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 Tuesday 12 November 2019 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 11.00am 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.

Interim Head of Law and Administration
SPECIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

(LARGE SCALE MAJOR APPLICATION)

12 NOVEMBER 2019

Chairman - Councillor R M Sutherland
Vice-Chairman - Councillor A S Harp

A G E N D A

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MEMBERSHIP

Chairman - Councillor R M Sutherland

B M Cross   W J Kemp
M G Dodson   A Nixon
A P Edgeller A N Pearce
A S Harp    M Phillips
A D Hobbs   R M Sutherland
J Hood

(Substitutes - F Beatty, A T A Godfrey, P W Jones, R Kenney)
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 APPENDICES:

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This application is a large scale major development and as such is excluded from the Council’s Scheme of Delegation for planning applications and requires determination by the Planning Committee.

Also called in by Councillor F Beatty

Officer Contact - Karen Tierney, Head of Development - Telephone 01785 619583

Officer Contact - Matthew Shrigley, Development Lead - Telephone 01785 619507

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.
Reason for Referral to Committee

This application has been called in by Councillor F Beatty (Ward member for Milwich) for the following reason:

“For committee to review whether this application for northern SDL is contiguous with the two others in the system, harmonious in design and layout and that they will together create a good place for future Stafford residents to live. It is disheartening that, following the Masterplan, so much is apparently to be left to reserved matters. The outline application should include all the areas requiring planning and design. To review proposals for primary access roads, proposed junctions and site access points. There is unarguable risk that our high aspirations for the new village will be watered down by SBC inability to safeguard the blueprint (the Masterplan), to insist developers do more than play lip service to our vision. To review the drainage strategy in the light of SCC reservations. To require specifically the provisions of community sports facilities to be included in plans for the secondary school. To review the cycle route provision”
The application is also a large scale major development and as such is excluded from the Councils scheme of delegation for planning applications and requires determination by the Planning Committee.

Context

The site covers an area of approximately 143 hectares and is located to the north of Stafford, approximately 3km from the town centre. The site lies to the east of Marston Lane, and north of the A513 (Beaconside), with Sandon Road (B5066) running between the two parcels of the site towards its eastern extent. To the east of the site lies agricultural land mixed with woodland plantation and some buildings and settlements, including Hopton (approx. 1km away) and Weston (approx. 3.5km away). Industrial units and Ministry of Defence (MOD) buildings are closer to the eastern/south eastern edge of the site. The River Trent also runs in a south easterly to north westerly direction further to the east of the site. Immediately adjacent to the site’s southern boundary, to the north of the A513, lies MOD 4 site which includes large scale buildings visible in the local landscape. Other built form in relation to the MOD, including barracks and further depots, also exist to the south east of the site. Beyond the A513 lies a modern industrial estate which forms the edge to the existing built-up urban area of Stafford.

The site is sub-divided into two parts by Sandon Road (B5066). The land to the north/west of Sandon Road comprises the vast majority of the site, with a much smaller section to the south of Sandon Road.

The site itself generally rises in topographical terms from the south to the north, from approximately 83 metres in the south west corner to 115 metres AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) in the north east corner of the parcel to the north west of Sandon Road. There is a ridge which extends from the northern boundary, south eastwards into the site, which creates a localised raised plateau towards the north east corner of the site. The parcel to the south of Sandon Road is relatively flat.

Both parts of the site currently comprise agricultural fields, mostly large open pasture fields. There are however a number of mature hedgerows within and on the boundaries of the site, including some mature hedgerow trees. Marston Brook is situated in the south west of the site and runs adjacent, in part, to the south west boundary. A public right of way (PROW) crosses the site, namely Hopton and Coton 11. Additionally, there is also an application to add a further PROW on site which has yet to be determined. There are several buildings on the site, including Newbuildings Farm and Newbuilding Cottage with associated outbuildings and access tracks. There are also areas of mature vegetation surrounding these farms and on the eastern parcel of the site. A pond is also present close to Newbuildings Farm.

The application seeks planning permission for residential development of the following:

- Demolition of existing buildings and structures (with the exception of New Buildings Farm Farmhouse, selected brick outbuildings and New Buildings Cottage).
- Up to 2,000 dwellings (Use Class C3),
- Two local centres comprising of the following uses: Class A1 - food retail up to 1100 sq m (gross maximum); Class A1 (non food retail), A2, A3 and A5 up to 2800 sqm (gross maximum) in total; and, Class A4 - Public House up to 600 sq m (gross maximum);
Class D1 – Health centre up to 600 sq m (gross maximum);
Class C2 - 0.48ha care home (up to 60 bed spaces);
Class D1 – 2 Form Entry primary school (area c.2.02ha);
Class D1 – 5 Form Entry secondary school, with associated (public) leisure facilities (area c.7ha);
- Diversion of Marston Lane to create 4 arm roundabout on Beaconside and creation of new junction with Common Road;
- Diversion and reprioritisation of Sandon Road (B5066) to form new access from development on to Sandon Road;
- Three new accesses on to Sandon Road (B5066);
- New access on to Beaconside (A513) at junction with Paton Drive;
- Formal Open Space, green infrastructure, structural landscaping, pedestrian and cycle paths, sustainable urban drainage scheme and associated drainage works, and flood storage area;
- Associated ground works, infrastructure and services and highway works.

Residential
The proposed development has capacity to deliver up to 2,000 dwellings, which would be delivered across a residential area of approximately 68.54 ha. This would equate to a housing density of approximately 30 dwellings per hectare.

The proposed development will provide a range of house types and tenures of varying sizes, including 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties which are a specific requirement of Policy Stafford 2.

Education
The proposal includes an area of 2.02ha to accommodate a 2 form entry primary school on site. Land for the primary school will be transferred to Staffordshire County Council as Local Education Authority following the grant of outline planning permission. Contributions for the construction of the school can then be secured from each phase of development as they come forward to cover the County’s costs for delivering the school to their preferred timetable.

A 6.99 ha area of land for a 5 form entry secondary school will be transferred to Staffordshire County Council following the grant of outline planning permission. Proportionate contributions towards the construction of the secondary school will then be secured as new housing development comes forward. This will allow the County to commence construction of the school expeditiously so that the facility can be available by 2024, considering current growth projections. However, this timescale could be delayed if housing growth does not come forward as quickly as predicted.

Local Centres
Two mixed used local centres will be provided within the site, with a total area of approximately 2.09ha. The local centres will comprise some or all of the following: A1 - food retail up to 1100 sq m (gross maximum); Class A1 (non food retail), A2, A3 and A5 up to- 2800 sqm (gross maximum) in total; and, Class A4 - Public House up to 600 sq m (gross maximum); Class D1 – Health centre up to 600 sqm (gross maximum); Class C2 - 0.48ha care home (up to 60 bed spaces).
Green Infrastructure
The application proposes the provision of approximately 59.72ha of Green and Blue Infrastructure including a destination park of approximately 7ha, the shared sports facilities within the secondary school (approximately 2ha) and the allotments/community gardens (2.34ha).

Drainage Strategy
The indicative layout identifies a number of attenuation ponds throughout the development, along with swales within the green corridors. The Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDs) will achieve better than greenfield surface water run-off and will provide features that will provide opportunities for wildlife and amenity open space.

The proposal also includes a flood storage area to control and reduce flooding in existing watercourses (Marston and Sandyford Brook) in accordance with Policy Stafford 2. The design of the flood storage area has been the subject of on going discussions with the Environment Agency, which remains supportive of this feature that can help provide some betterment in relation to existing downstream flooding.

Vehicular Access, Circulation, Parking and other Infrastructure
Seven vehicular access points are proposed into the development, two from the A513 Beaconside on the south west of the development, one from the western boundary of the site which links with the surrounding SDL, and four further points off the B5066 Sandon Road. A primary access road will run through the proposed development linking the western part of the SDL with the B5066 Sandon Road. The internal road network has been proposed on the basis of the agreed masterplan and ‘Manual for Streets’. The hierarchy proposed works on the principle of primary, secondary and tertiary streets and additional shared surface areas, private drives and green corridors. This street hierarchy would help contribute to the creation of character areas and a high quality place.

Pedestrian Cycle Access and Parking
The development will tie into the existing public rights of way across and around the site.

The following information was submitted with the application:

- Planning Application Forms
- Planning application drawings
- Planning and Affordable Housing Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Consultation Report
- Addendum Consultation Report
- Environmental Statement comprising the following chapters:
  - Scope and Methodology
  - Site Description
  - Proposed Development and Alternatives
  - Planning Policy
  - Socio Economics
  - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
  - Ecology and Nature Conservation
  - Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
  - Agricultural Circumstances
Officer Assessment – Key Considerations

1. Principle of the proposed development

Policy SP1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough highlights the presumption in favour of sustainable development and requires that a positive approach should be taken with regard to decision making to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. The policy also states that planning applications that accord with policies in the local plan will be approved.

Policy SP2 requires provision to be made of the development of 500 homes per year to provide for the future needs and prosperity of residents.

Policy SP3 and SP4 of the Plan for Stafford Borough requires future development to be delivered in a number of areas, principally the County Town of Stafford, of which 70% of the housing distribution should fall within. Policy SP7 supports these principles in requiring development to be within development boundaries and consistent with policies SP2, SP3 and SP4.

The site also forms a large part of the Strategic Development Location ‘North of Stafford’ which is allocated for development in the adopted ‘Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031’, (adopted June 2014) under Policy Stafford 2. This policy identifies that the strategic site is suitable for development of approximately 3,100 new homes and 36ha of employment, alongside necessary infrastructure.

Policy Stafford 2 requires that ‘Any application for development on a part or whole of the [North of Stafford SDL] area should be consistent with a master plan for the whole Strategic Development Location. It says that ‘the master plan for the whole site should be produced by all developers involved in the development of the site and agreed by the Council prior to applications being submitted’. It adds that ‘any application for a component of the whole site must be accompanied by a specific master plan which shows the relationship of the application area to the wider Strategic development Location and that ‘the design of the application should not prejudice the delivery or design of the wider SDL.’

A Design and Access Statement has been submitted with the application. This document suggests that the design of the proposals are consistent with the approved comprehensive masterplan for the north of Stafford SDL and that the development of the site will not prejudice the delivery of the wider SDL, in particular the key infrastructure requirements identified in the adopted Local Plan. This document establishes a framework that will ensure the future design of the development will be of a high standard, incorporating...
features that reflect the local vernacular and locational characteristics, as required by Local Plan policy. With respect to individual plot layout, consideration will also be given to The Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on Design in assessing subsequent reserved matters applications to ensure appropriate living conditions for future occupants.

The proposed development has capacity to deliver up to 2,000 dwellings, which would be delivered across a residential area of approximately 68.54 ha. This would equate to a housing density of approximately 30 dwellings per hectare.

The proposed development will provide a range of house types and tenures of varying sizes, including 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties which are a specific requirement of Policy Stafford 2 (i). The final housing mix will however be determined at the Reserved Matters stages. An elderly living facility is also required that meets the requirements of Policy Stafford (ii).

Policy Stafford 2 also requires that 30% of the new homes are affordable housing. However as a result of viability (see section 7) the affordable housing provision will be a minimum of 12%. The affordable homes would be integrated with the market housing and distributed throughout the Site. The exact type of affordable housing to be provided will also be determined at the Reserved Matters stage.

The Indicative Built Form Masterplan illustrates a proposed area of 2.02ha to accommodate a two form entry primary school on site. It is envisaged the primary school will also provide playground and associated facilities, with the detail being determined at the Reserved Matters stage. Also shown is a 6.99ha area of land for a five form entry secondary school. The school will include an enlarged, six court sports hall and an artificial grass pitch that will be available for public use outside of school hours. As such, this element of education provision is in accordance with requirements of Policy Stafford 2 (x) and (xvii).

Two mixed used Local Centres will be provided within the site, with a total area of approximately 2.09ha. These have been designed to act as community hubs for the residential areas and could contain a variety of the uses including food retail (class A1), non-food retail (class A1), restaurants/café and takeaways (class A3 and A5), pubs (class A4), professional services (class A2), along with higher density housing (apartments). The local centres will also include community facilities such as a health centre as well as accommodation for the elderly population in accordance with part (x) and (xx) of Policy Stafford 2.

The proposal which includes the provision of approximately 59.72 ha of Green and Blue Infrastructure, includes a Destination Park (7ha) which will include multifunctional play space for toddler, junior and teenage (dynamic) play and an additional Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) south of Sandon Road which is in accordance with policy (xviii) of Policy Stafford 2. The Green and Blue Infrastructure also includes sustainable urban drainage system (SuDs) features, the flood storage area to control and reduce flooding in existing watercourses and indicative areas of planting. These areas will be designed to maximise opportunities for multi-functional open space provision, particularly with regard to habitat creation. Contributions towards mitigation for the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation have been proposed for inclusion within an associated s106 agreement.
and as such these elements are considered in accordance with Policy Stafford 2(iv), (vi), (vii), (xiii) and (xv).

