full planning application for the above proposals.
- 1.2 The finalised proposals put forward in this application have been subject to a pre-application enquiry with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (hereafter referred to as BMBC or LPA), which has served to refine the design of the scheme in line with the feedback received from officers.
- 1.3 Subsequently, this statement sets out a justification for the proposals in line with sustainable development principles, with particular focus given to the very special circumstances that allow Green Belt development in this location.

## 2.0 Site and Location Overview

- 2.1 Below is an aerial image of the site that is the subject of the proposed development, of which further detail is provided in section 4. The red line in the image denotes the boundaries of the proposal site, with north also indicated.



- 2.2 The site in question covers an area of approximately 0.86 hectares and forms part of the total landholding of approximately 35 acres associated with the Burntwood Court hotel and leisure facility. The business includes an array of services, including accommodation, conferencing facilities, health and fitness centre, bar and restaurant, and ceremony hall. The ceremony hall was added following

planning approval in 2013, providing a purpose-built venue for weddings (and civil ceremonies) which have taken place at Burntwood Court since 1980.

- 2.3 The land is currently undeveloped, save for a footpath that crosses through the site to the north-west. Adjacent to the proposal site to the west is a recently constructed wedding and ceremonies hall, while to the east of the site is Southmoor Road (B6273). Around the facility and the wider site is considerable natural screening, including along the east boundary which abuts Southmoor Road.
- 2.4 At the neighbourhood level, the site is located on the outskirts of Brierley on the north-east fringe of the Barnsley Metropolitan area. In line with its countryside location, the site forms part of the Green Belt around the existing settlements in Barnsley, with the site's rural setting being a significant attraction to visitors. Although there are presently no public transport routes that service the facility, bus stops are located directly outside of the site. Nonetheless, the nature of the facility is such that most patrons or visitors will access the site via car (including car-pooling).

### **3.0 Relevant Planning History**

- 3.1 Consultation with BMBC Planning Explorer shows that, from the records available, the site in question forms part of a larger site that was approved for numerous developments, for which the details are given below. It should be noted that a number of the planning records, particularly those prior to 2000, are historical, with no access to the associated files or how the applications were determined.
- 3.2 B/77/2300/HR – *Development of former hospital site as sports complex with associated bungalow.*
- 3.3 B/83/1408/HR – *Extension to lounge bar of existing complex.*
- 3.4 B/87/0666/HR – *Outline for motel, exhibition room, extension to function rooms, golf driving range and tennis courts.*
- 3.5 B/90/0691/HR – *Erection of motel.*
- 3.6 B/92/1604/HR – *Erection of stabling/stone building and construction of all-weather training track.*
- 3.7 B/94/0506/HR – *Erection of extension to existing motel.*
- 3.8 B/94/1228/HR – *Alterations to premises and erection of new gym extension.*
- 3.9 B/98/0176/HR – *Erection of extension to existing function room.*

- 3.10 B/99/0336/HR – *Planning permissions granted by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2000 for the erection of a 20-bedroom 2-storey motel extension and new banqueting and conferencing facilities.*
- 3.11 B/00/1246/HR – *Erection of banquet/conference centre with motel annexe and restaurant (Reserved Matters).*
- 3.12 2013/0553 – *Erection of ceremony building with provision of associated access, parking and site landscaping and new outdoor children’s play area.*
- 3.13 The approval of application 2013/0553, and the general development of the complex over time, indicates the amenability of the LPA to Green Belt development, particularly where it serves to enhance the local economy (which has a bearing on the proposals in this new application). In line with this, section 7.1 of this statement provides an in-depth discussion pertaining to the justifications to allow the development of the site as proposed.

#### **4.0 Proposals**

4.1 The site in question is subject to the proposals outlined below:

- Erection of nine holiday pods associated with existing hotel facilities, comprising three types:
  - A: two-storey, two-bed pod (two units);
  - B: single-storey, two-bed pod (two units);
  - C: single-storey, one-bed pod (five units);
- Associated landscaping works:
  - Pond with footbridge located in centre of pod layout;
  - Tree planting and soft landscaping scheme to provide screening around proposal site and between pods.

