

Dear Members

Special Planning Committee (Large Scale Major Application)

A special meeting of the Planning Committee will be held in the **Craddock Room, Civic Suite, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford** on **Thursday 22 June 2023** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

The Committee will meet at the rear of the Civic Centre and depart at **9.30am** to visit the site(s) as set out in the agenda and re-convene at the Civic Centre at approximately **11.30am** to determine the application(s).

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown in each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.



Head of Law and Governance

**SPECIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
(LARGE SCALE MAJOR APPLICATION)
22 JUNE 2023**

**Chairman - Councillor B McKeown
Vice-Chairman - Councillor A Nixon**

AGENDA

1	Apologies	
2	Declaration of Member's Interests/Lobbying	
3	Planning Applications	Page Nos 3 - 55

MEMBERSHIP

Chairman - Councillor B McKeown

B M Cross	D M McNaughton
F D J James	A Nixon
E G R Jones	M Phillips
P W Jones	J P Read
R Kenney	S N Spencer
B McKeown	

SPECIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE - 22 JUNE 2023

Ward Interest - Nil

Planning Applications

Report of Head of Development

Purpose of Report

To consider the following planning applications, the reports for which are set out in the attached **APPENDIX**:-

		Page Nos
21/35159/OUT	Former Meaford Power Station, Meaford Road Meaford	4 - 45
	This application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the development is a large scale major application	
	Officer Contact - Alison Young, Senior Planner Telephone 01785 619595	
22/36826/FUL	Land To The West Of Holdiford Road, Stafford	46 - 55
	This application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the development is a large scale major application	
	Officer Contact - Jessica Allsopp, Planning Officer Telephone 01785 619535	

Previous Consideration

Nil

Background Papers

Planning application files are available for Members to inspect, by prior arrangement, in the Development Management Section. The applications including the background papers, information and correspondence received during the consideration of the application, consultation replies, neighbour representations are scanned and are available to view on the Council website.

Application:	21/35159/OUT
Case Officer:	Alison Young
Date Registered:	28 October 2021
Target Decision Date:	27 January 2022
Extended To:	21 July 2023
Address:	Former Meaford Power Station Meaford Road, Meaford, Stone, Staffordshire
Ward:	Swynnerton and Outlon
Parish:	Stone Rural
Proposal:	Outline planning application for the creation of development platforms and phased development comprising up to 96,932sqm of employment floorspace (Use Classes E(g)(iii)/B2/B8) including up to 2 hectares of battery storage (Use Class Sui Generis), ancillary office space, new internal site roads and the use of existing accesses (including western access onto Meaford Road for emergency access), parking, ecology and biodiversity enhancements, landscaping, drainage, ancillary works and associated infrastructure, involving demolition, site clearance and remediation (All Matters Reserved except access, in part).
Applicant:	St Modwen Developments Ltd
Recommendation:	Approve, subject to no intervention by the Secretary of State, a planning obligation to provide a Travel Plan monitoring fee, and to conditions

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This is a large scale major development which is excluded from the scheme of delegation and therefore needs to be determined by Planning Committee.

1.0 Context

1.1 The site formerly accommodated a power station and is located approximately 1km to the north of Stone within the open countryside and the North Staffordshire Green Belt. Power Stations (Meaford A and B) were demolished in 1982 and 1996 although some buildings and infrastructure remain. The red edged site area measures 47.13ha and the other land within the control of the Applicant and edged in blue measures approximately 54 hectares. The parts of the site that formerly contained the power station buildings forms predominantly exposed ground, compacted earth and piles of rubble.

- 1.2 The site is located 5.7 miles south of Junction 15 of the M6. The Trent and Mersey Canal forms the eastern boundary to the site and there are significant tree belts around the boundaries of the site, together with a woodland to the south. There are bus stops located in relatively close proximity to the site on the A34 and a cycle route along the canal as well as a towpath for walking alongside the canal.
- 1.3 Meaford Road is located adjacent to the western boundary of the site. To the west of Meaford Road is the River Trent and associated flood plain. The closest residential properties are off Meaford Road on St. Vincent Mews and Admiral's View, approximately 30m to the south-west.
- 1.4 There are several designated heritage assets within close proximity of the site including the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area and associated Grade II listed bridges adjacent to the eastern boundary. The Meaford Conservation Area also includes the Grade II* buildings at Meaford Hall.
- 1.5 An original outline permission for the re-development of the power station site was approved in 2007 and which was subsequently extended in 2015. A reserved matters approval was then granted in 2008 for the main site entrance including a roundabout and road improvements which have now been built out and completed. The existing northern access onto Meaford Road is only used to serve the Barlaston Bowling and Tennis Club and will remain in use. There is also a disused western access onto Meaford Road which would be used for emergency access only.
- 1.6 Reserved matters approval was granted in 2015 for a unit that is now occupied by Arcflex and which is located to the east of the site. In 2017 reserved matters approval was also granted for a further two units but these have not been constructed and the permissions have now lapsed.
- 1.7 Any new outline approval should therefore discount the footprint of the built-out unit from the originally approved outline permission so the consents remain consistent and especially in respect of the proposal's impact on the Green Belt.

Background

- 1.8 Outline planning permission was originally granted in 2007 for the development of a business park (98/35897/OUT). This consent was subsequently extended in 2010 (10/13609/EXT) and 2015 (14/21379/EXTO). The extension to the outline consent was approved on 07.05.15 with a time limit of 7 years for submission of the reserved matters and a condition requiring the development to be begun before the expiration of two years from the approval of the last reserved matters application. There are currently two reserved matters applications associated with the 2015 outline consent which are pending consideration – 22/35956/REM for three units along with the associated infrastructure, and 22/35950/REM for 8 units and associated infrastructure. The two reserved matters applications propose a total combined site area of 46.31 ha and a floor area of 86,715 sqm (Gross External Area).
- 1.9 The extension to the outline consent (14/21379/EXTO) included condition 2 which limited the floor space that can be used for B1 office space to 10,000 sqm, B2 industrial floorspace to 50 000 sqm and B8 warehouse and distribution use to 60 000

sqm with the overall footprint of the buildings not exceeding 96,500 sqm and the developed area of the site not exceeding 34.1 hectares. The current application proposes a limit in terms of floorspace only and the description of development does not refer to footprint or developed area of the site. Taking into account the part of the site that has already been developed with the Arcflex unit the footprint of development should now be limited to 93 171.8 sqm and the developed site area to 32.53 ha and condition 6 includes these limits.

- 1.10 The roundabout to the south and site access were completed under 14/20993/SCG, the spine road and drainage were completed under 15/22557/REM and the Arcflex Unit built under 15/23404/REM. No further development has been carried out under these permissions.
- 1.11 The reason given for the submission of the new outline application is to allow for a greater flexibility in terms of how the site is developed and to ensure the proportions of the site developed into office and B8 storage space can be flexible rather than limited to set floor space requirements. This is given to the change in economic circumstances and varying demand for different types of employment uses since the original application was submitted in 1998 and approval its approval in 2007. Following covid 19 and an increase in online sales there is greater demand for logistics units of a mix of sizes. In particular, on sites which are accessible from the strategic road network such as the application site. Condition 6 of the extension of time of the outline consent was restrictive in limiting the floor spaces that could be occupied by office space (4999sqm) and the floor area which could be in distribution use (60000sqm).
- 1.12 The report for the original outline application stated that the power station which was formerly on the site had 5 cooling towers along with a high power station hall and chimney and the buildings had a footprint of approximately 51 000 sqm. Additionally, that the rest of the application site would cover an area formerly occupied by railway sidings, coal storage and apparatus and that the development proposed would be lower in height than the former power station buildings and therefore have less visual impact.

Proposal

- 1.13 The application is an outline submission for the creation of development platforms and phased development comprising up to 96,932 sqm of employment floorspace (Use Classes E(g)(iii)/B2/B8) and up to 2 hectares of battery storage (Use Class Sui Generis), ancillary office space, new internal site roads and the use of existing accesses (including western access onto Meaford Road for emergency access), parking, ecology and biodiversity enhancements, landscaping, drainage, ancillary works and associated infrastructure, involving demolition, site clearance and remediation (All Matters Reserved except access, in part)." The reserved matters are therefore appearance, layout, scale, landscaping and access in part. The proposals are subject to Environmental Impact Assessment due to the scale of development and an Environmental Statement has been submitted with the application.

- 1.14 As the application is in outline, detailed plans have not been submitted at this stage and a series of parameter plans and illustrative plans have been submitted in support of the proposal.
- 1.15 The movement and connectivity parameter plan show the use of the existing roundabout and access to the south of the site for access into the site and the internal access road to the site currently extends as far as the Arcflex building. The existing access to the west of the site would be utilised for emergency access only.
- 1.16 A maximum building height parameter plan shows that heights of buildings would be between 13m and 18.5m (maximum height originally proposed in the submission was 25m) with the heights following the contours and existing land levels of the site as well as taking account of the existing screening on different parts of the site. The Maximum Building Heights Parameter Plan also shows the heights of Non-Building Uses including substations, electrical infrastructure and battery storage), vehicle parking and open storage, which will be up to 7m above ground level.
- 1.17 The land use parameter plan indicates where on the site the proposed built development would be sited as well as the areas of existing and proposed planting. Following feedback in relation to the scheme, as originally submitted, the proposed area of employment development in the south of the site has been reduced in scale and this has resulted in the overall floorspace proposed being reduced from 99,255sqm to 96,932sqm. The original floorspace proposed was based on the floor space approved in the original outline – 110 000 sqm minus the Arcflex unit and 2 hectares of battery storage. This calculation resulted in the proposed floorspace of 99 255 sqm which has subsequently been reduced to take account of the reduction in development to the southern end of the site. The proposed built development would be sited to the centre of the site with green infrastructure and landscaped buffers surrounding the development with a narrower green buffer to the eastern side of the site than the western side.
- 1.18 Illustrative landscaping masterplan - There is an existing bowling club to the north of the site with an area of woodland to the eastern side of it. The existing woodland is to be enhanced with additional planting and further planting is indicated to either side of internal site roadways and between the proposed buildings at the northern end of the site as well as around the perimeter of the site. The indicative plans show the larger scale / footprint buildings sited to the northern end of the site where most of the buffer planting exists and smaller scale buildings alongside the canal boundary where there is a narrower buffer of existing planting and further planting proposed.
- 1.19 There is a significant area of existing woodland to the southwestern corner of the site which would be retained and enhanced, and additional coppice planting is proposed to enhance existing woodland in the southeast of the site. There is an open area of grassland to the south eastern entrance of the site. The illustrative landscape masterplan has been amended to add additional green infrastructure in the west adjacent to the proposed phase 2 attenuation pond and to ensure that the green infrastructure forming the canal buffer is retained and enhanced.
- 1.20 There is a large area of land edged in blue and within the control of the Applicant to the east of the application site and canal corridor. This area of land would contain a

pond and grassland habitat and provide habitat replacement for Great Crested Newts as well as an overall biodiversity net gain (BNG). An Indicative BNG Assessment (using Defra Metric 3.0) for the site has been submitted (JN00432/BNG February 2022) which demonstrates that a net gain in both habitat and hedgerow units is achievable – a biodiversity Net Gain of 25.82 habitat units (10.67%) and 11.11 hedgerow units (557.74%) is achievable. The submission states that a detailed BNG Assessment will be prepared to support each phase of development and will be supported by a detailed 30-year Habitat Management Plan.

Officer Assessment – Key Considerations

- 1.21 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) sets out that the determination of applications must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the purposes of this application comprises of The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and The Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 2011-2031.

2.0 Principle of Development

- 2.1 The NPPF at paragraph 81 states that Planning policies and 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.
- 2.2 In turn, paragraph 83 states that planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.
- 2.3 Spatial Principle (SP) 3 sets out the Borough’s sustainable settlement hierarchy, the boundaries for which are designated in Policy SB1 inset maps.
- 2.4 SP2 states the Borough will accommodate new growth and investment over the plan period and that 8ha of employment land is required per year within the Borough during the plan period. SP5 states that 32% of the Borough’s employment growth would be outside Stafford and within the Rest of Borough Area.
- 2.5 SP6 states that priority will be given to supporting the rural sustainability of the Borough by protecting and enhancing its environmental assets and character whilst sustaining the social and economic fabric of its communities, through promoting a sustainable rural economy.
- 2.6 SP7 states that development in the countryside will only be supported where it is consistent with national and local Green Belt policies, SP6 and E2 and does not conflict with environmental protection and nature conservation policies and provides suitable mitigation or compensatory measures to address any harm.

