

Application No: 22/4964N

Location: Car Park, OAK STREET, CREWE

Proposal: Proposed erection of a part single, part two storey building to provide a Class D2 Youth Zone facility with minibus parking and drive in drop off layby from Oak Street with accessible car parking space. A 5 a-side illuminated (MUGA) pitch is located on the roof at first floor level with an acoustic screen from properties on High Street. Covered secure cycle parking to the North along with external recreation area with secure fencing. Service Yard to the North accessed off High Street providing access to bin storage and minibus space. Associated boundary treatments and hard and soft landscaping.

Applicant: Mr Adam Poyner, OnSide Youth Zones

Expiry Date: 23-Mar-2023

SUMMARY

The application proposes an essentially two-storey building on Oak Street car park to accommodate a “state-of-the-art youth facility” within Crewe Town Centre. The proposals represent an important opportunity for delivering town centre redevelopment and regeneration in a prominent location of the Southern Gateway Development Area in accordance with the objectives of Policies RET 9 and RET 10 of the SADPD.

Whilst of contemporary architectural design, the youth zone is considered to represent a high quality scheme that sites positively in the townscape. The proposed scheme therefore has the potential to be a significant catalyst for positive change in the southern gateway area in conjunction with the Council sponsored southern gateway public realm project.

The siting of the development will not adversely affect the amenities of those living nearby and achieve an acceptable relationship with the existing residential units located on the southern side of High Street. In addition, uses and activities of the Youth Zone will not result in unacceptable levels of noise or disturbance to nearby properties given the provision of specified acoustic mitigation measures. It is considered the proposal therefore complies with policy SE1 and SE12 of the CELPS and Policy HOU12 of the SADPD.

The site is in Crewe town centre with existing pedestrian and public transport infrastructure within the vicinity of the site, or within short walking distance. As the site is considered well located to cater for staff or visitors to travel by sustainable modes of travel, the use of the Youth Zone Centre will not have an adversely impact on town centre parking provision or harmful highway impact as a result of traffic generation.

The proposals will have a neutral impact on trees given proposed areas of new planting and will increase the biodiversity value of the development through the incorporation of features for nesting birds. Other issues including designing out crime have been satisfactorily addressed during the course of the application through small adjustments to the scheme.

The Crewe Youth Zone will deliver further important benefits through enhancing social and leisure opportunities and activates for young people of Crewe as well as creating 35 jobs.

On this basis, the proposal is for sustainable development which would bring environmental, economic and social benefits and is therefore considered to be acceptable in the context of the relevant policies of the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, the SADPD and advice contained within the NPPF.

Recommendation: APPROVE subject to Conditions

REASON FOR REFERRAL

Referred due to Council interest/ownership of the site.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a public car park (127 spaces) situated off Oak Street on the southern side of Crewe Town Centre. This prominent site lies within the “Southern Gateway Development Areas” as defined under policy RET 10 of the SADPD, which forms the entrance to the town centre from Mill Street and Crewe Railway Station.

The site is bounded by Oak Street (A5078) to the south. Commercial properties fronting onto Edleston Road to the west and High Street to the north-east back onto the site, albeit beyond an existing rear service access which runs around the northern and western site boundaries.

The existing car park is split into two by Cross Street which runs North to South across the site, providing a highway link between High Street to the north and Oak Street to the south. Due to its narrow carriageway width the northern section of Cross Street, due to its narrow width is a one-way street.

Although the site is relatively level, it slopes downward towards the eastern boundary with High Street. A small tree belt outside the site boundary to the south-east, provides screening to the adjacent roundabout junction of High Street, Oak Street and Mill Street.

PROPOSALS

The application proposes the development of a “state-of-the-art Youth facility” within Crewe Town Centre by OnSide Youth Zones. Onside was established as a regional charity in 2008 with the objective of creating “a network of Youth Zones providing young people top quality, safe and affordable places to go in their leisure time”.

There are currently 14 OnSide Youth Zones throughout the country with several more proposed. It is further stated that 50,000 members are making around 500,000 visits to OnSide's existing network drawn by the range of activities and support offered seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.