In line with Policy Stafford (viii) and (ix) the application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA), which assesses the proposed access arrangements, alongside a Framework Travel Plan which sets out how sustainable travel behaviour could be promoted, with specific reference to encouraging walking and cycling. The TA and associated plans identify the road access points to the site, and the application proposes the approval of the principle means of access to the west of Hopton garage. The TA also proposes a number of improvements to the road network to address capacity. These can be secured and controlled within the s106 agreement for the site.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle, although it is noted that as a result of viability the affordable housing provision is less than required by policies contained in The Plan for Stafford Borough.

Policies and Guidance:-
NPPF – Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development, Section 4 – Decision Making, Section 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes, Section 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities, Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport, Section 12 Achieving Well Designed Places; Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

National Design Guide

The Plan for Stafford Borough –SP1 – presumption in favour of sustainable development, SP2 – Stafford Borough Housing and Employment Requirements; SP3 – Stafford Borough Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy; SP4 – Stafford Borough Housing Growth Distribution; SP7 - Supporting the Location of New Development, Policy Stafford 2- North of Stafford; Policy C1 – Dwelling Types and Sizes, N1 – Design; N2- Climate Change.

2. Considerations of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The proposed development falls under Schedule 2, Part 10b (urban development projects) of the EIA Regulations as amended in 2015 and exceeds the applicable threshold and criteria within Column 2 of Schedule 2 (i.e. the Proposed Development area exceeds 5 hectares and the development includes more than 150 dwellings). A screening request was made to the authority and it was concluded that the characteristics of the development, the location of the development and the characteristics of the potential impact are such that the proposals are considered to be EIA development. As such, an Environmental Statement (ES) was required as part of the application to evaluate the sensitivity of the site and the surrounding area and determine if the development is likely to have potentially significant effects by virtue of its characteristics, location and the nature of potential effects.

The ES supports the application and assesses the impacts of the development within the context of Socio-Economic Issues, Landscape and Visual Issues, Ecology, Agriculture and Cultural Heritage, Transport, Noise, Hydrology and Drainage and Land Contamination.

The ES concludes that there are numerous positive significant effects of the proposed development in Socio-Economic terms due to the delivery of housing, primary and
secondary schools, health centre, local centres and a variety of open space, sport and recreation facilities.

With regard to landscape and visual issues, the ES concluded there will be an inevitable impact on landscape character and visual amenity as a consequence of the development, but that this impact has been accepted and acknowledged as part of the allocation of this strategic site. Notwithstanding this, a number of measures have been taken to mitigate these effects including incorporation of a notable band of vegetation along the northern and western site boundaries, reducing building heights, incorporating open space and allotments within the development, retention and augmentation of the framework of existing vegetation and provision of recreational linkages across the site.

The ES proposes net biodiversity gains with no significant adverse effects on relevant valued ecological receptors within the site. A Construction Environmental Management Plan is proposed to minimise the impact of the development on ecology and, along with a Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Strategy, can be controlled by condition.

The development will result in the loss of good agricultural land, and as such the effect of the development have been assessed as significant. However, the effect of the development of agricultural land within the application site was considered at the strategic stage before The Plan for Stafford Borough was adopted. The loss has been weighed up within the wider planning balance.

With regard to transport, the development meets the key transport tests set out by the local Highway Authority in that it would improve accessibility and provide healthier travel choices, effective design and road networks would provide for safer roads and create a sustainable development. Mitigation measures contained in a travel plan and the designing of a layout that facilitates foot and cycle movements within the development have been proposed and can be conditioned/included within the s106 of any approval and it is therefore considered that the development would have no adverse significant effects.

No permanent significant effects have been identified with regard to noise.

The ES suggests that the development is desirable in terms of beneficial impact on flood risk, drainage systems and water quality. This is due to the inclusion of a flood risk storage area alongside Marston Brook to regulate and reduce downstream flood flow in the brook. Additionally, the use of swales and balancing ponds help further mitigate water storage concerns and regulate water flow from the development. Drains and surface water sewers will also form part of the mitigation for surface water.

Finally, with regard to land contamination issues it is considered that the proposed development is unlikely to increase the risk to identified receptors once the mitigation measures are implemented. These measures include ground investigation, monitoring and risk assessment at the details stages of the development.

The ES concludes that there are no overriding environmental constraints, nor planning policies that would preclude the proposed development.

The proposal has taken into account all of the relevant environmental issues regarding the site and where necessary mitigation measures have been suggested to ensure that the
environment is protected and the impacts from the development are minimised. These mitigation measures can be conditioned as part of any approval for the site.

It is considered therefore that provided that the mitigation measures recommended in the ES are secured by condition there are no significant adverse effects which would justify refusal of the application.

3. **Outline Matters - Access**

All matters are reserved for subsequent approval other than the principle points of access on to the existing highway west of Hopton Garage.

Policy Stafford 2 – North of Stafford requires an access, transport and travel plan strategy for the SDL that maximises travel and accessibility by non car modes via safe, attractive and conveniently designed street, pedestrian and cycling connections within the development and to Stafford town centre, nearby existing and new employment areas. The strategy shall identify road access points to the site and between the site and the existing settlement. It shall also identify construction access arrangements that do not disrupt existing residents and improvements to transport capacity along the A34, A513 Beconside Road, and the Redhill roundabout.

There will also be an interconnected network of streets serving the development producing discernible and distinctive neighbourhoods and places integrated and linked to existing areas.

Furthermore; section (xii) of the policy requires highway capacity improvements, either through or around the perimeter of the site, or along Beconside, as a consequence of the development. Enhanced bus services and improved bus reliability, through bus priority, will also be required along the A34 between the site and the town centre as well as real time bus passenger information, increased frequency of existing and new bus services.

Policy T1 and T2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough compliment this policy by requiring a sustainable transport system as a result of the development and appropriate parking and manoeuvring facilities across the site.

A transport assessment and travel plan (the access, transport and travel plan strategy as referred to in the policy) were submitted as part of the application.

The assessment proposes seven vehicular accesses to the site. These consist of:

- New four arm roundabout on the A513 Beconside/Common Road/ Marston Lane,
- Upgrading the existing three arm A515 Beconside with Paton Drive signalised junction to a four arm signalised junction,
- New junction from Sandon Road to the northern parcel of the site west of Hopton garage, (primary access)
- Junction from Sandon Road into the northern parcel of the site east of Hopton garage (secondary access)
- Junction from Sandon Road into the southern parcel of the site opposite the above junction (primary access)
Junction from Sandon Road into the southern parcel of the site to the east of the primary access junction

Link to the wider SDL site on the application site western boundary (although no new junction is proposed here, the developer will provide an internal spine road to a point agreed with the local planning authority to allow for the construction of the internal spine road)

Of these seven vehicular accesses, permission is being sought in this application for the first three accesses, which will be delivered through s278 works by the developer as part of the scheme. This can be controlled by condition. The proposed condition also includes the requirement to deliver a new off-site roundabout on the junction of Beaconside and Sandon Road as part of these works.

Of accesses detailed in points four to six (the access point north of Sandon Road and the two access points south of Sandon Road all east of Hopton Garage), these junctions are indicative and approval is not sought for these junctions within this outline consent. Consequently approval for these junctions will be sought at a later stage, likely through the submission of the associated reserved matters consent.

Access point number seven will be delivered by the local Highway Authority by linking together the spine road which will be provided by developers east and west of Marston Lane using s106 contributions at a later stage in the development of the wider SDL.

The pedestrian/cycle access to the proposed development would be achieved through a number of connection points including all those proposed as vehicular access points. The development will also tie into the existing public rights of way across and around the site.

The s106 agreement will secure contributions to the off site highways infrastructure works required to mitigate the increase in traffic from the development. The works include:

- W06 Widening Beaconside (Sandon Road North to Sandon Road South),
- W07 Widening Beaconside/Dyson Way
- W09 Junction improvements Sandon Road/Astonfields Road
- W10 Junction Improvements Sandon Road / Corporation Street
- W11 Junction Marston Lane Link Road

The s106 agreement will also require the development of a travel plan to maximises travel and accessibility by non car modes and enhance bus services and bus reliability.

The Highway Authority recommendation also included a condition requiring driveways to be surfaced in a bound material and sustainably drained. However, this condition is more appropriately suited to a reserved matters application and should be included on any such approval. The provision of a construction management plan was also recommended and can be conditioned on a grant of outline permission.

Highways England has raised no objection to the proposal.

The County Council Public Rights of Way Officer notes that there have been a couple of applications for new rights of way that have been submitted but remain undetermined. No objection to the proposal is raised but highlights that the grant of planning permission does
not entitle developers to obstruct, divert or extinguishment a right of way. This advice can be carried forward as an informative to any grant of consent.

Given the s278 works proposed by the developer, the contributions that will be secured by the s106 agreement for the delivery of remediation and highways capacity improvement works and the contributions towards a travel plan for the site it is considered that the development accords with the Policy Stafford 2, T1 and T2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework:
Paragraphs 102, 103, 104, 109 and 110 - Promoting sustainable transport, Paragraph 98 – Promoting healthy communities

The Plan for Stafford Borough – Part 1:
Policy Stafford 2 – North of Stafford, T1 – Transport, T2 - Parking and Manoeuvring Facilities, N1 – Design, I1 - Infrastructure Delivery Policy

4. Indicative Layout

Policy Stafford 2 section (x) requires the development of the SDL to take on a ‘neighbourhood’ approach with the provision of a mix of uses including local retail facilities, social and physical infrastructure, a primary school education provision, a library service, health facilities and public open space.

Additionally, since the submission of the application, the Council has adopted a supplementary planning document on design. The design guide highlights the importance in understanding place, and requires a robust contextual assessment to be undertaken to enable a design that reflects and responds to this. The guidance expresses the importance of street trees in providing a positive contribution to character, identity and legibility of a scheme and that streets should be designed to form an attractive environment.

The indicative layout shows the seven access points proposed to the development from the exterior road network and the link to the allocated site to the west. Within the site, the primary access corridor links the location of the two local centres, the destination park and the primary and secondary schools. One local centre is located at the south of the application site fronting the A513 to the east of the proposed four arm signalised junction with Paton Drive. The other centre is located centrally within the site and incorporates the converted farmhouse and brick outbuildings of Newbuilding’s Farm and the pond feature. The exact uses for these centres will be determined at reserved matters stage but will include a variety of uses such as A1 (retail), A3, A5, A4 (food and drink) and D1 (services).

The primary access corridor will be a tree lined route with verges on both sides and a cycle path to improve accessibility by non car modes. The layout proposes higher density development along this primary access corridor to the site to reflect the urban character of this route and proposes lower density development along the edges to reflect the rural character of the countryside beyond.
A flood storage area is proposed adjacent to Marston Brook. Additional blue infrastructure (attenuation areas, swales etc) are proposed at key locations through the remainder of the site.

59.72ha of Green and Blue Infrastructure is proposed which includes 14ha of adoptable open space such as the destination park, Local Equipped Area of Play and ribbon parks. Additional Green Infrastructure in the form of green routes and paths and a landscaped edge, which also provides a noise mitigation barrier to the proposed HS2 route will be incorporated within the remaining Green Infrastructure. Existing hedgerows and tree lines have been retained and enhanced where possible to support the provision of Green Infrastructure across the site. To ensure that this is comprehensively addressed through the phased development of the site a strategic Green Infrastructure plan can be conditioned to any outline approval.

The layout shows a centrally located destination park, which includes an area of ‘destination play’ with equipment designed for the purpose of toddler play, junior play and dynamic/teenage play. The destination park will also include the provision of four junior playing pitches and associated community facilities. The delivery of this infrastructure will be detailed in section 6 and secured by a s106 agreement.

An area of 6.99ha north of the flood storage area is proposed to accommodate a five form entry school with shared sports facilities, an artificial turf pitch and a tennis court. A 2ha site to house a two form entry primary school is also proposed, close to the local centre at the New Buildings Farm.

A detailed design and access statement was submitted with the application, which was revised and updated in September 2017. The Design and Access Statement proposes a road hierarchy within the scheme to deliver distinctive neighbourhoods and places in line with Policy Stafford 2. The statement also proposes character areas to add legibility and to produce a network of places within the development.