- 2.7 Policy E1 seeks to sustain the local economy by supporting the location, diversity and intensity of new economic development through providing a variety of land and buildings for future employment uses, supporting the rural economy.
- 2.8 Policy E5 identifies the former Meaford Power Station as a previously developed site in the Green Belt where limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment will be supported for employment purposes consistent with SP7 and which would not have a greater impact on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt.
- 2.9 The Draft Local Plan 2020 to 2040, whilst not attracting significant weight in decision making does outline the Council's policy direction going forwards and makes provision for 80 hectares of employment land including the delivery of strategic employment sites with existing commitments making up two thirds of this supply. Meaford Business Park is specifically detailed as a strategic employment site to be protected in employment use.
- 2.10 An outline planning consent for 110 000 square metres of B1, B2 and B8 employment space was approved in 2007 with the most recent extension of time approved in 2015. The outline has been implemented and one unit constructed with reserved matters applications for a further 11 units under consideration. The two reserved matters applications are still pending consideration and the time limit for the submission of further reserved matters applications has now expired. The current proposed outline application has been submitted to try and ensure that the mix of employment uses can be more flexible than allowed by the previous outline. The site is also identified under Policy E5 as a previously developed site in the Green Belt where limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment will be supported for employment purposes.
- 2.11 The previously approved outline consent included condition 2 which limited the floor space that can be used for B1 office space to 10,000 sqm, B2 industrial floorspace to 50,000 sqm and B8 warehouse and distribution use to 60,000 sqm with the overall footprint of the buildings not exceeding 96,500 sqm and the developed area of the site not exceeding 34.1 hectares. These proportions of floorspace were amended in condition 6 of the extension of time approval (14/21379/EXTO) to no more than 4,999 sqm in B1a office use and no more than 60,000 sqm in B8 warehouse and distribution use. Subsequent to the original outline approval and the extension of time approval, reserved matters consent was granted (15/23404/REM) for the Arcflex building which has a footprint of 3,318sqm within an area including car parking of 1.57 hectares. The current submission takes account of this and the proposed outline scheme is for up to 96,932 sqm of employment floorspace in use classes E(g)(iii) (industrial process), B2 (light industry) and B8 (storage and distribution).
- 2.12 A chapter of the Environmental Assessment looks at the Socio Economics of the scheme and this has been updated with a further note following amendments to the scheme reducing the scale of development proposed. The note outlines the socio-economic benefits associated with the scheme and states that the economic benefits of the proposal will be significant with the proposed development creating up to 224 direct and 217 indirect construction jobs and 1,074 - 2,693 FTE direct local employees when operational. The proposed development will also generate an approximate total GVA of £94.8m over the construction period and up to

approximately £167.7m in direct GVA per annum, with approximately £2.1 million-£2.5 million per annum in business rates. The above estimates of total employees and GVA vary depending on the final mix of development type between E g(iii), B2 and B8 uses with lower numbers of employees associated with B8 uses. The lowest estimated level of employment generation (1074 FTE jobs) is based on all buildings having a B8 use.

2.13 Whilst the previous consents tried to control the mix of Eg(iii), B2 and B8 uses on the site the reason for this condition was to define the development and control the impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and not to secure a set mix of employment uses on the site. It is considered reasonable that this condition is no longer applied given the parameter plans submitted and that flexibility is key to bringing the site forward to meet current and evolving employment and business needs.

Green Belt

2.14 The application site is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and outside of a defined settlement boundary which is therefore subject to a stricter degree of control in order to ensure that any development preserves the openness and permanence of the area. The decision-making process when considering proposals for development in the Green Belt is in three stages and is as follows:

- a) It must be determined whether the development is appropriate or inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- b) If the development is appropriate, the application should be determined on its own merits.
- c) If the development is inappropriate, the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt applies and the development should not be permitted unless there are very special circumstances which outweigh the presumption against it.

2.15 The NPPF makes it clear that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. 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. Paragraph 138 of the NPPF lists the 5 purposes of the Green Belt as:

- 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.

2.16 The proposed scheme would be constrained within the boundaries of the former power station site and would not result in unrestricted sprawl and the development would not result in neighbouring settlements merging into one another. The fact that the majority of the former buildings on the site have been removed means that the site shares attributes with the countryside and has the appearance of woodland and open land when viewed from neighbouring public vantage points. As a result, the site contributes to the purpose to assist in safeguarding the countryside from

encroachment. The proposed built development would result in encroachment of development into the countryside and would cover a larger footprint than the former buildings on the site. The fact that there were buildings on the site and the encroachment which might have previously occurred on the site has been lessened by the removal of the buildings.

- 2.17 Whether or not the proposal would constitute additional encroachment in relation to the built development that was formerly on site, does not alter the fact that, the development would cause encroachment. The site is located far enough from the town of Stone to ensure that redevelopment would not harm the setting or special character of a historic town and the proposals would re-use derelict albeit land that is not within an urban area. The scheme is therefore considered to result in encroachment into the countryside contrary to part c of one of the five purposes of the Green Belt but is in general conformity with the other listed purposes.
- 2.18 The NPPF states in paragraph 147 that *“inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”*. Paragraph 148 states that LPA’s should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Paragraph 149 states that LPAs should regard construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt, it then lists exceptions to this and in paragraph 150 lists other forms of development in the Green Belt that are not inappropriate.
- 2.19 Part g of paragraph 149 makes provision for the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: – not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or – not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority. The redevelopment of the power station site is therefore not inappropriate development provided it would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. The NPPF at part g specifically refers to previously developed land either being in use or redundant and the glossary within the NPPF defines previously developed land as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. Therefore, despite the fact that the power station buildings have been demolished the land is still considered to be previously developed.
- 2.20 Policy E5 Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt states:-
 ‘The following sites will be identified as previously developed sites (whether redundant or in continuing use, excluding temporary buildings) within the Green Belt, where limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment will be supported for employment purposes consistent with Spatial Principle SP7, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development;

- Hadleigh Park (Former Creda Works Limited), Blythe Bridge.
- Moorfields Industrial Estate, Swynnerton.
- Former Meaford Power Station, Meaford, Stone.

2.21 There is very limited existing built development on the site as the principal, large scale power station buildings were demolished in 1982 and 1996. The proposed development will therefore have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing site as cleared and the proposals therefore constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposals will result in both definitional harm to the Green Belt by virtue of constituting inappropriate development and in harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

2.22 The built development proposed will clearly have a significantly greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the site as it exists currently however the floor space of development now proposed is based on that which was approved by the former outline consent which can still be implemented through the two reserved matters applications that are pending consideration. However it must be borne in mind that if the two reserved matters applications were to be refused then there would be no fallback position in terms of being able to submit further applications in relation to the former outline consent. In terms of the former buildings on the site the power station had 5 cooling towers along with a high turbine building with the overall height of the cooling towers measuring 76m and the chimney extending to 124m in height. The Energy Centre which gained a Development Consent Order in 2016 but which was never constructed had 50m height stacks and a 35m high generator building. The proposed development will also impact on the visual openness of Green Belt although this will be relatively limited given the fact that the site is self-contained benefitting from significant buffer landscaping around the boundaries which will be enhanced. The re-development of the site will not impact significantly on long distance views of the site or the visual amenity of the area when the previously developed nature of the site and scale of the former power station buildings is taken into account.

2.23 Given the inappropriate nature of the development the Applicant has submitted details of very special circumstances that they consider should be taken into account in determining the application and are as follows:

- There is an extant planning permission for 110,000sqm of employment development which restricts built form in line with the former power station buildings
- The site is allocated in the Development Plan for employment redevelopment; and there is a reliance on the site to meet employment land supply within the Plan period
- The proposals involve the re-use of previously developed land
- Socioeconomic benefits including up to 224 direct and 217 indirect construction jobs, £94.8m total GVA over the construction period, 1,074-2,963 direct operational employees (FTE), £2.1 million-£2.5 million in business rates annually, and £31.8 million-£163.8 million in direct GVA per annum when operational (all approximately); and

- There is a significant need and immediate demand for ‘investor ready’ Strategic Employment Sites owing to the very limited availability of sites and existing and new space under construction.

2.24 The proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt because it would not accord with the exception that is set out in paragraph 145 g) of the Framework. It would cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt and it would also not accord with the Green Belt purpose to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Paragraph 144 of the Framework states that substantial weight is to be 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. Against this harm, it is necessary to balance the other material planning considerations and this balance is set out in the concluding section of this report below.

Polices and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 13

Plan for Stafford Borough – Part 1 was adopted in June 2014

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031

Policies SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), SP2 (Stafford Borough Housing & Employment Requirements), SP3 (Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy), SP5 (Stafford Borough Employment Growth Distribution), SP6 (Achieving Rural Sustainability), SP7 (Supporting the Location of New Development), E1 (Local Economy), E5 (Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt)

The Plan for Stafford Borough: Part 2 (TPSB2) 2011-2031

SP3 (Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy), SP7 (Supporting the Location of New Development), SB1 (Settlement Boundaries)

3.0 Heritage Assets

- 3.1 Policy N1 of TPSB – ‘Design’ seeks to secure enhancements in design quality through conformity with a series of principles outlined with regards to use, form, space and movement.
- 3.2 Policy N8 – ‘Landscape Character’ states that development proposals must be informed by and be sympathetic to landscape character and quality and states that development should demonstrate that, amongst other consideration, proposals with landscape and visual implications should protect, conserve and enhance elements of the landscape that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the area and historic elements that contribute to landscape character.
- 3.3 Policy N9 – ‘Historic Environment’ requires development proposals to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including their setting, and that any potential harm to the significance of a heritage asset will require clear justification taking into account criteria which is set out in the policy.

- 3.4 The NPPF at paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraphs 201 and 202 set out two decision making tests where proposals would lead to substantial and less than substantial harm respectively. Paragraph 201 guides that substantial harm to or loss of significance should not be permitted unless that harm is necessary to deliver substantial public benefits that would outweigh the harm or loss, or other criteria are met. Paragraph 202 guides that where a development proposal would result in less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- 3.5 Conservation areas are considered at paragraphs 206 and 207. Paragraph 206 notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to the asset, or which better reveal its significance, should be treated favourably. Paragraph 207 goes on to note that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. The loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area should be treated under paragraphs 200 or 201 as appropriate taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the Conservation Area as a whole.
- 3.6 The site is located adjacent to the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area for a distance of approximately 1.5km and as well as being a conservation area there are several bridges and locks along this section of the canal including the grade II listed Turnover Bridge. Whilst the other canal structures are not listed, they nonetheless form an important part of the historic character and appearance of the canal and make a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area. The site also abuts the Meaford Conservation Area to the south-west inclusive of its setting and the setting of the grade II* listed Meaford Hall and Nursery House, and the grade II listed former stable block to Meaford Hall.
- 3.7 The scheme has been amended following an objection from the Conservation Officer who raised concerns regarding the proposed heights of the buildings and the potential for the development to have a dominating and urbanising impact on the predominantly rural setting of this part of the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area, the Meaford Conservation Area and the nearby listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets.
- 3.8 Additional information and justification has subsequently been submitted and the proposals have been amended by reducing the proposed maximum building heights in the north western part of the site from 25m to 18.5m and the removal of part of the proposed built development from the southern part of the site. The amendments and additional information, in particular the reduction in the density of development to the southern part of the site and the reduction of the maximum heights to the northern

part of the site, have reduced impacts on the surrounding heritage including the two conservation areas, listed buildings and the Bury Bank Hillfort.

