

Appendix B: Assessment Of The Planning Balance – Weighing The Harm Against The Public Benefits

Weighting Criteria	Appeal (Original, Larger Scheme)	Officers Report (New, Reduced Scheme)	Actual (New, Reduced Scheme)	Explanation
Harm to the Green Belt	Substantial	Substantial	Moderate	The scale of the scheme has been significantly reduced, with the removal of the 2-storey care home and 20% less built form. This should be acknowledged as reducing the harm.
Harm to setting of listed building	Less than substantial (moderate)	Less than substantial (moderate)	Less than substantial (low/moderate)	The new design now celebrates Burston Manor. Indeed, Historic England have confirmed a reduced level of harm to the setting of the Manor after a site visit on 29th April.
Harm to character	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Scale and density are significantly reduced, with a larger village green, more landscaping and trees and a more informal layout, materially reducing the level of harm.
Older persons housing	Substantial weight	Substantial weight	Substantial weight	Delivery of 124 homes for older people against a shortfall of 470 homes in 2023, rising to 642 homes by 2040. There is no Local Plan to deliver these homes.
Health and well-being benefits	Substantial weight	Substantial weight	Substantial weight	As a scheme providing residents with care, it will generate health care cost savings for the Local Authority of c£713,000 per year (c£4,600 per resident per year).
General housing	Significant weight	Significant weight	Substantial weight	Delivery of 124 homes against a requirement for 8,930 new homes (MCHLG, 2020-2030). At March 2020, the council have less than 1.9 years of land supply, reducing to zero by 2022.
The release of under-occupied family housing	Further weight	Further weight	Substantial weight	With no Local Plan, options for the provision of family housing are strictly limited and planners should therefore recognise the benefits for families.
NEW: Affordable housing	N/A	Limited weight	Substantial weight	Could be used by a Registered Provider to deliver up to 20 units (65% of the Council's delivery of 31 total affordable units from April 2019 to March 2020).
NEW: Local Marketing Provision	N/A	Limited weight	Significant weight	SADC residents will have first refusal on 20% of homes. Moreover, the best location for care accommodation to benefit the people of St Albans is in St Albans! Residents tend to stay in the local area, close to family and friends.
Alternative sites	Moderate weight	Some weight	Significant weight	In the absence of a viable Local Plan, there are no alternative sites and, once again, the planners should apply greater weight to this benefit, not less.
Highway access improvements	Some weight	Some weight	Some weight	The proposal includes over £1,000,000 of highway improvements, delivering significant road safety improvements for visitors to the garden centre.
Early delivery	Some weight	Some weight	Some weight	With no Local Plan, this is a rare opportunity to deliver accommodation that the authority agree they need in the short term.
Employment benefits	Some weight	Not reported	Some weight	The scheme will generate up to 200 full time construction jobs and 20-30 long-term jobs running the village. The inspector recognised this benefit and so should the planners.