

Application No: 23/0539N

Location: Land in the Western Part of Basford East, Crewe

Proposal: Full planning permission for Units 1-3 comprising a mix of Class B2 / E(g)(iii) light industrial / manufacturing and B8 warehousing & distribution uses and ancillary areas, together with access, car parking provision, landscaping (including buffers, habitat parks, nature trails), sustainable drainage features (ponds, swales and raingardens), ecological enhancements (wet meadows, woodland planting, wildflower grassland), and other associated works and infrastructure proposed within the northern part of the site, within the curtilage of Units 1 - 3.  
Outline planning permission for the southern part of the site comprising a mix of Class E(g)(i) offices, B2 / E(g)(iii) light industrial / manufacturing and B8 warehousing & distribution uses, with all matters reserved including (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) together with works and infrastructure associated with the southern part of the site.

Applicant: Muse Developments Limited

Expiry Date: 31-May-2024

## SUMMARY

This hybrid application (part full/part outline) relates to a significant part of allocation LPS2 - Basford East, Crewe for the delivery of employment use. The Justification of Policy LPS 2 adds that, "The provision of emplacement land development is the principal and overriding objective of the Basford East Site". It is considered that the proposals meet the overall requirements of policy LPS 2 as they relate to this site.

The mix of employment uses now proposed represents a departure from Policy LPS 2, specifically in relation to proposed Class B8 uses and a significant reduction in office space. However, the submitted Employment Land Report has demonstrated this is acceptable given the need to respond to market demand and also the issues depressing the long term demand for office space. Although it is recognised that a significant provision of office space is still required to be provided over the plan period and will be conditioned accordingly.

Importantly, it is estimated that these proposals will result in significant socio-economic benefits for Crewe and the wider area, including the creation of 2,900 (FTE) new jobs the site.

Improvements to the design and layout of the proposals have been secured during the course of the application and the overall masterplan/coding approach will ensure the proposed employment park will integrate well within its context. The proposals address site specific requirements of Policy LPS 2 ensuring a good quality of place, through a positive approach to green infrastructure, open space and pedestrian/cycleway connectivity. In addition, an

acceptable framework is provided on which to plan the detailed design of buildings within the southern part of the site at the reserved matters stage. The development subject to conditions is supported in design terms and the proposals accord with Policies SE1, SD1 and SD2 of the CELPS and GEN1 of the SADPD.

The LVIA and additional information has demonstrated that the development will achieve an acceptable relationship with the character of the locality, and not result in any unacceptable visual impacts from important viewpoints nor over-dominate the adjacent residential development.

Given significant separation distances between dwellings and employment units /operational areas and provision of intervening screening from extensive planting and landscaped bunding, the amenities of future occupiers of the adjacent residential development will not detrimentally be affected in terms of an overbearing visual impact, loss of outlook or light. However, updated information concerning noise impact and proposed mitigation measures is being considered by the Council's Environmental Health Officer and an update will be provided in advance of the meeting.

Access to the site from the principal highway network and the design of the internal roads and parking provision is considered acceptable. Pedestrian/cycle infrastructure provides good connectivity within the site and beyond. The impact on the wider highway network will be mitigated through the implementation of a scheme for the full signalisation of the David Whitby Way/A500 roundabout, and also an A500 and A5020 access improvement contribution of £2.45M secured through a S106 Agreement.

Issues relating to trees, drainage/flood risk, air quality, contaminated land and public rights of way have been addressed and are subject to conditions where necessary.

Ecological issues have been satisfactorily addressed particularly in respect to safeguarding habitat (including Basford Brook), protected species subject to a series of planning conditions being imposed. The delivery of biodiversity net gain is achieved through the creation of off-site habitat secured through a S106 Agreement.

The scheme is therefore considered to be in accordance with development plan policies and economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE, Subject to conditions and the prior completion of a S106 Agreement**

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site is a large greenfield site covering approximately 40 hectares of formerly redundant land which includes a range of mature trees, hedgerows and several small surface ponds. The site forms a significant part of the Basford East Strategic Allocation defined under CELPS Policy LPS 2.

The western boundary of the site adjoins the West Coast main railway line. The southern site boundary site extends up to the A500 Hough-Shavington by-pass with open countryside beyond. The Stoke on Trent/Nottingham railway passes close to the northern site boundary, beyond which lies Weston Road that is lined by commercial units and warehousing.

Mere Gutter and Basford Brook Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is present on the northern boundary of the application site. This watercourse supports one of only a few remaining populations of White Clawed Crayfish in Cheshire. Basford Brook is also identified under Policy LC6 of the Weston and Basford Neighbourhood Plan as a Wildlife Corridor.

The adjoining area to the east has detailed approval (21/4434N) for a residential scheme of 325 dwellings which is now being implemented by Taylor Wimpey and forms part of the wider Basford East Strategic Site. This development will be accessed via the recently constructed spine road running westward from the roundabout on David Whitby Way that also serves the adjoining Taylor Wimpey residential scheme. This spine road is also proposed to provide future access to the Network Rail depot located to the northwest of the site and is subject of current planning application 22/3158N.

A public right of way runs north/south through the site along its eastern site boundary (Basford FP1) with a link (Basford FP 2) to the adjacent residential development (21/4434N).

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This a hybrid application seeks full planning permission for development of the northern part of the site and outline approval for the southern part of the site.

### Part 1 – Full planning Application (north)

- Full planning approval is sought for the construction of three large employment units (Units 1, 2 and 3) which would have a combined gross internal floorspace of 72,803 sqm.
- A flexible permission for either Class B2 / E(g)(iii) light industrial / manufacturing or Class B8 warehousing & distribution use is being sought for Units 1 and 3, located within the north- eastern part of the site.
- Permission for Class B8 use (warehousing & distribution) only is being sought for Unit 2, in the north western part of the site. Unit 2 is the largest of the three units proposed as part of the ‘full’ component.
- These detailed proposals include the provision of landscaping (including buffers), sustainable drainage features, pedestrian linkages, ecological enhancements and other associated works and infrastructure.

### Part 2 – Outline Planning Application (south)

- Within the southern part of the site, outline approval is sought for the construction of employment units, suitable for Class E(g)(i) offices, additional B2 / E(g)(iii) light industrial /manufacturing and additional B8 warehousing & distribution uses, with a combined gross internal floorspace of up to 53,463sqm.

- The proposals include the provision of landscaping (including buffers), sustainable drainage features, pedestrian linkages, ecological enhancements and other associated works and infrastructure.

All matters have been reserved for future approval in respect of the 'outline' component of the scheme within the southern part of the site. However substantial supporting information has nevertheless been submitted at this stage to inform a future reserved matters submission. This includes an indicative master plan, a Design Code and parameters plans relating to the quantum of floorspace and use classes, maximum height and landscape framework.

Revised plans have been received during the application process in response to issues raised by the Council, including the repositioning of Unit 1 further away from the eastern boundary and prevent the creation of a "pinch point" at the main entrance. In addition, the parameters plan (Maximum Quantum and Use Class) has been amended to specify an area for the location of Class E(g)(i) offices adjacent to the site entrance and the boundary with the Taylor Wimpey Scheme.

An Environmental Statement (ES) has been submitted with the application. However, an ES addendum has been submitted to include an assessment of amended information which has been received including the following;

- Landscape and Visual Impact: Additional photomontages from viewpoints have been provided
- Ecology: An updated assessment has been undertaken which addresses comments from Natural England, the Environment Agency and CEC Ecology Officers. This includes updated surveys for certain ecological receptors and supplementary mitigation reports.
- Drainage and Flood Risk : An updated Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy Statement
- Noise and Vibration : A review of the acoustic assessment has submitted to address comments raised in relation to the adjacent TW site, and to account for the design amendments and mitigate noise effects.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

### With respect to the site itself

22/3158N - Construction of road, required to enable alternative access to Arriva Traincare site, Land West of David Whitby Way, Crewe. - NOT DETERMINED

### With respect to sites within the LPS 2 Basford East, Crewe allocation

21/4434N - Reserved matters application proposing details of layout, appearance, scale and landscaping for the residential element (C3 use) of the outline development 15/1537N - Outline planning application (with all matters reserved) for a mixed-use development comprising residential use (Use Class C3) (up to 325 residential dwellings); employment use (Use Class B1), local centre comprising health centre and community facility (Use Class D1), food/non food retail (Use Class A1), public house/restaurant (Use Class A4/A3) and associated works including construction of a new access road with access from the Crewe Green Link Road

South, creation of footpaths and provision of public open space and landscaping. Approved 7-Oct-2022

20/0615N - Deed of variation in connection with outline planning permission 15/1537N. Approved to Modify S106 27-Mar-2020

19/5934N - Approval of Reserved Matters following Outline Approval 14/4025N - Outline application for the erection of upto 490 residential dwellings and a primary school - 2000m2 (D1) a pumping station, substation, recreational open space, ecological mitigation area, internal access routes, ground modeling and drainage works, parking provision, footpaths, cycle routes, landscaping and associated works including details of access at the Basford East site Crewe Approved 26- Nov-2020

19/2545N - Approval of all reserved matters following outline approval 15/1537N for the infrastructure works at Basford East. Approved 05-Nov-2019

19/3649N - Hybrid planning application for mixed use and residential development comprising; a) in full: the conversion, alteration and extension of the former mill and two farm buildings to business / professional services (Classes A2 and B1) and/or food and drink (Class A3) and/or non-residential community uses (Class D1) and/or leisure uses (Class D2), under Class V of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) with initial vehicular and pedestrian access from Mill Lane and permanent vehicular and pedestrian access from the future highway network serving the Basford East Strategic Site, and associated car parking and landscaping, and; b) in outline: residential development with vehicular access from the future highway network serving the Basford East Strategic Site and associated car parking and landscaping, and with all other matters reserved. (Crotia Mill) - NOT DETERMINED

19/2545N - Approval of all reserved matters following outline approval 15/1537N for the infrastructure works at Basford East. Approved 05-Nov-2019

19/0704N - Non-material amendment to approved application 15/1537N - Outline planning application (with all matters reserved) for a mixed-use development comprising residential use (Use Class C3) (up to 325 residential dwellings); employment use (Use Class B1), local centre comprising health centre and community facility (Use Class D1), food/non-food retail (Use Class A1), public house/restaurant (Use Class A4/A3) and associated works including construction of a new access road with access from the Crewe Green Link Road South, creation of footpaths and provision of public open space and landscaping. Approved 10-March-2019

16/2465N - Variation of Conditions 4, 5 and 6 on application 14/1366N - to fell additional trees as part of the Crewe Green Link Road Scheme. Approved 03-Nov-2016

15/3550N - Non material amendment to 14/1366N - Dual carriageway road, known as the Crewe Green link Road (south) linking A500 with the A5020 and associated works. Approved 25-Aug-2015

15/1537N - Outline planning application (with all matters reserved) for a mixed-use development comprising residential use (Use Class C3) (up to 325 residential dwellings); employment use (Use Class B1), local centre comprising health centre and community facility

(Use Class D1), food/non-food retail (Use Class A1), public house/restaurant (Use Class A4/A3) and associated works including construction of a new access road with access from the Crewe Green Link Road South. Approved 23-Dec-2016

14/4025N - Outline application for the erection of upto 490 residential dwellings and a primary school - 2000m2 (D1) a pumping station, substation, recreational open space, ecological mitigation area, internal access routes, ground modeling and drainage works, parking provision, footpaths, cycle routes, landscaping and associated works including details of access at the Basford East site Crewe. Approved 09-Feb-2016

14/1366N - Variation of condition 2 (plans) attached to planning application 12/4115N. Dual carriageway road, known as the Crewe Green Link Road (South) linking the A500 with the A5020 and associated works. Approved 06-Jun-2014