- 3.9 Notwithstanding these improvements, there is no doubt that the development will have a significant visual impact, particularly in its first decade or so before the tree planting has had chance to thicken and mature. However, consideration must be given to the previous use of the site as a power station which itself once had a very imposing impact on the landscape. In addition, the site is allocated in the Development Plan for the redevelopment of the currently vacant site for employment uses and will bring economic public benefits. There are also planning applications (albeit undetermined) for the redevelopment of the site for up to 110,000sqm of employment development, whereas the current proposals seek 96,932sqm of employment development. Based on the above considerations, whilst it is undeniable that the proposed development will result in less than substantial harm to the setting of multiple heritage assets, it is considered, following the submission of the latest amendments, that the harm would be outweighed by the clear economic public benefits in this instance. In addition, there is a strong presumption in favour of development by virtue that the site is allocated for employment development in the Plan for Stafford Borough. The development is therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Paragraph 202 of the NPPF.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework
Section 16

Trent and Mersey Conservation Area Appraisal – August 2014
Meaford Conservation Area Draft Appraisal

The Plan for Stafford Borough
Policies: N1 Design; N8 Landscape character; N9 Historic environment
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Design

4.0 Landscape

- 4.1 TPSB Policy N8 'Landscape Character' - Development proposals must be informed by, and be sympathetic to, landscape character and quality, demonstrated through local site specific assessments. Development should demonstrate that proposals with landscape and visual implications, should protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance:
- a) The elements of the landscape that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the area (including heritage assets, cultural character and biodiversity);
 - b) Historic elements of the present day landscape that contribute significantly to landscape character;
 - c) The setting and views of or from heritage assets
 - d) The locally distinctive pattern of landscape elements such as woodland, streams, hedgerows, trees and field boundaries.

New development should reinforce and respect the character of the settlement and the landscape setting, through the design and layout that includes use of sustainable building materials and techniques that are sympathetic to the landscape.

- 4.2 A detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) supports the application which makes an assessment of the landscape character and type in the vicinity of the site and the impact that the proposed development would have both during and post construction. The site is located within the Trent Valley which has a mix of landform and levels. The site is relatively contained by the existing woodland/vegetation around the boundaries of the site but is previously developed land that is largely covered in hardstanding and which contributes little to the overall landscape character of the area. The viewpoint locations as assessed in the LVIA are considered to be appropriate locations for the study and are agreed as being representative of the wider visibility of the site within the landscape.
- 4.3 The conclusion of the landscape section in the ES is that *the character of the Site vicinity, whilst containing some tracts of intact rural landscape, notably on the Trent Valley floor and on the upper valley slopes, is heavily disrupted and considered to be of medium-low value owing to the post-industrial derelict character of the Site. Also, the characteristic structure of the landscape in the vicinity, including vegetation patterns and the varied landform, provides very strong containment to the Site. Overall, it is considered that the character of the Site vicinity is of low sensitivity to the type of development proposed.*
- 4.4 Views into and out of the site from public vantage points are currently relatively limited however the existing structural planting on the site would be impacted by the proposed development through removal of some of the planting during construction. The scale of the buildings proposed means that they would be visible within the landscape however the submitted LVIA states that the overall vision for the development is the perception of built development set discreetly amid woodland and other structural vegetation and that secondary mitigation measures include:
- A range of locally appropriate native species planting within green infrastructure areas and along roadway corridors through built areas, including woodland, scrub mosaic, hedgerows, marginal wildflower grassland and specimen trees; and
 - Shallow bunding on the eastern boundary adjoining the canal corridor where detailed consideration of tree protection allows this through more detailed applications, to accentuate the screening effect of planting.
- 4.5 Following concerns raised both from consultees and neighbouring residents the plans have been amended and the open grassland habitat to the southern end of the site is proposed for retention. Further planting of a mix of evergreen and deciduous species is proposed along the canal corridor to try and ensure year round cover. The height of the buildings has been reduced and secondary mitigation is proposed in the form of building colouration. These measures would reduce the prominence of the proposed development in the surrounding landscape. Further detail on the proposed landscaping measures and visual mitigation of the development can be required at reserved matters stage but in principle the measures proposed are considered acceptable and will ensure that the landscape and visual impact of the development is minimised as far as possible including impact on the setting of heritage assets.

Policies and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Sections 12 and 15

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031
Policies N1 (Design), N8 (Landscape Character)

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Design

5.0 Layout, Design & Appearance

- 5.1 TPSB Policy N1 sets out design criteria including the requirement for design and layout to take account of residential amenity and local context and have high design standards.
- 5.2 The application is an outline submission with all matters reserved except for access and the access into the site has already been completed. As details of layout, design, appearance and landscaping are reserved the only plans submitted with the outline application are illustrative plans and parameter plans including a boundary plan, illustrative masterplan and landscaping masterplan, land use parameter plan, maximum building heights plan, movement and connectivity parameter plan and demolition plan. The indicative masterplan shows the siting of 14 buildings of varying sizes along with access roads through the site and tree planting and landscaped belts to the edges of the site. When the reserved matters approval was granted for the Arcflex unit significant consideration was given to the need for a landscape buffer along the boundary with the canal and amendments were submitted re-siting the building further west and reducing floor levels as well as the introduction of a landscape buffer of minimum 10m width. The report for the Arcflex application states that ‘it was considered essential that an adequate landscaping buffer with a minimum width of at least 10m to include tree planting be provided along this eastern boundary of the site, to soften the impact of what would be a featureless 12m high elevation.’ The report also stated that a 10m wide buffer would not be unreasonable elsewhere on the development site alongside units bordering the canal. The illustrative landscape masterplan submitted with the current application indicates that the minimum 10m width of landscape buffer will be positioned alongside the canal through the development site with a wider buffer proposed to the north of the site.
- 5.3 There are currently two reserved matters applications under consideration for development of the site associated with a previous outline consent and these are for a total of 11 units of varying sizes. One building – occupied by Arcflex – has already been constructed and this appears very prominent in the landscape and views across the site (in particular from the canal) and one of the reasons for this is the fact the building is finished in light and mid grey cladding which is light reflective and does not blend in effectively with the landscaping. In order to overcome this issue the Applicant has provided additional information on the cladding for the proposed buildings which proposes built form colouration in more muted tones of greens and browns that would associate closely with the tones of the woodland setting. The proposed building heights across the site have also been reduced following concerns raised by the Design and Conservation Officers’. The proposed built form colouration

would be varied and associated closely with the tones of the existing wooded setting and with upper sections lighter coloured to blend in with the sky, the aim would be to reduce visual prominence and break up the perceived massing of substantial built forms.

- 5.4 The proposed vegetation in the indicative landscaping details including evergreen species formed of shrub understorey below canopy trees situated on a shallow bund would provide a much denser screening than between the existing industrial building and the canal side vegetation.
- 5.5 As the application is an outline submission the detailed design and appearance of the proposed buildings and the associated landscaping would be dealt with in detail at reserved matters stage and the illustrative details included at this stage demonstrate that the layout, design and appearance of the proposed buildings could be acceptable in principle in line with the provisions of Policy N1 of TPSB.

Policies and Guidance:-
National Design Guide (NDG)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Section 12

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031
Policies N1 (Design), N8 (Landscape Character)

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Design

6.0 Amenity

- 6.1 Policy N1 requires the design and layout of development to take account of noise and light implications and amenity of adjacent residential areas. There are no neighbouring dwellings located in close enough proximity to the site to be directly impacted in terms of overbearing impact and loss of privacy. However, the development of a large scale industrial development which has the potential to result in noise and disturbance to residential properties both during construction and operation. The traffic generated by the proposed development also has the potential to result in noise and disturbance to neighbouring occupiers.
- 6.2 A noise survey was undertaken in 2021 and submitted with the application. The measurement locations were representative of the nearest noise sensitive receptors which were considered to be dwellings along Meaford Road, Mount Road, Washdale Lane, Newcastle Road and the A34.
- 6.3 The conclusion of the noise survey was that the assessment has determined that the noise and vibration effects resulting from the Development are not significant for both the demolition and construction phase as well as the operational phase. Construction noise and vibration effects will be controlled through mitigation measures set out in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). 'On Site Commercial / Industrial Sound' effects will be controlled through detailed design that will be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.

- 6.4 The Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that the report is satisfactory in principle and the methodologies contained are agreed. Additional specific mitigations may be recommended once detailed proposals are presented and can therefore be required at reserved matters stage.
- 6.5 An air quality report has been submitted with the application which concludes that the overall operational air quality effects of the proposed development are judged to be 'not significant and that it is judged that the proposed development is consistent with Paragraph 185 of the NPPF, being appropriate for its location in terms of its effects on the local air quality environment. It is also consistent with Paragraph 186, as it will not affect compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives. The Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that the Operational Air Quality Report is satisfactory for our purposes at outline and it is recommended that a Construction Air Quality Report is submitted which assesses the impacts of the construction phase and in particular dust. This can be controlled by condition on this outline application requiring an air quality report to be submitted for the whole site.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Section 12

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031
Policy N1 (Design)

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Design

7.0 Access, Parking and Highway Safety

- 7.1 Policy T2 states that all new development must have a safe and adequate means of access and internal circulation; not have unacceptable highway safety impacts and provide sufficient parking provision.
- 7.2 The site benefits from outline planning permission for employment uses (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) (Ref 14/21379/EXTO), and much of the highway infrastructure work has already been agreed and implemented, such as the provision of the new Meaford roundabout in 2016. The existing roundabout would provide access to the site from Meaford Road.
- 7.3 Pedestrian / Cycle Access will be via a wide shared footway/cycleway that will run adjacent to the internal spine road and provide access to each of the development plots. This will connect to the existing shared use route alongside Meaford Road, connecting to the A34. There are walking routes to and from the development to local bus stops and residential dwellings with the NCN Route 5, a traffic free cycle route, accessible from the site, providing a connection to the north and south via the canal towpath. Stone is situated within cycling distance of the site and regular bus services are accessible from the A34, providing connections to Stoke-on-Trent to the north and Stafford to the south.

- 7.4 The Transport Assessment provided by the developer has tested the capacity of three junctions on the local highway network and the modelling results demonstrate that each junction is forecast to operate well within capacity and therefore, the impact of the proposed development on the local highway network will not be severe and no additional mitigation is required. On this basis the Highway Authority has not raised any objections to the proposal.
- 7.5 The Applicant has stated that it is one of their key aspirations to provide a pedestrian and cycle access onto the canal but that they cannot be definitive on location at present due to land ownership and that this could be required by condition using wording similar to that on the existing outline approval.
- 7.6 Concerns have been raised by both the Canal and River Trust and the Parish Council with regards to the impact of the development on traffic using Top Lock Bridge and exacerbating existing issues regarding use of and damage to the bridge. However, the Transport Assessment sets out that the proposed development would not be reliant on the bridge for HGV's travelling to and from the site and would not result in any significant additional use of the bridge. The Highway Authority has not objected to the development on this basis. However, the Applicant is involved in ongoing discussions regarding signage and other potential measures to reduce usage of the bridge.
- 7.7 In principle there is sufficient space within the site to provide the required level of car parking associated with each unit to accord with the parking standards within the Local Plan.
- 7.8 The development, subject to conditions and a section 106 UU for travel plan monitoring, is considered to adhere with the development plan and NPPF in this regard and is acceptable with regards to parking, access and highway safety.

Policies and Guidance:-
National Design Guide (NDG)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Section 9

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031
Policies T1 (Transport), T2 (Parking and Manoeuvring Facilities), Appendix B – Car Parking Standards

8.0 Flooding & Drainage

- 8.1 TPSB Policy N1 states that development should not be located in areas of flooding or contribute to flooding elsewhere. Policy N2 requires developments to provide sustainable drainage systems.
- 8.2 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and the submitted Flood Risk Assessment concludes that the site is at either very low or low risk of flooding from the sources assessed with the exception of two areas potentially at risk of surface water flooding.

Mitigation is proposed to provide the development with further resilience against flood risk. A surface water drainage strategy has been submitted for the site which principally proposes utilising the existing outfalls to the River Trent, which once served the former Meaford Power Station development at the site. The strategy confirms that measures will be put in place to ensure that discharge will be at attenuated greenfield rates and that in the southern part of the site a new surface water drainage network will be provided to discharge into the Downs Banks Brook to the south of the site at an attenuated greenfield rate. An attenuation basin will store run-off from this part of the development during large rainfall events. Further recommendations regarding floor levels/ yard levels and ensuring runoff is directed away from buildings are set out and the conclusions of the submitted supporting reports is that provided the drainage strategy and mitigation measures outlined are adhered to the development will sustainably manage the drainage of the site and flood risk for its lifetime.