4.2 Further information pertaining to the proposals are included in a Design & Access Statement, produced by Bond Bryan Architects, which accompanies the plans submitted with this application.

#### **5.0 Planning Policy**

5.1 In determining the application, the most relevant planning policy documents include the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised February 2019);
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Local Plan (adopted January 2019).

5.2 Other supporting documents that have been reviewed to ascertain their relevance to the scope of the proposed development include:

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity (adopted May 2019);
- Trees and Hedgerows (adopted May 2019).

## 6.0 Pre-Application Feedback

- 6.1 Prior to the submission of this full application, a pre-application enquiry was submitted to BMBC that outlined the intended development. The LPAs assessment of the proposals was generally positive, in that the Case Officer highlighted the attractive and thoughtful design and site layout that would provide a high-quality environment for visitors.
- 6.2 Given the site's Green Belt status, the Case Officer made clear that it would be necessary as part of any full application to provide a level of justification for development that is commensurate with the scale and nature of the development. On assessing the exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF, it is clear that 'very special circumstances' would need to be demonstrated. Very special circumstances could include economic benefits, if they were deemed to outweigh the presumed harm caused by development in the Green Belt.
- 6.3 Further to Green Belt considerations, further input was received from the LPA's biodiversity and tree officers. With regards to biodiversity, an ecology report was requested which should demonstrate compliance with relevant policies, specifically BIO1 and the supporting information from the relevant Supplementary Planning Documents, Biodiversity and Geodiversity, and Trees and Hedgerows. In order to be compliant with these policies, the development should avoid any net loss of biodiversity features. The site's inclusion in the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area also requires further measures regarding mitigation, enhancement, or compensation to ensure a high standard of biodiversity is maintained on the site. It was noted that the proposed pond and planting had the potential to achieve improved habitats in line with these policy objectives.
- 6.4 The Tree Officer's assessment of the site made clear that a full tree survey would be required to inform the final layout of the proposed development, particularly if existing trees were to be affected. The Officer noted that tree coverage around the site was likely installed so as to provide screening of the facility from surrounding vantage points. As the development, as proposed, would extend beyond this area of tree coverage, the Officer was amenable to the notion of further planting to screen the pods from the same vantage points and integrate the scheme into the wider site, the details of which should be provided within a full application.
- 6.5 In other matters, highways officers did not provide a response at the time of the Case Officer's response, though due to the site having existing access and parking facilities it was not anticipated that a formal transport statement would be required to support the proposals. the South Yorkshire Mining Advisory Service

confirmed that the site does not lie within a Coal Authority Referral area, with no apparent mining-related issues or constraints that would preclude the development of the site as intended. Also, HS2 Limited confirmed that there was no objection to the proposed development on the basis that it was not set to be affected by the intended HS2 route, though consideration should be given to measures to mitigate any potential impact of the eventual construction of the new rail infrastructure.

6.6 The LPA's Definitive Map Officer highlighted that the application would affect a public footpath that crosses through the north-west of the site in a north-easterly direction towards Southmoor Road. As such, it was requested that proposals to resolve any impact on the footpath be submitted to the LPA's public rights of way team as a separate matter to any follow-up application.

6.7 In summary, the feedback received in response to the pre-application enquiry can be viewed positively, in that it has been acknowledged that the scheme is of a high quality and would provide an attractive environment complementary of its natural surroundings. Nonetheless, the protected designations that cover the proposal site demand a level of justification to ensure that development would uphold the purposes of the Green Belt, as well as preserve or enhance habitats in line with biodiversity improvement targets.

## **7.0.0 Accordance with Planning Policy**

7.0.1 In this section, the details of the proposed development are discussed within a number of key contexts, in accordance with relevant national and local planning policy, as well as the feedback received in the pre-application enquiry.

### **7.1.0 Development in the Green Belt**

7.1.1 Notwithstanding the general positivity that was expressed by the Case Officer in the pre-application enquiry feedback, it is important to note that the acceptability of the scheme is subject to providing sufficient justification for the proposals to demonstrate that they would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As per paragraph 133 of the NPPF, the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Consequently, applications to develop Green Belt land are carefully scrutinised to ensure they are in accordance with these overarching objectives.