The applicant's vision is to help young people keep healthy and active, whilst also encouraging them to be positive and aspirational. This bespoke facility will offer both sporting and creative facilities for young people between the ages of 8 and 19 years, and up to 25 years for those with additional needs.

The building will accommodate a sports hall, an illuminated roof top sports pitch (MUGA), changing and showering facilities, café/coffee shop and kitchen, and a range of meeting rooms/activity areas. Facilities and activities available at Crewe Youth Zone are proposed to include the following;

- . sporting activities including football, badminton, netball, basketball, cricket, climbing, boxing and fitness training
- . creative activities including arts and media opportunities, dance studio, media suite, and arts and crafts workshops
- . health and well-being support, information and guidance
- . experience of the outdoors through activities such as exploration walks, kayaking, climbing etc.

The Youth Zone will result in the creation of 35 full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent jobs .

The proposed building is of contemporary design and of 2 storey height which then wraps round High Street and Oak Street which includes a recessed entrance. The building has a curved façade onto the junction of Oak Street with High Street and is faced with metal cladding above a brick work plinth. Large openings are incorporated into Oak Street façade to reveal the sport activities taking place on the roof creating an active frontage.

In terms of vehicular access arrangements, a dedicated drop-off/pick-up bay (5 parking spaces) is proposed off Oak Street to serve the Youth Zone. A service yard accommodating refuse and recycling facilities and a minibus parking space is proposed to the rear of the building and accessed directly from High Street.

Amended plans have been submitted to widen the adopted section of Cross Street leading from High Street for two-way operation and includes a new turning head. This will enable vehicles to enter, turn and leave Cross Street in a forward gear back to High Street via the adopted highway.

RELEVANT HISTORY

None relevant

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

LPS 1 - Central Crewe
MP 1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
PG 2 - Settlement Hierarchy
SD 1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD 2 - Sustainable Development Principles
EG 5 - Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce
SC 1 - Leisure and Recreation
SC 3 - Health and Well-being
SE 1 - Design
SE 2 - Efficient Use of Land
SE 3 - Biodiversity
SE 4 - The Landscape
SE 5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands
SE 7 - The Historic Environment
SE 9 - Energy efficient Development
SE 12 - Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
SE 13 - Flood Risk and Water Management
CO. 1 - Sustainable travel and transport

Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD)

PG 9 - Settlement boundaries
GEN 1 - Design Principles
GEN 2 - Security at crowded places
ENV 3 - Landscape Character
ENV 6 - Trees, hedgerows and woodland implementation
ENV 15 - New development and existing uses
ENV 16 - Surface water management and flood risk
HER 1 - Heritage Assets
HER 4 - Listed Buildings
HER 8 - Archaeology
RET 7 - Supporting the viability of town and retail
RET 9 - Environmental improvements, public realm and design in town centres
RET 10 - Crewe Town Centre
HOU 12 - Amenity
INF 2 - Public Car Parks
INF 3 - Highway Safety and Access
INF 9 - Utilities
REC 5 - Community facilities

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Strategy
Crewe Town Centre Public Realm Strategy
A Cultural Strategy for Crewe 2019 -2029

CONSULTATIONS (Summary)

Environmental Health: No objection subject to conditions for the remediation of contamination , implementation of noise mitigation measures and requirement for the provision of a Staff Travel Information pack. Informatives are recommended to be attached in respect of Construction hours, Noise Generative Works and provision of a Site Specific Dust Management Plan (DMP).

Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service - No objection, subject to a condition being imposed requiring the approval of a programme of archaeological mitigation to be undertaken in respect of below ground archaeological remains relating to the early worker's housing e and a Methodist chapel shown on the historic town plan dated 1875.

Highways - No objection subject to conditions

United Utilities - No objection subject to a condition being attached requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with the submitted drainage scheme.