12/4115N - Dual carriageway road, known as the Crewe Green Link Road (South) linking the A500 with the A5020 and associated works. Approved 18-Jan-2013

## **POLICIES**

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)**

LPS 2 - Basford East

MP1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

PG 1 - Overall Development Strategy

PG 2 - Settlement Hierarchy

PG 7 - Spatial Distribution of Development

SD 1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD 2 - Sustainable Development Principles

SE 1 - Design

SE 2 - Efficient Use of Land

SE 3 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE 4 - The Landscape

SE 5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE 6 - Green Infrastructure

SE 7 - The Historic Environment

SE 8 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

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

CO 2 - Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure

CO 4 - Travel Plans and Transport Assessments

EG 1 - Economic Prosperity

EG 3 - Existing and Allocated Employment Sites

IN 1 - Infrastructure

IN 2 - Developer Contributions

### **Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD)**

PG9 Settlement Boundaries

GEN1 Design principles  
GEN4 Recovery of forward-funded infrastructure costs  
ENV1 Ecological network  
ENV2 Ecological implementation  
ENV3 Landscape character  
ENV5 Landscaping  
ENV6 Trees, hedgerows and woodland implementation  
ENV7 Climate Change  
ENV10 Solar energy  
ENV12 Air quality  
ENV14 Light pollution  
ENV15 New development and existing uses  
ENV16 Surface water management and flood risk  
ENV17 Protecting water resources  
HER 1 Heritage assets  
HER 4 Listed Buildings  
HER 5 Registered parks and gardens  
HER 8 Archaeology  
HOU12 Amenity  
INF 1 Cycleways, Bridleways and footpaths  
INF3 Highways safety and access  
INF9 Utilities

## **Weston and Basford Neighbourhood Plan 2015 - 2030**

- Modified plan made on 20th February 2024

However, the Modified Neighbourhood Plan states that, "For the avoidance of doubt, the policies in the Plan do not cover the land at the major allocations at Basford West, Basford East and South Cheshire Growth Village."

### **Other Material Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)  
Adopted SPDs

### **CONSULTATIONS**

**Environmental Protection:** Further information required to address noise impact of the scheme. Conditions are recommended for the remediation of contamination, provision of electric vehicle infrastructure and use of Ultra Low Emission Boilers. Standard informatives relating to hours of construction, piling, dust management and floor floating.

**United Utilities:** No objection. Although proposals are acceptable in principle, a condition is recommended requiring full details of the design for the surface water and foul water drainage schemes.

**Natural England:** No objection

**Historic England:** No comments.

**Network Rail:** No objection. However, as the proposal includes works within 10m of the railway boundary and an interface with the railway boundary, the development is required to be undertaken in accordance with standard requirements of Network Rail including a Risk Assessment and Method Statement. These requirements will be attached as an Informative.

**HS2 Ltd:** No objection. In line with the announcement that High Speed Rail between Birmingham and Manchester (HS2 Phase 2) is to be cancelled, the original holding objection has been removed.

**CEC Strategic Highways Manager:** No objection. Subject to conditions including the implementation of a scheme for the full signalisation of the David Whitby Way/A500 roundabout. Also a S106 Agreement is required to secure a total contribution of £2.45m to fund improvement measures within the A500/05020 including towards the improvement of Meremoor Moss Roundabout junction (A500/A531/B4572).

**National Highways:** No objection but recommends that a condition is applied in relation to providing a travel plan for the site.

**Public Rights of Way:** No objection. Original concerns relating to alignment of public footpaths Basford FP 1 have been resolved. Recommend a condition is attached for a rights of way scheme of management to be provided that will set out all the detail of the construction of the path and the future maintenance arrangements.

**Cadent :** No comments received

**Flood Risk Manager:** No objection subject to conditions requiring the approval of the detailed drainage strategy/design plan and SuDS management plan.

**Cheshire Archaeology:** No objection subject to a condition securing a programme of targeted archaeological investigation and recording.

**Environment Agency:** - No objection as additional information has been provided that has satisfactorily addressed original concerns raised in relation to the site drainage plan and impact on white clawed crayfish. Conditions are recommended - that a method statement to protect white clawed crayfish during drainage works and the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment.

**Health and Safety Executive (HSE) :** Do not advise against granting planning permission in this case.

**Crewe Town Council :** Updated comments further to reconsultation;

- Net biodiversity gain of 0.29% represents a bare minimum based on desk top calculations, which does not fulfil the intent of ensuring benefit as it provides close to zero margin for error. Net biodiversity gain should evidence surety that the development's associated provision will be greater than is being displaced



- The provision of swift boxes would support a local initiative to retain and grow the local population
- Unable to identify sustainable energy production on site from the roof plans (eg PV panels), which does not support the planning authority's policies or recognition of the climate crisis.

**Weston and Crewe Green Parish Council: Object;**

Supplementary comments received further to re-consultation on amended proposals;

Re-orientation of Unit 1 relocates the car parking to the rear of the unit closer to housing resulting in additional noise and nuisance from vehicles entering and leaving the site. Access for vehicles loading and unloading must be restricted to the western side of this unit, well away from the housing. It is still considered to be an overdevelopment of the site.

Detailed drawings still indicate that the 1.3 million sq. ft. of development will be used exclusively for B8 warehousing uses, despite the written description of the content of this application (mix of uses including offices, light industrial, manufacturing in addition to warehousing). Whilst the uses indicated on the plans don't accord with the Cheshire East Local Plan which specifically excludes warehousing, it is recognised that market forces have changed since the Local Plan was approved. Notwithstanding this, any permission must ensure that the applicant's description of the intended uses is strictly adhered to. This site forms a critical part of the Basford East Strategic Development Area which purports to represent an exemplar development at the entrance to Crewe and the Northwest, and this must be fully recognised.

Traffic generation - The Parish Council is still having extreme difficulty in understanding the justification for the traffic generation to and from the site, given that the only access will be from the central roundabout off David Whitby Way. This will also be the only access to serve about 800 dwellings, a 2-form entry primary school, and community facilities. The applicants accept in their Transport Assessment that there are current capacity issues relating to David Whitby Way and that the level of parking for the proposed units is below standard.

Safe crossing of David Whitby Way - It is not accepted that an 'at grade' crossing will in any way be satisfactory. In the event of an approval of this application, the Parish Council urge the LPA to ensure that included in a 106 Agreement are substantial funds to help resolve this issue with a much more acceptable crossing facility.

Network Rail Application 22/3158N - This application is still pending and unable to ascertain whether the increased traffic generation resulting from this proposed use has been included within the Muse traffic figures. It is acknowledged that HS2b is now no longer an issue.

Height of Buildings has not been modified by the amended plans - The buildings shown are between 20 and 23 metres to the top of ridge line (65 - 75.5 ft) and that the sections still show that the Units will dominate the skyline and dwarf the Wimpey housing. The Parish Council raises strong objection to this part of the scheme. As a comparison, the units on Basford West are limited to a maximum height of 18 metres across the site (14/0378N), with a maximum height of 15 metres in the fringe locations. If approved the current proposal should be conditioned accordingly and the height restricted.

Design of Units - The Parish Council considers this to be drab, stark, unimaginative, and uninspiring with colours are limited to various shades of grey. Treatment of the units should better harmonise with the surrounding area. Little regard seems to have been given to National Design Guidance.

Landscaping and Structure Planting - Should the application be approved full landscape and structure planting must be undertaken well before any development commences, if it is to have any impact particularly in relation to safeguarding the amenities the adjacent housing.

Biodiversity - The Parish Council shares the concern of Crewe Town Council that the stated net biodiversity gain of 0.29% is an absolute bare minimum based on a desktop calculation. Notwithstanding the fact that this application was submitted prior to February 2024, it falls well short of the 10% now required in the Environment Act 2021. This is a particularly relevant point given that this site should represent an exemplar development.

A local liaison group is established to monitor the implementation of the scheme and resolve problems before they become major issues.

Light pollution and Noise - The submission seems to be lacking on any proposals to mitigate light pollution, particularly in relation to the proposed adjacent residential development, along with reduction of noise generation.

The Parish Council consider that more work is required to achieve a more acceptable scheme before it is presented to the Strategic Planning Board.

#### Previous Comments:

The Parish Council has no objection to the principle of employment development on this site, given it forms a part of the Strategic Masterplan for Basford East.

Notwithstanding this, it is extremely concerned about the current proposal as submitted and urges the Local Planning Authority to enter negotiations with the applicant to reduce the intensity of the development and its impact on the surrounding land uses. In this context, traffic generation, layout, massing, height, design, and integration with the other uses (dominance, overlooking and, noise) approved for Basford East, are all critical factors which need, in our view, re-visiting and a rethink.

The application seems to be seeking to maximise the floorspace on this site at the expense of the immediate surrounding area (particularly the adjacent housing development). In specific terms, the Parish Council is concerned about the following issues:

- The total development is for 1.3 million square feet and judging from the detailed drawings virtually the whole of this site will be used for B8 warehousing uses despite the description of the content of this application. The application states that the warehousing content will be 700,000 sq. ft. The Cheshire East approved Local Plan specifically states that B8 uses are not considered suitable for this site due to highway constraints. The proposals contain no improvements to the highway network to accommodate the scale of B8 uses now proposed. The proposal does not therefore accord with the Local Plan.

- The Parish Council cannot accept or understand the justification for the traffic generation to and from this site. The sole access is off the central roundabout on David Whitby Way which also serves approx. 800 dwellings (Wimpey and Onward/Lane End) in addition to a proposed new 2 F/E Primary School. The applicants state that this access will have sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed traffic and the development will have a minimal impact on the other junctions which serve the site. The Parish Council cannot accept this. David Whitby Way regularly becomes gridlocked at peak times, with existing traffic volumes and this is without any of the proposed housing, warehousing and school development having taken place.
- The safe crossing of David Whitby Way in the vicinity of this central roundabout is fundamental to serving the two residential areas on either side, proposed new school and proposed community facilities. This is likely to result in a major conflict point for vehicles entering and leaving the proposed development, residents entering and leaving their homes, and pedestrians including school children and the disabled. In the Parish Council's view, the only solution here is some form of bridge or underpass, not an 'at grade' crossing. This needs to be factored into the equation as part of the consideration of this application.
- Frequent reference is made in the applicant's submission to Network Rail, who are providing part of the essential infrastructure within the site. Network Rail have a current application pending (22/3158N) to use this site access to serve their existing depot adjacent to the West Coast Main Line. Their application provides for the construction of a major part of the necessary highway infrastructure to serve the site. This will bring additional heavy traffic through this central roundabout and application site. This application cannot in reality be separated from the current proposal. HS2b also want a compound at the western end of this site abutting the railway line which would again be served from this central roundabout. The HS2b works are unlikely to be short term and again will generate considerable construction traffic which will inevitably use the David Whitby Way Roundabout. No allowance has been made for these in the traffic figures submitted with the application.
- Basford East has been heavily promoted as an opportunity to create a high-quality employment led, vibrant and mixed-use development providing high quality homes and employment opportunities to assist with the regeneration of Crewe. This proposal does not in the Parish Councils opinion fulfil this aspiration.
- Whilst accepting that this is a large site overall (about 97 acres), the buildings shown on the submitted plans are between 20 and 23 metres high (65 – 75.5 ft), and the sections show that they dwarf the adjoining Wimpey housing. As a comparison the buildings on Basford West are limited to a maximum height of 18 metres across the site (14/0378N) with a maximum height of 15 metres in the fringe locations – the latter forming a part of the reserved matters. The design of the buildings detailed in the current application is stark and of a standard type in grey sheet steel which can be seen anywhere in the country. This is not in any way imaginative. No account has been taken of the Government Guidance on building Better Beautiful nor indeed of the National Design Guidance.
- Whilst the applicants go to great lengths to justify the proposed landscaping and buffer zones, the Parish Council considers that this needs enhancing. For example, we question whether the 4-metre-high buffer to the rear of the Wimpey houses is sufficient.