- 8.3 The Lead Local Flood Authority have confirmed that they have no objections to the proposed drainage subject to a condition to ensure it is implemented as set out in the reports.
- 8.4 Subject to adhering to conditions the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regards to flooding and drainage and adheres to the development plan and NPPF in this regard.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework
Section 14

The Plan for Stafford Borough
Policies N1 (Design), N2 (Climate Change), N4 (The Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure)

9.0 Ecology

- 9.1 TPSB Policy N4 states that the natural environment will be protected and that new development where damage to the natural environment is unavoidable must provide appropriate mitigation. Policy N1 requires development to retain significant biodiversity and landscaping features and create new biodiversity areas. To comply with the guidance contained within the NPPF and the Council's biodiversity duty new development must demonstrate that it will not result in the loss of any biodiversity value of the site.
- 9.2 Policy N5 - Sites of European, National & Local Nature Conservation Importance requires development to protect nature conservation sites and mitigate against any impacts on protected sites.

- 9.3 The Applicant has confirmed that the detailed strategy, including monitoring and management prescriptions will be provided in Ecological Mitigation Plans (EMP) and Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) which will be prepared for each phase of the Development and as part of this outline application information on habitat creation/retention has been provided via the amended Illustrative Landscape Master Plan.
- 9.4 There are several SSSI's and Local Nature Reserves located within 10k of the site and the site itself has a wide variety of habitats including grassland, woodland and standing open water. The ES submitted with the application contains a chapter on Biodiversity which is supported by a series of protected species surveys and further information has been provided during the application process in the form of an updated invertebrate survey and Great Crested Newt mitigation strategy.
- 9.5 Great crested newts (GCN) and amphibians in general will be mitigated for under the Staffordshire District Level Licencing Scheme. This will include the creation of four new waterbodies on the wider blue land which have been designed specifically for GCN. The development proposal (21/35159/OUT) has been split into three phases for the purposes of licensing to enable timely authorisation under the District Licence, in-line with scheme compensation habitat delivery in Staffordshire. Each phase would receive separate Certification from NatureSpace and the County Newt Officer has confirmed that the proposed mitigation measures are acceptable subject to the measures being required by three specifically worded conditions.
- 9.6 An up-to-date invertebrate survey has been submitted and the Biodiversity Officer has confirmed that subject to a condition requiring submission of an Ecological Management Plan the development is considered acceptable. An Indicative BNG Assessment (using Defra Metric 3.0) for the site has been submitted (JN00432/BNG February 2022) which demonstrates that a net gain in both habitat and hedgerow units is achievable – a biodiversity Net Gain of 25.82 habitat units (10.67%) and 11.11 hedgerow units (557.74%) is achievable. The submission states that a detailed BNG Assessment will be prepared to support each phase of development and will be supported by a detailed 30-year Habitat Management Plan.
- 9.7 Subject to adhering to conditions the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regards to ecology and biodiversity and adheres to the development plan and NPPF in this regard.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework
Section 15

The Plan for Stafford Borough
Policies N1 (Design), N4 (The Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure), N5
(Sites of European, National & Local Nature Conservation Importance)

10.0 Arboriculture and Landscaping

- 10.1 Landscaping is a reserved matter and the landscape masterplan submitted with this application indicates that significant new planting would occur to the canal side buffer and southern part of the site. This would enhance the existing extensive landscaping around perimeter of the site. The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan also includes areas of open wildflower grassland, woodland edge wildflower planting, hedgerow planting as well as pond creation and wetland species planting. The proposed indicative landscaping is considered acceptable and further detail can be provided at reserved matters stage.
- 10.2 A detailed arboricultural survey and tree removal and protection plans have been submitted with the application. No category 'A' trees are to be removed and more than 80% of other category trees can be retained. The trees to be removed consist of 101 category 'B' trees and 40 category 'C' trees with overall percentages of trees to be retained being 81% category 'B' trees and 86% category 'C' trees. The Tree Officer has confirmed that he has no objections subject to the works being completed in accordance with the arboricultural assessment and the landscaping in accordance with the landscaping strategy. He recommends that conditions are required to ensure that all measures within the tree protection plans and arboricultural method statements are implemented and maintained, works are carried out outside the bird nesting season and that the landscaping is maintained and replanting is carried out where necessary over a five year period.
- 10.3 Overall, the landscaping and green infrastructure proposed on the site is acceptable and the proposals adhere to the development plan and NPPF in this regard.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework
Section 15

The Plan for Stafford Borough
Policies: N1 Design; N4 The natural environment & green infrastructure; N8
Landscape character

11.0 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's)

11.1 The application site is over 15km (16.8km) from the Cannock Chase SAC and 14.6km from the Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC; the Council's assessment of the proposed development under the habitat regulations, concludes that the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant negative impact upon the critical functions of the SACs' reasons of designation, either directly or indirectly, alone or in combination with other applications or approved developments. Whilst the proposed development will result in significant traffic movements which have the potential to raise NOx levels within the SACs' zone of influence, an assessment of traffic numbers and the air quality assessment submitted establishes that the thresholds set out in Natural England's guidance will not be met. Furthermore, Natural England raise no objection with regard to any other potential implications of the proposed development.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework
Paragraphs 179-182

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031
N6 (Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC))

12.0 Other matters

Canal and River Trust

12.1 The Canal and River Trust have objected to the application and raised a series of concerns some of which they state can be dealt with through submission of further information, inclusion within a Section 106 agreement and some via suitably worded conditions. The main issues which they raise are:-

- a) The structural stability of the canal infrastructure including Meaford Top Lock Bridge, Bridge 98
- b) The visual impact of the proposal on the canal Conservation Area
- c) The use of the canal towpath as an active travel route towards Stafford and Stoke
- d) The means of disposing of surface water
- e) The preservation and enhancement of ecology

As detailed above the developer is in continuing discussion with the Highway Authority regarding the bridge and measures that can be put in place. However, the Transport Assessment submitted demonstrates that the development will not generate significant additional traffic movements using the bridge and it would not therefore be reasonable to require the Applicant to enter into a section 106 agreement in this respect. An assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the canal Conservation Area, surface water disposal and ecological considerations has been carried out in the relevant sections of the report above and the revised details submitted are considered acceptable. A further link between the site and towpath is under consideration and details can be required by condition.

Land Contamination

- 12.2 The Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that the submitted land contamination reports are acceptable for the outline stage and that in principle the site is suitable for the developments proposed with mitigations. Further reports and ground investigation/ remediation can be required by condition.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Section 12

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031
Policy N1 (Design)

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Design

13.0 Planning balance and Conclusion

- 13.1 The proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt because it would not accord with the exception set out in paragraph 145 g) of the Framework. It would cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt and it would also not accord with the Green Belt purpose to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Paragraph 144 of the Framework states that substantial weight is to be 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. The other identified harm with respect to the proposed development is the identified less than substantial harm to heritage assets
- 13.2 In this case the very special circumstances associated with the development and benefits of the development are very substantial and substantial weight can be attached to them in the planning balance. They relate to the contribution of the proposal to the Council's employment land supply deliverability and the socio-economic benefits of the development, in accordance with the relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan, as well as the fact that there is an established fallback position for development of the site. It is therefore considered that these other considerations outweigh the harm identified and that there are very special circumstances which justify the development.
- 13.3 It is considered that the proposal is acceptable with regard to technical considerations and would not result in undue harm with regard to matters including amenity, highways, accessibility, ecology, or flood risk and it complies with The Plan for Stafford Borough and the National Planning Policy Framework in this respect. The proposed development would result in the requirement for a planning obligation to provide the Travel Plan monitoring fee.
- 13.4 As this is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, albeit that other considerations outweigh the harm identified and there are very special circumstances which justify the development, it is necessary if the application is not

to be refused to refer the application to the Secretary of State for him to determine whether to call-in the application for his own determination.

Consultations

Newt Officer

No objection and no further GCN information required, the applicant has provided proof of entry into Stafford Borough Council's District Licence Scheme via provision of a Naturespace Report and Initial Phase 1A Certificate. Informative recommended along with the conditions listed in the submitted report.

Natural England

Refer to standing advice - the application is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes. It is for the local planning authority to determine whether or not this application is consistent with national and local policies on the natural environment.

Biodiversity Officer

As requested in previous comments, an invertebrate study has been undertaken and a report produced.

The surveys found many notable species including new records for the county. The report notes that many of the significant species found on site are associated with wetlands. The planned Great Crested Newt mitigation works of a network of new ponds should have the additional benefit of maintaining and enhancing conditions for these species. This multifunctionality should be explored with management plan aims, if possible.

An Ecological Management Plan should be submitted detailing how environmental mitigation will be maintained in good condition. Monitoring would be helpful to assess the skipper populations post completion.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

The biodiversity metric calculator has not been provided, only a summary. This needs to be provided for review. It is promising that a net gain can be shown, but we need to be confident that the correct attributes have been assigned to habitats.

It is not clear why so much priority habitat is to be lost, when non-priority habitats on the site could be impacted in favour of retaining more high value areas.

Detailed comments on the revised information submitted but raise concerns with regards to loss of some habitat types – loss of priority habitat OMHPDL is not acceptable in this instance, because of the county importance of the site, and the scarce species it supports especially Grizzled skipper. The invertebrate species of note need to be retained on the site in the first instance, as well as providing habitat compensation offsite.

The slight revision of the proposed landscaping on site is welcomed but there needs to be greater provision of nonwoodland habitats. While we understand the need for visual mitigation, this could be achieved with use of landscaped bunds as well as

well placed trees and undergrowth- the current landscaping plans are too woodland based to maintain the most valuable habitat types on the site. It is indicated that further habitat detail would be provided at reserved matters stage, but this should be indicated more clearly on plans to be approved at this outline stage.

CIEEM EclA guidance includes use of local designation criteria to evaluate the value of sites- this has not been carried out, apart from with respect to birds. We advise that the majority of the proposal site should be considered a candidate local wildlife site of county importance. Other areas, such as blue line areas 8 and 4 also appear to be of high value and may also qualify. While this does not mean no development can occur, the proposals should aim to maintain this level of value when creating new habitats and ensure no reduction in overall area of LWS-value land post development. LWS assessment should also be built into ongoing monitoring.

Highways England

No comment response.

Highway Authority

No objection subject to conditions. The site benefits from extant outline planning permission for employment uses (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) (Ref 14/21379/EXTO), and much of the highway infrastructure work has already been agreed and implemented, such as the provision of the new Meaford roundabout in 2016, (Planning application 98/35897/OUT). The extant permission (Ref 14/21379/EXTO) has restrictions on its uses and floorspaces and this is changed under the new application. which will deliver a more flexible permission that can easily respond to changing circumstances and occupier demands.

Access, to the proposed development is provided from Meaford Road in the form of a 4-arm roundabout with Wash Dale Lane and Tower Road. To the north of this roundabout, Meaford Road is subject to a 50mph speed limit. To the south, it is subject to a 40mph speed limit. There is a 7.5t vehicle weight limit (except for access) on Meaford Road, immediately north of the existing northern site access.

Pedestrian / Cycle Access will be via wide shared footway/cycleway that will run adjacent to the internal spine road and provide access to each of the development plots. This will connect to the existing shared use route alongside Meaford Road, connecting to the A34. There are walking routes to and from the development to local bus stops and residential dwellings with the NCN Route 5, a traffic free cycle route, accessible from the site, providing a connection to the north and south via the canal towpath. Stone is situated within cycling distance of the site to the south. A regular bus services are accessible from the A34, providing connections to Stoke-on-Trent to the north and Stafford to the south.

The Transport Assessment provided by the developer has tested the capacity of three junctions on the local highway network, as requested with and without the Proposed Development. A34 / A51 Roundabout, Meaford Road / A34 Roundabout, Site Access / Meaford Road Roundabout. The modelling results demonstrate that each junction is forecast to operate well within capacity and therefore, the impact of the Proposed Development on the local highway network will not be severe and no additional mitigation is required.

The developer also considers that there are existing HGV traffic movement issues on Top Lock Bridge. However, the developer and the TA and have suggested this bridge should not encounter any increase in HGV usage from the proposed development but are working with the local highways authority to consider if there are any suitable solutions for Top Lock Bridge to resolve what is existing issues.