Cheshire Constabulary, Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) - Comments received raising a series of issues needing to be addressed in relation to CCTV provision, lighting, access control measures, secure cycle storage, and measures to reduce the potential for anti-social behaviour from congregation and trespass onto green spaces. (The DOCO has confirmed that these issue have now ben satisfactorily address - see report below)

Cadent Gas : No objection

VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL:

Crewe Town Council : Comments as follows;

Supports and welcomes the application but seeks enhancements to the proposals to meet planning policy and sustainability:

- i. The provision of sustainable energy generation (eg Solar/PV)*
- i. The provision of additional features that supports net biodiversity gain (eg bat boxes, invertebrate nesting, bird nesting)*
- ii. The provision of bike parking*

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

19 representations have been received objecting to the application on grounds summarised below;

- Proposed location of the 'youth zone' unacceptable and impractical. There are a number of businesses in the vicinity who rely on the parking spaces on Oak Street for their employees, clients, visitors and customers.

- Loss of Oak Street Car Park will have detrimental impact on local businesses that rely on safe and convenient parking.
- High Street is a one-way street with limited short-term parking available on one side of the road. However, due to high parking demand, both sides of the road are used for parking which is hazardous for pedestrians.
- Loss of car park will exacerbate existing parking and highway safety problems on High Street.
- Additional car parking should be provided locally before development takes place.
- Increase in traffic volumes and congestion on busy roads detrimental to highway safety.
- Is siting of youth zone suitable next to a main busy road?
- Unclear how big the drop off lay-by for the youth building will be, but often the number of cars is underestimated.
- Location of drop off point on Oak street will increase congestion and “add to the existing chaos”.
- Inadequate parking facilities for youth zone.
- Ample derelict land on High Street to build a youth facility with a small car park.
- Vacant premises in Crewe could be used to accommodate the youth zone.
- “The heritage centre would be better for the heritage building and using the library building for the youth hub”.
- Exterior of building lacking in decoration and colour and of an unacceptable drab appearance. As prominent from main thoroughfares into the town centre, “its exterior must be striking and memorable whereas the proposed design lacks ambition imagination and distinction”.
- Unacceptable loss of car parks and lack of long-stay parking in Crewe town centre.
- Multi storey car park (Delamere Street) will not be provided for some time to address loss of Oak Street car park
- Will result in anti-social behaviour and crime

One representation received in support of application is summarised as follows;

- This kind of investment opportunity in Crewe should be welcomed
- Benefits for young people in Crewe, including those from deprived areas, from the support, engagement and future opportunities resulting from this project
- A nearby multi-storey car park under construction on Delamere Street will be completed before this project gets underway and several other car parks I walking distance will mitigate development of Oak Street Car Park

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site lies within the settlement boundary of Crewe where there is a presumption in favour of development. Policy PG 2 (Settlement Hierarchy) of the CELPS identifies Crewe as a principal town where significant development will be encouraged to support its revitalisation and recognising its role as the most important settlements in the borough. Development will maximise the use of existing infrastructure and resources to allow jobs, homes and other facilities to be located close to each other and accessible by public transport.

In principle, the proposals are supported by CELPS Policy LPS1, which identifies Central Crewe, including the town centre, as an opportunity to regenerate under-exploited assets and provide a strong mix of uses. In particular Policy LPS1 seeks to achieve this through;

- support for multi-use facilities to drive footfall and a diversity of uses within the town centre
- support for an enhanced cultural offer
- Potential leisure development

The proposed development would further accord with CELPS Policy EG5 which supports a town centre first approach, as the youth zone would provide cultural and leisure facilities for young people.