Any structure planting would need to take place well before any development commences to have any impact. Where is the bio-diversity net gain in this development?

- The Parish Council also consider that this application could go much further in demonstrating its green credentials and compliance with Cheshire East's climate change conditions. Where, for example, are the solar panels and electric charging points

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS;**

Representations have been received from Taylor Wimpey;

An objection was received in relation to the possible impacts on the scheme on residents of the adjacent, approved residential development at Basford East (21/4434N) from transport/traffic, noise and air quality. However, this was subsequently formally withdrawn subject to consideration of the amenities of future residents regarding the impact of vehicular movements, noise, and light impact.

Further to re-consultation in relation to the amended Environmental Statement (ES) an additional representation has been received stating;

*"Taylor Wimpey have been provided by Muse the revised ES noise chapter. Taylor Wimpey are satisfied in relation to the required noise mitigation measures (at paragraphs 13.35 to 13.43) to be undertaken to the residential units. Muse have confirmed that they will cover the reasonable costs for Taylor Wimpey in relation to the mitigation required. "*

A representation has been received from a local Resident stated to be "Neutral comments" and raises the following points;

- To ensure local residents have access to employment opportunities and reduce the car dependency of the development, a financial contribution (circa £50,000) should be secured towards providing bus service between Crewe Bus Station and Basford East. Bus stops within the nearby residential development will be provided by the time Phase 2 built and serve the development.
- This contribution would ensure the development does not cause detrimental harm to the highway network, promote sustainable travel and boost economic activity within the Crewe/Basford corridor.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Key Issues**

- Principle of development
- Employment Use
- layout/Design
- Highways
- Pedestrian/Cycle Routes
- Ecology
- Trees
- Landscape
- Amenity

- Flood Risk/Drainage

## **Principle of Development**

The site (39 ha) forms a significant part of an allocation LPS2 - Basford East, Crewe of the CELPS for the delivery of employment use together with to 850 new homes. The Justification of Policy LPS 2 importantly adds that, "The provision of emplacement land development is the principal and overriding objective of the Basford East Site".

It is further recognised that Basford East is a gateway site into Crewe and presents the opportunity to create a high-quality employment led, vibrant and sustainable, mixed-use development with excellent links to Crewe and the M6 Motorway. Key to the site's delivery is the provision of Crewe Green Link Road South (David Whitby Way).

Site Allocation LPS 2 Basford East sets out the development plan policy for the site. This includes, that its development over the Local Plan Strategy period 2010 -2030 will be achieved through:

- 1. The delivery of up to 19 hectares of B1 Office Space, up to 5 hectares of B2 floor space; to include the creation of a fourth generation business park, with generous green infrastructure provision. The site is not considered to be suitable for B8 uses, due to highway constraints;*

In addition, Policy LPS 2 also requires the incorporation of green infrastructure including buffer/screen planting alongside all site boundaries to offset the visual impact on the open countryside and the setting of the grade 1 listed Crewe Hall and its registered park and garden, along with the creation of wildlife habitats and protection of Basford Brook.

Policy LPS further includes a series of Site Specific Principles relating to the overall Basford East site including residential elements and consequently not all are relevant to the development of the employment area. However, Issues relating to the following are addressed in following sections of the report;

- Necessary contributions to road infrastructure improvements
- Provide access from David Whitby Way through to the existing Rail Depot
- Provision of pedestrian and cycleway links with connections through to South Cheshire Growth Village LPS 8
- Achieve a quality of place and green setting for the employment park with the integration of safe and secure pedestrian and cycle routes
- Development at Basford East must respond to its sensitive landscape setting and also ensure it does not adversely impact on the setting of Crewe Hall (Grade 1) and its registered park and garden
- Provision of appropriate noise mitigation measures

As set out in the report below, the Council's Highway Officer has advised that the inclusion of B8 use within the site is not unsuitable in transport terms as the nature and extent of anticipated vehicular movements would not have an adverse impact on the local highway network either in terms of highway safety, traffic management issues or capacity.

Therefore, in principle whilst it is considered appropriate to consider a different mix of employment uses for the site, this would nevertheless represent a departure from the provision set out by Policy LPS 2 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. The proposed mix and quantum of employment uses which to be delivered across the site is addressed below.

## **Employment Use**

The application is supported by an Employment Land Report (ELR) carried out by the BE Group and provides a review of market demand/local need for office and industrial space.

The Employment Land Report's assessment has determined that the extent (19 Ha) of office floorspace (former use Class B1) to be provided at Basford East as stated by Policy LPS 2 is now unlikely to be deliverable or viable in an appropriate time frame.

Nevertheless, the Council's Economic Development Officer (EDO) has raised concerns regarding the substantial reduction in office space/use class B1 which is considered contrary to the original vision for this strategic site. This vision projected thousands of new jobs in office and light industrial space being created over the years, with space provided for growing employers and inward investment. The EDO considers the proposals will result in a lower overall number of jobs being created than originally envisaged particularly given the larger extent of B8 Distribution & Storage Uses (e.g. logistics) as well fewer numbers of employees in comparatively higher quality and better-paid roles which are delivered through office employment.

In response to these concerns the applicant points out that from its assessment of the position in respect of the provision of office space at Basford East the ELR concludes that;

*"If the Basford East site was to continue to be allocated for up to 19 ha for offices, it is likely that this would take many years to be fully developed, well beyond the planning horizon of the Local Plan Strategy. At current take-up rates for office land and the recent share of office transactions in Crewe, 19 ha could take about 48 years to be fully consumed. It is considered that this element of the policy allocation of up to 19 ha is out of date and no longer appropriate for the Basford East site."*

The ELR also explains that the reduced demand for office space is essentially due to significant changes in economic circumstances including increased business costs and the pandemic. The report adds that, *"The Office market is currently in a state of flux, with business evaluating the way in which they balance homeworking with in-office working in the post-pandemic environment"*. It is also important to note that the ELR was prepared prior to the cancellation of HS2 phases 2a and 2b.

On the other hand, in recent years the ELR demonstrates that there has been a growth in demand for larger and industrial and distribution floor space (Classes B2 & B8). Importantly however, the applicant still recognises that office floorspace is required to be provided within the scheme to support the Crewe economy as the current supply of office space is low. Nevertheless, the level now proposed is far more reflective of current and future demand, than that envisaged for allocation LPS 2. As a result, the ELR's overall findings are that a mix of uses at the Basford East site includes the following;

- *A significantly reduced role for offices than proposed in the Local Plan Strategy, but offices still forming an important part of the mix of employment uses within the site. In particular, opportunities should be provided that allow for businesses to co-locate their office/administrative functions with their manufacturing/logistics functions in modern, high-quality, hybrid premises.*
- *A range of units appropriate for B2/B8 operations, including a broad range of unit sizes to accommodate a strong mix of enterprises, including regionally and nationally significant enterprises.*

The submitted “hybrid” application is consistent these conclusions and the overall masterplan proposes the following employment use mix across the site;

- Up to 783,645 sq ft (72,803 sqm) of Class B8 warehousing & distribution uses
- Up to 475,474 sq ft (44,173 sqm) of Class B2 general industrial! Class E(g)(iii) light industrial uses
- Up to 100,000 sq ft (9,290 sqm) of Class E(g)(i) office uses.

In terms of the provision of office space, the amended parameters plan and Design Code indicate “commitment” to the provision of up to 100,000 sq.ft (9,290 sqm) of Class E(g)(i) Office accommodation. A “development zone” (indicative Units 4 - 7) is identified on the parameters plan within the outline part of the employment site adjacent to its main entrance for the siting of office use Class E(g)(i).

Also upper floor office accommodation is shown on the floor plans for Units 1- 3 within the full planning area of the site and approximately equates to;

- Unit 1 - 900 sqm approx.
- Unit 2 - 1500 sqm approx.
- Unit 3 - 1100m sqm approx.

It is considered that the overall master-planning approach will ensure that an appropriate mix and quantum of employment uses is delivered across the site. However, notwithstanding this, a planning condition is recommended to ensure that future development of the site will deliver an appropriate mix of employment uses to reflect this distribution, including a minimum provision of (9,290 sqm) of Class E(g)(i) office uses within phase 2, whilst ensuring flexibility in responding to market demand from a wide range of potential occupiers.

In summary, given that low demand for office floor space is predicted to persist in the longer term, the proposed provision within the site is acceptable in supporting the local economy. It is considered that the mix and quantum of employment uses now proposed is acceptable. Importantly, the development of this large employment will result in significant socio-economic benefits for Crewe and the wider areas, and the applicant estimates that the proposal will create 2,900 (FTE) new jobs across a range of occupations, both higher and lower skilled.

## **Layout / Design**

The importance of securing high quality design is specified within the NPPF and Policies SE1, SD1 and SD2 of the CELPS, GEN1 of the SADPD and the Cheshire East Design Guide. In

particular, development proposals should consider the wider character of a place in addition to that of the site and its immediate context, to ensure that it reinforces the area in which it is located.

This hybrid application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, a design code and regulating plan, masterplan and parameters plans relating to uses, building heights and landscape framework. The Council's Design Officer has undertaken an assessment of the application, which is reflected in the commentary below.

### Master planning/site framework

The Design Officer considers that the overall master planning approach adopted for this strategic site has resulted in a well-conceived employment development. There is a clear hierarchy in terms of street structure and design, albeit there is still concern about the capacity to tree line the main east-west spine with appropriately scaled trees, although this issue can be addressed through a landscape condition.

The extent of open and visible parking has been mitigated to an extent through enhanced landscaping throughout the site and includes the use of "green streets" although it accepts that the extent of surface parking across the site and its resulting visibility from certain viewpoints is dictated by highway requirements.

Connectivity and movement through the site, has been positively planned, and in particular achieving a positive termination of the east-west greenway, albeit still in concept form. The movement strategy also includes different length leisure routes and the prospect of positive connection to the Taylor Wimpey residential site to the east.

The scheme proposes a positive approach to open space, both public and for the benefit of occupants/workers within the development. This should set it apart from some of the larger employment schemes. Gresty Park presents a positive opportunity to enable people to experience a waterscape environment and to interact with nature. Based on the coding, the Marl Pit Park within the outline part of the site should provide a positive arrival into the site from the east-west greenway. However, the quality of the open space design at reserved matters will be crucial and it is advised that the naturalised feel conveyed in the coding needs to be maintained.

The SuDS framework for the site is considered to be another positive aspect of the scheme. The visibility of that within streets, car parks and public spaces will help to characterise the development and supplement the ecological wetland feel of the development.

### Detailed component (full Application)

The Design Officer considers that in terms of architectural treatment a consistent approach across the development is likely to be better than individual designs for each building, but some individualisation would help elevate quality. For phase 2, where there is potential provision of smaller units, then there will be scope to create some subtle variation to the architecture reflecting their different scale and use, as identified in the Design Code.



The Design Officer noted the concerns raised by the Weston and Crewe Green Parish Council as regards building design, but this full part of the application is essentially a proposal of 3 larger footprint buildings, and the options to dress large buildings of this type are limited. One of the key issues raised by the Parish Councils is the “monotone palette” proposed for cladding facing buildings. However, introducing more colour variety can potentially worsen matters through further emphasising the scale of already significant buildings. It can also create excessively busy elevations and schemes that can date quite quickly. The Design Officer therefore concludes that the proposed approach is acceptable and further notes the Landscape officer’s comments as regarding the positive contribution of landscaping/green infrastructure within the scheme and the impact that will have over time in softening the buildings.