The Council's Design Advisor raises no objection to the scheme and notes that the quantum of information is generally considered to be acceptable as a robust assessment of the scheme has been undertaken within the revised design and access statement. However, whilst the document includes further information with regard to design proposals, scale, density, building heights, massing and appearance and character, there are some matters that are unresolved at this stage – notably the impact of HS2 on the ‘rural edge’ of the proposed scheme, and the parameters setting out the storey heights within the scheme. Whilst it is unfortunate not to have clarity on either of these matters, it is considered that whilst the delivery of HS2 may change certain parameters on the site, the design principles will still need to be adhered to within any revised design changes as a result of changing infrastructure requirements. With regard to storey heights, the Design Advisor acknowledges that market trends are moving away from 2.5 – 3 storey buildings and as such concerns about the proliferations of these types of houses may not be necessary. It is considered that details on building heights on primary access corridors can be determined as part of a reserved matters application.

Finally, it is noted that the access junction within the site connecting the primary access corridor with Sandon Road has been amended since the application was originally
submitted. Whist this change is acknowledged, ongoing consideration should be made to the long term access arrangements into and through the MOD 4 site adjacent to this to ensure that any future development is legible, permeable and connected to its surrounding sites.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Chapter 12 – Achieving Well Designed Places

The Plan for Stafford Borough – Policy Stafford 2- North of Stafford; SP1 – presumption in favour of sustainable development, N1 – Design; Supplementary Planning Guidance Design

5. Consultation Responses / Conditions

Archaeology
There are no designated or undesignated heritage assets within the area of the proposed scheme. However, the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (SHER) does record the presence of an early 19th century farmstead (New Buildings Farm) occupying an area of high ground within the centre of the site. To the north east the SHER also records the presence of a small out-farm complex associated with the farm.

The archaeologist raises no strategic issues with regard to the site. However, he has advised that a staged archaeological evaluation be undertaken comprising initial desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and trial trenching and that this work will inform the need for and scope of any further archaeological mitigation on the site. This can be controlled by condition.

Ecology
Paragraph 170 in the NPPF advises that planning decisions should, amongst other things, minimise the impacts on and provide net biodiversity gains. In turn, provision (vii) of Policy Stafford 2 requires existing hedgerows and tree lines to be retained and enhanced to support the provision of a network of Green Infrastructure including wetland and water corridors, play areas, green corridors allowing wildlife movement and access to open space.

The Environmental Statement makes clear that the recommended mitigation should be carried out as stated to avoid adverse ecological impacts. Whilst the Green Infrastructure plan is welcomed, it will not be effective without a long-term management plan. A condition on approval would require a Construction Environmental Management Plan and Landscape & Environmental Management Plan to be submitted as part of any Reserved Matters. Additionally, all works shall be undertaken in line with the recommendations made in Chapter 8 and associated appendices of the Environmental Statement.

A Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) has been undertaken and shared with Natural England. Natural England has considered the assessment, and the measures proposed to mitigate for all identified adverse effects that could potentially occur as a result of the proposal. Natural England concurs with the assessment conclusions providing that all mitigation measures are appropriately secured within the permission. This mitigation can
be secured through the Construction Environmental Management Plan and Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Strategy. Additionally, s106 contributions have been secured for the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust commented on the application and whilst they recognise the generally positive design of the outline proposals with regard to wildlife, they did request clarification on a number of issues or further details with regard to the site. These include detailed plans for habitat creation, soils, flood management and species mitigation. These details have also been requested from Natural England, HEHS, the Environment Agency and the Biodiversity Officer and as such can be included within existing proposed conditions that can be attached to any outline consent.

Environmental Health including noise and air quality

Environmental Health raise no objection to the proposal subject to appropriate conditions regarding a construction management plan to include details of construction, demolition, groundworks, noise, contaminated land, air quality, lighting and drainage.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is located in flood within Flood Zone 1, the zone of lowest risk, which normally signifies land where fluvial flooding is unlikely to occur. A flood risk assessment has been submitted with the application, and a chapter within the Environmental Statement is dedicated to hydrology and drainage.

Policy Stafford 2 part (xv) requires a flood management scheme and less than greenfield surface water run off to Sandyford Brook and Marston Brook through open water storage solutions, maximising opportunities for multifunctional open space provision.

Land for a flood storage area has been allocated on the site next to Marston Brook. This storage facility will regulate flow in Marston Brook helping to relieve existing downstream flooding. It will be built at an early stage of the development, and is currently proposed to come forward within Phase 1B on the site. Notwithstanding that, the Environment Agency has requested a condition for details of the flood storage area and a requirement for it to be constructed before any development on adjacent land is undertaken. This condition can be attached to any subsequent approval and can ensure the timely delivery of this infrastructure.

Additionally, a large number of balancing ponds and swales are proposed on the site which will ensure the regulation of surface water discharges from the built development to the existing watercourses. The drainage system should be designed to discharge at a rate of flow 20% less than the existing site to further benefit downstream flood alleviation. Additionally, two new foul pumping stations to convey sewage from the development are proposed. These are indicatively proposed to the far south of the development block south of Sandon Road and to the east of the local centre on the boundary with Beaconside. The exact location and design details of these can be established within the relevant reserved matters submission.

The Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have been consulted on the application, and have no objections subject to a number of drainage conditions regarding the flood storage area, surface water drainage details, a Construction Environmental Management Plan and clarification that the development is carried out in
accordance with the flood risk assessment. Natural England have requested a detailed drainage strategy to be submitted and approved as part of the scheme to ensure that sites such as Baswich Meadows SSSI are not adversely affected by the development. It is considered that Natural England’s concerns can be allayed by the details submitted within other conditions proposed by the Environment Agency and the LLFA and as such it is not necessary to impose an additional, separate condition.

As a result of changes to accommodate HS2 works changes to surface water attenuation in the Sandon Road have been made. The LLFAs latest consultation response confirms acceptability subject to the conditions they previously identified.

Health and Safety
The Health and Safety Executive and National Grid were consulted on the application. The presence of a medium/low pressure pipeline was highlighted to the north west of the site and an objection was initially raised to prevent development within the safeguarding zones of the pipeline. After consultation with the HSE and National Grid regarding proposed improvement works to the pipeline, the HSE removed their objection on the basis of the inclusion of a condition that would restrict development on the area of the site affected until a scheme to divert or reinforce the pipeline had been approved and implemented to the satisfaction of the HSE.

HS2 Ltd
The HS2 Safeguarding holding direction which had prevented the progress of this application since May 2018 was withdrawn on 10th July 2019.

Leisure and Culture
The open space requirement for this site is approximately 14ha with a capital contribution value of £1,831,147. Additionally to that a destination park is a requirement of policy Stafford 2 and should be provided on the site to an area of approximately 7.34ha. Whilst an additional Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) would be required within the development parcel south of Sandon Road, areas of open space within the main proportion of the site could be laid out as natural play spaces. Part (vii) of Policy Stafford 2 requires a network of Green Infrastructure and to ensure that this provision within the site is comprehensive and meets the requirements of this policy it is considered reasonable to attach a condition requiring the submission of a strategic landscaping and Green Infrastructure plan to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable development.

Sport England have commented on the application and have requested a number of contributions towards sport infrastructure within and around the site. These include contributions for an enhanced sports hall on the secondary school site and an artificial grass pitch. A contribution is also sought for a swimming pool that will be accommodated outside of the SDL site. Additionally, they have requested a number of conditions or provisions within the s106 to ensure the appropriate design of the site and secure provision for community use within the dual use element of the secondary school (i.e. the sports hall and ATP).

Finally, on other large housing developments within the borough a concern over the safety of ponds, swales and attenuation areas in close proximity to residential development has been raised. Given the potential for conflict between areas of play and areas of potential water storage and the potential for retrofitted means of enclosure to cause harm to the
public realm, it is considered reasonable and good practice to include a condition requiring
details of any forms of enclosure to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local
planning authority prior to implementation.

Trees
The majority of the individual trees and tree groups have been incorporated into the
indicative plan, included within the boundaries of non-residential area features or
appearing to form an integral part of the green corridors previously alluded to.
Consideration has been given to the design and where possible works with existing trees.
Some hedgerows represent a significant constraint to development and have been
proposed to be removed, however the Tree Officer has recommended that an ash tree on
the boundary with the MOD site (T78) earmarked for removal should be retained. Whilst
T78 is currently earmarked for removal, its removal relates to a potential future access into
the adjacent MOD site, which has not yet been confirmed. As such, retention of this tree
and any associated replanting and mitigation of associated trees and hedgerows can be
ensured and secured through conditions regarding tree works, a Green Infrastructure plan
and landscape a mitigation strategy.

The MOD commented that trees should not be planted along the perimeter of the site
close to the MOD, specifying the separation distance and that the tree variety should not
form a continuous barrier. Whilst the layout submitted is only indicative, trees are shown in
proximity to the MOD boundary. However, this matter can controlled at the reserved
matters stage when details of landscaping will be determined.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework:
Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities, Chapter 11 – Making effective use
of land; Chapter 12 – Achieving well designed places; Chapter 14 – Meeting the
Challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change; Chapter 15 – Conserving and
enhancing the natural environment;

The Plan for Stafford Borough – Part 1:
Policy Stafford 2- North of Stafford, N1 – Design; N2 – Climate Change
N4 – The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure; C7 - Open Space, Sport and
Recreation, N6 - Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC), N8 – Landscape
Character; N9 – Historic Environment,

6. Section 106 Contributions and the Delivery of Infrastructure

Policy I1 requires that residential or commercial development will be supported by
appropriate levels of physical, social and environmental infrastructure at a timely stage.
Infrastructure requirements for this site are being delivered as follows:

Physical Infrastructure
Highways works will be delivered by a combination of s278 works undertaken by the
developer and s106 works where works will be undertaken by the Highway Authority
following the receipt of monies collected through the s106 agreement.
The s106 agreement will secure contributions to the off site highways infrastructure works required to mitigate the increase in traffic from the development. The works include:

- W06 Widening Beaconside (Sandon Road North to Sandon Road South),
- W07 Widening Beaconside/Dyson Way
- W09 Junction improvements Sandon Road/Astonfields Road
- W10 Junction Improvements Sandon Road / Corporation Street
- W11 Junction Marston Lane Link Road

Contributions for these works will be collected from each phase of development.

The s106 agreement will also require the development of a travel plan to maximise travel and accessibility by non car modes and enhance bus services and bus reliability. Provisions within the s106 require the Travel plan to be reviewed at regular intervals through the course of the development of the SDL.

The s278 works relate to proposed access to the site and will be undertaken by the developer and secured by condition.

Appendix D of The Plan for Stafford Borough requires that Stafford exchange is enabled with Superfast Fibre Access Broadband. Part (xix) of Policy Stafford 2 requires that the development must provide standard telecommunication connections to link to the Stafford exchange enabled with Superfast Fibre Access Broadband. This infrastructure delivery can be controlled by condition.

**Environmental Infrastructure**

The open space requirement for this site is approximately 14ha with a capital contribution value of £1,831,147. Additionally to that an on site destination park is a requirement of Policy Stafford 2 and should be provided to an area of approximately 7.34ha.

As the development is being delivered in phases, the capital contribution and the associated on-site maintenance for open space will be delivered in phases by the developer securing the works themselves as part of the relevant phase.

A contribution towards mitigation to the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation will be secured in the s106 agreement. This equates to £159 per dwelling and will be secured within the delivery of phase 3, 4 and 5 of the development.

**Social Infrastructure**

Policy C2 in the Plan for Stafford Borough states that developments of 12 or more dwellings within Stafford must deliver 30% affordable housing.

This development of up to 2000 dwellings is therefore required to deliver 30% affordable housing, which equates to 600 affordable homes. The other housing element of the scheme is an elderly living proposal of up to 60 units. This would again require 30% affordable housing, equating to 18 units.

The affordable housing should comprise a mix of one, two and three bed homes and these homes should vary in the property size to allow for a variation in occupiers. It is preferred that any 1 bedroom accommodation contain a minimum of three habitable rooms, particularly in units designed for older people that are not part of flexi-care style
scheme. Where a two or more bedroom affordable home is intended for rent, it is recommended that this is not delivered as part of flat/apartment units. Additionally, the clustering of affordable housing should be in clusters of approximately five, but no more than ten.

With regard to the primary and secondary school provision, the primary school is required to be open by the occupation of the 1000th dwelling on the site. It is proposed that following the grant of outline planning permission, land for the primary school will be transferred to Staffordshire County Council as the Local Education Authority (LEA). Contributions for the construction of the school can then be secured within the s106 agreement on each phase of the development.