SADPD Policy RET 10 supports opportunities for improving and regenerating Crewe town centre and in particular recognises the significance of Southern Gateway Development Area (SGDA) as the arrival point into the town centre for pedestrians from the railway station. In supporting opportunities for regeneration in the SGDA under Policy RET 10, the following considerations apply ;

i The refurbishment of existing buildings along High Street to support a vibrant range of main town centre uses will be supported. This could include the development of existing gaps in the street frontages and the redevelopment or improvement of existing poorly designed buildings;

ii. development proposals should provide for, wherever possible, safe and attractive pedestrian connections, including through to the Civic and Cultural Quarter Development Area (CCQDA), thereby reinforcing and improving connectivity between the primary shopping area, the CCQDA and Crewe Railway Station;

The application site constitutes the redevelopment of a relatively large and unattractive gap within the street scene in a prominent location with a high quality scheme. The site will also be easily accessible from the approved (22/3996N) cycleway/footway link from Mill Street that will run through to the Civic and Cultural Quarter Development Area (CCQDA) of the town centre. The approved cycleway/ footpath link is located on the opposite side (eastern) of High Street to the proposed youth zone and will then be run through a new area of public realm between High Street and Forge Street to access the CCQDA.

It is therefore considered that the proposed youth zone development will introduce vibrant activity and significantly enhance the appearance of this gateway location together with safe and attractive pedestrian connections in accordance with the objectives of Policy RET 10 .

In line with CELPS Policy SE1 "Design", SADPD Policy RET 9 further supports town centre development provided this makes a positive contribution and integrates with their surroundings. Policy RET 9 sets out the principles that town centre development should follow including designing buildings and spaces that create a sense of identity, are adaptable, accessible, inclusive, easily understood, and enhances local character.

Policy RET 9 emphasises that new development proposals should "deliver high quality contemporary architecture that responds to the existing townscape character in terms of the width, character, massing, proportion, and rhythm of buildings"

In summary, the youth zone will deliver town centre redevelopment within the Southern gateway in accordance with the objectives of Policies RET 9 and RET 10 of the SADPD. Detailed issues relating to the siting and design of the Youth Zone scheme are addressed below.

Siting and Design

The application site is a large and unattractive gap within the street scene which occupies a key location within the Southern Gateway alongside Oak Street and the adjacent to the roundabout junction of Oak Street, Mill Street and High Street. Given the prominence of the site, a building of sufficient stature is required to create a strong visual focus to this gateway.

The proposed building is essentially two storey and is faced with metal cladding above a brick work plinth. It has a curved façade onto the junction of Oak Street and High Street which then wraps around onto Oak Street, to include a recessed entrance and an active edge at ground level on the Oak Street frontage.

The southern and eastern elevations of the building onto Oak Street and High Street have been pushed out to enhance the building's scale and presence, and also punctuated by regular vertical openings in the façade, creating active frontage and enabling the roof top sports pitch (muga) to have some interaction with the street. The northern side of the building encloses the block and rear servicing zone between it and the existing buildings which front onto High Street.

The Council's Design Officer considers that the design of the youth zone scheme will deliver a building with presence at this key site, helping to waymark the southern gateway into the town centre. Its contemporary design, from detailing and materiality helps enclose the urban block at a scale consistent with the wider area. In particular, the architectural treatment of the corner of the scheme in addressing Oak Street and High Street, creates a building that will help to animate this presently open and poorly defined gateway to the town

Importantly, the Design Officer considers that the relationship of the scheme to the southern gateway public realm project has positively influenced design refinement, both for the building and the limited public space around the public edges of the building. It is recognised that the scheme has limited opportunity to create additional open space and landscaping, but some of the existing trees onto Oak Street are being retained and new public realm is proposed in front of the building including modest areas of new soft landscaping on High Street, linking to that of the proposed southern gateway project.

The Design Officer has advised that proposed materiality is informed by Crewe's history but also the site's important anchoring role for the southern gateway project. A condition is however recommended requiring the approval of materials to ensure the use of an appropriate facing brick and quality of the cladding, especially on the main public faces of the building.

In common with Youth Zones elsewhere a vehicular drop-off/pick up facility is provided on the Oak Street frontage to allow for the safeguarding of Children entering the youth zone. Although this requirement slightly weakens the public realm and street containment of the

scheme and ideally more greening is required at the street edge, the Design Officer recognises that the location of the drop off area has enabled the main entrance to the building to be provided in a prominent position towards the corner of Oak Street/High Street as well as securing satisfactory visibility from the drop off area to the entrance to enable safeguarding.