As originally proposed a pinch-point was created between Unit 1 and the access road at the main entrance to the development. Given its massing/height, (20 m to ridge/15m to haunch) Unit 1 would have appeared over-dominant. Amended plans have “flipped” the building around so that its entrance, staff car park and active elevations face towards the site gateway.

The re-orientation of unit 1 has brought significant benefits in creating an active entrance to the scheme. It also means Unit 1 is set further from the approved neighbouring housing. This makes for a far more positive entry into the development, particularly if this active frontage arrangement can also be secured for the future office area on the opposite side of the entry road (as defined on the regulating plan). Ideally, landscaping for the frontage of the car park of unit 1 could be further enhanced by tree planting within the hedge line, but that can be addressed through a landscape condition.

The revisions to the siting of Unit 1 in conjunction with the positioning of the proposed office units of the outline component of the application, will ensure an appropriate scale of development at the main entrance street and help prevent excessive enclosure. The Parameters Plan (Use) for the outline component has been revised to specifically show the provision of office buildings (Units Nos 4 - 7) in this location, to thereby reflect the principles of the submitted Design Code as well as the safeguarding the layout structure and as shown by the indicative masterplan.

Unit 2 is a large building but is set to the back of the site on its western edge, adjacent to the Network Rail land. Whilst the sections indicate this building to be 23m to ridge, 18m to haunch with the unit orientated east-west it will be viewed in the context of other buildings within the site and therefore partly screened by them.

Unit 3 is proposed to be 20m to ridge and 15 metres to haunch. Proposed housing to the east would be circa 60m away from the building at its closest point, divided by a landscaped bund and the PRow corridor (Basford FP 1). The bund height ranges from 2 – 4m (4m in relation to the southern part of the building). As advised by the Council’s Landscape officer, additional photo montages and site sections have demonstrated that views from the housing area would be acceptable and that the buildings would not be overly dominant.

### Outline component

The strengthened Design Coding, including the provision of a regulating plan and the clarification on the parameters for office space being provided on part of the outline area,

provides greater certainty in delivering mixed employment use and certain fixes to establish the framework for the site, particularly as this area is subject to outline approval. The coding produced for the site provides a positive framework on which to plan the detailed design of buildings and spaces as part of Reserved Matters submissions.

### Other considerations

Whilst some of the proposed buildings are of a large scale, and notwithstanding the comments made above about design/materiality, this has to be weighed against the operational needs of occupiers, which require these proposed building heights.

The Design Officer also considers that flexibility should be adopted for the heights of the office element identified within the outline part of the site adjacent to the eastern boundary and site entrance. It is highlighted that whilst the submitted parameters plan establishes “maximum” building heights for that area, height reductions can still be sought at reserved matters stage.

The Design Officer notes that there is a modest discrepancy in the area set aside for the park in the southern outline area (called Marl Pit Park in the Design Coding) comparing parameters/regulating plans and the outline masterplan. This is because part is identified within the development zone on the parameters/regulating plan. The code identifies the southern edge of the park as employee space for Unit 10 of the illustrative layout. This employee space seems very generous and could be reduced with more given over to the public park use. This should however be clarified in the detailed design for this part of the site at Reserved Matters stage.

There are no design principles for rain gardens within the landscape section of the coding and this will need to be resolved through the detailed landscape design (both via condition for the detailed part of the hybrid scheme and within reserved matters for the outline element).

As part of the detailed landscape scheme for the southern part of the site consideration should be given to wildflower planting the presently proposed grassed verges to supplement the other street GI such as tree and other planting areas and swales. In addition, the detailed landscape design needs to ensure that the sub stations and other utility infrastructure are adequately screened.

The Design Officer considers that bin and cycle stores should be ‘greened’ by using living surfaces as alluded to in the images within the design coding.

### Energy and climate adaptation

The Design Officer advises that the scheme is to be designed to BREEAM “very good” as set out in the supporting energy and sustainability statement with some provision of air source heating, Photovoltaic, EV charging, reduced energy demand and various other ‘soft’ initiatives, including the approach to sustainable drainage.

### Overall

In summary, the Design Officer considers that the overall masterplan/coding approach will ensure the development of the proposed employment park is acceptable design terms and

achieves an acceptable relationship with the adjacent residential scheme. The scheme will address the aspirations of Policy LPS 2 in providing a layout which will ensure a good quality of place, through a positive approach to open space and connectivity, and an acceptable framework on which to plan the detailed design of buildings within the southern part of the site at the reserved matters stage.

It is considered that in design terms the proposals comply with Policies; SE1, SD1 and SD2 of the CELPS and GEN1 of the SADPD.

## **Highways & Accessibility**

The proposed access to the site is taken from the spine road that connects with David Whitby Way and also an approved residential development (Taylor Wimpey) The access will effectively form part of new access road to serve the Network Rail depot proposed under application 22/3158N to the west of this application site.

In accordance with the requirements of Policy LPS 2 development is expected to;

- contribute towards road infrastructure improvements in the area, including the Crewe Green Link Road, A500 link capacity improvements, A5020 Weston Road junction and junction 16 of the M6.
- provide contributions towards improvements to existing, and the provision of new, public transport links to Crewe Railway Station, Crewe town centre and local villages.
- allow continued access to and servicing of the adjacent railways including improved access to the Rail Depot from Crewe Green Link Road South.
- provide improvements to existing, and include the provision of new pedestrian, cycle and public transport links to existing and proposed residential and employment areas, shops, schools and health facilities.
- provide connections to the South Cheshire Growth Village, South East Crewe, in the form of green infrastructure, pedestrian and cycle links with further consideration of comprehensively master planning both schemes.
- provide a quality of place with pedestrian and cycle links through to Crewe Railway Station and beyond to Crewe town centre

## Access

The spine road provides direct access on both sides of the road to the northern and southern parts of the site, the width of the road is 7.3m which is an industrial standard road capable of allowing HGV movements to occur. The northern and southern parts of the scheme have one principal access off the spline road, and there is a secondary car park access on the northern development site. As part of this development the existing part of the main spline road will be widened to provide a ghost right turn lane for the northern part of the Taylor Wimpey development.

The Highway Officer has advised that priority junction designs are to an acceptable standard and provide sufficient visibility and width for commercial access points. Internally the same specification is proposed in terms of width on both the north and south developments and each has a footway/cycle path provided.

## Car and Cycle Parking

The total number of parking spaces in both the outline and full application is 754 spaces which includes 32 disabled spaces and 70 Electrical Vehicle charging spaces. The Phase 1 development (Unit 1 - 148 car parking spaces, Unit 2 – 404 car parking spaces, and Unit 3 – 201 car parking spaces).

As Phase 2 is submitted in outline, the numbers of car parking spaces is subject to change in any reserved matters application. The majority of floorspace is storage and distribution uses and these operate on shift patterns and as such staff numbers on site at any one time are staggered and as such parking demand is lower.

All of the proposed units subject to full approval have covered cycle parking (Unit 1 - 34 spaces, Unit 2 - 96 spaces and Unit 3 - 48 spaces) which is considered acceptable.

## Accessibility

The internal footway and cycleways connect to the spine road which has shared footway/cycle facility on the northern side and this then connects with a similar facility on the western side of David Whitby Way. There is a network of existing footways north of the site towards Crewe and the shared footway/cycleway extends to Crewe Green roundabout.

It is accepted that there are no current bus services along David Whitby Way and the nearest service is the 85 on Weston Road (approx. 1000m from the site) that provides a hourly service between Newcastle-under-Lyme and Nantwich calling at Crewe.

It is important that developments are able to be accessed via pedestrian footways and that cycle facilities are provided, preferably on segregated paths. The proposed development is connected to these facilities and as such can be accepted as accessible. The provision to travel to work by public transport is poor, and although a limited bus service is available reasonably close to the site, it is likely that the staff catchment for this development is wide-ranging and staff will be travelling from numerous locations to the site. As part of the approved residential sites at Basford East, there is support for a new Bus Service to provide access to the site; this will assist in providing sustainable access.

## Traffic Impact

The new access road usage will ultimately be shared between the MUSE employment site, Taylor Wimpey residential scheme and also the Network Rail Depot (22/3158N). The Highway officer has advised that the assessment of all three sites using the access road has been undertaken. The traffic generation equates to 460 peak hour trips for the MUSE scheme using the access road and a comparatively small number of 177 daily trips would be generated by the Network Rail Depot.

The traffic impact of the proposed development (also taking account of the modest movements of the rail depot) has been assessed at the principal junctions likely to be affected by the additional trips generated by the site. These include;

- David Whitby Way/Basford East Site Access roundabout;

- University Way/Weston Road/David Whitby Way/Savoy Road roundabout
- A500/David Whitby Way roundabout;
- A500/A531/B5472 roundabout;

The assessment has determined that a number of mitigation measures required at various junctions for both Phase 1 and 2 of the development. The Highway Officer further advises that as a number of the same junctions on the road network are affected by both this application and South Cheshire Growth Village (SCGV) development, mitigation measures are required from both schemes.

The principal impact of Phase 1 is at the A500/David Whitby Way roundabout given the vast majority of the HGV movements generated by the scheme will pass through this junction. The Highway Officer advises that a mitigation scheme has been submitted to improve capacity at this junction, which include a full signalisation of the roundabout. This has been assessed by CEC and considered acceptable to be delivered as part of Phase 1 as a S278 scheme secured through a planning condition

The University Way / David Whitby Way Roundabout also has capacity problems when both the Phase 1 and 2 employment development traffic is added, and a mitigation scheme has also been proposed for this junction. However, there is additional impact at the roundabout resulting from the proposed South Cheshire Growth Village (SCGV) development submitted under current outline planning application 22/1447N which will add significant peak hour traffic to the junction. However, given that the principal impact at this junction would arise from SCGV, it is recommended that these improvements should be secured as part of the mitigation measures for the SCGV proposal.

A major improvement scheme for the A500 is to be delivered by CEC which includes the Meremoor Moss roundabout junction. This roundabout has existing capacity problems in the peak hours. The MUSE employment development will have an impact at the junction, but it will however be particularly impacted by the proposed SCGV development. A capacity assessment has been undertaken with the Muse development added only and shows long queueing on the A500 and the B5472.

In these circumstances the Highway Officer advises that a financial contribution to the CEC designed works that can incorporate the MUSE employment development traffic should be secured as part of phase 2 (outline). A proportionate and viable contribution to this scheme has been agreed and should therefore be secured by a S106 agreement.

CELPS Policy LP2 sets out what is expected to be secured in terms of infrastructure contributions to the road network. This development will add significant additional daily traffic on the local road network principally to the A500 and David Whitby Way (A5020) where road infrastructure improvement schemes are planned. A total financial contribution of £2.45m is recommended to be secured towards funding CEC planned improvement schemes for the A500 corridor or the A5020 corridor and / or enhanced cycling facilities on the A532 Corridor.

### Summary

In summary, the Highway Officer raises no objection to the application. It is considered that access to the site from the principal highway network is acceptable and the design of the

internal roads and pedestrian cycle/infrastructure provides good connectivity within the site and beyond. The traffic impact of the scheme can be mitigated through off site highway improvements as set above with financial contributions secured through a S106 Agreement as follows;

- A500 and A5020 access improvement contribution – Payment of £250k on commencement of Phase 2 (Buildings 4 to 10).
- A500 and A5020 access improvement contribution – On commencement, a payment per s.q.metre of plots of Phase 2 (Buildings 4 to 10) to a maximum cumulative value of £2.2M.