Canal and River Trust

The main issues relevant to the Trust as statutory consultee on this application are:

- a) The structural stability of the canal infrastructure including Meaford Top Lock Bridge, Bridge 98
- b) The visual impact of the proposal on the canal Conservation Area
- c) The use of the canal towpath as an active travel route towards Stafford and Stoke
- d) The means of disposing of surface water
- e) The preservation and enhancement of ecology

Further information is required to clarify 3 aspects of the proposal and to address other matters suitably worded conditions and a legal agreement are necessary.

Further information is required in connection with:-

- Meaford lock bridge – there has been an increase in traffic using the bridge since the roundabout was constructed causing damage. The CRT is working with SCC Highways to implement new signage. The impact of the development on the bridge must be addressed and mitigation costs covered by the developer.
- Access to towpath – footpath link proposed in Traffic Assessment. Condition on previous outline needs updating. Detailed comments provided on surfacing and accessibility to the canal.
- Visual impact – the parameter plans do not recognise the canal vegetation buffer as a key aspect of the development and of a separate character to other areas of Green Infrastructure. Concern that the 23m buffer between the canal and buildings is unlikely to be achievable for the majority of the buffer. This is important in order to comply with Policies SP7, N1 and N8.

Matters that can be dealt with by condition:

- Structural stability – there is a need to ensure that no additional burden is placed on the canal cutting and embankment infrastructure.
- Built heritage – the power station has been demolished and so there is the opportunity to be mindful of the listed and non-designated heritage assets within the canal corridor. The scale and massing of the proposed development will have impact is not appropriately mitigated – the landscaping needs careful design.
- Flood management – the culvert needs protecting both during and after development.
- Surface and foul water drainage details required by condition.
- Ecology – lighting strategy required by condition.

The Environmental Statement identifies potential risks to the canal as a receptor during the proposed works and it is noted that a CEMP will be produced which will

provide further details of mitigation measures. We request that the following matters are included within a CEMP condition:

- The protection of the canal and the towpath during the construction process.
- The protection of the water quality of the canal from windblown dust and litter during the demolition and construction process.
- The protection of the water quality of the canal from contaminated/silty surface water runoff during the construction process.

Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce

Support the application.

Design Advisor

While the change in the proposed maximum heights of the buildings within the northern part of the site from 25m to 18.5m would no doubt have a substantively reductive impact on the level of visual intrusion that the built form of the scheme would exert on its wider landscape setting, contextually, these buildings remain as being very large and tall, and though significantly reduced, would still present themselves as notable and potentially incongruent visual features within the locality. However, it is considered that further mitigation of the visual impact of these buildings could be achieved via an approach to the development of their detailed design that has the objective of “losing the development in the wider landscape” at its core. Having said that, it is acknowledged that achieving this objective 100% is an unrealistic expectation, utilising this objective as a driver for the detailed design of the buildings should nonetheless be required, and in this regard it is suggested that the following design aspects be considered and applied as appropriate and as agreed.

- Colour tones for materials of visible elements should match or be slightly darker than the tonality of the landscape background or context colours against which the development would be viewed, with external walls and roofs being of specific note.
- Patterning for the elevations to be selected to be visually recessive in relation to the prevalent landscape colouration in the locality and to visually “lighten” and reduce the bulk, height, and massing of the building.
- Lighting column heights and lighting generally should be kept to the minimum necessary for operation to minimise intrusive light spill.
- Consideration of alternative approach to building form, composition, height, massing.

Even if the above measures are put in place, elements of this scheme will still exert a relatively dominant and urbanising impact on its locality, but it is likely that if the above approach is applied and maintained through the further design development of the scheme, that an appropriate balance between the impacts and benefits of this scheme could be achieved.

The removal of the proposal to build-out the southern-most plot resolves the various concerns that were previously highlighted in relation to this plot/location as it essentially maintains the status quo. There remain concerns (as expressed in previous consultation responses), regarding improved connectivity to the canal towpath, and also in relation to future of the northern access gatehouse and route

into the site. Improvements to these aspects would be expected to be further highlighted and addressed at reserved matters stage.

On balance, the most recent alterations to the scheme (if accompanied by an ongoing commitment and/or condition to further mitigate the visual impact of the scheme through its detailed design), have likely nudged the proposals to a point where the negative impacts of the scheme could be sufficiently mitigated to be acceptable.

Environment Agency

We have reviewed the information submitted and have no objections to the proposed development. Comments made in respect of groundwater and contamination and land contamination survey condition required.

Proposed guidance notes recommended and the Applicant should be informed that an Environmental Permit may be required.

Lead Local Flood Authority We are now satisfied with the submitted proposals and have no objection to the granting of planning permission. We would however recommend that conditions requiring the development to accord with the approved drainage scheme and to ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made for the control of surface water are attached to any planning permission in order to secure the implementation of the scheme in accordance with the submitted documents.

Network Rail

No objections. Advise on measuring from tracks and railway boundary, fencing, encroachment, scaffolding, vibro-impact machinery, demolition, drainage, excavation, buffer gap, noise, trees, parking/ hardstanding areas. A Risk Assessment and Method Statement and Basic Asset Protection Agreement are required to be submitted directly to Network Rail.

Western Power Distribution

No objection in principle however the landowner/ developer should contact WPD prior to starting work as there may be WRD assets in the vicinity of the proposed works.

Coal Authority

The site is not located within a high risk area and so no comment.

Tree Officer

No objections subject to the works being completed in accordance with the arboricultural assessment and the landscaping in accordance with the landscaping strategy. Conditions required to ensure that all measures within the tree protection plans and arboricultural method statements are implemented and maintained, works outside the bird nesting season and that the landscaping is maintained and replanting is carried out where necessary over a five year period.

Historic England

Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds.

We recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and in line with the specialist advice of your archaeological and conservation advisors. It is not necessary for us to be consulted on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals.

Conservation Officer

Following the feedback of various consultees amended plans, documents and further information were submitted in late February 2022. The primary changes relevant to conservation include:

- The reduction in the maximum height to the buildings within the northern part of the site from 25m to 18.5m.
- The removal of proposed built form to the southern part of the site.
- The submission of additional information relating to the landscape visual impact of the proposed development, with the new heights.
- Reassurances around the landscape buffer between the canal and development, with an illustrative section.

The amendments and additional information, in particular the reduction in the density of development to the southern part of the site and the reduction of the maximum heights to the northern part of the site, have reduced impacts on the surrounding heritage including the two conservation areas, listed buildings and the Bury Bank Hillfort.

Notwithstanding these improvements, there is no doubt that the development will have a huge visual impact, particularly in its first decade or so before the tree planting has had chance to thicken and mature. However, consideration must be given to the previous use of the site as a power station which itself once had a very imposing impact on the landscape. In addition, the site is allocated in the Development Plan for the redevelopment of the currently vacant site for employment uses and will bring economic public benefits. There are also extant planning permissions for the redevelopment of the site for up to 110,000sqm of employment development, whereas the current proposals seek 96,932sqm of employment development.

Based on the above considerations, whilst it is undeniable that the proposed development will result in less than substantial harm to the setting of multiple heritage assets, it is considered, following the submission of the latest amendments, that the harm would be outweighed by the clear economic public benefits in this instance. In addition, there is a strong presumption in favour of development by virtue that the site is allocated for employment development in the Plan for Stafford Borough. Subsequently there is no conservation objection to the grant of outline consent; more detailed consideration of how the heritage impacts of the development can be mitigated through sensitive design and landscaping can be assessed at reserved matters stage.

Staffordshire County Council Archaeologist

No objections following submission of desk-based assessment and no further archaeological evaluation works are required.

Severn Trent Water

No objection to proposed drainage.

Environmental Health Officer

Land Contamination:

The land contamination reports are acceptable for our purposes at outline. In principle the site is suitable for the developments proposed with mitigations. It is noted that asbestos as fibres in soils in general has been identified and that asbestos in bulk in former disposal areas has been identified. Further investigations are to be carried out for general land contaminants and it is recommended for asbestos fibres in particular. Remediations should be proposed with particular considerations for any bulk asbestos disposal areas.

Air Quality:

The Operational Air Quality Report is satisfactory for our purposes at outline. It is recommended that a Construction Air Quality Report is submitted which assesses the impacts of the construction phase and in particular dust. Consideration should be given to the potential release of asbestos fibres in air with preferably reassurance perimeter monitoring.

Lighting:

High intensity lighting impacts both during construction and operationally should be considered at full application.

Noise:

The report is satisfactory in principle for our purposes and the methodologies contained are agreed. I note the option for a S61 agreement where necessary. Additional specific mitigations may be recommended once detailed proposals are presented.

Parish Council

The comments for RM application reflect those of outline. In particular:

- Concerns regarding an increase in traffic through the narrow access at Top Lock Bridge and the surrounding lanes.
- Pedestrian access along Meaford Lane from the A34, ensuring that there is pedestrian access on both sides of the road.
- Protecting the biodiversity along the canal side and reinforcing a buffer zone between the development and the canal to reduce visual intrusion.

Neighbours

(97 consulted): 9 responses: Material planning considerations summarised below:

- Concern over buildings on southern part of site/ loss of open and important grassland
- Scale of proposed buildings and number to be in warehousing use
- Design and impact on rural location
- Impact on canal corridor, height of buildings, inadequate buffer and impact on visual amenity/ Conservation Area
- Landscape impact
- HGV traffic relate to warehousing use
- Traffic generation and traffic levels on A34

- Disturbance from increased night-time traffic
- Highway safety
- Additional use of towpath – already conflict between bikes and pedestrians
- Noise
- Felling of trees
- Water supply of neighbouring property crosses site

Two neighbour letters withdrawing previously expressed concerns and echoing views of residents' association.

Meaford Residents Association

Original response – general concerns raised about scale of proposed development and particular issues raised – impact on southern grass area, impact on canal conservation area from height of buildings and further buffer required, height of buildings proposed in general on site, transport and access, water and flood risk, land contamination, biodiversity.

Follow up regarding southern grassland – plans subsequently amended.

Concerns raised regarding the inability to include a footpath link, concerns regarding the objections from the Canal and River Trust and the Conservation Officer and the outstanding newt issue.

17.03.22 – Withdraw objection - In summary, we welcome the positive steps that are reflected in the amended Planning Application but ask that our residual observations and concerns receive your consideration (South grassland, canal side, remainder of site, transport and biodiversity)

Barlaston Bowls and Tennis Club

Support the proposals

Site Notice expiry date: 09.12.2021

Newsletter Advert expiry date: 15.12.2021

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

92/28855/FUL	Change of use to general industrial (Buildings A and B) – Approved 28.04.1993
93/29617/FUL	Provision of 6 starter units offices studio workshops light ind units engineering w/shop in existing complex – Approved 25.08.1993
98/35897/OUT	Change of use to B1 B2 & B8 buildings sports facilities roadways and new roundabout – Approved 01.05.2007
00/39127/FUL	Change of use to open storage (retrospective application) – Approved 14.07.2000

06/06211/FUL	Demolition of existing switch house and installation of new switch house and extension of existing palisade compound. – Approved 31.05.2006
08/09601/FUL	Variation of conditions 3, 6, 7, 12, 16, 17, 19 and 20 of outline planning permission ref: 35897 to enable the phased development of the site – Approved 10.03.2008
08/09816/FUL	Rebuilding of existing substation site – Approved 17.04.2008
08/10097/REM	Reserved matters to permission 98/35897/OUT- Phase 1 - Development of southern access roundabout to Meaford Road, together with associated landscaping and balancing pond. – Approved 04.07.2008
08/10757/DCON	Discharge of Condition 18 on permission 35897 – 24.06.2010
09/12663/FUL	Variation of condition 22 on approved application 35897 - Outline Planning Permission for B1 B2 & B8 Buildings, Sports Facilities, Roadways and New Roundabout – Approved 23.12.2009
10/13609/EXT	Extension of time on 35897 - Change Of Use To B1 B2 & B8 Buildings Sports Facilities Roadways And New Roundabout – Approved 21.07.2010
14/20993/SCG	Construction of a new access to an employment area together with associated highway improvements including a new roundabout, footpath/cycleway, lighting and landscaping – Approved 16.01.2014
14/21379/EXTO	Extension of time on Outline Planning permission number 98/35897/OUT as previously extended by planning approval number 10/13609/EXT (Change of use to B1, B2 and B8 buildings, roadways and new roundabout) – Approved 07.05.2015
15/22557/REM	Reserved matters for layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for the development of an estate spine road and associated drainage for the development pursuant to outline planning permission 14/21379/EXTO. An Environmental statement was submitted under the original permission. – Approved 06.10.2015
15/22560/REM	Reserved Matters on application 14/21379/EXTO (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) – Refused 06.10.2015
15/23404/REM	Reserved matters for layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for the development of Unit 3 pursuant to outline planning permission 14/21379/EXTO – Approved 23.06.2016
SI 0000 of 2016	Development Consent Order (DCO) for the construction of Meaford Energy Centre ('MEC'): a gas-fired power station, including an exhaust stack 50m in height and built form and other

infrastructure up to 35m in height (noting that the deadline for implementing the DCO has now expired).