7.1.2 As described in paragraph 134 of the NPPF, Green Belt designation is intended to:

- check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

- preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

7.1.3 As such, development that is contrary to these objectives is considered to be inappropriate and therefore harmful to the Green Belt, as per paragraph 143 of the NPPF. Despite this emphasis on preservation of the Green Belt, paragraph 144 goes on to say that ‘very special circumstances’ would allow development in the Green Belt that would otherwise be considered inappropriate, where it can be shown that the benefits of a scheme outweigh perceived harm.

7.1.4 Indeed, it should be noted, here, that the Green Belt is not an outright barrier to development, nor should any interpretation of matters such as impact on Green Belt openness be too literal or applied too stringently. That is, it is often the case that development in the Green Belt has an inevitable quantitative impact on openness. However, employing an appropriate design at a suitable scale can achieve a scheme that preserves and even enhances a site in terms of its visual character, while also preserving the purposes of the Green Belt.

7.1.5 As is the case with the proposal site, Green Belt development can entail the extension of established business premises that would benefit from an increase in or enhancement of its facilities. Due to the site location and the current layout, it is not felt that it can reasonably be argued that the proposed development would constitute infill development in the Green Belt, which would be acceptable in line with clause G of paragraph 145 of the NPPF. That is, the site is not flanked by existing built development, but is situated between the existing facilities at Burntwood Court and Southmoor Road. Therefore, it is necessary to demonstrate very special circumstances that outweigh any perceived harm to the Green Belt. In line with this requirement, there are numerous considerable benefits to be attributed with the proposals that would outweigh what is asserted to be relatively limited and insubstantial impact on the Green Belt. Namely these benefits are:

- Securing the viability of an important local business;
- The valuable contribution the development can make to the success and vitality of the local economy;
- The considerable improvements to the site’s biodiversity that will be achieved from the proposed development.

7.1.6 First, there would be a clear benefit from the proposals insofar as helping to secure the viability of the Burntwood Court facility. The catastrophic economic impact of Covid-19 has been well documented, with the hospitality sector especially affected by enforced closures and significant restrictions on the manner in which it can operate within fluid government guidelines. As such, virtually all of Burntwood Court’s sources of revenue, through its hotel, health and fitness centre, conferencing facilities, wedding venue and other events have inevitably been severely reduced. Despite this unprecedented financial shock, Burntwood Court’s unique setup, namely the combination of its multi-faceted hospitality offer

– usually found in inner cities – and its rural surroundings, presents an opportunity to expand its accommodation provision and help to facilitate a strong recovery over the coming years. Particularly, the proposed development would perfectly complement the ceremony hall which is typically in high demand for weddings. It is expected that the pods would provide a beautiful holiday destination for newlyweds and their friends and family. Similarly, the proposed natural features and setting of the pods would be suitable for all holiday-goers looking for a rural getaway.

- 7.1.7 Second, beyond securing the viability of the business itself, associated with this is supporting the contribution that Burntwood Court makes to the local economy. Having also been adversely impacted by Covid-19, BMBC have been preparing a Recovery and Renewal Strategy that is intended to reverse the damage caused throughout the Borough. Even notwithstanding the impact Covid-19, there is an explicit directive in national policy, echoed by Barnsley’s Local Plan, for the planning system to help facilitate sustainable economic growth where possible (NPPF paragraph 80). Furthermore, clauses A and C of NPPF paragraph 83, concerning supporting the rural economy, are also applicable:

*Planning policies and decisions should enable:*

*a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; ...*

*c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside;*

- 7.1.8 The Local Plan reaffirms the national guidance with a number of goals to support the local economy, including protecting existing employment sites and ensuring a sufficient provision of land for future economic growth, as well as promoting tourism and maintaining sustainable rural economies. These goals are based on an acknowledgement that Barnsley currently underperforms economically in comparison with other parts of South Yorkshire, with its existing economic structure vulnerable to economic shocks (such as Covid-19). These goals are reflected in policy E5, which seeks to encourage the growth of the tourism business sector, including hospitality, and encouraging tourist-related development in rural areas to support the local economy. It should be noted that the supporting text to policy E5, at paragraph 8.26, makes clear that ‘tourism’ refers to all activity of visitors, including overnight and same-day visitors, as well as covering a diverse range of activities. Furthermore, paragraph 8.28 goes on to say that BMBC would look to support and explore *all* opportunities to improve existing destinations.