In summary, the Design Officer concludes that contemporary design, materiality and architecture of the building is of good quality, and it sits positively in the townscape. The proposed scheme therefore has the potential to be a significant catalyst for positive change in the southern gateway area in conjunction with the Council sponsored southern gateway public realm project.

The development is therefore of a siting and design which accords with the objectives of CELPS policy SE1 and policies GEN 1, RET 9 and RET 10 of the SADPD.

Amenity

SADPD Policy HOU 12 (Amenity) requires that new development should not be permitted if it is deemed to cause unacceptable harm upon neighbouring amenity such as from overlooking, visual intrusion or noise and disturbance.

Existing properties adjacent to the northern and western boundaries are principally in commercial use including office accommodation, and a variety of retail and leisure uses (e.g. Fink Theatre Academy). There are also several flats occupying the upper floors of premises adjacent to the northern site boundary. A distance of at least 16m will remain between the closest principal windows serving flats at 12-16, High Street and the northern elevation of the youth zone. Importantly this elevation of the building does not contain any upper floor windows, and is to the sports hall and first floor MUGA.

Areas of upper floor glazing to an access stairway and several windows serving a manager's office and meeting room are included at the eastern end of the youth zone's northern elevation. Nos 2-4 back onto this part of the site. However a distance of over 22m will remain between windows of the first floor flat at 4 High Street, and no principal windows serving the flats of No.2 High Street face towards the application site.

It is considered that given the siting and design of the northern elevation of the youth zone building that the proposals will not result in an overbearing impact or loss of privacy to any adjacent residential properties.

Furthermore, following assessment of the submitted noise report, the Council's Environmental Health Officer does not consider that the use or operation of the youth zone will generate unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to nearby properties in this town centre location. This is subject to the mitigation measures recommended by the noise report being implemented which includes the installation of 2m high acoustic barrier to be installed at roof level, to the north of the MUGA pitch (already incorporated into the design of the northern elevation of the building), and also a 3m high acoustic barrier around the northern boundary of the external play area and rear service area.

It is considered the proposal therefore complies with policies SE1 and SE12 of the CELPS and Policy HOU12 of the SADPD.

Highways

The site is currently a public car park with 127 spaces accessed via Oak Street and Cross Street. Cross Street bisects the car park with a north/south connection through the middle between Oak Street and High Street.

It is proposed to replace the entire Oak Street Car Park with the Youth Zone development.

Sustainable access

The site is on the edge of the centre of Crewe with footway access to it available from either direction and the wider area. There are also signalised pedestrian crossings to the west at the junction with Edleston Road. The site is also a short walk to bus stops which provide frequent services to the wider Crewe area.

Cheshire East Council have proposals for improved pedestrian and cycle connections from Crewe train station, along Mill Street, and past the site along High Street to Forge Street to the north. This includes a new crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists across Vernon Way, immediately to the east of the Mill Street roundabout.

Safe and suitable access

Cross Street is part of the adopted highway but will be closed at the southern end as part of these proposals, The Cross Street access from High Street will remain to serve existing businesses on High Street. An amended plan has been submitted showing that the Cross Street carriageway will become 2-way and a shared space with a turning head added. The Highway Officer advises that this is acceptable and requires existing Traffic Regulation Orders to be amended and implemented during the s278 technical approval process.

A vehicular pick-up/drop-off area is proposed to be provided along the site frontage with two access points from Oak Street. The drop-off area will have a one-way operation with the entrance to the west and an exit to the east. The Highway Officer recommends a condition is imposed in relation to the detailed design of the drop-off area, including the provision of signage/surface markings to enforce its one way operation and amend positioning of bollards which appear to be placed within the highway.

The Highway Officer advises that the proposed development will result in a net reduction in vehicle turning movements at this location of Oak Street which is an overall benefit with regard to highway safety and congestion.