- 16/24777/DCON Discharge of conditions 15 and 17 of 14/21379/EXTO – 29.09.2017
- 16/24824/DCON Discharge of condition 7 (part A) of 14/21379/EXTO - 22.03.2017
- 16/24929/DCON Discharge of condition 19 on application 14/21379/EXTO for Unit 3 Phase - 02.11.2016
- 16/24975/DCON Discharge of conditions 20, 23 and 24 on application 14/21379/EXTO - 28.02.2017
- 16/25011/DCON To discharge condition 22 of planning permission for application 14/21379/EXTO - 28.02.2017
- 16/25058/DCON Discharge of condition 25 of 14/21379/EXTO - 19.12.2016
- 16/25423/AMN Non-Material Amendment to application 15/23404/REM – Approved 17.01.2017
- 17/26821/DCON Discharge condition 6 of application 15/23404/REM - 24.08.2017
- 17/26998/DCON Discharge of condition 16 on application 14/21379/EXTO - 29.09.2017
- 17/27506/REM Reserved Matters for layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for the development of Units 4 and 5 pursuant to outline planning permission 14/21379/EXTO. – Approved 05.02.2018
- 17/27768/DCON Discharge of conditions 7, 17, 18, 19 and 25 on application 14/21379/EXTO - 10.04.2018
- 18/29088/REM Reserved matters for layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for the development a foul pumping station and attenuation pond pursuant to outline planning permission 14/21379/EXTO – Approved 10.01.2019

Recommendation

Approve, subject to no intervention by the Secretary of State, a planning obligation to provide a Travel Plan monitoring fee, and to conditions

1. Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of eight years from the date of this permission.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.
3. This outline permission relates to the following drawings and documents:
 - Outline Site Boundary Plan BM-M-03
 - Land Use Parameter Plan BM-M-06 Rev M
 - Maximum Building Heights Parameter Plan BM-M-08 Rev L
 - Demolition Plan-Layout 29989 - BM-M-12
 - Design and Access Statement - Feb 2022
 - Transport Assessment Addendum - Version 2
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy - Version B
 - Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment - Rev 02
 - Outline Ecological Mitigation Strategy - February 2022
 - Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement - February 2022
 - Environmental Statement - Amended February 2022
 - Air Quality Assessment - October 2021
 - Geo-environmental Desk Study - October 2021
 - Sustainability Report - October 2021
 - Framework Travel Plan - October 2021
4. This is an outline planning permission and no phase of development (as per condition 5) shall be commenced until details of access within the site, the layout of all buildings and structures, the scale of the buildings, the appearance of the buildings including materials to be used on the external surfaces and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called the "reserved matters") of that phase have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority by way of reserved matters application(s). The phase of development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
5. Before or alongside the submission of the first Reserved Matters application, pursuant to Condition 4, a scheme for the phasing of the development of the entire site shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be undertaken in substantial accordance with the approved phasing plan.
6. This permission relates to the provision of up to 96 932 square metres of Use Classes E(g)(iii) (any industrial process) /B2 (general industrial) / B8 (storage or distribution) floor space and up to 2 hectares of battery storage (Use Class Sui Generis). The development of buildings shall be contained wholly within a collective footprint of 93,172 square metres and within an area not to exceed 32.53 hectares of the site.
7. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, (or any Order revoking and re-enacting those Orders with or without modification), no development consisting of a building enlargement within Part 7 Class H of the Order shall be carried out without the prior permission by application of the Local Planning Authority.

8. No phase of the development shall commence until a scheme to facilitate the safe and effective movement of pedestrians and cyclists for that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter no part of the development on that phase shall be brought into use until the approved scheme has been implemented.
9. No alterations shall be made to the existing closed gated access point to the south of the existing National Grid substation onto Meaford Road or any subsequent use as an emergency access thereof unless in accordance with details to be submitted and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
10. No phase of development (as per condition 5) shall commence until a surface water drainage scheme for that phase, and its relationship with the whole site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage strategy shall be based upon the principles set out in the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (Rev B, 9th February 2022) and shall include maintenance and management details. The phase(s) shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the phase(s) is completed and shall be retained and maintained in line with the approved details thereafter.
11. Prior to commencement of a phase (as per condition 5), details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority setting out satisfactory arrangements for the control of surface water as part of any temporary works associated with the permanent development, to ensure that flood risk is not increased prior to the completion of the approved drainage strategy. The measures as approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to commencement of that phase and retained until the permanent drainage strategy under condition [11] is implemented.
12. No phase of development (as per condition 5) shall be occupied until a foul drainage strategy has been implemented in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
13. Prior to the commencement of any phase of development (as per condition 5) the following components of a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority:
 - a) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified: (i) all previous uses (ii) potential contaminants associated with those uses (iii) a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors (iv) potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site;
 - b) A site investigation scheme, based on (a) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site;

- c) The site investigation results and the detailed risk assessment (b) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken; and
- d) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in (c) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.
- e) A verification report demonstrating that the details agreed under (c) and (d) have been carried out.

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

- 14. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition [12], and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition [12], which is subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority.
- 15. Prior the formation of building foundations in a particular phase (as per condition 5), a noise assessment, including building fabric mitigation measures as necessary, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any approved mitigation for the phase shall be carried out in full prior to first occupation of any building within that phase.
- 16. Before any external plant and/or machinery is used on any building, details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority setting out the specification(s) and any noise mitigation measures. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and be thereafter maintained.
- 17. No phase of the development (as per condition 5) shall commence until full details of existing ground levels, proposed ground levels and finished floor levels of the proposed buildings for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
- 18. No phase of the development (as per condition 5) shall commence until details of all external lighting for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The phase shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
- 19. No phase of the development (as per condition 5) shall commence until an air quality assessment for the whole site is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted Construction Air Quality Report must assess the impacts of the construction phase and in particular dust and the potential release of asbestos fibres in air.

20. No phase of the development (as per condition 5) shall be occupied until a Landscape Management Plan for the whole site is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping carried out for each phase in accordance with condition [4] shall be informed and managed in accordance with the approved Landscape Management Plan.
21. No phase of the development (as per condition 5) shall commence until details of all proposed boundary treatments for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The phase shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
22. Prior to occupation of the first unit within the first phase of development (as per condition 5) the picnic area (south of Turnover Bridge as identified on the Land Use Parameter Plan as Green Infrastructure Adjacent to Canal) shall be delivered in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The picnic area shall be thereafter be retained for use by the public in accordance with the approved details .
23. Prior to commencement of the second phase of development (as per condition 5), details of a footpath link/s to the edge of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall also include wayfinding measures around direct active travel links with the National Cycle Network from the northern portion of the site to aid the convenience of access to/from the site from Barlaston / Trentham / Stoke. The submitted documents shall include details of the proposed timing of the creation of the footpath link. The measures shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation of the final unit within the final phase of development and shall be retained thereafter.
24. No phase of the development (as per condition 5) shall commence unless and until a Habitat Management and Ecological Mitigation Plan, broadly in accordance with the Outline Ecological Mitigation Strategy (dated February 2022), has been submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The approved mitigation measures shall be thereafter implemented for each phase and managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.
25. Prior to the demolition of the buildings as shown on Plan 29989-BM-M-12, a Method Statement, including details of ecological protections, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The demolition shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved Method Statement.
26. Prior to the commencement of any phase of construction (as per condition 5), including demolition, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved CEMP shall include details relating to the following:
 - Construction access
 - Hours of construction

Routing of HGVs and delivery times

Location of the contractors' compounds, cabins, material storage areas and contractors parking

32. No development hereby permitted shall take place except in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Council's organisational licence (WML-OR112, or a 'Further Licence') and with the proposals detailed on plan "Meaford Business Park: Impact Plan for great crested newts District Licensing (Version 3)", dated 3rd March 2023.
33. No development hereby permitted (except those impacts shown on Sheet 1 of plan "Meaford Business Park: Impact Plan for great crested newts District Licensing (Version 3)", dated 3rd March 2023, and except those habitat proposals shown on Sheet 1 of plan "Meaford Business Park: HMMP Map for great crested newts District Licensing (Version 3)", dated 3rd March 2023) shall take place unless and until a certificate from the Delivery Partner (as set out in the District Licence WML-OR112, or a 'Further Licence'), confirming that all necessary measures regarding great crested newt compensation have been appropriately dealt with, has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority and the authority has provided authorisation for the development to proceed under the district newt licence. The Delivery Partner certificate shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved.
34. No development hereby permitted shall take place except in accordance with Part 1 of the GCN Mitigation Principles, as set out in the District Licence WML-OR112 (or a 'Further Licence') and in addition in compliance with the following:
- Works to existing ponds onsite may only be undertaken during autumn/winter, unless otherwise in accordance with the GCN Mitigation Principles.
 - Works which will affect likely newt hibernacula may only be undertaken during the active period for amphibians.
 - Capture methods shall be used at suitable habitat features prior to the commencement of the development (i.e., hand/destructive/night searches), which may include the use of temporary amphibian fencing, to prevent newts moving onto a development site from adjacent suitable habitat, installed for the period of the development (and removed upon completion of the development).
 - Amphibian fencing and pitfall trapping shall be undertaken at suitable habitats and features, prior to commencement of the development.
 - The recommendations in report "Meaford Business Park District Licence HMMP -- Red Line and Blue Line (Version 6)", dated 3rd March 2023, and on map "Meaford Business Park Phase 1A and 1B: HMMP Map for great crested newts District Licensing (Version 3)", dated 3rd March 2023, provided as part of the planning application shall be complied with.

The reasons for the Council's decision to approve the development subject to the above conditions are:

1. To comply with the requirements of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
2. To comply with the requirements of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
3. To define this outline permission
4. To comply with the requirements of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
5. To define the permission in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7, E5, N1, N4, N8, N9, TI and T2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
6. To define the permission and to ensure that the subsequent development has no greater impact upon the openness of the green belt or the purposes of including land within it than the extant outline permission, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7, E5, N1, N4, N8, N9, TI and T2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
7. In order to allow the Local Authority to retain a degree of control over the development in the interests of safeguarding the appearance of the area, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7 and N4 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
8. In the interests of highway safety and to ensure that related highway works are designed and constructed to acceptable standards at the appropriate time and to provide sufficient capacity on the trunk and road highway network, in accordance with the requirements of Policies TI and T2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
9. In the interests of highway safety and to ensure that related highway works are designed and constructed to acceptable standards at the appropriate time and to provide sufficient capacity on the trunk and road highway network, in accordance with the requirements of Policies TI and T2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
10. To prevent the increased risk of flooding in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7 and N2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
11. To prevent the increased risk of flooding in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7 and N2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. In order to ensure an appropriate method of disposing of foul water from the development which will not pose a risk to the water environment, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7 and N2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy.
13. To protect against contamination of the water environment, specifically the River Trent and the underlying aquifer, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7 and N2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
14. To protect against contamination of the water environment, specifically the River Trent and the underlying aquifer, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7 and N2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
15. To protect residential amenity in accordance with the requirements of Policy N1 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
16. To protect residential amenity in accordance with the requirements of Policy N1 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
17. To ensure that the development is not detrimental to the landscape, green belt and adjacent Conservation Area, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7, N1, N8 and N9 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
18. To ensure that the development is not detrimental to the landscape, green belt and adjacent Conservation Area, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7, N1, N8 and N9 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
19. To protect residential amenity in accordance with the requirements of Policy N1 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
20. To ensure that the development is not detrimental to the landscape, green belt and adjacent Conservation Area, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7, N1, N8 and N9 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
21. To ensure that the development is not detrimental to the landscape, green belt and adjacent Conservation Area, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7, N1, N8 and N9 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
22. In the interests of public amenity and to ensure that the development is not detrimental to the landscape, green belt and adjacent Conservation Area, in

- accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7, N1, N8 and N9 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
23. In the interests of promoting sustainable travel, in accordance with the requirements of Policies T1 and T2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 24. In the interests of safeguarding protected wildlife, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7 and N4 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 25. In the interests of safeguarding protected wildlife, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7 and N4 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 26. In the interests of protecting amenity, water quality and highway safety, in accordance with the requirements of Policies T1, T2, SP7, N2 and N4 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 27. In the interests of promoting sustainable travel, in accordance with the requirements of Policies T1 and T2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 28. To ensure that the existing culvert, which enables the regulation of water levels in the canal, can continue to operate to minimise the risk of flooding in the locality, and to comply with Policies N1, N2, N4 & N5 of the Plan for Stafford Borough and the advice and guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework in paragraphs 152, 153, 167 & 169.
 29. To ensure that the development is not detrimental to the landscape, green belt and adjacent Conservation Area, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7, N1, N8 and N9 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 30. In the interests of safeguarding protected wildlife, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7 and N4 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 31. To ensure that the development is not detrimental to the landscape, green belt and adjacent Conservation Area, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SP7, N1, N8 and N9 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 32. In order to ensure that adverse impacts on great crested newts are adequately mitigated and to ensure that site works are delivered in full compliance with the Organisational Licence (WML-OR112, or a 'Further Licence'), paragraphs 179 and 185 of the National Planning Policy

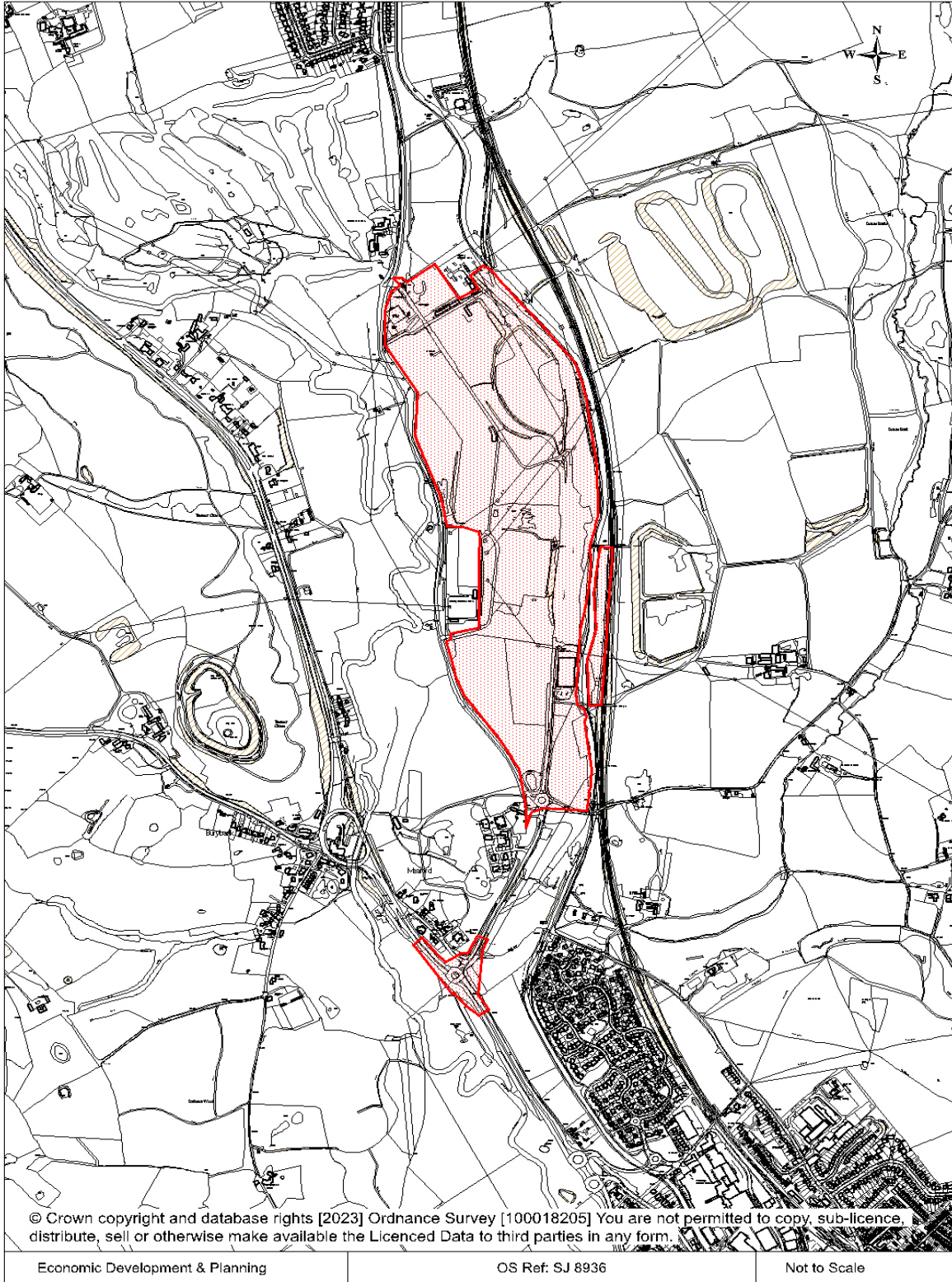
Framework, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

33. To adequately compensate for negative impacts to great crested newts, and in line with paragraphs 179 and 185 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
34. In order to ensure that adverse impacts on great crested newts are adequately mitigated and to ensure that site works are delivered in full compliance with the Organisational Licence (WML-OR112, or a 'Further Licence'), paragraphs 179 and 185 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 This permission is subject to a Section 106 Agreement to secure the approved Travel Plan and the Travel Plan Monitoring Fee (£11,325). The Travel Plan monitoring fee is required to support the developer's Travel Plan Coordinator and audit annual monitoring reports to ensure the Travel Plan outcomes are being achieved.
- 2 The applicant/developer is advised to contact the Canal & River Trust in order to ensure that any necessary consents are obtained, and the works are compliant with the Trust's current "Code of Practice for Works Affecting the Canal & River Trust". For further advice please contact Susan Higton, Works Engineer on Susan.Higton@canalrivertrust.org.uk in the first instance.
- 3 The applicant/developer is advised to contact the Canal & River Trust's Estates Team to discuss all land ownership matters relating to the development and to ensure all necessary commercial agreements with the Trust are in place. Please contact Jeff Peake, Estates Surveyor, at Jeff.Peake@canalrivertrust.org.uk in the first instance.
- 4 The applicant/developer is advised to contact the Canal & River Trust's Utilities Team to discuss any surface water discharges from the development to the adjacent canal, including any continued use of existing discharges, as it may be necessary to obtain a fresh agreement from the Trust to do so. Please contact Philippa Walker, Regional Utilities Surveyor, at Philippa.Walker@canalrivertrust.org.uk in the first instance.

**21/35159/OUT
Former Meaford Power Station
Meaford Road
Meaford**



Application:	22/36826/FUL
Case Officer:	Jessica Allsopp
Date Registered:	23 February 2023
Target Decision Date:	25 May 2023
Extended To:	3 June 2023
Address:	Land To The West Of Holdiford Road, Stafford, Staffordshire
Ward:	Milford
Parish:	Berkswich
Proposal:	Change of use of land to form two dog exercise fields including formation of hardstanding for vehicle parking
Applicant:	Mr P Hunter
Recommendation:	Approve, subject to conditions.

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application site:

The application site forms two agricultural fields measuring around 4 hectares. The site is accessed off Holdiford Road via an existing gated access that was granted approval in 2017 under permission 17/27142/FUL.

The application site is located in close proximity to Shugborough Estate which forms a Grade I listed building and parks and garden. Other constraints of the site include being the Staffs and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area and is within close proximity to the Cannock Chase AONB. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and within 8km of Cannock Chase SAC.

The proposal:

The application seeks to gain planning consent for the change of use of this agricultural land to a dog walking field including associated hardstanding for parking and access into the site.

The application mentions details of a 1.9m high fence that surrounds the application site for security and a moveable field shelter that the applicant has stated will move every 28 days. These parts of the application fall under the remits of permitted development and as such the impact of these elements cannot be assessed under this application.

The site would be split into two separate dog walking fields that utilise a pre-booking system.

Officer Assessment – Key Considerations

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) sets out that the determination of applications must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan comprises of The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031, The Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 2011-2031.

1 Principle of Development

The application site lies within the rural parish of Berkswich, which is not defined as a Key Service Village within the sustainable settlement hierarchy within the Plan for Stafford Borough.

The proposal would result in a loss of the land with an agricultural classification of grade 4 (poor quality agricultural land) to a dog exercise area.

Policy E2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough supports rural development outside settlements in circumstances including; (v) diversification of the agricultural economy and (vii) recreation uses appropriate to a rural location. All development is subject to a number of safeguarding limitations, particularly relevant in this case are: (c) complementary to and not prejudice any existing viable agricultural or other uses; (d) respect and protect the natural landscape; (f) be appropriately designed for its purposes; and (g) not be detrimental to the amenity of the area.

The proposed use is a dog walking and exercising facility, that would provide a service for the local and wider community. Owing to its size, it could be acceptable as a form of rural diversification as it would not prejudice any existing or future viable agricultural or other uses on site. It is also noted that the quality of land is graded as poor by Natural England and as such it is considered to be land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops or level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (for example cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. As such it is not considered that the loss of this land as agricultural land to an appropriate use is acceptable.

As such the principle of this development is considered to be acceptable.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Paragraphs 8 & 11

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031 – Policies SP3 Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy, SP7 Supporting the Location of New Development, C5 Residential Developments outside the Settlement Hierarchy

2 Character & Appearance

Policy N1 of TPSB requires new development demonstrate a high standard of design which is considerate of local context, density and landscape. Consideration has therefore been given to the proposals visual impact upon the site and its setting.

The application site is within the open countryside comprising a large, mostly flat, arable field within the rural parish of Berkswich. The site is within the setting of the Shugborough Estate, a Grade I listed park and garden and listed building. The site is also within close proximity to the Cannock Chase AONB and the Staffs and Worcestershire Canal Conservation area. The site is bounded by open fields to the north and west, Shugborough Estate to the east (separated by Holdiford Road) and a railway line to the south separating the site from Main Road, Milford some 50m beyond.

Policy N7 of TPSB states that the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and scenic beauty of the Cannock Chase AONB is of primary importance. Any proposals for new development (including changes of use), within or likely to adversely affect the landscape and scenic beauty of Cannock Chase AONB or its setting, will only be allowed where the proposal will enhance the visual, nature conservation and/or historic assets of the landscape.

The AONB Officer has objected to the proposed development on the basis of an excessive height for fencing, size and materials of the moveable shelter and the proposed hardstanding. It is noted that the Conservation Officer and the Inland Waterway have objected to the proposal on similar grounds.

The objections relating to the fence and the moveable field shelter are not relevant to this proposal as although they are related to the application they fall under the remits of permitted development.

It is considered that a tarmacked access track and hardstanding for car parking would look incongruous within the surrounding area given its rural setting. It is noted however that this forms an imperative part of the proposal to form safe and adequate highway safety measures for the proposed development. It is therefore considered that a condition shall be added to any consent granted that the hardstanding shall be provided in grasscrete or similar to overcome any objections from the aforementioned consultees.

With the recommended condition it is not considered that the proposed development would have a harmful impact upon the rural nature of the site or the surrounding sensitive areas.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Design Guidance (NDG)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Section 12. Achieving well-designed places

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031 – Policies N1 Design, N7, Cannock Chase AONB, N8 Landscape Character, N9 Historic Environment

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Design

3 Amenity

Policy N1 of TPSB requires the design and layout of development to take account of noise and light implications and amenity of adjacent residential areas.