- 7.1.9 It is clear that the proposed development would be in line with these policies. The nature of the pods and associated landscaping would respect the character of the countryside, which has been a fundamental principle in each stage of development at Burntwood Court. Furthermore, the expanded service provision

would represent sustainable growth which would benefit the local economy. As part of this overall economic benefit, the extra revenue that would be generated would help to support local employment, with the majority of the 134 individuals (FTE 80 jobs) on the payroll at Burntwood Court drawn from the local area. Additionally, in terms of job creation, the development of the site as proposed would also provide work for the local construction sector, all of which should weigh in favour of the development.

- 7.1.10 Insofar as complementing the wedding service offer at Burntwood Court, previous consultations undertaken by the operators showed that the wedding services brought people from all over South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and beyond. As part of this consultation, participants were asked to identify what potential additional features would increase their preference for Burntwood Court over other wedding venues. From the responses received, it is evident that the venue would benefit from more landscaped areas (64% of respondents) and additional features in the grounds for photo opportunities (60% of respondents), while increased accommodation would be another positive addition (40% of respondents). Partly as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is anticipated that there will be a greater preference for UK-based honeymoons, or ‘minimoons’ with family and friends ahead of longer breaks abroad. Therefore, the proposed development would be addressing the points raised in the consultation, and meeting the demand from the rise in ‘staycation’ holiday-goers, and in doing so would maintain Burntwood Court’s competitive advantage over other destinations, to the benefit of Barnsley’s economy.
- 7.1.11 The aim of policy E6 ties into that of E5, looking to encourage a viable rural economy that results in the growth of existing businesses and is related to tourism or recreation. In line with the objectives of national and local policy, it is clear that the LPA should be looking to support the sustainable growth of an established local business. While policy E6 also makes clear that, as part of supporting the rural character of an area, development is expected to avoid any harmful impact on the countryside, including the Green Belt and any biodiversity value therein, it is asserted that any impact on the Green Belt would be minimal. With regard to the purposes of the Green Belt cited in paragraph 7.1.2, none of these fundamental purposes would be in any way adversely affected by the proposals. In fact, any perceived harm is outweighed by a substantial net increase in biodiversity value that would be achieved through the proposed works.
- 7.1.12 The essence of the proposals is its natural character that complements the site’s countryside setting. In accordance with this, there would be minimal impact on Green Belt openness, with the total footprint of the pods equating to 8.2% of the proposal site area, and a 9% increase in the built footprint across the complex. Furthermore, following the pre-application feedback from the LPA’s biodiversity and trees officers, to counter any perceived impact on the Green Belt, the landscaping scheme proposed for the site achieves a minimum 40.5% net increase in biodiversity value, which far exceeds the standard target increase of 10%. (Further details with regard to this net increase are provided in section 7.2 of this statement and the Preliminary Ecological Assessment submitted in

support of the application). Not only does the increased biodiversity value benefit the site, but it also ties into the wider objective of environmental conservation and enhancement within the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area which was designated by the Government in 2012. Therefore, when balanced against the minimal impact on the Green Belt, it is asserted that the biodiversity gains that would be achieved demonstrably outweigh this impact, thus representing a further very special circumstance to allow development.

7.1.13 In summary of the implications of development on the Green Belt, the site's designation has been fully considered by the applicant. The resulting proposals stem from the clear understanding that Burntwood Court's location and rural landscape setting are an integral part of what draws people to the venue, hence a layout and landscape scheme that harnesses and enhances these natural features. In doing so, the proposals would help to achieve the sustainable growth of the businesses, thus securing its long-term viability and ultimately benefitting the local economy. Together, these positives amount to very special circumstances that allow Green Belt development and are not outweighed by the impact on the Green Belt, that has been shown to be small. As such, the LPA should look favourably on the proposals in this regard.