An additional vehicle access point will be provided from High Street to serve the rear service area of the Youth Zone. Swept paths have been provided which shows that these vehicles can enter and exit the site in a forward gear. The Highway Officer considers that the proposed kerb realignment on High Street will ensure satisfactory visibility is provided for the service yard access as is reflective of vehicle speeds on High Street.

Parking

Off-road parking provision is not being provided for the development. However, given age restrictions the majority, if not all, of those who will use the youth zone will not be able to drive or have access to a car. Youth Zone staff can use one of the nearby public car parks within the town centre, or travel by alternative transport modes given the sustainable location of the site.

There will also be 32 covered and secure cycle spaces in the outdoor space to the north of the building, and the applicant will also produce a Travel Plan.

A drop-off/pick-up area is proposed on the frontage of the building with Oak Street. This will have 5 formal car spaces, with additional space for 2 or 3 cars to drop-off/pick-up informally if required. Surveys of other sites the applicant runs indicates that the site will generate around 28 car movements (14 in, 14 out) over a whole opening session. The drop-off/pick-up capacity is therefore considered to be sufficient.

The proposal will result in the loss of public car parking spaces. A survey of Crewe town centre car parks was carried using pre-covid ticketing data for September 2019. This showed that there was an oversupply of town centre long-stay car parking including Thomas Street Car Park which is significantly under utilised. In addition, Parking Services have informed that long stay town centre car parking demand had reduced post covid.

Given the usage of Oak Street and other nearby car parks, there will remain sufficient town centre car parking supply if Oak Street closes, even prior to the opening of the (under construction) Multi-Storey Car Park on Delamere Street. These car parks are similar distances to the centre of Crewe. For example, both Oak Street. Thomas Street and Wrexham Terrace car parks are each approximately a 5 minute walk to the Crewe Municipal Buildings. The Lifestyle Centre is around 6 minutes from Thomas Street. The loss of the car park therefore raises no highways concerns.

Conclusion

The Strategic Highway Manager considers that the proposals are acceptable and raises no objection to the proposed development in terms of the impact on highway safety, traffic management or car parking provision. This is subject to conditions being imposed requiring the proposed works to Cross Street and to High Street (Service access) to be implemented prior to the commencement in use of the Youth Zone. Conditions are also recommended requiring the approval of details of the drop-off area and for the provision of covered/secure cycle parking.

Designing out Crime

The Cheshire Constabulary Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCOC) originally raised a series of issues in respect of the proposals with regard to the need to discourage crime and anti-social behaviour. These principally concerned the provision of effective security measures including CCTV, access controls, and measures to secure exterior emergency stairways and deter congregation.

Following assessment of additional information, and discussions with the applicant, the DOCOC has advised that all of the main points have been addressed through enhanced security measures and adjustments made to the proposed development.

In particular, amended plans propose 2m high green screen fencing with exit opening gates to secure the external fire escape stairway from unauthorised access which serves the sports hall at the south west corner of the building. This has addressed DOCO concerns that given its location, the siting of this stairway would encourage anti-social behaviour and congregation.

The DOCO considered that an originally proposed low retaining wall for planting adjacent to the eastern elevation would be used as an informal seating area and for congregation. In response the proposals have been amended to omit the retaining wall, and with proposed “defensible” planting provided at ground level.

In response to issues raised by the DOCO, the applicant further advises that all doors and windows will not be recessed to the extent to which they provide shelter, apart from the front main entrance which is set into the building. It is also proposed that this area will have CCTV surveillance when the building is closed. Furthermore, CCTV will be provided to cover all external elevations and rear service areas.

In addition the applicant advises that all external spaces will have access control, all fire exit doors are alarmed and will be appropriately secured.

Energy Efficient Development

The Design and Access statement and Low and Zero Carbon Technology Report sets out the approach to ensure that the CO₂ associated with the building's operation will be minimised, including use of energy efficient technologies wherever possible within the scheme.

The provision of mechanical and electrical services for the youth zone will be designed to deliver a controlled environment for the building. This is to be achieved through reducing energy consumption by maximising energy efficiency in the design of the fabric of the building and the application of low carbon and renewable technologies.