The application site is bounded by agricultural land to the west and north and to the east lies the Shugborough estate on the opposite site of Holdiford Road. To the south lies the rural settlement of Milford. The site is separated from Main Road, Milford by a railway line with the back of the plots abutting the southern part of the railway line. The closest dwelling to the application site is 52 Main Road which is sited to the rear of its plot. 52 Main Road is sited 45m south of the application site. It is considered that given the distance of the application site to the nearby dwellings that there would be no breach of the councils amenity guidelines or any noise implications.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Design Guidance (NDG)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Paragraph 130

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031 – Policy N1 Design

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Design

4 Highway Safety

Policy T2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough states that all new development must have a safe and adequate means of access and internal circulation; not have unacceptable highway safety impacts and provide sufficient parking provision.

The application site uses an existing site access which was granted permission in 2017. The Highways Officer raises no objection to the change of use in relation to the change of use of this land in relation to the access.

Two areas of hardstanding shall be provided alongside an access track through the site. there would be a total of 15 car parking spaces to be provided across both car parks providing parking for both fields. The Highways Officer details that there is sufficient parking for the use of the field via use of a pre-booking system and 5-10 minute turnaround time between sessions.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Design Guidance (NDG)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Section 9. Promoting sustainable transport

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031 – Policies T1 Transport, T2 Parking and Manoeuvring Facilities, Appendix B – Car Parking Standards

5 Habitats Regulations Assessments

Under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, the Local Planning Authority as the competent authority, must have further consideration to the impact of this development, in this case, due to the relative proximity, on the Cannock Chase SAC and Pasturefields Salt Marshes. The LPA have completed a Habitats Regulation Assessment which concludes that given the nature and scale of the proposal the development is not considered have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC. On this basis, it is concluded that the LPA have met its requirements as the competent authority, as required by the Regulations and therefore the proposal will comply with the requirements of the Development Plan and the NPPF in this regard.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs 179-182

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB) 2011-2031 N5 Sites of European, National & Local Nature Conservation Importance & N6 (Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC))

6 Ecology

A preliminary ecological appraisal has been submitted with the application. This report identifies the ecological value of the site, looking at protected species as well as habitats.

The report notes that the proposed development is small-scale and that whilst there are nearby surrounding habitats of significant value, none would be impacted by the proposal provided that noise and artificial nocturnal lighting are not inappropriate. It also notes that mitigation pollution measures should be secured and adhered to at all times.

The application site is considered to be poor botanically and removal of arable land represents no ecological constraint to the proposed development.

The report considers reptiles, bats and Great Crested Newts. No further reports are requested. The report makes a number of recommendations including those relating to lighting, trees, bats and nesting birds.

The Biodiversity Officer has been consulted and he comments that there are no habitats of significant ecological value on site.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

The Plan for Stafford Borough (TPSB)

N4 The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure

7 Flooding

The application site falls within Flood Zone 1, however as the site is larger than 1 hectare a flood risk assessment has been submitted to supplement the application. It concludes that although the site area is relatively large, the application principally proposes the change of use of the land from agricultural to two dog exercise fields. As such, there will be no change to the land itself. It will remain grassland and there will be no impact upon runoff or drainage.

The Flood Risk Management Team have not provided comment on this application.

8 Conclusion

The proposed dog walking facility would form an appropriate re-use of Grade 4 agricultural land within the open countryside and as such is supported by Policy E2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.

The proposed development would not result in harm to the surrounding sensitive sites such as the Cannock Chase AONB, the Shugborough Estate or the Staffs and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area subject to conditions relating to the materials of the proposed hardstanding.

The proposal provides adequate onsite parking facilities and a safe means of access into the site and would not result in undue harm to the residential amenity of any neighbouring dwellings.

As such it is recommended that permission is granted for this development.

Consultations

Highways:

I have no objection (on Highway grounds) to the proposed development.

Flood Team:

No response received.

Conservation Officer:

In summary, whilst the principle of change of use to dog exercise fields is acceptable from a conservation perspective, as is the erection of mesh deer fencing, the proposed hardstanding for the car parking area and access to the western dog field would constitute an urbanising encroachment into the rural and verdant character and setting of the listed buildings and the canal conservation area and would result in less than substantial harm, to the degree of moderate harm to the designated heritage assets. In addition, insufficient information has been supplied with regards to the proposed field shelter, which could further impact the setting of the designated heritage assets.

The proposals in their current form are therefore contrary to paragraphs 200 and 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. In addition, the proposals fail to satisfy Section 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which places particular emphasis on the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their setting and conserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. There is a conservation objection to the application in its current form.

Bio-diversity Officer:

Fauna Forest Ecology undertook a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal during 2022. There are no habitats of significant ecological value on site.

Newt Officer:

Awaiting response

Canal and River Trust:

The applicant/developer is advised to contact the Canal and River Trust in order to ensure that any necessary consents are obtained, and the works are compliant with the Trusts current "Code of Practice Works affecting the Canal and River Trust.

AONB:

Conditional objection on the basis

- Excessive height of and use of fencing
- Hardstanding and car parking subdividing the area
- Size, proposed materials for the movable shelter referred to in the Planning Statement
- Lack of mitigation

Inland Waterway:

In view of the above negative impacts on the heritage and amenity value of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, its Conservation Area and its Listed Aqueduct, IWA objects to this planning application.

These adverse impacts could be reduced by removing the 'Field West' along with its fencing and car park from the scope of the application. The impacts on the heritage setting of the Aqueduct could then be further mitigated by better screening of the northwest corner of 'Field East' with a length of strengthened native woodland tree and shrub planting behind the canal towpath and adjacent to the river boundary. With these significant changes, the proposed dog exercise usage of the 'Field East' part of the site could be made more acceptable.

Parish Council: Berkswich Parish Council has no objection in principle to the proposed change of use but would be opposed to any subsequent proposal to introduce external lighting.

The Parish Council is concerned at the potentially harmful visual intrusion of the proposed 'deer fence' especially where it will be readily visible crossing the centre of this open site, and in the setting of the canal conservation area along the riverbank between the grade II listed Holdiford Aqueduct and Holdiford Lane. The Parish Council suggests that if permission is to be granted for the change of use a condition be imposed requiring tree planting adjacent to the new fence in the centre of the site, and the planting of a screen hedge of suitable native species along the riverbank between Holdiford Aqueduct and Holdiford Road to mitigate its impact.

Site Notice:

Expiry date: 13.04.2023

Newsletter Advert:

Expiry date: 19.04.2023

Relevant Planning History

- 17/27142/FUL - Alteration of access – Permit – 05.12.2017

Recommendation

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.
2. This permission relates to the originally submitted details and specification and to the following drawings, except where indicated otherwise by a condition attached to this consent, in which case the condition shall take precedence:-
Drawing Number - R0297-001 P2, R0297-002 P1, R0297-003 P0
3. Notwithstanding any details and specifications submitted, full details of the proposed materials to be used for the areas of hardstanding shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to their installation. The development shall thereafter be carried out and retained in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
4. The parking and turning areas shown on drawing R0297-001 P2 shall be provided prior to the development being brought into use and shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.
5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, no external lighting shall be provided within or on the boundaries of the site, without the prior written permission, on application, of the Local Planning Authority.
6. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations set out in the preliminary ecological appraisal by Fauna Forest Ecology dated February 2023.
7. Before the development is first brought into use, suitable receptacles for the disposal of dog waste shall be provided within the exercise field and the car parking area (or such other locations as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) and shall thereafter be retained as such for the life of the development.
8. The site shall only be used for the approved purpose of supervised dog exercising between the hours 08.00-20.00 during the months of March to August, and 08.00-16.00 during the months of September to February.

The reasons for the Council's decision to approve the development subject to the above conditions are:

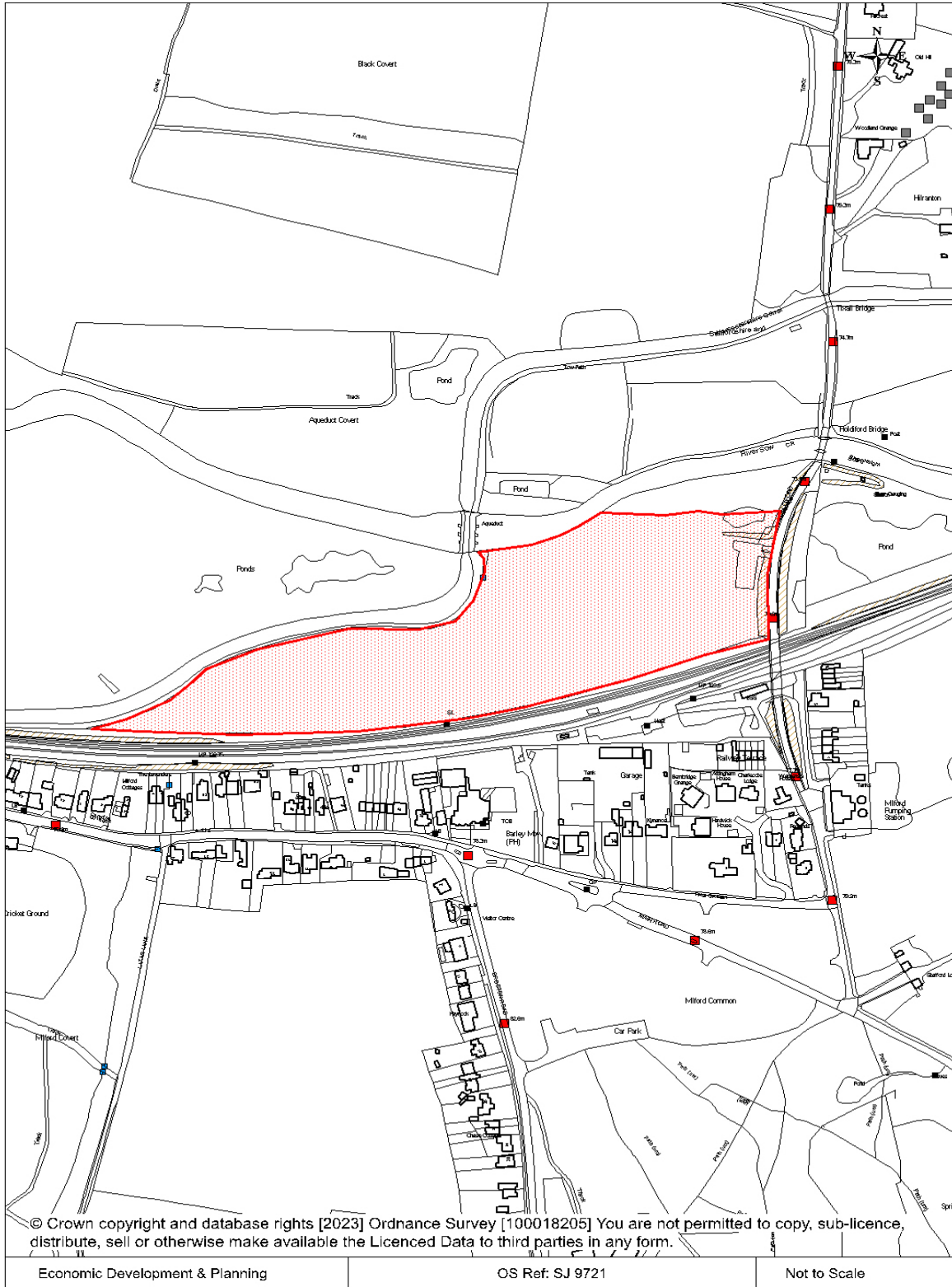
1. To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. To define the permission.
3. To safeguard the character and appearance of the area (Policy N1h of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
4. To ensure the provision of adequate off-street facilities in the interests of the convenience and safety of users of the highway. (Policy T2d of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
5. To safeguard the amenities of the area (Policy N1e of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
6. In order to ensure that the development does not have a detrimental impact on protection species or matters of biodiversity importance (Policy N4 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
7. To safeguard the amenities of the area (Policy N1e of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
8. To safeguard the amenities of the area (Policy N1e of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Order) 2015, as amended, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, the Council has worked in a positive and proactive way in determining the application and has granted planning permission.
- 2 The applicant/developer is advised to contact the Canal and River Trust in order to ensure that any necessary consents are obtained, and the works are compliant with the Trusts current "Code of Practice Works affecting the Canal and River Trust.

22/36826/FUL Land To The West Of Holdiford Road Stafford



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Economic Development & Planning

OS Ref: SJ 9721

Not to Scale