DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2017/0394	**PROCTORS NURSERY**	**SITING OF ONE POLYTUNNEL**
Valid 13/06/2017	**LEEK ROAD**	
	ENDON	**(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether or not the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site comprises a large horticultural nursery which lies to the north of the A53 less than a mile to the east of Endon village. It is surrounded by open rural land and is within the Green Belt. Within the site there is a large number of polytunnels and glasshouses and a metal-sheeted storage building. Planning approval was also given for a small mobile home for staff overseeing the round-the-clock horticultural operation.

PROPOSAL

The application is for a polytunnel to be used for growing plants. It would be placed next to two recently approved polytunnels of the same dimensions (36.5 x 7.9 metres) and height (4.4 metres) and would form one large polytunnel structure. The building would be used for the propagation and growing-on of bedding plants and basket plants which have increased in stock at the site and which requires protection from cold and wind.

Further information given by the applicant to justify the chosen location is as follows:

"The proposed polytunnel can be located as planned – with the incorporation of the new (approved) access. The polytunnel has been sited to best suit the operational needs of the nursery and hence be sited adjacent to the other two recent polytunnels. The siting and orientation of the polytunnels has been planned for the daily operation of the nursery (the original concept was to have the polytunnels running north/south – but this was changed to suit the planning dept). To the west of the existing polytunnels there are existing beds and standing out areas for the nursey – this area is mapped out with irrigation and has been upgraded recently to run in tandem with the investment in the polytunnels."

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy

DC1 Design Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

Sections 7 (Design) and 9 (Green Belts).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

There have been a number of recent approvals for polytunnels and glass houses, the most recent being SMD/2016/0762. A new access has also been recently approved but not yet implemented: SMD/2016/0730.

SMD/2015/0056: Horticultural workers mobile dwelling. Refused. Allowed on appeal.

Before then, there have been several approvals given on the site in the last five years for horticultural related development including glasshouses and polytunnels.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 1.8.17

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

No objection.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The site is in the Green Belt and new buildings are only allowed under limited criteria as set out in the NPPF in order to protect their openness. However, agricultural related development is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and horticultural uses relate to agriculture. The applicant has provided sufficient justification for the need of the building for the horticultural business. I therefore do not consider the new building/development would amount to inappropriate development and a number of approvals have been given recently for new horticultural related buildings on the Proctor Nursery site.

The polytunnel would be the closest structure to the main road to the south which provides the access to the site and is the only public highway or right of way adjoining the site. It would be closest to both the existing access and the recently approved access (not yet built) which is in a more central position along the road and a bend in the new access road would be adjacent to the proposed polytunnel. Such development should look to be located in the least prominent part of the site if available. Although there is no sufficient expansion space within the site to the north

or east, there is space to the west which would be further from the road (and the accesses) and would be better screened, particularly by recently approved buildings. It is accepted that the proposed tunnel should be adjacent to existing polytunnels for operational reasons. However, to the west of the current complex of buildings lie outdoor irrigation/planting areas which have been "upgraded to lie in tandem with the polytunnels". I consider this to be sufficient justification for not locating the built structures within this part of the site in the interests of the operation of the business.

In any case, I do not consider the siting of the polytunnel would be unduly harmful to the character and appearance of the area or the landscape. The polytunnel would be viewed against the backdrop of existing structures and there is significant tree/hedge screening along the roadside. If the recently approved new access is built, further planting would be provided by way of a condition, particularly where the current access (to be blocked off) is located.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

To conclude, the proposed structure is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and despite being the closest structure to the main road which runs past the site, would not significantly harm the character and appearance of the area.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 18.8.17

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council