The energy efficiency strategy aims to make the best use of the energy available through consideration of the following;

- Reduction of energy consumed by use of construction elements with good thermal properties.
- Reduction of energy consumption by efficient lighting design with occupancy and daylight control.
- Reduction of solar gain to prevent overheating in summer.
- Simplicity of environmental controls to assist users.
- Maximising heat recovery.
- Use of low energy lighting.
- Consideration of summertime temperatures

Various low or zero carbon solutions are considered within the low Zero Carbon Report informing the detailed design stage of the project. The use of photovoltaic panels at roof level alongside the use of Air to Water heat pumps to provide the heating, cooling and hot water medium for the building are recommended as appropriate for the youth zone

Furthermore, the submitted BRUKL calculations show that through the use of photovoltaic panels the youth zone will generate over 10% of its energy requirements from renewable sources in accordance with the requirements of CELPS Policy SE.9 (Energy Efficient Development).

Ecology

The Council's Ecologist does not consider that the proposed development results in any significant ecological issues.

However this planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate features to increase the biodiversity value of the final development in accordance with CELPS Policy SE 3. To this end, revised elevational drawings include the incorporation of features for nesting birds which is considered sufficient to fulfil this policy requirement. A condition is therefore recommended to ensure the installation and retention these features.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed scheme represents an important opportunity for delivering town centre redevelopment and regeneration in a prominent location within the Southern Gateway Development Area in accordance with the objectives of Policies RET 9 and RET 10 of the SADPD.

Whilst of contemporary architectural design, the youth zone is considered to represent a high quality scheme that sites positively in the townscape. The proposed scheme therefore has the potential to be a significant catalyst for positive change in the southern gateway area in conjunction with the Council sponsored southern gateway public realm project.

The siting of the development will not adversely affect the amenities of those living nearby and achieve an acceptable relationship with the existing residential units located on the southern side of High Street. In addition, uses and activities of the Youth Zone will not result in unacceptable levels of noise or disturbance to nearby properties with the provision of specified acoustic mitigation measures. It is considered the proposal therefore complies with policy SE1 and SE12 of the CELPS and Policy HOU12 of the SADPD.

The site is in Crewe town centre with existing pedestrian and public transport infrastructure within the vicinity of the site, or within short walking distance. As the site is considered well located to cater for staff or visitors to travel by sustainable modes of travel, the use of the Youth Zone Centre will not have an adversely impact on town centre parking provision or harmful highway impact as a result of traffic generation.

The proposals will have a neutral impact on trees given proposed areas of new planting and will increase the biodiversity value of the development through the incorporation of features for nesting birds. Other issues including designing out crime have been satisfactory addressed during the course of the application through small adjustments to the scheme.

The Crewe Youth Zone will deliver further important benefits. This proposed state-of-the-art Youth facility will enhance social and leisure opportunities and activates for young people of Crewe as well as creating 35 jobs.

On this basis, the proposal is for sustainable development which would bring environmental, economic and social benefits and is therefore considered to be acceptable in the context of the relevant policies of the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, the SADPD and advice contained within the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the following condition

- 1. Commencement of development (3 years)**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Details of materials and finishes**
- 4. Details of levels**
- 5. Details of secure cycle storage/parking**
- 6. Implementation of works to widen Cross Street**
- 7. Implementation of works to secure service access from High Street**
- 8. Submission and approval of details of drop off/pick up bay**
- 9. Submission of Landscaping details**
- 10. Implementation of landscaping**
- 11. Implementation of drainage scheme**
- 12. Contaminated land - Submission and approval of Remediation Strategy**
- 13. Contaminated land - Submission and approval of Verification Report**
- 14. Contaminated land - soil testing**
- 15. Measures to deal with unexpected contamination**
- 16. Submission and approval of Travel Information Park**
- 17. Implementation of noise mitigation measures**
- 18. Implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved written scheme of investigation**
- 19. Provision of features for nesting birds**

In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Planning has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chair of the Southern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