With regard to the secondary school, a 6.99 ha area of land for a five form entry secondary school will be transferred to Staffordshire County Council following the grant of outline planning permission. Contributions for the construction of the school can then be secured on each phase of the development. This will allow the County Council to commence construction of the school expeditiously so that the facility can be available by 2024, which is currently the date LEA predict there will be a need for the new school.

Contributions towards the total cost of provision of the secondary school will be secured from the west of Stafford Strategic Development Site and the two other sites that make up the remainder of the North of Stafford SDL.

Contributions towards increasing the three court sports hall within the secondary school to a six court sports hall for community use will be secured by s106. Additionally, contributions for the delivery of an artificial turf pitch will be secured. The additional sports hall space and artificial grass pitch will be delivered as part of the secondary school. A community use agreement will be secured by condition to ensure the additional facilities are available for both the school and the wider community.

Finally, the Clinical Commissioning Group has been consulted on the application and any response will be reported to Committee.

Policies and Guidance
National Planning Policy Framework
Paragraphs 54 and 56 – Decision-making; Paragraphs 54 – 57 Planning Conditions and Obligations; Paragraphs 112- 116 Supporting high quality communications

The Plan for Stafford Borough – Part 1:
I1 - Infrastructure Delivery, Stafford 2 – North of Stafford , C2 - Affordable Housing, C7 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation, N6 - Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

7. Viability

A development proposal compliant with Policy Stafford 2 results in total financial contributions / on-site provision (excluding affordable housing) to the value of £31,220,695, comprising:
Off site highways works £9,276,830
Public Transport Contribution £1,570,865
Travel plan monitoring £ 11,325
Sports provision
  Sports Halls £ 672,034
  Swimming Pools £ 807,040
  Artificial Grass Pitch £ 117,629
Public open space provision
  Capital Contribution - £1,831,147
  On site Maintenance £3,411,192
Education
  Primary school £6,859,350
  Secondary school £6,345,280
Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation
£ 318,000
Total = £31,220,695

In addition to comply with Policy Stafford 2 and Policy C2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough 30% of the homes would need to be provided as affordable houses.

The applicant does not believe that the development is viable with all of the policy compliant contributions and provision listed above and subsequently provided a viability submission.

The Council commissioned the District Valuation Service (DVS) to independently assess the financial viability information submitted by the applicant. The DVS has confirmed that the payment of all of the infrastructure contributions / provision would render the scheme unviable.

The Council has subsequently asked DVS to undertake sensitivity analysis to determine what level of infrastructure contributions / provision could be provided without the scheme being unviable. Based on this information the applicant made an offer to the Council, and a negotiated agreement has resulted in a proposal which DVS confirm is the maximum contributions / on-site provision that can currently be achieved whilst retaining a viable development. The contributions are now as follows:

Off site highways works £8,066,809
Public Transport Contribution £1,248,840
Travel plan monitoring £ 11,325
Sports provision
  Sports Halls £ 672,034
  Swimming Pools £ 0
  Artificial Grass Pitch £ 117,629
Public open space provision
  Capital Contribution - £1,831,147
  On site Maintenance £3,411,192
Education
  Primary school £6,859,350
  Secondary school £6,345,280
Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation
£ 318,000
Total = £28,881,606
In addition a minimum of 12% of homes would be provided as affordable housing with a tenure mix comprising of 70% social rent and 30% intermediate.

Polices and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
Paragraph 57 – Viability

The Plan for Stafford Borough – Part 1:
I1 - Infrastructure Delivery, Stafford 2 – North of Stafford,

8. Concluding comments and the planning balance

The application proposes outline permission for the construction of up to 2,000 dwellings and forms the largest portion of the North Stafford SDL and as such is in accordance with the Plan for Stafford Borough. Contributions have been sought, subject to the financial viability of the scheme, to ensure the delivery of necessary infrastructure where the scheme remains policy compliant. Conditions are also recommended to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures can be achieved.

Due to viability issues it is recognised that the proposed development is not in complete accordance with Policy Stafford 2 and Policy C2 of The Plan for Stafford Borough. However the proposal is in accord with the government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, and is in accord with paragraph 59 of the NPPF. The planning balance therefore must consider the positive of a significant boost to the supply of housing in Stafford including the provision of some affordable housing, against the negative that the proposal doesn’t fully accord with policy. Largescale housing developments in Stafford in recent years have been unviable with full policy compliant obligations, which suggests that the viability of the Strategic Development Locations considered at the time of the preparation of The Plan for Stafford Borough is out of date. As such the balance lies in favour of support for this application.

The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and a s106 agreement to secure delivery of highways and education infrastructure, SAC mitigation, allotments, open space, affordable housing and local labour and skills development. The s106 agreement will also contain provision to reassess viability prior to commencement of the second and subsequent phases.

Consultations

Parish Council
Hopton and Coton Parish Council:
   □ Sandon Road HS2 realignment not included in the site location
   □ The flood storage opposite Hopton Lane is unusable
   □ The junctions with Sandon Road and secondary streets are impractical and suggests an unfamiliarity with the prevailing traffic on Sandon Road
   □ The suggested access to RAF Stafford is an unknown quantity
   □ Why have higher buildings on road sides in the development?
Subsequent Comments:
The Borough Councillor present said that this application follows the Master plan and that this application is for access only. She also said that the settlement is going to be very large and, consequently, the whole thing has got to be very carefully though-out. Other Councillors expressed the view that in the plan, there does not seem to be any reference to the current road system and that the system being proposed was dangerous. It was thought that possibly the best solution would be a dual-carriageway, possibly running parallel with HS2. It seems ridiculous that we have already got the M6 and the A34 which is dual-carriageway in places and yet, the main road which will run through the new development is single-track. It was thought that the village of Hopton will become a "death-trap" because people will emerge from the new development onto Within Lane in Hopton. There is already too much traffic on Within Lane considering its narrowness and this situation will only get worse.

Adjoining Parish Councils:

Creswell
Creswell Parish Council remain concerned that the Masterplan for the area and the Outline permission have been developed by the owners of the site. This will then be sold on to one or, more likely, a number of developers who will then submit full permission applications which will form the detailing of the development area. The Parish is concerned that the outcome of this is that deviation from the ideals in the original Masterplan are highly likely – in the worst case the actual development looking very little like the original masterplan itself. The Borough Council should ask for more detailed plans to be submitted as part of his application to protect the principles of the Masterplan.

Subsequent comments 9th October 2017:
The road alignment between Beaconside and the B5066 remains unchanged with a junction proposed on what is a bad bend with poor visibility. There will also be an additional entrance prior to this junction due to another approved application for 125 houses. There is concern about the safety of this. The council have concerns about the timing of the delivery of the destination park. With the building of the houses taking a significant amount of time it is likely that any residents moving in now with children are unlikely to see a park built before their children reach adulthood. The council would like to understand what measures are being put in place to mitigate flooding of Marston Brook and the associated issues that this causes on Sandon Road, Stafford. The council would also like to ensure that the various sites making up the Stafford North Masterplan are linked up via the estate roads and that the provision exists to ensure that no pieces of land are held as ransom strips preventing this from happening.

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG):
Response to be reported to Committee.

Defence Infrastructure Organisation Land Management Services:
The MOD does not have any concerns significant enough to warrant a formal objection to the application. However, the MOD would raise some comments regarding trees and hedges and drainage and flooding to ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse effect on Defence interests. These comments request a five meter buffer
from MOD land boundaries and do not consist of trees that could form a continuous screen.

Also, The MOD would like to see assurances that appropriate surface water storage measures will be adopted by the developer in order to avoid any flooding or increased run-off to any part of MOD Stafford. It is noted that attenuation areas are proposed adjacent to MOD Stafford Main Site and Site 4. These features should not affect MOD land in any way, should be of adequate capacity to avoid overspill and their excavation should not affect MOD land and would like to see assurances that there will be no adverse impact on the sewer passing through the barracks.

**Environment Agency:**
No objections subject to conditions regarding a flood risk management scheme to provide an acceptable flood storage area and that work is carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment. (Con 11 and 30).

**Natural England:**
No objection subject to appropriate mitigation secured through conditions. Any approved scheme should incorporate well designed green infrastructure (GI) to ensure that the development is better able to be accommodated within it landscape setting and as an extension to the town of Stafford. (23rd Jan). Requested conditions relating to Green infrastructure strategy, SuDS, soil quality (Cons 6, 14, 15)

Additional Response 12 March 2019 - Natural England notes that your authority, as competent authority under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations, has undertaken an Appropriate Assessment of the proposal, in accordance with Regulation 63 of the Regulations. Natural England is a statutory consultee on the Appropriate Assessment stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. Having considered the assessment, and the measures proposed to mitigate for all identified adverse effects that could potentially occur as a result of the proposal, Natural England advises that we concur with the assessment conclusions, providing that all mitigation measures are appropriately secured in any permission given.

**National Grid:**
Presence of medium/low pressure pipe line through the site.
No objections subject to condition requested by HSE on any subsequent reserved matters approval.

**Highways England:**
No objection

**HS2:**
Response 10 July 2019
There have been a series of meetings between the HS2 hybrid Bill team, engineers, technical specialists and the applicant’s planning and drainage consultants to discuss the complex interfaces between the HS2 proposed scheme as amended in this location in the form of an Additional Provision (AP) and Supplementary Environmental Statement in March 2018.

As a result of the technical engagement, together with clarification that the proposed development will provide its own drainage within the application red line boundary (and in such an event the design solution contained within the AP will not be necessary), HS2 Ltd,
the developer and land owners are now confident that a design solution can be achieved which would allow the proposed HS2 scheme to co-exist with the proposed development.

The developer and land owners subsequently entered into negotiations with HS2 to provide an undertaking to perform a series of obligations as set out in a legal agreement in the event that planning permission is granted pursuant to the planning application. The legal agreement in question was completed on 9 July 2019 and as a result the holding objection issued by HS2 Ltd dated 24 May 2018 is superseded by this response, and now formally withdrawn.

In the event the local planning authority are minded to grant outline planning consent it is advised that the following standard informative is attached to the decision notice for the applicant's awareness:

“Informative:
The applicant is advised that the application site falls partially within land that may be required to construct and/or operate Phase 2a of a high speed rail line from West Midlands to Crewe, known as High Speed Two. Powers to construct and operate High Speed Two are to be sought by promoting a hybrid Bill in Parliament. As a result the applicant is advised to follow ongoing progress of the HS2 programme at: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/high-speed-two-limited.”

Previous response 24 May 2018
Lodges a holding objection to planning permission being granted. HS2 Ltd therefore recommends the local planning authority refuses planning permission and suggests the following wording for a reason for refusal:

REASON FOR REFUSAL:
‘The proposed development would conflict with the HS2 Phase 2a safeguarded route as published, and would impact on the ability to build or operate HS2 or lead to excessive additional costs, and the Government's objective of delivering HS2, which is a project of national importance. The proposal is therefore contrary to Government Guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the formal Safeguarding Directions for the High Speed Two rail project – Phase 2a (West Midlands to Crewe) issued 27 September 2017.’

Health and Safety Executive (HSE):
No Objection subject to inclusion of condition which would restrict occupation of residential dwellings until risk reduction measures have been undertaken.

SBC Biodiversity Officer:
The Non-Technical Summary makes clear that the recommended mitigation should be carried out as stated to avoid adverse ecological impacts. Whilst the green infrastructure plan is welcomed, it will not be effective without a long-term management plan. A condition should require a Construction Environmental Management Plan and Landscape & Environmental Management Plan to be submitted as part of Reserved Matters. Additionally, all works shall be undertaken in line with the recommendations made in Chapter 8 and associated appendices of the Environmental Statement. (Con 14),
SBC Environmental Health:
No objection subject to appropriate conditions regarding a construction management plan to include details of construction, demolition, groundworks, noise, contaminated land, air quality, lighting and drainage, (Condition 7, 9, 15, 18, 22, 23 + flood risk conditions)

SBC Housing:
Affordable Housing Policy requirement should be met for this site. The development proposed is of up to 2000 dwellings is therefore required to deliver 30% affordable housing, which equates to 600 affordable homes (assuming all 2000 are developed). The other housing element of the scheme is an elderly living proposal of up to 60 units. This would again require 30% affordable housing, equating to 18 units. Council Policy suggests that affordable housing should be provided at a ratio of 80% social rent and 20% intermediate affordable housing. The affordable element of the general needs housing part of the development should therefore deliver 480 social rented homes and 120 intermediate affordable housing. The older persons living accommodation should deliver 15 social rented homes and 3 intermediate affordable homes. A mix of properties to would be expected to meet the sizes and standards required. On large developments with a mix of affordable and open market housing, it is expected that the affordable housing be spread across the development in clusters to allow for easy management by Registered Providers. The look of the affordable properties should be indistinguishable from the open market housing on the site

SBC Design Advisor:
In overall terms it is considered that the underlying urban and landscape structure of the layout has been relatively well considered and will lead to a scheme that could predominantly deliver appropriate levels of connectivity and legibility. The disposition of the primary and secondary road network and the resulting pattern of development blocks are generally considered to deliver an appropriate open and interconnected network of streets. These blocks appear to be predominantly defined and articulated by perimeter type urban blocks, and while there are some concerns that the rationale for how and why this structure begins to break down quite quickly within parts of the tertiary and private drive network, and how that afford opportunity to inform the character and quality of the design, the layout is largely considered to provide a sound spatial framework. One area where it is considered the proposals could be significantly enhanced would be the introduction of a more fragmented outer development edge; instead of the proposals presenting a fairly solid built frontal to the surrounding landscape setting, it has areas where relatively substantial green space penetrates into the layout to connect with the internal green infrastructure network. This could significantly enhance the visual transition between built form and surrounding landscape and could help to “root” the development more successfully into its setting. There are concerns over the impact on HS2 of the rural edge character area of the scheme, and the percentages of 2.5 and 3 storey dwelling proposed. Additionally, concern is raised regarding the ability of the highways network to respond to emerging adjacent sites to ensure a legible, cohesive and linked built environment.