In addition, planning conditions are recommended to be attached as follows;

- Prior to occupation of the second unit within Phase 1, a ghost right turn lane to be provided on the existing spine road to serve the northern part of Taylor Wimpey residential Development .
- Prior to occupation of the last building unit within the Phase1 development, implementation of a scheme for the full signalisation of the David Whitby Way/A500 roundabout
- No occupation of Phase 1 (Unit 2) until the completion of the Network Rail access road as proposed under planning application 22/3158N.
- Prior to the occupation of each unit, an individual Travel Plan shall be submitted for that unit with the aim of promoting alternative/low carbon transport options for staff and patrons.

As recommended by National Highways a further condition is required to be imposed to secure the approval of a comprehensive travel plan framework for the site prior to first occupation.

### **Basford East Pedestrian/Cycle Routes**

A specific policy requirement of LPS 2 (Basford East, Crewe) is for development of pedestrian links (allowing for cycle access) to the South Cheshire Growth Village (LPS 8) to the east and the wider development with the Basford East Strategic Allocation to specifically provide a safe and secure environment for children to travel to school.

The development of 449 dwellings (Onward Homes) on the eastern side of David Whitby Way approved under 19/5934N incorporates a high-quality pedestrian/cycle route between the proposed South Cheshire Growth Village and David Whitby Way. A Toucan crossing on David Whitby Way secured under outline approval 15/1537N which enables this link to connect through to the Taylor Wimpey residential scheme.

The east/west pedestrian route then continues through the TW scheme via Croatia Mill and connects into the southern part of the proposed MUSE employment area utilising the public footpath network (Basford FP1 and FP2).

The Highway Officer has advised that the provision of the Toucan crossing can be satisfactorily provided on David Whitby Way, notwithstanding the concerns raised by the Weston Parish Council. The crossing is required to be provided under the outline approval 15/1537N prior to the occupation of dwellings of the TW residential scheme.

It is considered that the provision of a satisfactory east-west pedestrian route is vitally important to the wider Basford East development (and indeed the South Cheshire Growth Village).

In addition, to further improve pedestrian/cycle connectivity, the Highway Officer has advised that a further Toucan crossing is to be provided on David Whitby Way in a position to the north of the roundabout junction with the spine road. It will be funded through an existing S106 contribution. The additional crossing will significantly improve accessibility from the northern part of the TW residential development to the proposed primary school on the opposite side of David Whitby Way.

## **Ecology**

There are various ecology matters to consider and these are broken down into the following subsections and assessed accordingly. Revised comments have been received from the Councils Ecologist in respect of updated information which has been submitted including the ES statement addendum, Bioiversity Net Gain assessment, surveys and mitigation reports.

### Statutory Designated Sites

The application site falls within Natural England's SSSI impact risk zones. The applicant has undertaken a 'shadow ALSE' and submitted this in support of the application. Natural England have been consulted and responded on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and raised no objection.

The shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment has been adopted by the Council, and the conclusions of the assessment, that the proposed development is not likely to have a significant effect upon the Midland Meres and Mosses – phase 1 Ramsar or the West Midland Mosses SAC.

### Non-statutory Sites

Mere Gutter and Basford Brook Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is present on the northern boundary of the application site. This watercourse supports one of only a few remaining populations of White Clawed Crayfish in Cheshire. The Councils Ecologist advises that contamination and disturbance during the construction phase and surface water discharges during the operational phase of the development pose a significant risk to the LWS.

In order to minimise the risk of surface water contamination during the operation phase the ES states that a three level SUDS treatment will be provided for surface water from medium hazard areas and one treatment for low hazard areas. This approach is acceptable and is anticipated to be sufficient to safeguard the brook from operational phase surface water contamination. This matter may be dealt with by means of a condition in the event that planning consent is granted.

The applicant's ecological consultant has advised that no new outfall structures are required to Basford Brook. These will be located remotely, discharging into new naturalised channels which will subsequently be connected into the brook. These are illustrated on the recently submitted plan 'Indicative outfall details' drawing 0520 rev. P02.

This approach will minimise disturbance of the brook. Works to construct the swale will involve light excavation, landscaping and providing areas of rip rap (insetting natural stone paving into the channel). No in-river works will be required to construct the swale and rip rap channel. The connection of the swale to the brook will be supervised by the ecological clerk of works.

The Council's Ecologist recommends that the submission of detailed designs for the outfalls to Basford Brook and the supervision of their installation by an ecologist be secured by a condition in the event that consent is granted.

Risks related to construction phase disturbance and contamination could be addressed through the implementation of a CEMP, which includes fencing off 'no go' areas during the construction process and emergency spill response plan and dust control to minimise contamination. This is recommended to be required by a planning condition.

The submitted White Clawed Crayfish Mitigation Strategy includes the supervision of works, the installation of silt fencing, biosecurity measures to safeguard the crayfish population. The implementation of this mitigation strategy should be secured by a planning condition.

The Environment Agency (EA) have made further comments on the application and suggested a condition for a further white clawed crayfish mitigation strategy dealing with the connection of the swale to Basford Brook including drawdown of the watercourse and exclusion of crayfish. As above, it is not anticipated that any works will be required in the river channel therefore these measures may not be required. However, the Council's Ecologist recommends that a condition be attached as requested by the EA which required the submission of the specified mitigation in the event that in channel works are found to be necessary.

#### Ecological Network

The application falls partly within a Core Area of the CEC Ecological network. SAPD Policy ENV1 requires developments in Core Areas to increase the quality or quantity of priority habitat. I advise that the creation of reedbeds as part of the SUDS and the proposed native hedgerow planting would contribute to fulfilling this policy requirement.

#### Great Crested Newts

This protected species is present at several ponds on site. The Council's Ecologist considers that the proposed development would result in a high magnitude adverse impact on this species as a result of the loss of aquatic and terrestrial habitat and the risk of animals being killed or injured during the construction process.

The EC Habitats Directive 1992 requires the UK to maintain a system of strict protection for protected species and their habitats. The Directive only allows disturbance, or deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places:

- (a) in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, and provided that there is;
- (b) no satisfactory alternative and
- (c) no detriment to the maintenance of the species population at Favourable conservation status in their natural range



The UK has implemented the Directive in the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 2010 (as amended) which contain two layers of protection (i) a requirement on Local Planning Authorities (“LPAs”) to have regard to the Directive’s requirements above, and (ii) a licensing system administered by Natural England and supported by criminal sanctions.

Policy SE 3 of the CELPS states that development which is likely to have a significant impact on a site with legally protected species will not be permitted except where the reasons for or the benefits of the development outweigh the impact of the development. Circular 6/2005 advises LPAs to give due weight to the presence of protected species on a development site to reflect EC requirements. “This may potentially justify a refusal of planning permission.”

The NPPF advises LPAs to protect and enhance biodiversity: if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts) or adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, planning permission should be refused.

Natural England’s standing advice is that, if a (conditioned) development appears to fail the three tests in the Habitats Directive, then LPAs should consider whether Natural England is likely to grant a licence: if unlikely, then the LPA should refuse permission: if likely, then the LPA can conclude that no impediment to planning permission arises under the Directive and Regulations.

In terms of the Habitat Directive tests;

- The proposed development is of overriding public interest. The site forms part of the Basford East Strategic Allocation and its development which would provide significant employment opportunities and economic benefits for Crewe, supporting the overall aims of the local plan strategy and the important contribution to that made by this strategic site.
- The site is allocated for significant development and there is no satisfactory alternative to delivering this scale of employment development.
- In order to address the potential, impacts of the proposed development upon this species, the applicant intends to enter the development in Natural England’s District Level Licencing scheme. The Councils Ecologist advises that this approach would be sufficient to maintain the favourable conservation status of the affected species.

The applicant has provided a copy the countersigned Impact Assessment and Conservation Payment Certificate from NE as evidence that the development is eligible to join the scheme. condition should be attached which requires the developer to enter into the licencing scheme prior to works on site.

As a result, the proposed development would be comply with the relevant policies of the Development Plan in terms of the impact upon protected species.

#### Common Toad

This priority amphibian species was recorded on site during the reptile surveys. The ES advises that it is likely that this species would breed at ponds on site. The proposed development would result in an adverse impact on his species as a result of the loss of ponds, smaller areas of high value habitat and large areas of lower value terrestrial habitat, together with the risk of animals

being killed during site clearance and construction works and the risk posed by drainage infrastructure.

The Council's Ecologist advises that the loss of ponds would be compensated for through the proposed replacement ponds, although some clarification on this point is required as discussed below. The risk of animals being killed could be reduced through the implementation of Reasonable Avoidance Measures during the construction phase and the incorporation of dropped kerbs and amphibian friendly gully pots. This will be secured by a planning condition. The Council's Ecologist advises that the proposed development is likely to have a residual minor adverse impact upon this species due to the overall loss of available habitat on site.

### Ponds

There are 10 ponds on site, four of which are considered to be priority habitat. All of these ponds, apart from one, would be lost as a result of the proposed development.

Paragraph 7.225 of the ES refers to 14 new ponds being created as part of the development. The applicant's ecological consultant has advised that all of the proposed ponds on site are wildfire ponds with the exception of the SUDS basin located in the northern part of the site. The Council's Ecologist accepts this is broadly acceptable.

### Hedgerow

Native Hedgerows are a priority habitat and hence a material consideration. The submitted ES advises that the existing hedgerows are largely retained apart from losses associated with the proposed access roads. The landscape masterplan includes replacement native species hedgerow planting. I advise that if the loss of the existing hedgerow is considered unavoidable, then whether the proposed planting is sufficient to address that lost can be assessed through the application of the biodiversity metric discussed below.

### Water Vole

This priority species was historically present on Basford Brook but has not been recorded for a number of years. No evidence of the species was recorded during the surveys undertaken in support of this application, and I advise that it is unlikely to be present or affected by the proposed development.

### Bats

No bat roosts were identified in the trees subject to detailed surveys. The application site is considered to be of Local value for foraging and commuting bats, with Bat activity mainly being associated with woodland to north and railway line to the west. I advise that the proposed development will result in some loss of suitable bat foraging habitat, which would be at least partly compensated for through the proposed pond creation and landscape planting. Whether the proposals are sufficient to fully compensate for the loss of suitable habitat on site can be determined using the biodiversity metric discussed below.

To avoid any adverse impacts on bats, a condition is recommended that requires the submission of detail of the proposed lighting scheme which should reflect the Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note 08/18 (Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK).

### Badger

No conclusive evidence of badger activity was recorded on site during the submitted updated

survey (July 2023), however badgers are known to be active in this locality. Based upon the current status of badgers on site I advise that the proposed development is likely to have a low impact upon badgers as a result of the loss of suitable foraging habitat.

As the status of badgers on a site can change in a short timescale, a condition should be attached requiring an updated badger survey to be submitted prior to the commencement of development.

### Reptiles

Slow worm is present on site. This is a priority species and hence a material consideration. The presence of this species would also be sufficient for a site to be selected as a Local Wildlife Site. The species was recorded on the site's western boundary, but suitable habitat also occurs towards the site's northern boundary.

The ES identifies a potential Moderate adverse impact upon slow worms resulting from the proposed development. In order to mitigate this impact, a reptile buffer is shown on the landscape master plan along the southern section adjacent to the western railway line.

The Council's Ecologist advises that the proposed development must avoid the loss of any suitable reptile habitat. The application site for the most part supports habitats of low value for reptiles, however the proposed development does result in the loss of an area of suitable habitat towards the north. The revised ES recommends the implementation of trapping and exclusion measures to minimise the risk of reptiles being harmed during site clearance works and this approach is acceptable. The number of days trapping will need to be agreed with the LPA prior to site clearance works. This matter can be dealt with by means of a suitable condition.