#### 7.2.0 Environmental Impact

7.2.1 As highlighted in section 7.1, the proposed development represents a considerable improvement in the site's biodiversity value. This positively addresses both national and local objectives with regards to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. In particular, paragraph 175 of the NPPF makes clear that *opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity*. In line with this, one of BMBC's challenges with regard to green infrastructure, as stated in their Local Plan, is to maintain and, where possible, strengthen its networks of natural habitats. In doing so, these networks would enhance the appearance, character, and overall quality of the countryside across Barnsley. Equally, improvements in the Borough's green infrastructure would contribute towards the conservation of biodiversity.

7.2.2 With a view to meeting the above challenge, Local Plan policy GI1 sets out the LPA's objective to enhance biodiversity and landscape character, which, importantly for this application, includes improving opportunities for recreation and tourism. To reiterate the point raised in section 7.1 of this statement, paragraph 8.26 of the Local Plan makes clear that tourism refers to a diverse range of activities and includes both overnight and same-day visitors. In this respect, it is clear that the proposals will have a positive impact insofar as they would increase the potential of the site's social and economic benefits.

7.2.3 Specifically addressing biodiversity, policy BIO1 details a number of ways in which developments should look to respect the biodiversity credentials that a site possesses, as well as protect species and habitats of principal importance. As

with other policies, policy BIO1 seeks measures that prioritise preservation and enhancement of these credentials where possible in order for a development to be considered acceptable. As stated in section 6 of this statement, the site's inclusion in the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area also has implications for any development proposals, in that there are greater expectations of the degree of biodiversity enhancements to be achieved. Pursuant to this aim, a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was undertaken by specialist ecological consultants Whitcher Wildlife Limited. The PEA provides details of the site's current features, its biodiversity credentials, and whether the proposals for the site would achieve an increase in biodiversity.

7.2.4 In summary, the PEA concludes that the features of the site, a combination of various grassland and hedgerow, were considered to provide a low-quality habitat or would be unaffected by the proposed works. Also, no nests, roosts or setts were identified as part of the site investigation. Resultantly, it is the view of Whitcher Wildlife Limited that the proposals would not have any negative impacts on biodiversity matters. The site's existing features were calculated to have a biodiversity value of 2.74 Biodiversity Units. By comparison, the estimated biodiversity value to be achieved by the proposed development was calculated at 3.85 Biodiversity Units, which represents an increase of 1.11 Biodiversity Units. This increase does not include the biodiversity value of the proposed boundary trees, which were unable to be calculated at the time of the report but were confirmed would have an additional value. Even without the additional value from the boundary trees, the increase of 40.5% far exceeds the target of 10%, which represents a highly significant benefit of the proposed development.

7.2.5 As such, it is asserted that considerable positive weight should be attributed to the substantial contribution that would be made by the development, particularly with regard to helping to achieve the LPA's biodiversity objectives in the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area.

### **7.3.0 Sustainable Development and Principle of Development**

7.3.1 Sustainable development underpins the updated NPPF, indicating the greater awareness within society of the shared responsibility to create more sustainable places to live. As such, it states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, by striving to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The achievement of sustainable development has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental. These objectives are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The essence of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and "for decision taking this means: approving development proposals that accord with an *up-to-date* development plan without delay" (paragraph 11, clause C).

7.3.2 In accordance with this focus on sustainable development, local authorities have followed the guidance set out within the NPPF in their formulation of local policy.

In the case of Barnsley, sustainability represents a key consideration, demonstrated by specific Local Plan policy, SD1, which makes clear that a positive approach will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This policy is to be read in conjunction with policy GD1, which sets out the general expectations of development.