SBC Forward Planning:
A contribution of £159 per house for the ‘Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation – mitigation project delivery’ should be included within the S106 agreement for the application.
SBC Leisure and Culture:
Due to the size of this development the Council is reasonably entitled to request a quantitative provision of 30.81m² per person of open space provision under its current policy. Based on the 2,000 dwellings proposed within the phase the Council will be looking for open space in the region of 143,575 m².

This site constitutes one phase of the Northern SDL and therefore the open space contribution forms part of the strategic masterplanning for sporting and leisure facilities within the catchment area. It is acknowledged that Axzo Nobel, Richborough and any further developments will be required to contribute in order that all the requirements identified through the masterplan can be provided. The current Sports England calculator has been used to assess the contributions required for the development:
- Capital contribution towards open space £1,831,147
- On site maintenance contribution (within Masterplan) £3,411,192
- Swimming Pool contribution £807,040
- Sports Hall contribution £672,034
- Artificial Sports Pitch £117,629
- Total contributions £6,839,042.00

SBC Tree Officer:
Consideration of the existing tree stock and how it frames the wider landscape both currently and post development is critically important. However, in the case of this development the future planting, maintenance and continued improvement of the treescape is perhaps of even greater importance. Whilst retention of established trees will do a great deal to soften the impact of the newly built environment and provide the backbone for the green infrastructure needed, it is the steps taken to enhance that tree stock which will determine how such a significant expansion of the town will fit seamlessly into the surrounding landscape, rather than jar against it. Having reviewed the arboricultural report submitted in support of this application and the indicative layout plan for the development, I am satisfied that at this early stage consideration is being given to design that where possible works with the existing trees. For the most part the existing treescape consists of individual trees, groups and hedgerows typical of agricultural field boundaries.

There are no objections to the development subject to a condition requiring the protection of trees and hedgerows details of tree protection area, method statements and tree facilitation work for the development.

SCC Archaeology:
There are no designated or undesignated heritage assets within the area of the proposed scheme. Bearing in mind the scale of the scheme and the potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains to be present I have no strategic issues to raise. It is however advised that, should permission be granted for this scheme, a staged archaeological evaluation be undertaken comprising initial desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and trial trenching; this work might satisfactorily be achieved by a condition upon permission (condition 13).

SCC Landscape:
Unfortunately I have not really had time to look at this in sufficient depth to make a meaningful response. I have not read the LVIA. The Masterplan appears to offer a reasonable buffer between the development plots and the rural landscape beyond. In addition, the fact that the proposed HS2 alignment is in close proximity to the site’s north
eastern site boundary would limit the influence of development on the landscape to the north. Bearing in mind the principle set by other development that is permitted and proposed to the north of Stafford I have no strategic issues to raise.

**SCC Highway Authority:**
No objection in principle subject to the securing of relevant transport infrastructure on the assumption that the developer enters into a Section 106 Agreement to secure Contribution towards off-site highway improvements and public transport services, Travel Plan Framework with Outcomes and Measures, contribution of £11,325 towards the monitoring costs for the travel plan and conditions regarding detailed schemes for off site highways works, a construction environmental management plan and the surfacing of driveways in an bound and sustainably drained material.

**SCC Public Rights of Way Officer:**
The plans recognise the existence of Public Bridleway no 11 Hopton and Coton which runs through the proposed development site and Public Bridleway's No's 12 and 16 Hopton and Coton and No 8 Marston which run across the northern edge of the proposed development.
The attention of the developer should be drawn to the existence of the paths and to the requirement that any planning permission given does not construe the right to divert, extinguish or obstruct any part of the public path network. If the paths do need diverting as part of these proposals the developer would need to apply to your council under section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to divert the bridleways to allow the development to commence.

**SCC Lead Local Flood Authority:**
*Latest response 1 July 2019*
The Technical Note and supporting information in relation to Flood Risk and Drainage Principles outlines two alternative options for the Catchment 2 Drainage Strategy to accommodate plans for HS2, in order to demonstrate that an acceptable Drainage Strategy can still be achieved. It confirms that the key principles and considerations in relation to the technical standards would remain as previously approved, and is therefore acceptable in this regard.
The conditions recommended in our previous response should be included to secure approval of the detailed design and phased implementation.
I understand there may be broader planning considerations in addition to the technical standards that the LPA will wish to consider. In particular please note the increased storage depths required within ponds 2a and 2b or 3a and 3b, depending on the option.

*Previous response 6 October 2017*
The Flood Risk Assessment (09-0473, THDA Limited Consulting Engineers, 12/12/2016) and Supplementary Document to Flood Risk Assessment (09-0473, THDA Limited Consulting Engineers, Rev B, 21/08/2017) set out the flood risk constraints and overall drainage strategy for the site.
Individual phases of development will need to comply with the overall FRA and Drainage Strategy, providing any mitigation measures and infrastructure necessary.
Prior to commencement of each phase a detailed surface water drainage design will be required, to include both works within the phase and the sitewide infrastructure necessary to serve that phase.
At no time during the development should the rate of surface water discharge exceed that from the undeveloped site during equivalent rainfall. The proposed development will only be acceptable if the following measures are incorporated in an acceptable surface water drainage scheme, to be secured by way of planning conditions on any planning permission.

**Condition**

No phase of development shall begin until a detailed surface water drainage design for that phase has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority. The design must be in accordance with the overall strategy and key design parameters set out in the Flood Risk Assessment (09-0473, THDA Limited Consulting Engineers, 12/12/2016) and Supplementary Document to Flood Risk Assessment (09-0473, THDA Limited Consulting Engineers, Rev B, 21/08/2017), including outfall locations, discharge rates, conveyance routes and water quality treatment measures.

The design must demonstrate:

- Surface water drainage system(s) designed in accordance with national and local standards, including the Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (DEFRA, March 2015).
- SuDS design to follow the Management Train concept, including adequate water quality treatment, which can be demonstrated using the Simple Index Approach (CIRIA SuDS Manual 2015).
- Limiting the total discharge rate generated by all rainfall events up to the 100 year plus climate change critical rain storm to no more than 80% of the equivalent greenfield rate. Specific discharge rates for individual outfalls as set out in the Outline Drainage Strategy.
- Detailed design (plans, network details and calculations) in support of any surface water drainage scheme, including details on any attenuation system, and the outfall arrangements. Calculations should demonstrate the performance of the designed system for a range of return periods and storm durations inclusive of the 1 in 1 year, 1 in 30 year, 1 in 100 year and 1 in 100 year plus climate change return periods.
- Plans illustrating flooded areas and flow paths in the event of exceedance of the drainage system and natural watercourses, to include flows from external sources. Site layout and levels should provide safe flood routes and adequate access for maintenance.
- Provision of an acceptable management and maintenance plan for surface water drainage to ensure continued performance of the system for the lifetime of the development. This should include a schedule of required maintenance activities and frequencies, and contact details for the organisation responsible for carrying out these duties.

**Reason**

To maintain a rational and coherent drainage strategy for the broader development location whilst ensuring that individual phases meet national and local standards throughout the course of development.

**Condition**

No phase of development shall be occupied until the surface water drainage system for that phase has been completed in accordance with the approved design, and details of the appointed management and maintenance companies have been provided to the LPA.
Reason
To reduce the risk of surface water flooding to the development and properties downstream for the lifetime of the development.

SCC Education:
The development site is to provide the land (2 ha) and the build costs for a 2 FE primary school. The number of homes proposed within the application the development site would be expected to contribute the whole of the build cost.

The first primary school will need to be open by the occupation of the 250th dwelling on the SDL land. The expected build period of the primary school is around 18 months. The development site is also to provide the land (7 ha) for the secondary school site proposed on the North of Stafford SDL. Based on the housing trajectory for the SDL, a new secondary school will be required for September 2024. Suitable access for the construction and operation of the secondary school site will need to be transferred to the County Council following receipt of planning permission for the Maximus Lands.

The expected build cost of the new secondary school is £20m. The level of secondary contribution per dwelling as previously shared during the master planning stage was £4,016. The number of RSL dwellings of the affordable allocation on this application will be discounted when calculating the secondary contribution. Payment of the education contributions can be dealt with more fully during the S106 negotiations.

Staffordshire Badger Conservation Group:
No objections – request that all wildlife corridors are made a condition of planning permission so that they will be fully protected and not lost at a further date.

Staffordshire Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor:
Recommend the development acquires ‘Secured by Design’ accreditation

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:
The application would appear to comply broadly with the NPPF, in that the EIA concludes that there will be an overall significant net biodiversity gain. Detailed plans for habitat creation, soils, flood management and species mitigation strategies should be secured by condition and S106 contributions should be secured for off site compensation to a number of non statutory wildlife sites.

Sport England:
Contributions for indoor and outdoor sporting provision should be sought for this development. Additionally conditions regarding design and layout of the ancillary facilities at the destination park, sports hall and artificial grass pitch and the securing of a community use agreement should be included within any planning approval.

Western Power Distribution:
No comments received.

Press advert and 4 site notices displayed
Neighbours:

(37 consulted): 2 letters of representation received from 2 properties. The issues raised are summarised below:-

Traffic and Highways
- Controlled crossings are needed at the new roundabout at Marston Lane and Patton Drive
- Cycle path needs to be provided along the main access road through the development
- National cycle route must be safely accommodated by the provision of controlled crossings at the new roundabout at Beaconside Marston Lane junction.
- Pedestrian and cycle route should be provided across Marston lane to link to the allocated housing development in the west.
- Access onto Sandon Road should be relocated to make it safer and accommodate HS2.
- A wheel wash facility for construction vehicles should be provided.

Relevant Planning History (adjacent sites within the SDL)

Akzo Nobel land – Land north of Taylor Wimpey development and west of Miller Homes development.

16/24595/OUT - Outline planning application for residential development of up to 700 dwellings (Use Class C3), 1 No. (up to 60 bed) elderly living facility (Use Class C2), a one form entry primary school (Use Class D1) and a local centre to provide up to 2500 sqm GIA of open use (Use Classes A1 and/or A2 and/or A3 and/or A5 and/or D1) development together with supporting infrastructure including: green infrastructure, highways and associated works. All matters are reserved other than the indicative routes of new Primary and Secondary Access Roads and the principle points of access. - Approved 10th October 2018

Miller Homes development – Land off Marston Lane

16/25260/OUT - Outline planning application for residential development and associated works. All matters are reserved other than means of access to the site – Approved 18th January 2018

18/28182/REM - Reserved matters for 100 dwellings with details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to outline application 16/25260/OUT – Approved 13th June 2018

Taylor Wimpey development – Land north of Beaconside

14/21007/FUL - 66 dwellings served via an existing access to Beaconside, landscaping, car parking and other works - Land North of Beaconside (Marston Grange) – Approved 9th September 2015
14/20781/REM - Reserved matters application (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) for 152 dwellings pursuant to planning permission 10/13362/OUT – Land North of Beaconside (Marston Grange) – Approved 24th September 2014

13/18533/REM - Submission of Reserved Matters (layout, scale, appearance and landscaping) for the construction of 257 dwellings served via two access points from Beaconside (approved under planning permission 10/13362/OUT), landscaping, car parking, earthworks to facilitate storm water drainage and all other ancillary and enabling works (Phase 1) – Land North of Beaconside (Marston Grange) – Approved 19th August 2013

10/13362/OUT - Residential development - 409 dwellings (outline) with details of means of access from Beaconside submitted for approval – Approved 31ST August 2012

Recommendation

Approve, subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval of the details of the layout of the development, the scale of the buildings, the appearance of the buildings, access to and within the site with the exception of the principle points of access on to the existing highway west of Hopton Garage, and the landscaping of the development (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before the relevant phase of the development is commenced. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

2. Applications for the approval of reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority before the expiry of 10 years from the date of this permission and the development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiry of two years from the date of approval of the final reserved matter.