### Aquatic invertebrates

Further surveys of four ponds on site have been undertaken (APEM 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023). The surveys did not identify the ponds surveyed as being significantly important for aquatic invertebrates. The applicant's ecological consultant has confirmed that a number of other ponds previously observed on site were dry at the time of the survey.

### Breeding Birds

A number of species of bird were recorded as breeding on site. This included a number of priority species which are a material consideration for planning. The proposed development would result in the loss of habitat for priority species associated with scrub and woodland habitats and ground nesting priority bird species.

The proposed planting, and the provision of bird boxes on site, would at least partially mitigate impacts on species associated with scrub and woodland habitats, however the proposed development is likely to result in a residual impact upon ground nesting priority bird species, which would be affected by a direct loss of suitable habitat and deterred from breeding on site due to the loss of openness. This effect is likely to be significant at the Local scale.

In addition, a planning condition is recommended to protect breeding birds.

### Barn owl

Barn Owls were recorded as breeding in a nest box just outside the redline of the application in the southern part of the site.

The submitted ES advises that the proposed development would result in a minor impact on barn owls because of the loss of foraging habitat. The breeding pair of owls adjacent the site is however likely to be disturbed during the construction phase (in the area subject to the outline application) which is likely to result in the abandonment of the territory. Construction works in the area subject to the full application is unlikely to disturb barn owls.

The submitted mitigation strategy involves the temporary removal of the current nest box prior to any seasonal breeding activity occurring as a means of avoiding any disturbance of breeding owls. The box would be reinstated once potential disturbing construction works are complete. In addition, the provision of two replacement nest boxes is proposed, one to the north of the application site and a second on land to the south of the A500, as a means of compensating for the potential loss of the existing nesting site.

It is recommended that a condition be attached requiring that any future reserved matters application be supported by an updated barn owl survey and a mitigation strategy informed by the submitted scheme.

### Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

All development proposals must seek to lead to an overall enhancement for biodiversity in accordance with Local Plan policy SE3(5) and deliver a Biodiversity net gain in accordance with SADPD policy ENV 2. In order to assess the overall loss/gains of biodiversity an assessment has been undertaken using the Defra Biodiversity 'Metric' version 3.1.

The revised BNG calculation submitted in support of the application advises that the proposed development, including offsite habitat creation works, would result in a net gain of 3.59% for area-based habitats and a 42.29% for hedgerows for the full application area.

The Council's Ecologist advises that the proposed SUDS ponds should be entered into the metric as such rather than wildlife ponds as is currently the case. This change results in the gain from area-based habitats being reduced slightly to 2.58%.

The outline application area is estimated to result in net gain of 5.36% for area-based habitats and no change for hedgerows. Part of the existing farmland within the outline area falls within the CEC ecological network but has not been entered as such in the submitted metric. Revising the metric to reflect this shows that the proposed development still being anticipated to delivering a very slight net gain. This however meets the requirements of SADPD Policy ENV2, as opposed to the mandatory BNG requirements that came into effect in February 2024 and to which this application is exempt as it was submitted in February 2023.

A planning condition is required to secure the submission and implementation of a habitat creation method statement and a 30-year monitoring and management plan for the on-site habitats created as part of both the full and outline areas.

A section 106 agreement would also be required to secure the offsite biodiversity measures including the submission of a habitat creation method statement and 30 year monitoring and management plan. The applicant intends to deliver the offsite works for both the full and outline elements of the application under a single management plan.

This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate features to increase the biodiversity value of the development in accordance with Local Plan Policy SE 3. A condition is recommended of proposals for ecological enhancement (bat and bird boxes) for each phase.

## Summary

In summary, subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement to secure off-site habitat to deliver Biodiversity net gain, and a series of planning conditions to protect species and safeguard habitat (including Basford Brook) the Council's Ecologist raises no objections to the development;

## **Trees**

This is a hybrid application (part full/part outline) application for a new employment park. The site is identified in the CELPS as a strategic site (Basford East LPS2), located in the westernmost part of the site allocation. Policy LPS2 includes the principles relevant to arboriculture and trees to achieve the development through the incorporation of Green Infrastructure.

Trees within and immediately adjacent to the site are not currently protected by a Tree Preservation Order or lie within a designated Conservation Area.

The application is supported by an Environmental Statement with a series of technical assessments and Appendices that include technical reports and supporting information. An updated Arboricultural Impact Assessment (TEP Version 2.0 dated 14/8/23) is included at Appendix 7.10 of the ES. Section 2.19 of the AIA refers to the following:

The AIA refers to the presence or otherwise of Ancient Woodland, Veteran Trees and Community Forests. The Council's Forestry Office concurs with the AIA that trees within or adjacent to the site are not covered by these designations.

The AIA refers to the presence or otherwise of habitats of principal importance, including habitat types defined by woody vegetation on the Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory. The Forestry Officer agrees with the AIA that the Inventory confirms one priority habitat of Deciduous Woodland within the application site (Woodland W1 and G4 of the AIA).

## Full

AIA Para 3.9, Table 34 and Drawing 2 (Tree Works Plan - Effects) identify 1 moderate (B) category Oak tree, 2 moderate (B) category groups and 4 low (C) category groups will require removal to accommodate the development.

It is agreed (AIA para 3.12) that tree removal by area is mostly low quality (Category C) and represents a small percentage of tree cover, with most of the tree cover, including the linear woodland belt to the north along Basford Brook being retained.

The individual Oak and two moderate category groups are located adjacent to ponds within the centre of the site in conflict with the position of Unit 3. The proposal has no direct or indirect impact on the integrity of the linear woodland to the north of the site.

The applicant proposes mixed, native planting on a proposed bund to the east of the site, avenue planting of specimen trees to the main access roads, swale and wet area planting and smaller species tree planting within the car park areas and welcome areas as a means of compensation for the loss of trees and mitigate for the impact of development. The proposed planting is considered sufficient to compensate for the loss of trees.

The Forestry Officer notes that tall growing columnar tree species are proposed to be planted as avenue planting on spine roads. Where appropriate new planting should comprise of large canopy trees rather than columnar forms, with a mix of species that are resilient to pest, diseases and climate change and delivered in locations that support their long-term growth and spatial requirements. In addition, the delivery of new planting integrated as part of the rain gardens within areas of car parking should be designed to have sufficient soil volume to ensure tree longevity. These issues can be addressed through a planning condition requiring details of the landscape scheme and planting.

In summary, the Forestry Officer raises no objection to this part of the scheme (full application) subject to conditions being attached requiring the submission of a scheme of tree protection measures, an Arboricultural Method Statement and a detailed service and foul and surface water drainage layout to ensure the long term retention of the trees.

### Outline

In terms of anticipated tree Loss, the AIA para 3.15 (Table 6) and Drawing 4 (Tree Works Plan - Anticipated Effects) identify 3 High (A) category Oak trees; 6 moderate (B) category Oak trees, 3 moderate (B) category groups and 7 low (C) category groups that are anticipated for removal to accommodate the development.

The majority of the removals are located within the southern central section of the site and eastern boundary section to accommodate Units 9 and 10. New planting is shown on the Landscape Masterplan, albeit indicative at this stage which includes planting along the spine roads and mixed native planting on the bunded landscape buffer to the east of the site as compensation for the loss of trees and mitigation for the impact of development. The Forestry Officer considers that the proposed planting is acceptable to compensate for the loss of trees. Although should the design change at reserved matters stage and there are additional impacts on trees these will need to be considered in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy.

The Forestry Officer has also assessed the indirect impact on trees. The AIA (Para 3.17) refers to the potential impact of a proposed attenuation pond on a group of trees. It is advised that any subsequent reserved matters application should seek to design the attenuation pond to retain these trees.

Para 3.18 of the AIA refers to a high (A) category Oak (T18) to be retained within green space which may be encroached by new structures, roads or level changes. The Forestry Officer advises that any reserved matters application shall ensure that the trees' rooting environment

is respected in accordance with the design requirements of BS5837:2012 to ensure the trees long term health and safe well-being.

Para 3.18 of the AIA refers to the potential impact of the emergency service road on two high (A) category Oak trees, T7 and T8. It is considered that any future reserved matters application should seek to adjust the road to avoid the RPA of the two trees to safeguard their long-term retention.

The Forestry Officer concludes that any future reserved matters application should consider the detailed design of the development on trees by reference to an Arboricultural Impact Assessment / Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan having regard to BS5837:2012 to ensure the retention of those trees that make a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity and landscape character of the area. A Condition is therefore recommended to be attached in respect of the outline part of the scheme to require that reserved matters applications are supported by an appropriate Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

## **Landscape**

### Visual Impact

As part of the application a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted within the ES. The Council's Landscape Officer advises that the assessment follows the guidelines and methodology outlined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2013. The assessment refers to the National Character Area, Area 61 – Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain/Cheshire Sandstone Ridge.

The LVIA has however been updated to take account of the repositioning of Unit 1 further away from the site entrance and eastern site boundary, and also include additional information of views of the larger and higher units of the employment scheme and their impact on the wider landscape with specific focus on Crewe Hall (grade 1) and the village of Weston. Additional photomontages and sections have also been provided of the visual relationship between the approved TW residential development and the proposed employment scheme.

The Council's Landscape Officer has assessed the relevant landscape impacts of the LVIA within the ES, and in the context of the additional information which has been provided and concurs with the findings that the effects on Crewe Hall (grade 1) and the registered park and garden are not significant. Furthermore, it is also demonstrated that when viewed from the environs of Weston, only the rooftops of buildings would be partially visible above the tree line given the presence of intervening vegetation.

It is considered that the LVIA and additional information satisfactorily demonstrates that overall, in the long term, no significant adverse effects are anticipated in terms of the visual impact of the proposed development. Furthermore, given comprehensive landscaping and planting will be implemented on site, the Landscape Officer agrees that most of the long-term landscape and visual effects are either determined to be negligible or negligible to minor.

It is also considered that revised scheme which has re-positioned Unit 1 further into the site has less visual impact on the near and wider landscape, including the nearest dwelling of the Taylor Wimpey scheme. The Landscape Officer considers that the submitted images are acceptable,

particularly given the proposed mitigation in form of planting and landscape bunding alongside the site boundaries with Taylor Wimpey housing scheme.

### Landscape proposals

A key landscape requirement within LPS 2 is the provision of green infrastructure including new planting, the creation of tree lined boulevards, provision of green spaces and retention of existing trees and hedgerows.

Although the development will involve some loss of trees this will be compensated by the proposed planting scheme and furthermore hedgerows within the site are also retained in accordance with one of the site-specific principles of development listed under LPS 2.

The proposed Employment Park has been designed to create a green and healthy workplace with a rich natural landscape, providing accessible open spaces. The landscape strategy has been devised to set the development within generous green infrastructure that threads through the development through the provision of “green streets”. In addition, the periphery landscape will be strengthened includes the retention of existing hedgerows and trees.

A green corridor is proposed along the spine roads and green buffers will be incorporated to separate and provide substantial stand-offs with the adjoining residential scheme. A landscaped buffer is proposed along part of the eastern boundary of the site, incorporating trees and shrubs, which would separate the development from the adjacent residential development, providing visual screening, as well as a habitat corridor.

The scheme proposes a positive approach to open space, both public and for the benefit of occupants/workers within the development. Habitat parks are proposed within the northern and southern part of the scheme, providing green space, ponds and outdoor seating for members of the local community and workers of the site to uses. In particular the proposed “Marl Pit Park” shown on the indicative masterplan within the southern part (outline) of the should provide a positive arrival into the site from the east-west greenway. Although the quality of the open space design will need to be secured in accordance with Design Code at the reserved matters stage.