- 7.3.3 It is clear from the proposals that the development of the site in question would be consistent with the objectives of the above policies, achieving economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, as an established local business at an existing site, the principle of the development is acceptable, especially when considered against the minimal impact to the Green Belt and the overriding benefits to be gained from the sustainable economic growth of the business and the local economy. Locating the holiday pods adjacent to the existing facilities would be an efficient use of the wider landholding, with a design approach (discussed further in section 7.4) that is grounded in the natural character of the wider area. The development would include high-quality landscaping and avoids any unacceptable impact on the environment or natural resources, with an appropriate natural boundary in keeping with the countryside setting.
- 7.3.4 Energy efficiency is another important element of sustainability in new developments. As such, Local Plan policies CC1 and CC2 detail the ways in which all new buildings are expected to be efficient and use resources sustainably, as well as maximising sustainable design and construction features. It is expected that the proposed development will incorporate, where possible, energy efficiency measures including high performance window glazing and frames, low-energy LED lighting, water-efficient white goods, taps, toilets, baths and other equipment. Should there be scope to incorporate any technologies for off-grid energy production, they will be based on an assessment of the greatest environmental benefit, benefit to future occupants, ongoing running costs and physical feasibility. Should permission be granted for the proposed scheme, detailed design proposals and energy assessments will be undertaken to ensure energy efficiency is optimised.
- 7.3.5 It is acknowledged that, at present, the public transport network does not provide ready access to the site. However, this is clearly outweighed by the nature of the facility and fact that a fair proportion of its trade is from events, conferencing, and accommodation, which tends to entail longer journeys to the site. Further support in this regard is set out in paragraph 84 of the NPPF, which concedes that it will be necessary to allow the development of businesses (in this case the growth of an existing business) in rural areas beyond settlement limits where they are not well served by public transport.
- 7.3.6 Together, the above discussion with regard to sustainable development has established that the nature of the proposed scheme is in keeping with the objectives of national and local policy. The principle of the development is also acceptable, being in line with the established use of the existing business. Despite being outside of the settlement limits of nearby Brierley, the proposed development would contribute towards the progression of the business, as well as continue to

support other local businesses in Barnsley's rural economy and the local economy in general.

#### **7.4.0 Design and Amenity**

- 7.4.1 In terms of the design of the proposed development, it is consciously influenced by its natural countryside setting, with the pods to be set amongst high-quality landscaping. As with the previous development of the ceremony hall, the siting of the pods is intended to utilise the existing connections between the various facilities on site, optimising function as well as amenity.
- 7.4.2 As discussed in section 7.1, the design of the proposed development has sought to minimise any potential impact on the Green Belt, as well as achieve biodiversity enhancements through its significant provision of natural screening and other habitat-friendly features. In much the same way, the green and blue infrastructure proposed would also create an attractive, secluded, and tranquil environment for guests, providing a high level of amenity.
- 7.4.3 Each of the nine pods would have its own areas of private amenity space, including an open deck fronting the pod and facing into the complex, as well as a sheltered deck to the rear. The pods would each have their own garden area, separated by hedgerow, with the complex bounded by trees to provide screening and privacy.
- 7.4.4 The pods themselves would be a contemporary design that incorporate natural materials to complement the countryside setting of the site. Varying in size and configuration (as set out in section 4), each pod would have a pitched roof and generous proportions of glazing, maximising the natural light into each unit. Wood cladding and panelling would also be a prominent material for each pod, tying them into their surroundings.
- 7.4.5 As supported by the pre-application Case Officer's feedback, the proposed development entails an attractive and thoughtful design, both in terms of its appearance and its layout which, together, would provide a high-quality environment for visitors. The natural design aesthetic envisaged for the site also provides unique accommodation that stands apart from the current hospitality offer at Burntwood Court, yet remains firmly in keeping with the rural location.

#### **7.5.0 Highways and Parking Provision**

- 7.5.1 This section addresses any impact that the proposed development may have on the surrounding road and transport network, and how the site incorporates a sufficient provision of car parking. While it is usually desirable that new development is located as close as possible to the public transport network, it should be acknowledged that more rural locations, in particular, lack the necessary provision of services to achieve a modal shift in transport. As discussed previously,

there is a general acceptance in national policy that rural businesses are less likely to be located near public transport routes. As such, this should not automatically count against new development, especially where a successful local business is established in a rural location and whose selling point is, amongst other factors, its natural surroundings.