3. Except insofar as may be otherwise required by other conditions to which this permission is subject the development shall be carried out in accordance with the following listed plans:
   - BIR.2908_38 (Site Location)
   - M.0408_30 Rev G (Site Plan)
   - BIR.2908_50 (Indicative Built Form Masterplan)
   - BIR.2908_47 Rev C (Phasing Plan)
   - BIR.2908_31 Rev B (Local Centre LC1)
   - BIR.2908_31 (Local Centre LC2)
   - BIR.2908_30 Sheet No3 Rev M (Land Use Parameter)
   - BIR.2908_44 Sheet 12 Rev N (Land Use Budget)
   - BIR.2908_30 Sheet No4 Rev P (Access and Movement Parameter)
   - BIR.2908_30 Sheet 13 Rev L (Building Heights Parameter)
   - BIR.2908_30 Sheet 12 Rev J (Indicative Green Infrastructure Parameter)
   - 11021-15-3 (Beaconside/Common Road)
   - 11021-15-4
   - 11021-15-5 Rev C (Plan 1)
   - CDX/8645/W11/R00/01 (Rev P0)
   - CDX8645/W03/R00/02 (Rev P0)
4. Notwithstanding the approved plans within condition 3, The development shall be built out in accordance with the phasing plan BIR.2908_47 Rev C unless otherwise agreed in writing.

5. No more than 2,000 dwellings (use class C3) shall be erected on the application site hereby approved.

6. Prior to the submission of any reserved matters applications a strategic landscaping and green infrastructure plan for the site as a whole shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. The plan should have regard to the Green Infrastructure drawing BIR.2908_30 Sheet 12 Rev J and include the provision of a minimum of 14.35 ha of onsite casual amenity open space, Destination Park, playing pitches and LEAP. The plan will show how the development will tie in with existing public rights of way across and around the site, allow sufficient buffer and security to surrounding MOD sites, and ensure that the development is accommodated within its landscape setting. Any reserved matters applications shall accord with the approved plan.

7. The submission of any reserved matters application for a phase including commercial works shall include detailed noise reports for commercial developments within the site, consideration (through site location selection) should be given to mitigating noise around schools, care homes and health centres and residential development in particular.

8. Within three months of the date of this permission, a detailed scheme for off-site highway improvements to the junctions of:
   - Beaconside with Common Road and new access into site as shown on drawing CDX8645/W03/R00/02 (Rev P0)
   - Beaconside with Paton Drive and new access into the site as shown on drawing 11021-15-4
   - Beaconside with Sandon Road (north) as shown on drawing 11021-15-5 Rev C (Plan 1)
shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, this scheme shall be fully implemented, constructed and open prior to first occupation of any dwelling served from the relevant access. The highways improvement works at the junctions not approved first shall be approved, constructed and open prior to commencement of any dwelling on phase 3.

9. Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved a Flood Risk Management scheme to provide an acceptable flood storage area shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The scheme must include:
   - The design of the flood storage area must demonstrate a benefit downstream by reducing flows to levels stated in Figure 8 to Figure 12 in the New Buildings Farm Mapping study 'TechnicalNote_OptionH_rev2(003) (2012) as produced by LUTRA consulting. Specifically the storage area must deliver reductions in flows as shown in Figure 8 and Figure 11.
- Before construction, the flood storage area will need to be hydraulically modelled using the Environment Agency's current model for Sandyford Brook to demonstrate that there will be a reduction in flows downstream. This benefit must be approved by the Environment Agency.
- When designing the storage area, the designer must demonstrate that the flood storage area has been designed taking the upstream storage area into account. This must be demonstrated and approved by the Environment Agency.
- The flood storage area must be constructed before any development on adjacent land to allow enough space for design iterations at the detailed design stage.
- A detailed maintenance programme should be submitted.
- The scheme shall be fully implemented and subsequently maintained, in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

10. Prior to the commencement of development on any phase, a Construction Management Plan (CMP) for that phase shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved management plan shall include, but not be confined to:
- Details relating to construction access, hours of construction, lighting, routing of HGV’s, delivery times, the location of the contractors compounds, cabins, material storage areas, visitors and contractors parking, noise management measures including screening to protect residential dwellings from excessive noise, site waste management plan, sales office and a scheme for the management and suppression of dust from construction activities including the provision of a vehicle wheel wash site, protection of watercourses, control of vibration and noise if piling is undertaken and measures for dealing with hazardous materials.
- Details of demolition and hazardous materials management plan, detailing proposed working methods and site security, hrs of works and method to remove demolition materials from site.
- Details of escalation and communication procedures (e.g. site meetings, toolbox talks) between agents, office/site office staff and sub contracting staff regarding details of condition discharge and condition restrictions within any planning approval on the site.
All site operations shall then be undertaken strictly in accordance with the approved CMP for the duration of the construction programme.

11. Prior to commencement of each phase, details of the measures to protect trees and hedgerows during construction of that phase must have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall include:
(a) Fencing. Protective fencing must be installed around trees and hedgerows to be retained on site. The implementation and design of protective fencing must conform to specifications provided in BS5837:2012, unless agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. A scale plan must be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority accurately indicating the position of protective fencing. No development of a phase shall be commenced on site or machinery or material brought onto site until the approved protective fencing has been installed in the approved positions and this has been inspected on site and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This fencing shall be maintained throughout the course of development until its completion.
(b) Tree Protection Area (TPA). The area around trees and hedgerows enclosed on site by protective fencing shall be deemed the TPA. Excavations of any kind, alterations in soil levels, storage of any materials, soil, equipment, fuel, machinery or plant, citing of site compounds, latrines, vehicle parking and delivery areas, fires and any other activities liable to be harmful to trees and hedgerows are prohibited within the TPA, unless agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The TPA shall be maintained during the course of development of the relevant phase.

(c) Method Statement. A method statement for construction in relation to trees and hedges incorporating no dig techniques as required in any phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter construction in that phase shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved methods.

(d) Facilitation Tree Work. Prior to commencement of development of a phase details of any tree works management with regard to the uprooting, felling, or pruning of any trees, large shrubs or hedgerows within that phase shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority and shall be carried out as part of the development. These works shall take place in accordance with the approved scheme unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

12. Prior to the commencement of each phase of development hereby approved a detailed surface water drainage design for that phase shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority. The design for each phase must be in accordance with the overall strategy and key design parameters set out in the Flood Risk Assessment (09-0473, THDA Limited Consulting Engineers, 12/12/2016) the Supplementary Document to Flood Risk Assessment (09-0473, THDA Limited Consulting Engineers, Rev B, 21/08/2017) and THDA Technical Note Dated 27/03/19 - Rev 2, including outfall locations, discharge rates, conveyance routes and water quality treatment measures.

The design must demonstrate:
- Surface water drainage system(s) designed in accordance with national and local standards, including the Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (DEFRA, March 2015).
- SuDS design to follow the Management Train concept, including adequate water quality treatment, which can be demonstrated using the Simple Index Approach (CIRIA SuDS Manual 2015).
- Limiting the total discharge rate generated by all rainfall events up to the 100 year plus climate change critical rain storm to no more than 80% of the equivalent greenfield rate. Specific discharge rates for individual outfalls as set out in the Outline Drainage Strategy.
- Detailed design (plans, network details and calculations) in support of any surface water drainage scheme, including details on any attenuation system, and the outfall arrangements. Calculations should demonstrate the performance of the designed system for a range of return periods and storm durations inclusive of the 1 in 1 year, 1 in 30 year, 1 in 100 year and 1 in 100 year plus climate change return periods.
- Plans illustrating flooded areas and flow paths in the event of exceedance of the drainage system and natural watercourses, to include flows from external sources.
Site layout and levels should provide safe flood routes and adequate access for maintenance.
- Provision of an acceptable management and maintenance plan for surface water drainage to ensure continued performance of the system for the lifetime of the development. This should include a schedule of required maintenance activities and frequencies, and contact details for the organisation responsible for carrying out these duties.

13. Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development hereby permitted, a written scheme of archaeological investigation ('the Scheme') for that phase shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall provide details of the programme of archaeological works to be carried out within the site, including post-excavation reporting and appropriate publication and interpretation. The scheme shall thereafter be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details.

14. Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development hereby approved a Construction Environmental Management Plan and Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Strategy for that phase shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. This plan should include methods for controlling pollution and flooding during construction (in accordance with BS42020:2013), details of how best practice will be employed at all times during construction works to ensure potential welfare issues to badgers and other wildlife are minimised and any disturbance effect and a consequence of the construction phase is reduced to non-significant levels; details on how impacts on protected species will be mitigated and how the biodiversity value of the phase will be enhanced in accordance with best practice. It should also include detailed provisions for design, funding and long term management of multi-functional green infrastructure and surface water drainage and how this links in with the wider site and the strategic landscaping and green infrastructure plan, approved pursuant to condition 6. The strategy should also set out how the recommendations within the associated appendicies should be followed. The strategic landscaping & green infrastructure plan should reference a recognised Biodiversity Metric and in accordance with NPPF 2018 ensure a net gain in biodiversity. This should be implemented through the mitigation hierarchy with any residual impact covered by a biodiversity offset contribution. The details shall then be implemented as approved.

15. Prior to the commencement of each phase a stage II intrusive ground investigation shall take place for that phase in accordance with the recommendations of the phase I report. The report should also include a soil management plan, advising on soil handling and making the best use of different soils on site and a system for ensuring that any imported soil for gardens and public open space is verified as being uncontaminated. Any recommendations of the investigation shall be undertaken and implemented as approved.

16. No development shall take place on any phase until details of earthworks for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including the levels and contours to be formed, showing the relationship of proposed mounding to existing vegetation and surrounding landform. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
17. Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development hereby approved existing and proposed land levels and finished floor levels up to and including the boundary for that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local Planning authority. The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details, unless the local planning authority agrees to any variation.

18. Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development hereby approved an external lighting strategy for the phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The external lighting strategy shall include details of lighting to areas of public open space, green corridors and paths and be in accordance with a strategic landscaping and green infrastructure plan as approved within condition 6 of this approval. The lighting strategy should also give detail of lighting to any commercial aspect of any phase and mitigate against intrusion into homes. The details shall thereafter be implemented as approved by the final occupation of the phase, unless the local planning authority agrees to any variation.

19. Prior to the commencement of Phase 2 as shown on Phasing Plan BIR.2908_47 Rev C details of the construction, design and layout of the playing pitches and ancillary facilities at the destination park shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority after consultation with Sport England. The scheme will include a detailed assessment of ground conditions of the land proposed for playing fields which identifies constraints which could adversely affect playing field quality, measures to address such constraints and a written specification of the proposed soils structure, proposed drainage, cultivation and other operations associated with grass and sports turf establishment. The scheme shall ensure substantive compliance with standards and methodologies set out in Sport England and Football Association technical guidance and shall include a timetable for delivery. The playing pitches and ancillary facilities shall be then laid out in accordance with the approved plans.

20. Prior to the construction of any dwellings within a phase, a strategy to facilitate high speed broadband for future occupants of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall seek to ensure that upon occupation of a dwelling, either a landline or ducting to facilitate the provision of a broadband service to that dwelling from a site-wide network, is in place and provided as part of the initial highway works and in the construction of frontage thresholds to dwellings that abut the highway, unless evidence is put forward and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority that technological advances for the provision of a broadband service for the majority of potential customers will no longer necessitate below ground infrastructure. The development of the site shall be carried out in accordance with the approved strategy.

21. No phase of development shall be occupied until the surface water drainage system for that phase has been completed in accordance with the approved design, and details of the appointed management and maintenance companies have been provided to the Local Planning Authority.
22. Prior to occupation of any dwelling within each phase of the development details of a 'Welcome Pack' for that phase providing information on the locality shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. It should include educational and awareness raising information addressing relevant ecological issues; e.g. (i) the location and sensitivities of nearby national and local designated sites; (ii) steps that residents can take to enjoy and conserve these local resources; (iii) minimising disturbance to wild birds - key 'do's and don'ts' - such as the value of fitting pet cats with bells on their collars to minimise wild bird predation and keeping dogs on leads in order to help minimise disturbance to wildlife at sensitive times of year and (iv) details of how car journeys could be minimised giving details of cycle and walking routes and alternative transport methods (e.g. bus routes nearby). The 'Welcome pack' for the relevant phase shall be given to occupiers on first occupation of each dwelling within that phase on the site.

