

Application No: 20/4532N

Location: WALNUT TREE FARM, RADWAY GREEN ROAD, BARTHOMLEY,  
CW2 5PQ

Proposal: Relocation of Cheshire Microlight Center from Arclid (Sandbach) to Walnut Tree Farm, Barthomley Extension of existing barn to store microlights and existing field currently used for agricultural purposes, converted for a grassed landing strip. Field to be retained for grazing.

Applicant: Mr Paul Abell

Expiry Date: 10-Feb-2021

## **SUMMARY**

The proposed development does not preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed development is inappropriate within the Green Belt and no very special circumstances have been identified. The proposed development is therefore unacceptable in principle and conflicts with CELPS Policy PG3, saved C&NLP Policy NE.1 and the NPPF.

Insufficient information has been provided in relation to noise and the impact upon residential amenity and an adjacent riding school cannot be determined. The proposed development is contrary to Policies BE1, RT16 and NE17 of the C&NLP and Policies EG2, SC1 and SE12 of the CELPS and the NPPF.

The site is in close proximity to the Midland Meres & Mosses – Phase 2 Ramsar, Oakhanger Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Black Firs & Cranberry Bog SSSI and Sandbach Flashes SSSI. The application could have potential significant effects on these designated sites, and no Habitat Regulations Assessment has been provided. The proposed development is contrary to Policy SE3 of the CELPS and Policies NE.6 and NE.7 of the C&NLP and the NPPF.

The development would encroach upon a PROW and insufficient information has been provided in relation to this issue. The proposed development is contrary to Policy RT.9 of the C&NLP.

A major hazard pipeline crosses the site and insufficient information has been provided in relation to this issue. The proposed development is contrary to Policy BE.21 of the C&NLP.

There are no issues in terms of the impact of the development upon built heritage, trees, highways and air quality. The development complies with the Development Plan in relation to these issues.

The benefits of the proposed development are noted. However, it is not considered that these benefits outweigh the harm identified and on this basis the application is recommended for refusal.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**REFUSE**

## **REASON FOR REFERRAL**

This application is referred to Southern Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Edgar for the following reasons;

- *Scant details of the number and type of aircraft being stored and used.*
- *Seasonal details of when flying with take place.*
- *Number of movements per day expected.*
- *Storage of fuel, parts, accessories and the provision for servicing.*
- Why has the existing site ceased operation? Was it due noise disturbance, frequency of flights, car traffic to and from the site?*
- *Is it reasonable to expect aircraft to do their landing and take-off so close to the M6 motorway?*
- *Noise impact over predominately rural area with many stables. Will it literally 'frighten the horses'?*

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site is a farm located to the western side of Radway Green Road. A short distance to the east of Radway Green Road is the M6.

The site lies within the Green Belt as defined by the Development Plan.

The site includes a working farm and fishery.

PROW Barthomley FP9 runs through the application site

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

The application seeks planning permission for the relocation of the Cheshire microlight centre from Arclid.

This will involve the creation of a grassed landing strip. The application form states that the field will be retained for grazing.

The development includes the extension of an existing barn to store microlights. This building would measure 25m in width and 35m in length. The building would have an eaves height of 4.2m and a ridge height of 6.4m. A small office (10m x 4.1m would be attached to this extension). There would be associated hardstanding provided as part of this extension.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

21/3779N - Prior approval of agricultural building - Prior Approval Not Required 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021

14/5318N - Agricultural lean-to building - Approved 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015

11/4467N - Retention of Silage Clamp Extension - Approved 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012

11/2540N - New agricultural building - Approved 26<sup>th</sup> August 2011

11/2538N - Lean-to extension of existing building - Approved 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011

11/0591N - The Erection of a 233m<sup>2</sup> General Purpose Agricultural Building within the Farm Yard at Walnut Tree Farm - Approved 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011

10/2205N - 90m<sup>2</sup> Extension to a General Purpose Agricultural Building - Approved 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2010

10/1457N - 450m sq. General Purpose Agricultural Building - Approved 18<sup>th</sup> May 2010

P99/0112 - Quad bike and horse riding track, chalet and car parking - Approved 27<sup>th</sup> April 2000

P98/0387 - Angling and irrigation pool with car parking - Approved 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1998

P92/0530 - Farm store (GDO determination) - Permitted Development 14<sup>th</sup> July 1992

7/18580 - Agricultural fertiliser plant (retrospective) - Approved 26<sup>th</sup> July 1990

## **POLICIES**

### **Local Plan Policy**

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

MP1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 – Sustainable Development Principles

PG3 - Green Belt

PG6 - Open Countryside

SE1 - Design

SE3 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE4 - The Landscape

SE5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE6 - Green Infrastructure