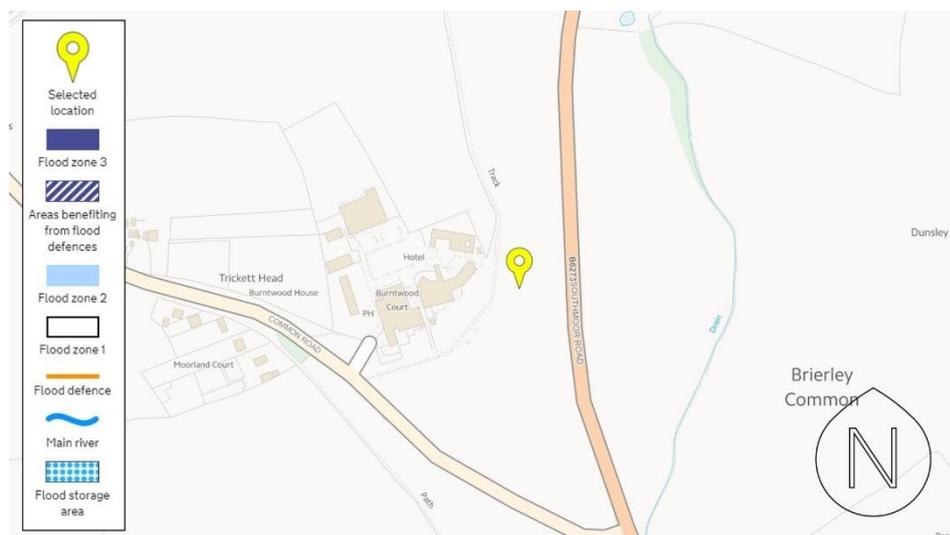
7.5.2 It is notable that the LPA's *Parking* supplementary planning document does not specify a minimum provision of parking for hotels, which constitutes the main use of the site. However, at approximately 200 parking spaces, there is ample existing provision to meet the parking requirements for visitors to the facility. In this regard, it is considered that the existing provision will also comfortably accommodate any requirement associated with the proposed holiday pods.

### 7.6.0 Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Contributions

7.6.1 A Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a tool to help Local Planning Authorities secure financial contributions towards local infrastructure projects.

7.6.2 As part of the work undertaken towards producing the new Local Plan, BMBC made preliminary consultations regarding the introduction of a CIL in 2016. However, an agreed CIL charging schedule is yet to be put in place. As such, any contributions from developers will continue to be sought by means of a Section 106 agreement.

### 7.7.0 Flood Risk



7.7.1 Local Plan policies CC1 and CC3 makes clear that development should be located where it would reduce the risk of flooding. Consultation of the Environment Agency website (see image above) shows the flood risk of the proposal site and the surrounding area (site indicated by yellow marker). As part of Flood Zone 1, the land has less than a 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding.

7.7.2 Section 14 of the NPPF sets out the guidelines to which developments should adhere with regards to flood risk. With Flood Zone 1 designation, it is not believed that the site requires a flood risk assessment as, per footnote 50 of the NPPF, it is under one hectare in size and has not been identified as having critical drainage problems or being a flood risk in the future. In addition, it is not believed that the development proposed can be considered a more vulnerable use of the site. Nonetheless, it is ensured that, should the site be approved for development, necessary measures will be taken to ensure that there is sufficient on-site drainage infrastructure.

## 8.0 Conclusions

8.1 This statement has been produced in support of a full planning application for the development of land at Burntwood Court to provide holiday pod accommodation. In line with the above justifications, it is asserted that the proposals are in accordance with the objectives and stipulations of relevant national and local planning policy, as well as with the general principles of development with regard to the location of the proposal site.

8.2 Despite the site's Green Belt designation, it is asserted that the impact of development would be minimal and would not adversely affect the purposes of Green Belt development. Furthermore, very special circumstances pertaining to the viability of a local business and its contribution to the local economy of Barnsley, as well as the substantial biodiversity gains that would be achieved, outweigh any presumption that the proposed development would be inappropriate.

8.3 As confirmed by the Local Planning Authority as part of a positive pre-application enquiry, considerable thought has been given to the design of the scheme, especially in terms of its appearance, layout, and how it would function as part of the wider facility. Importantly, the design approach is grounded in preserving and enhancing the natural environment, with its rural setting being a key positive that gives Burntwood Court a competitive advantage over other similar facilities in the region and beyond.

8.4 Within the context of the site, its location and its function, the proposed scheme represents sustainable development economically, socially, and environmentally and should be viewed favourably by the Local Planning Authority. Accordingly, the applicant looks forward to continuing their positive and proactive dialogue with officers to ensure this project is delivered.