23. Prior to occupation of any dwelling within a phase containing commercial development details of any external lighting to serve the proposed commercial development within that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme should show the type and extent of lighting and limit the intrusion into nearby residential development. Once approved, the scheme should be implemented in accordance with the approval plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

24. Prior to occupation of any dwelling in the relevant phase the measures and initiatives detailed in the Travel Plan Framework ref SJT/NES 11021-02 shall be in place. The measures and initiatives shall be implemented in line with these details unless otherwise agreed in writing and reviewed data shall be made available for inspection as required. The measures and initiatives are to be reviewed and revised prior to the occupation of any subsequent phase until the final phase is occupied.

25. Notwithstanding any description / details in the application documents, prior to the submission of any application for or including the local centres, a design brief for the relevant local centre shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The detailed design principles within the brief shall include: - Constraints, topography, land use, architectural language (i.e. contemporary / traditional etc), massing and scale parameters, access and circulation, parking, public realm, layout, appearance, phasing, architectural, landscape and sustainable construction guidelines, electrical changing points, cycle storage facilities, public recycling area
Reserved matters submitted pursuant to condition 2 in this outline permission for the relevant phase of the development shall demonstrate compliance with the approved design brief.

26. Prior to any occupation of phase 5 as detailed on approved phasing plan BIR.2908 47 Rev C the internal spine road shall be constructed from the A513(Beaconside)/B5066(Sandon Road) to a point agreed in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with the Highway Authority, shown on drawing CDX/8645/W11/R00/01 Rev PO within the applicants land unless otherwise agrees in writing by the local planning authority.
27. Prior to occupation of any dwelling within the phase to which it is included, details of any railings surrounding any ponds, swales or attenuation areas shall be submitted to, approved in writing by the local planning authority and implemented as such.

28. Prior to the first occupation of the secondary school details of the design and layout of the secondary school sports hall and floodlight fenced artificial grass pitch shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with Sport England. The sports hall and artificial grass pitch shall be constructed as approved and be ready for use on first occupation of the secondary school.

29. Prior to the first occupation of the secondary school or community facilities, a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The agreement shall apply to the artificial grass pitch and sports hall and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities, sinking fund to replace carpet and a mechanism for review. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

30. All phases of the development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment (ref: 09-0473 North of Stafford Strategic Development Location, dated 12/12/2016, and the Supplementary Document to the Flood Risk Assessment, dated 21/08/17 prepared by THDA Limited Consulting Engineers) and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:
   - All residential development must be located within Flood Zone 1.
   The mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

31. No reserved matters application shall be submitted pursuant to the outline application within the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inner or middle consultation zones of National Grid Distribution Ltd pipeline ref. 2681: 21 Feeder Audley/Alrewas (i.e. within 105 metres of the pipeline) until a scheme for the diversion or reinforcement of the pipeline has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, in agreement with National Grid Gas Distribution Ltd and HSE. The scheme shall be implemented as approved. No dwellings approved by this permission shall be occupied within the inner or middle consultation zones until the approved scheme has been completed.
The reasons for the Council’s decision to approve the development subject to the above conditions are:

1. The application has been made for outline permission only.
2. To comply with the section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
3. To define the permission.
4. To define the permission.
5. To define the permission.
6. To retain and enhance a network of green infrastructure in accordance with Policy Stafford 2 - North of Stafford and Policy N1 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.
7. To safeguard the amenities of the area (Policy N1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
8. In the interests of highway safety and to accord with Policy Stafford 2 - North of Stafford and Policy T1 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.
9. To reduce the risk of flooding downstream of the development site as required in Policy Stafford 2 - North of Stafford within the Plan for Stafford Borough.
10. To minimise the impact of construction activity on the surrounding environment in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
11. To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy Stafford 2 - North of Stafford, N4 and N8 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.
12. To maintain a rational and coherent drainage strategy for the broader development location whilst ensuring that individual phases meet national and local standards throughout the course of development.
13. To ensure any archaeological remains and potential are preserved in accordance with policy N9 of The Plan for Stafford Borough.
15. To comply with Defra's construction code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites, Paragraph 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework and N4 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.
16. In the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory form of development (Policy N1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).
17. To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with policy N2 and N4 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.

18. To ensure an adequate level of amenity provision for the occupiers of the developments to accord with Policy Stafford 2 - North of Stafford, and C7 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.

19. To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with Policy Stafford 2 - North of Stafford of the Plan for Stafford Borough.

20. To facilitate the enablement of high speed broadband for future occupiers of the development. (Policy Stafford 2 North of Stafford of the Plan for Stafford Borough).

21. To reduce the risk of surface water flooding to the development and properties downstream for the lifetime of the development.

22. To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy N2 and N4 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.

23. To safeguard the amenities of the area (Policy N1 of The Plan for Stafford Borough).


25. To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development (Policy N1 of the Plan for Stafford Borough).

26. In the interests of highway safety and to accord with policy Stafford 2 - North of Stafford and Policy T1 of the Plan for Stafford Borough.

27. In the interests of safety for future occupiers of the development.

28. To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with Policy Stafford 2 - North of Stafford of the Plan for Stafford Borough.

29. To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with Policy Stafford 2 - North of Stafford of the Plan for Stafford Borough.

30. To reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants.

31. In the interests of safety for future occupiers of the development.

Informative(s)

1. The Local Planning Authority consider the proposal to be a sustainable form of development and therefore complies with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2 Any application for the approval of reserved matters shall be in accordance with the principles of 'Active Design' (as defined by Sport England) and laid out within the document 'Active Design: Planning for health and wellbeing through sport and physical activity' October 2015.

3 The conditions requiring off-site highway works shall require a Major Works Agreement with Staffordshire County Council and the applicant is therefore requested to contact Staffordshire County Council in respect of securing the Agreement. The link below provides a further link to a Major Works Information Pack and an application form for the Major Works Agreement. Please complete and send to the address indicated on the application form which is Staffordshire County Council at Network Management Unit, Staffordshire Place 1, Wedgwood Building, Tipping Street, STAFFORD, Staffordshire ST16 2DH (or email tonmu@staffordshire.gov.uk)

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/staffshighways/licences/. This consent will require approval under Section 7 of the Staffordshire Act 1983 and will require a Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980. Please contact Staffordshire County Council to ensure that approvals and agreements are secured before commencement of works.

4 The applicants should be reminded that the granting of planning permission does not constitute authority for interference with the rights of way or their closure or diversion. For further information the applicant should be advised to read section 7 of DEFRA's Rights of Way Circular (1/09) and any proposal to divert, extinguish or obstruct any right of way should be approved by Staffordshire County Council in line with government guidance.

5 The applicant is advised that part of the application site (albeit limited) falls within land that may be required to construct and/or operate Phase 2a of a high speed rail line from Crewe to Manchester and the West Midlands to Leeds, known as High Speed Two. Powers to construct and operate High Speed Two are to be sought by promoting a hybrid Bill in Parliament. As a result this part of the application site may be compulsorily purchased. More information can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/high-speed-two-limited
16/25450/OUT
Land North Of Beaconside
Stafford
REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This is a Large Scale Major planning application and as such it is excluded from the Scheme of Delegation and must be determined by Planning Committee.

Context

This is a retrospective planning application for the retention of polytunnels. The specific type of polytunnel under consideration are lower height standard “Spanish tunnels” which comprise galvanised tubular metal hoop structures with y shaped legs which are screwed into the ground. The polytunnels have a clear dome shaped polythene cover. The polytunnels are used for the production of soft fruit and serve 3 primary purposes:-

1. to provide protection of the agricultural produce from rain damage;
2. Allow the fruit to be picked during times of inclement weather; and,
3. they allow the growing season to be extended.

Each polytunnel is 8.0m in width and 4.0m in height (at the highest point).

The entire site covers an area of 10.435 hectares, part of which falls within the administrative area of South Staffordshire. In those circumstances a separate planning application is also being considered by South Staffordshire District Council in conjunction with this proposal within the Borough.

The application submission states that the proposal is for temporary basis only. The application proposes for occupation of the land envisaged over a 3 to 4 year period. The proposal comprises permanent metal structures with seasonal sheeting being placed over elevated stands “table tops” with the strawberries being grown in ridge and furrow on the ground. The areas of land would then be cleared and will be cultivated and laid to grass.
The metal frames would be covered between March and October each year whilst in use for soft fruit production.

Picked fruit is transported via County roads to the packhouse situated at Littywood Farm. Access to the site falls with the boundary of South Staffordshire Council. Accordingly highway safety implications related to the access are subject to the conclusion of the neighbouring authority taking into account the advice of the Highway Authority.

The application is supported by the following documents:
- Design statement
- Flood Risk assessment
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Phase 1 habitat report
- Economic Assessment

**Officer Assessment – Key Considerations**

1. **The principle of the development**

Paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that policies should support the sustainable growth and expansion of business and enterprise in rural areas through well designed new buildings. It is also specified policies should promote the development and diversification of agriculture.

Spatial Principle 7(ii), (iii) and (iv) of The Plan for Stafford Borough (PfSB) sets out criteria for development in the countryside. Primarily it must be consistent with the objectives of the local plan to support rural sustainability. Supporting a sustainable rural economy is central to this strategy and polytunnels achieve this as a form of agricultural diversification. Policy E2 (v) of the Plan for Stafford Borough states that support will be given to the diversification of the rural economy.

The application is supported by an economic and operational statement. This report considers the overall farming enterprise which includes the land at Woollaston Lane, Mitton, including the soft fruit growing operation which is dependent on the polytunnels being considered by this application.

The submitted statement highlights the significance of the use of polytunnels to extend the cropping season to meet consumer demands. The report states that the agricultural business at Littywood employs 8 full-time staff, 4 part-time staff and 300 (maximum) casual/part-time staff. The statement notes that considering the decline in agriculture in the UK generally, that this level of employment is significant. It also highlights that the business contributes significantly to the local economy. The statement emphasises that the polytunnels are an integral part of the soft fruit business at the farm and that without them it would not be financially sustainable.

Taking into account the information provided by the applicant the development will aid rural agricultural enterprise in line the Local Plan policy. However in making an overall conclusion other material considerations need to be considered to ensure there is no conflict with competing environmental and nature conservation policies of the Plan for Stafford Borough and, that provision is made where necessary for any mitigation or
compensatory measures to address any harmful implications triggered. Those further elements are now considered.

Policies and Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework:
Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development.
Section 3 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy
Section 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The Plan for Stafford Borough:
Spatial Principle 6 – Achieving Rural Sustainability
Spatial Principle 7 - Supporting the Location of New Development;
Policy E2 – Sustainable Rural Development

2. The impact on the visual appearance of the local landscape

The application site forms part of Mitton farm. The surrounding landscape is a mixture of arable and pasture land and the topography is relatively flat. Mature hedgerow flanks fields as a key component of the character of the area.

The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). In summary this information aims to establish the following:

- an understanding of the site and its setting in landscape and visual terms.
- to understand the development proposals and mitigation measures.
- to identify all potential impacts of the proposal upon the landscape.
- to identify impacts on visual receptors.
- conclusion about the residual effects of the scheme.

The LVIA states that application site lies within an area of good quality landscape which has a medium sensitivity level in gauging changes brought about by development proposals.

It also states that polytunnels are an accepted form of agriculture and that no field patterns are proposed to be altered and there is no removal of trees or hedgerow. The report comments that the main adverse landscape impact of polytunnels results from the large expanses of polythene coverings, which are an eye-catching and an un-natural element in the landscape.

Several viewpoints are used in the LVIA and take into account a range of factors including: accessibility to the public; potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected; viewing distance and elevation; the nature of the viewing experience, view type and the potential for cumulative views of the proposed development in conjunction with other polytunnel development. The following receptors are identified in the report and no mitigation is suggested in any of these locations: Oak Tree Farm, Upper Mitton Farm, Shredicote Lane & Woollaston Lane (various points)

The LVIA states that the polytunnels will be visible over hedgerows however they are no out of scale with the landscape or will be particularly visually prominent in the majority of views within and around the area. The report does acknowledge that their visual
prominence increases once covered in plastic sheeting. It considers that in the proposed location there will be no adverse effect to the tunnels being erected in this location in rotation, and that landscape planting is required to mitigate the effect on the landscape.

**Officer assessment**

Policy N8 of the PfSB states that development proposals must be sympathetic to the landscape character and quality. It also states that development proposals with landscape implications should protect, conserve and where appropriate enhance the landscape.