The proposed planting scheme will also help to soften the built form and assimilate the development into the wider landscape context. This is especially important in close proximity to public footpath routes and visual screening around site edges with the Taylor Wimpey scheme.

The Landscape Officer advises that the landscape related plans are acceptable at this stage, albeit there are some areas especially where boundaries of units or car parking could benefit from some more tree planting, but this can easily be addressed through a condition required details of the landscape scheme.

In summary, it is considered that the landscape design, offers a pleasant and welcome level of planting, complexity with occasional seating areas. The employment park will in time will benefit from extensive tree planting which will soften the large facades of the units. Adequate planting buffers have been provided especially along the main eastern boundary.



The Landscape Officer also recommends a condition be imposed (full application) requiring the provision of a vertical standalone landscape feature, incorporating distinctive signage identifying the development alongside the site boundary on the approach to Crewe Railway Station.

## **Amenity**

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

Residential properties of the approved Taylor Wimpey development (21/4434N) will be sited adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. In addition, dwellings of this this development will also front onto the spine road leading from the roundabout on David Whitby Way.

The approved TW layout ensures that proposed dwellings are well set back behind buffer planting along the central spine road, given this would also serve as the main access to the adjoining employment site to the west in the future. In addition, roadside tree planting the landscape buffer areas, will provide a green corridor into the development of depths of between around 7m to 11m in depth.

Extensive landscape buffer areas will be provided alongside the western site boundary of the TW development and landscape bunding is also sited alongside the eastern boundary of the Employment area. This ensures that appropriate stand-off distances is secured between new housing which takes account of the height of large industrial buildings and operational areas of the employment site.

In particular, significant interface distances are achieved of between 55m and 114m between the nearest dwellings and employment units 1 and 3 within the northern part (full application) of the site. During the course of the application Unit 1 has been repositioned further away from the eastern boundary to avoid the creation of a pinch-point at the main entrance to the development, but also significantly improves the relationship of the scheme with the TW development. Whilst a staff car park is now sited between the end of Unit 1 and the TW development, its loading bay is now located further from the site boundary on the same side of the building and the relocated car park will be substantially screened by landscaped bunding.

In addition, the amended parameters plan for the outline part of the site identifies that office buildings will be located adjacent to the site entrance as opposed to industrial buildings. Landscaped bunding and planting alongside the boundaries of the site will mitigate the visual impact and scale of development within the employment area from the adjacent dwellings.

Given the significant separation distances between dwellings and employment units /operational areas and provision of intervening screening from extensive planting and landscaped bunding, the amenities of future occupiers of dwellings of the TW development not be detrimentally impacted in terms of an overbearing visual impact, loss of outlook or light.

## Noise Impact

In support of this application, the applicant submitted a noise impact assessment given the proximity of approved residential properties. However, given issues raised by CEC Environmental Health and Taylor Wimpey an updated assessment has been submitted. This specifically addresses noise implications from the repositioning of Unit 1, noise resulting from the operation of mechanical plant within the employment park and the impact of traffic noise on dwellings of the Taylor Wimpey site adjacent to the spine road accessing the employment area.

The noise assessment concludes that noise resulting from the operation of the employment units and mechanical plant will be effectively mitigated from the adjacent housing scheme through proposed bunding alongside the eastern site boundary. In terms of traffic noise associated with vehicular movements generated by the proposed employment development the report recommends the provision of mitigation in terms of an upgraded specification of double glazing and trickle vents for specified dwellings of the TW scheme adjacent to the access road, as well as additional 1.8 m high screen fencing to several plots to provide necessary acoustic screening from the road.

Importantly further to its consideration of the updated noise assessment (ES) Taylor Wimpey has stated the required mitigation measures for dwellings set out above are considered acceptable. TW confirms in its representation to the application that, “Muse have confirmed that they will cover the reasonable costs for Taylor Wimpey in relation to the mitigation required “

However, the latest information is being considered by the Council’s Environmental Health Officer and an updated consultation response is expected to be received shortly. An update to this report clarifying the position will be provided in advance of the meeting.

## Air Quality

Air quality impacts have been considered within the air quality assessment submitted in support of the application. This has been considered by the Council’s Environmental Protection Officer (EPO) who considers it acceptable, and in particular is satisfied that the receptors used in the air quality assessment are representative and acceptable.

The report considers whether the development will result in increased exposure to airborne pollutants, particularly as a result of additional traffic and changes to traffic flows. The assessment uses ADMS Roads to model NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> impacts from additional traffic associated with this development and the cumulative impact of committed development within the area.

A number of modelled scenarios have been considered within the assessment. These were:

- 2019 Baseline (Model Verification);
- 2033 Baseline + Committed Development; and,
- 2033 Baseline + Committed Development + Operational Traffic.

The assessment concludes that the impact of the future development on the chosen receptors will be **negligible** with regards to all the modelled pollutants. However, the proposed

development is considered significant in that it is highly likely to change traffic patterns and congestion in the area.

Poor air quality is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the public and also has a negative impact on the quality of life for sensitive individuals. It is therefore considered appropriate that mitigation should be sought in the form of direct measures to reduce the adverse air quality impact.

The EPO considers that a development of this scale and duration would be expected to have an adequate demolition, construction and trackout dust control plan implemented to protect sensitive receptors from impacts during this stage of the proposal and this is mentioned within the AQ Assessment as a form of mitigation.

The EPO raises no objection to the proposed development but recommends that conditions are attached requiring details for the provision of electric vehicle infrastructure and the use of Ultra Low Emission Boilers are necessary to ensure that local air quality is not adversely impacted for existing and future residents.

### **Flood Risk/Drainage**

A drainage and flood risk assessment (ES) has been undertaken to consider the potential effects of the proposed development on the existing hydrological regime, and flood risk to on and off-site receptors. An updated an updated Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy Statement were submitted to address comments made by the Environment Agency (EA) in relation to the potential effects on White Clawed Crayfish within Basford Brook.

As set out in the Ecology section of the report above, original concerns raised by the EA have been addressed subject to the submission of mitigation measures in the event that channel works along the brook found to be necessary. A further condition is recommended requiring the provision of Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be submitted to safeguard the Mere Gutter and Basford Brook LWS throughout the construction phase.

A number of small surface ponds are present on site and Basford Brook lies adjacent to the northern and eastern site boundaries.

Basford Brook is designated as a 'main river' by the Environment Agency. Most of the site is located in Flood Zone 1 (lowest area of flood risk). An area in the north of the site, adjacent to Basford Brook, lies in Flood Zone 2 and 3. The proposed development has taken account of these flooding constraints and land falling within Flood Zone 3 lies outside of the proposed development's platform/built development extent. In addition, no buildings are proposed within the area of land identified as Flood Zone 2. The only development located in Flood Zone 2 is parking, landscaping and hardstanding.

It is considered that the Flood Risk Assessment is acceptable and surface water would be dealt with by appropriate SuDs techniques as set out the Sustainable Drainage Systems Supplementary Planning Document (SuDS SPD). In particular, The proposed drainage strategy includes a range of SUDs features such rain gardens, green roof/walls and attenuation storage in swales and basin/ponds discharging to Basford Brook. As Basford Brook is considered a 'sensitive watercourse' due to the presence White Clawed Crayfish, a three-tiered

SuDS system is importantly proposed in accordance with the SuDS SPD. This ensures that enhanced water quality improvement is achieved by surface water passing through three separate suds systems before discharge into Basford Brook. (e.g. surface water from access roads drains via swales to ponds/detention basin with reduced d controlled discharge through reed beds prior to discharging to Basford Brook.

The Council's Flood Risk Manager has raised no objections in principle to the proposed Drainage Strategy. Although detailed issues are required to be addressed in respect of the final design of elements of the drainage system, and condition are therefore recommended to be imposed on the full and outline parts of the scheme.

United Utilities raises no objections to the application, subject to a condition requiring full details of the design for the surface water and foul water drainage schemes. The Environmental Agency have raised no objections to the development subject to the development being undertaken in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment.

The application proposals are therefore deemed to adhere with Policy SE13 of the CELPS and Policy ENV 16 of the SADPD.

## **SECTION 106**

A Section 106 Agreement is required to secure the following:

- A financial contribution of £2.45m towards funding CEC planned improvement schemes for the A500 corridor or the A5020 corridor and / or enhanced cycling facilities on the A532 Corridor. This is required to mitigate for the impact of the proposed d development on the local highway network.
- To secure the offsite habitat creation measures, including the submission of a habitat creation method statement and 30-year monitoring and management plan, to ensure the development deliver the required Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

## **CIL REGULATIONS**

In order to comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010, it is necessary for planning applications with legal agreements to consider the issue of whether the requirements within the S106 satisfy the following:

- a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- a) Directly related to the development; and
- c) Fair and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

It is considered that the contributions required as part of the application are justified meet the Council's requirement for policy compliance. As set out above, all elements are necessary, directly relate to the development and are fair and reasonable in relation to the scale and kind of development.

On this basis the scheme is compliant with the CIL Regulations 2010.

## CONCLUSIONS

This application relates to a significant part of allocation LPS2 - Basford East, Crewe for the delivery of employment use. The Justification of Policy LPS 2 adds that, "The provision of emplacement land development is the principal and overriding objective of the Basford East Site". It is considered that the proposals meet the overall requirements of policy LPS 2 as they relate to this site.

The mix of employment uses now proposed represents a departure from Policy LPS 2, specifically in relation to proposed Class B8 uses and a significant reduction in office space. However, the submitted Employment Land Report (ELR) has demonstrated this is acceptable given the need to respond to market demand and also the issues depressing the long-term demand for office space. Although it is recognised that a significant provision of office space is still required to be provided over the plan period and will be conditioned accordingly.

Importantly, it is estimated that these proposals will result in significant socio-economic benefits for Crewe and the wider area, including the creation of 2,900 (FTE) new jobs the site.

Improvements to the design and layout of the proposals have been secured during the course of the application and the overall masterplan/coding approach will ensure the proposed employment park will integrate well within its context. The proposals address site specific requirements of Policy LPS 2 with the layout ensuring a good quality of place, through a positive approach to green infrastructure, open space and pedestrian/cycleway connectivity. In addition, an acceptable framework is provided on which to plan the detailed design of buildings within the southern part of the site at the reserved matters stage. The development subject to conditions is supported in design terms and the proposals accord with Policies SE1, SD1 and SD2 of the CELPS and GEN1 of the SADPD.

The LVIA and additional information has demonstrated that the development will achieve an acceptable relationship with the character of the locality, and not result in any unacceptable visual impacts from important viewpoints nor over-dominate the adjacent residential development.

Given significant separation distances between dwellings and employment units /operational areas and provision of intervening screening from extensive planting and landscaped bunding, the amenities of future occupiers of the adjacent TW residential development will not detrimentally be affected in terms of an overbearing visual impact, loss of outlook or light. However, updated information concerning noise impact and proposed mitigation measures is being considered by the Council's Environmental Health Officer and an update will be provided in advance of the meeting.

It considered that access to the site from the principal highway network is acceptable and the design of the internal roads and parking provision is adequate. Pedestrian/cycle infrastructure provides good connectivity within the site and beyond. The impact on the wider highway network arising from the development of this site will be mitigated through the implementation of a scheme for the full signalisation of the David Whitby Way/A500 roundabout, and an A500 and A5020 access improvement contribution of £2.45M secured through a S106 Agreement.

Issues relating to trees, drainage/flood risk, air quality, contaminated land and public rights of way have been addressed and are subject to conditions where necessary.

Ecological issues have been satisfactorily addressed particularly in respect to safeguarding habitat (including Basford Brook), protected species subject to a series of planning conditions being imposed. The delivery of biodiversity net gain is achieved through the creation of off-site habitat secured through a S106 Agreement.