Taking into account all points within the submitted the LVIA notes there is existing mature hedgerows along Woollaston Lane provide significant screening of the polytunnels. Whilst the height of the hedgerow varies and there are intermittent gaps the hedgerows do provide a good level of screening. The polytunnels can be seen from the wider area however, views are generally quite limited due to existing vegetation and the topography of the land. The view taken is that the agreement of further soft landscaping mitigation sought by planning condition isn’t necessary.

The site is in a remote location and is rural/agricultural in character. Other developments of polytunnels can also be found in the immediate area. Therefore, it is not considered that the retention of the polytunnels applied for would have a significant detrimental impact upon the appearance of the local landscape.

Policies and Guidance:–

National Planning Policy Framework:
Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The Plan for Stafford Borough:
Policy E2 – Sustainable Rural Development
Policy N1 – Design
Policy N8 – Landscape Character

3. **Residential Amenity**

There are no residential properties which are situated immediately adjacent to the site. It is not considered therefore that the proposal would result in any adverse impacts to residential amenity.

Policies and Guidance:–

The Plan for Stafford Borough
Policy N1 – Design
4. **Highways**

The access to the site is situated off Woollaston Road and, is situated within South Staffordshire. South Staffs District Council are in the process of determining if the access arrangement serving the development is acceptable based on comments from the Highway Authority. The site would only need to be accessed by agricultural vehicles and agricultural workers.

The Highway Authority do not raise any objections subject to conditions to ensure that the access to the site within the limits of the public highway has been reconstructed in a suitable stable material and, that wheel cleaning/washing facilities have been installed on site. Given that the access falls within South Staffordshire it is only considered necessary to attach a condition relating to the wheel wash facilities – given mud and debris from the business operation could be transferred to local roads within the Borough if not properly regulated.

The same highways conditions have been suggested by the Highway Authority to South Staffordshire District Council. Therefore it is anticipated road surfacing can be covered separately in consideration to the planning application with the neighbouring district Council.

**Policies and Guidance:**

**National Planning Policy Framework:**
Section 9: Promoting sustainable development

**The Plan for Stafford Borough:**
Policy T1 - Transport

5. **Surface Water Drainage**

The site lies partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3 associated with the Church Eaton Brook, a classified Main River which flows to the north of the red line boundary. As the site is located within the mapped floodplain, this application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) as required by the NPPF.

In summary, the FRA looks at the following:
- the extent of the Flood Zones across the site using the EA flood data;
- the practical use of sustainable drainage (SUDS) measures using the relevant soil maps, software and other literature;
- the existing surface water drainage;
- a post-development management plan/drainage strategy for surface water;
- assesses flood risk and appraises flood risk from other sources.

The FRA concludes that the polytunnel areas will be restricted to the Flood Zone 1 and that there is a very low surface water flooding risk across the area designated area for polytunnels.
The Environment Agency notes that the FRA acknowledges the policy steer to locate all development in the area of lowest risk of flooding. The application proposes to locate the polytunnels within Flood Zone 1 only, in line with the sequential approach to development and flood risk.

The Environment Agency also advised that the applicant submit a layout plan to show that the proposed polytunnels are located within Flood Zone 1 only and in light of that information the Environment Agency do not raise any objections subject to conditions relating to:-
- The permission being carried out in accordance with the FRA and the mitigation measures detailed within the FRA.
- A buffer strip of rough grassland to be maintained within 8m of the top of the bank of the Church Eaton Brook to the north of the site. No polytunnels shall be erected within this zone.

Similarly the County Flood team do not raise any objections but suggest an additional point is added to the mitigation measures listed by the Environment Agency relating to the construction and maintenance of leg row and interception swales as specified in the submitted FRA.

Taking account of the submitted FRA and the comments raised by both the EA and the County Flood team it is not considered that the proposal will result in any significant flood or drainage issues subject to appropriately worded planning conditions.

Policies and Guidance:-

National Planning Policy Framework:
Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding

The Plan for Stafford Borough:
Policy N2 – Climate Change

6. Ecology

An extended phase 1 habitat survey supports the application which was undertaken in December 2018. The report identifies the site as consisting of two arable parcels of land bordered by open fields and that hedgerows enclose the site which comprise of a good mix of woody species.

The report notes that the trees within the hedgerows bordering the site offer bat roosting habitat but that they are unlikely to be impacted on. The report also identifies that a number of ponds are located within 250m of the proposal site. The closest pond was found to have low suitability for Great Crested Newts (GCN) The ponds located further away did however record average suitability. Taking account of the distance, lack of direct habitat corridors and fragmentation due to Woolaston Lane and Church Eaton Brook, the report suggest that reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs) should be employed.

The report notes that the main impact of the polytunnels is the loss of arable field habitat to bird species, drainage impact and the on site management of agrochemicals particularly where the polytunnels are in close proximity to Church Eaton Brook.
The report does not recommend that any further surveys are considered necessary however it does recommend that a series of RAMs should be implemented on site including the monitoring of flora and fauna.

The Biodiversity Officer comments that the submitted survey did not find evidence of protected species but does make recommendations for reasonable avoidance measures. The avoidance measures are in regard to amphibians, particularly Great Crested Newts and that the suggested works are reasonable and appropriate.

In light of all information received, and factoring the retrospective nature of the proposal, the view taken is that the imposition planning conditions implied by the technical advice is appropriate. Also accounting there are other areas of legislation which require for the protection of wildlife.

Policies and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework:
Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The Plan for Stafford Borough:
Policy N4 – The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure;

Conclusion

The polytunnels the subject of this application are already in situ. Whilst it is recognised that they do have a significant impact upon the wider landscape, it is not considered the impact is visually harmful relative to surroundings.

Moreover there is no harm arising relating to flood risk, ecology matters, residential amenity or highway safety. Overall subject to appropriately worded planning conditions the development complies with the aims and objectives of the Councils Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Consultations

Highway Authority:
No objections subject to conditions relating to:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into further use until the access to the site within the limits of the public highway has been reconstructed in a suitable stable material for a minimum distance of 10.0m rear of the highway boundary and completed.
2. Provision of wheel cleaning/washing facilities have been installed on site in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved facility shall thereafter be utilised by all vehicles for the full period of operation.
Environment Agency (EA):

Comments that the site lies partially within medium and high risk Flood Zones 2 and 3 associated with the Church Eaton Brook, a classified Main River which flows to the north of the red line boundary. The site boundary falls within the 8m buffer from this river where development is required to gain consent from the Environment Agency under the Environmental Permitting Regulations. As the site is located within the mapped floodplain, this application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The FRA acknowledges the policy steer to locate all development in the area of lowest risk of flooding. In light of this it proposes to locate the polytunnels low risk Flood Zone 1 only, in line with the sequential approach to development and flood risk. The FRA also addresses a number of issues relating to surface water runoff and associated pollution, therefore Staffordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority should be consulted on these proposals due to their size (over 1 ha in FZ1).

This brook drains to the Whiston Brook waterbody under Water Framework Directive (WFD) as defined by the Humber River Basin Management Plan. This waterbody is classified as being of Bad ecological status, legislation requires that this waterbody improves to Good Status by 2027.

Reasons that this waterbody is failing to meet its required status have been identified as elevated phosphate levels and low invertebrate populations. Abstraction pressures within the catchment are also contributing to the brook currently failing to meet the required standards. A major reason for this failure is also diffuse pollution from agricultural practices, in particular sediment run-off into the watercourse. We are satisfied that suitable measures will be put in place to ensure the Whiston Brook and its tributaries will not be detrimentally affected by silt from the proposals. It is therefore essential that the mitigation measures detailed within the FRA are implemented to protect the local rivers from siltation.

- Conditions are recommended relating to:-Compliance with the FRA.A buffer strip of rough grassland shall be maintained within 8m of the top of the bank of the Church Eaton Brook to the north of the site. No polytunnels shall be erected within this zone.

The EA are satisfied with the amended plan submitted in support of this application as it demonstrates the proposed polytunnels will be sited in Flood Zone 1. Subject to the recommended conditions there are no objections.

Lead Local Flood Authority:
Comment that the proposals will be acceptable provided the measures detailed within the FRA are implemented, including construction and maintenance of leg row and interception swales as specified in the FRA. The Environment Agency has recommended a condition requiring compliance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment. It is suggested an additional point is added to the mitigation measures listed:

- construction and maintenance of leg row and interception swales as specified in the FRA
Environmental Health Officer:
No comments.

Biodiversity Officer:
Leigh Ecology undertook an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey during December 2018. The survey did not find evidence of protected species but does make recommendations for reasonable avoidance measures.

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This means that vegetation clearing should not be undertaken in the nesting season (March to August), unless it can be demonstrated by the developer that breeding birds will not be affected. This can be done by requesting a method statement for protection / avoidance of nesting birds as a condition – this may include timing of work, pre-work checks, avoiding nesting areas etc.

As specified by the Environment Agency, buffer strips are required of rough grassland at least 8m from the Church Eaton Brook.

Further response dated 16th October 2019 - The RAMs are in regard to amphibians, particularly Great Crested Newts. The suggested works seem reasonable and are appropriate.

Bradley Parish Council:
The Parish Council has the following observations and comments in connection with the above application:-
1. The route vehicles travel from the site following the purple route to packing house is a single track road for the transport of pickers on double decker buses, tractors and trailers for movement of fruit.
2. The condition of the road surface is very poor and is breaking up, especially from Bradley village to packing house. It is felt that generally where the local infrastructure is affected, the applicant should make a financial contribution to the repair of the roads.
3. Retrospective application shows continuous disrespect for the community.
4. In respect of water “run off”, the conclusion of the water report should be attached on conditions for consent.
5. Also, it is queried when reducing the use of plastic, why so much is allowed to cover our fields.

Neighbours:
(0 notified): Site notice posted. No representations received.

Relevant Planning History
None relevant.
Recommendation

Approve, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans listed below except as otherwise required by conditions attached to this consent in which case the condition(s) take precedence:
   location plan at 1:2500/ A1 landscape 18S43P01
drawing no: 18-159-01 Topographic site survey

2. Polytunnels shall only be sited on the land as shown on drawing no 18S43P01

3. The polytunnels hereby permitted shall only be used for the cultivation of soft fruit. In the event that they cease to be used for this purpose and become redundant, the polytunnels including all supporting structures and all structures, fixtures and fittings within them shall be removed from the land within a period of two months of their disuse or vacancy.

4. The polythene coverings shall be removed from all of the polytunnel frames and the polythene shall be removed from the fields by 31 October each year and shall not be replaced until 1 March the following year.

5. Prior to 1st March 2020 wheel cleaning/washing facilities shall be installed on site in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved facility shall thereafter be utilised by all vehicles for the full period of operation.

6. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Evans Rivers and Coastal Flood Risk Assessment: Rotating polytunnels for soft fruit growing, Land at Mitton, Penkridge, reference 2212/RE/12-18/01 (December 2018) and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:
   - The polytunnels shall be located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 as defined by Figure 7 and stated within section 4.1.4 and 7.2
   - Spaces between plants beds and polytunnels shall be grassed and covered within impermeable plant bed covers over winter to reduce soil erosion as stated within section 6.7.1 and 6.7.3
   - Buffer strips parallel to roadways and field margins shall be constructed to reduce runoff as per section 6.7.6 and 6.7.7
   - Construction and maintenance of leg row and interception swales as specified in the FRA

7. A buffer strip of rough grassland shall be maintained within 8m of the top of the bank of the Church Eaton Brook to the north of the site. No polytunnels shall be erected within this zone.
8. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted extended phase 1 habitat report (report BUS/18-001 by Leigh Ecology) and shall include the reasonable avoidance measures set out within the report.

9. No external lighting shall be constructed or installed without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

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

1. To define the permission.

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 safeguard the character and appearance of the area (Policy N1h of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

5. In the interests of the safety and convenience of pedestrians.

6. To reduce the risk of flooding within the site and ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere through the locating the proposals outside the areas of mapped risk. The polytunnels themselves are designed and laid out as to not increase soil erosion or siltation and subsequent pollution of the local watercourses (Policy N2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough)

7. To prevent deterioration of existing habitats along this waterbody, bringing the proposals in line with the Humber River Basin Management Plan (Policy N4 of the Plan for Stafford Borough)

8. In order to ensure that the development does not result in damage or harm to legally protected species or their habitat/roost. (Policy N5 of the Plan for Stafford Borough)

9. To safeguard the character and appearance of the area (Policy N1h of The Plan for Stafford Borough).

Informative(s)

1. The Local Planning Authority consider the proposal to be a sustainable form of development and therefore complies with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.