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 Development Plan, and advice contained within the NPPF.

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE, Subject to conditions and the prior completion of a S106 Agreement to secure the following:**

<b>S106</b>	<b>AMOUNT/REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>TRIGGER</b>
A500 and A5020 access improvement contribution	£2,450, 0000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Payment of £250k on commencement of Phase 2 (Buildings 4 to 10).</li> <li>- On commencement, a payment per s.q, metre of plots of Phase 2 (Buildings 4 to 10) to a maximum cumulative value of £2.2M.</li> </ul>
<b>BNG</b> Details of offsite biodiversity measures including the submission of a habitat creation method statement and 30 year monitoring and management plan, and biodiversity metric	Submission of BNG measures, habitat creation method statement and 30 year monitoring and management plan, and biodiversity metric.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submit details for approval prior to commencement.</li> <li>- Delivery of habitat creation in the next appropriate season following commencement</li> </ul>

**AND subject to the following conditions;**

**FULL**

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Development in accordance with approved plans
3. Mix of employment uses (Uses Classes) and restriction on floorspace
4. Details of materials and finishes
5. Details of Hard Surfacing
6. Submission of details of landscaping scheme
7. Implementation of landscaping scheme
8. Submission of Landscape Management Plan
9. Details for provision of vertical standalone landscape feature alongside boundary with the West Coast Mainline

10. Details of Boundary treatments
11. Submission of Arboricultural Method Statement prior to commencement of development
12. Submission of a scheme for the protection of trees prior to commencement of development
13. Submission of a detailed service and foul and surface water drainage layout with regard to long term tree retention prior to the commencement of development
14. Submission of detailed design of outfalls to Basford Brook informed by the submitted illustrative proposals
15. Prior to the commencement of development, submission of a CEMP to include measures to safeguard the Mere Gutter and Basford Brook LWS throughout the construction phase and include details of the Ecological Clerk of works appointed to oversee its implementation.
16. Prior to commencement of development a detailed surface water drainage scheme to be submitted which includes a minimum three stage treatment for medium hazard surfaces and a minimum one treatment stage for low hazard surfaces in accordance with the submitted Sustainable Drainage Strategy Statement
17. Development to proceed in accordance with the submitted White Clawed Crayfish Mitigation Strategy prepared by TEP dated February 2024.
18. Submission and implementation of Amphibian Reasonable Avoidance Measures prior to the commencement of development to include staged vegetation clearance and measures to safeguard retained habitat during the construction process.
19. Reptile mitigation to be implemented in accordance paragraphs 7.66 – 7.68 of the submitted ES addendum dated February 2024.
20. Submission of proposals for ecological enhancement (bat and bird boxes etc.) prior to commencement.
21. Submission prior to commencement of amphibian friendly drainage systems and dropped kerbs to minimise risks to amphibians and other wildlife.
22. Safeguarding of nesting birds.
23. Entry into Natural England's District Level licencing scheme prior to commencement of works on site.
24. Submission of updated badger survey prior to commencement of development.
25. Detailed lighting scheme (bat friendly) to be submitted prior to commencement.
26. Submission and implementation of habitat creation method statement, and 30 year habitat management and monitoring strategy
27. Prior to commencement of development the detailed surface water drainage design and SuDS management plan shall be submitted and approved.
28. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment and mitigation measures detailed
29. Details of foul water drainage scheme
29. Provision of a ghost right turn lane on the existing spine road  
Implementation of scheme for the full signalisation of the David Whitby Way/A500 roundabout
30. No occupation of Unit 2 (Phase 1) until access is available from Network Rail access road as proposed under planning application 22/3158N.
31. Prior to the occupation of each unit, an individual Travel Plan shall be submitted for that unit
32. Submission of a comprehensive travel plan framework for the site prior to first occupation.  
Provision of Electric Vehicle infrastructure
33. Provision of Ultra Low Emission Boilers
34. Prior to commencement of development submission of Phase II ground investigation and risk assessment, and remediation strategy if necessary .

35. Contaminated land - Verification report
36. Contaminated land – soil testing
37. Measures to deal with unexpected contamination
38. Details of Levels
39. Public rights of way scheme of management
40. Programme of archaeological observation

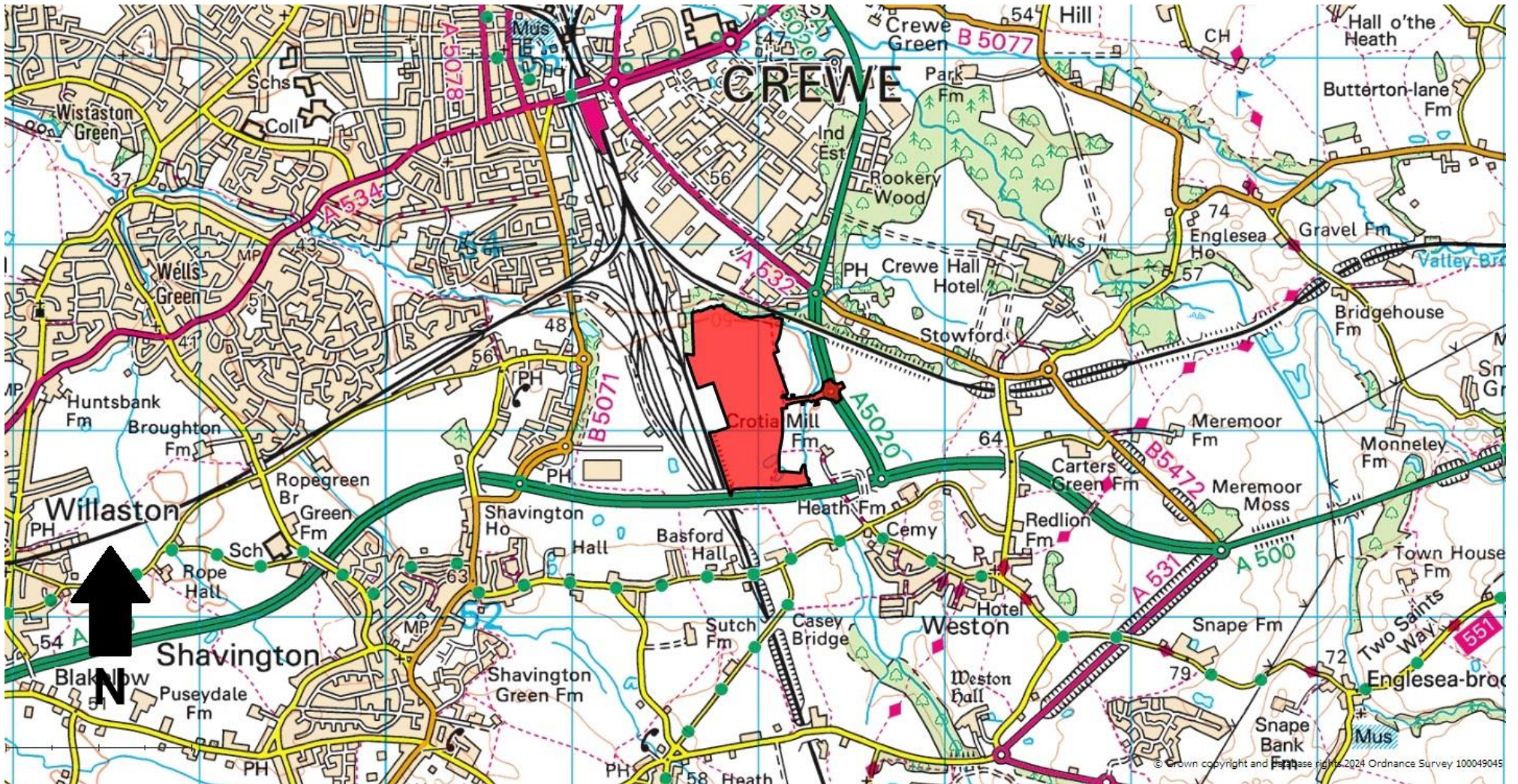
## OUTLINE

1. Outline Timescales
2. Outline Matters Reserved
3. Approved plans
4. Define mix of employment uses (Uses Classes) and restriction on floorspace – to include a minimum provision of 9,290 sqm of Class E(g)(i) office space
5. Phasing plan to be submitted with first reserved matters application
6. All reserved matters applications to comply with the Design code and regulating plan
7. Implementation of landscaping scheme
8. Submission of Landscape Management Plan
9. Details of Boundary treatments submitted with all reserved matters applications
10. Details of levels to be submitted with all reserved matters applications
11. Arboricultural Method Statement to be submitted with all reserved matters applications
12. If as part of any reserved matters application outfalls to Basford Brook are required, a detailed design of outfalls informed by the submitted illustrative proposals are to be submitted.
13. Prior to the commencement of any phase of development, a CEMP to be submitted including measures to safeguard the Mere Gutter and Basford Brook LWS throughout the construction phase to include details of the Ecological Clerk of works appointed to oversee its implementation.
14. The surface water drainage (SUDS) scheme for any reserved matters phase of development discharging to Basford Brook to include a minimum three stage treatment for medium hazard surfaces and a minimum one treatment stage for low hazard surfaces in accordance with the submitted Sustainable Drainage Strategy Statement.
15. Prior to commencement of development of any phase of development a detailed SUDS management plan is to be submitted to and agreed by the LPA. The agreed management plan to be implemented in full for the lifetime of the development.
16. Any in-channel works which are required to connect drainage scheme to Basford Brook a white clawed crayfish mitigation strategy shall be submitted in support of that reserved matters application.
17. Any reserved matters application to be supported by Amphibian Reasonable Avoidance Measures to include staged vegetation clearance and measures to safeguard retained habitat during the construction process. The agreed strategy to be implemented in full.
18. Reptile mitigation to be implemented in accordance paragraphs 7.66 – 7.68 of the ES addendum submitted in support of the outline application dated February 2024. .
19. Any reserved matters application to be supported by an updated barn owl survey and a mitigation strategy informed by the submitted Barn Owl Mitigation Strategy prepared by TEP dated July 2023.
20. Submission prior to commencement of any phase of amphibian friendly drainage systems and dropped kerbs to minimise risks to amphibians and other wildlife.



21. Submission of proposals for ecological enhancement (bat and bird boxes) for each phase.
22. Safeguarding of nesting birds.
23. Reserved matters application to provide a detailed design for the proposed reptile mitigation area as detailed in the outline application submissions, including fencing and access for maintenance.
24. Entry into Natural England's District Level licencing scheme prior to commencement of works on site.
25. Submission of updated badger survey in support of any future reserved matters application.
26. Detailed lighting scheme (bat friendly) to be submitted with any future reserved matters application.
27. Submission and implementation of habitat creation method statement, and 30 year habitat management and monitoring strategy to reflect the target habitat detailed in the submitted biodiversity Net Gain Report (TEP Version 2.0 dated May 2024) as relevant to the particular reserved matters application.
29. No development shall take place until a detailed drainage strategy/design plan for the site has been submitted to and approved
29. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment and mitigation measures detailed
30. Details of foul water drainage scheme
31. Prior to the occupation of each unit, an individual Travel Plan shall be submitted for that unit
32. Submission of a comprehensive travel plan framework for the site prior to first occupation.
33. Provision of Electric Vehicle infrastructure
34. Provision of Ultra Low Emission Boilers
35. Prior to commencement of development submission of Phase II ground investigation and risk assessment, and remediation strategy if necessary .
36. Contaminated land - Verification report
37. Contaminated land – soil testing
38. Measures to deal with unexpected contamination
39. Public rights of way scheme of management
40. Programme of archaeological observation

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 Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.



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