SE7 - The Historic Environment

SE12 - Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability  
SE13 - Flood Risk and Water Management  
CO1 - Sustainable Travel and Transport  
CO2 - Enabling Business Growth through Transport Infrastructure  
SC1 - Leisure and Recreation  
SC3 - Health and Well-Being  
EG1 - Economic Prosperity  
EG2 - Rural Economy  
EG4 - Tourism

### **Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan**

- 1.
2. NE1 - Development in the Green Belt
3. NE5 - Nature Conservation and Habitats
4. NE9 - Protected Species
5. NE13 - Rural Diversification
6. NE17 - Pollution Control
7. NE20 - Flood Prevention
8. BE1 - Amenity
9. BE3 - Access and Parking
10. BE4 - Drainage, Utilities and Resources
11. BE6 - Development on Potentially Contaminated Land
12. BE7 Conservation Areas
13. BE21 - Hazardous Installations
14. TRAN3 - Pedestrians
15. TRAN5 - Provision for Cyclists
16. RT16 - Noise Generating Sports

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

There is no Neighbourhood Plan in Barthomley.

### **Other Material Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework  
Department for Transport (2015) General Aviation Strategy.

### **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

**Environment Agency:** The LPA should refer to the Environment Agency standing advice.

**Natural England:** As submitted, the application could have potential significant effects on these designated sites. Natural England requires further information in order to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation.

The following information is required:

- A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Without this information, Natural England may need to object to the proposal.

**CEC Flood Risk Manager:** No objection subject to the imposition of a planning condition regarding surface water drainage.

**CEC PROW:** It would appear from inspection of the definitive map that Public Footpath 9 Barthomley will be obstructed by the proposed development. As there is currently no proposal for the path to be suitably diverted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) by the applicant the PROW Team wish to object to the planning application. The primary duty of the Cheshire East Borough Council is to keep public rights of way open and available for members of the public. The obstruction of a public right of way is also a criminal offence, so without a suitable proposal to divert this footpath we have no option but to object to the development.

**Cadent Gas:** General Advice provided.

**National Grid:** The National Grid has reviewed this application and has issued a Holding Objection. The National Grid would like to know the following;

- How would the field be converted into a landing strip?
- Mitigation to protect the gas pipeline would be required as it runs through the middle of the proposed landing strip

**Network Rail:** No comments received.

**Manchester Airport:** No comments received.

**Civil Aviation Authority:** No comments received.

**Health and Safety Executive:** HSE's advice is that there are sufficient reasons on safety grounds, for advising against the granting of planning permission in this case.

**Highways England:** No objection.

**Strategic Highways Manager:** The application is acceptable in regard to highways and no objections are raised.

**Environmental Health:** Insufficient information provided relating to noise. Recommend refusal.

## **VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL**

**Barthomley Parish Council:** The Parish Council together with the Barthomley Action Group object to the application. The objection concludes as follows;

- Following a detailed review of the documentation submitted, it is considered that this poorly conceived application has completely disregarded the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Development Plan for Cheshire East. This is demonstrated

by the lack of detailed information submitted with the application, and in particular the lack of suitable survey work or mitigation proposed, and the disregard for the provisions of the national and local planning policies of reference to this proposal. Approval of the scheme would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of Barthomley and would not support the aims of local or national policy.

- There are also considerable flaws in how the application has been submitted and a significant amount of information is missing, making a thorough assessment of the proposal and its impacts difficult. In view of this, the Parish Council trust that the application will be refused. There are also a number of material considerations, including effect on neighbouring properties and noise, that warrant the outright refusal of the application.

- Should additional information be submitted, or a revised scheme be prepared, the Parish Council ask that they and other third parties be given the opportunity to review and comment as necessary.

- In addition, should the Council be minded to approve the proposal based on the information provided in support of the application, the Parish Council is advised to seek legal recourse.

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

Letters of objection have been received from 46 households raising the following points;

- Possibility of planning creep - light planes next
- No details of air corridors and heights that the planes will fly
- Traffic congestion in the area
- The field should be retained for the production of food
- Lack of detail contained within the application
- There is no benefit for Barthomley
- Storage of flammable liquid at the site
- There is already a quad bike centre at the site causing problems
- Danger caused by people learning to fly
- Proximity to riding stables
- Noise will affect the Conservation Area
- Impact of the development on footpaths FP9 and FP10. Diversions will need to be put in place
- Contrary to Green Belt policies
- The letters of support are coming from a wider area and the negative impact upon the residents in the area outweighs the benefits
- Obstruct PROW network
- The development and any lighting will be an eyesore
- Intrusive to local residents and businesses
- Increased pollution
- Risk of drivers landing on the M6 or local road network
- Disproportionate additions within the Green Belt
- Commercial development will impact upon the peace and quiet of the village and the Barthomley Conservation Area
- Microlights fly low and are intrusive in terms of noise and privacy
- Disruption to local wildlife
- Disruption to homes

- Distress to horses
- Access to this site will be difficult with a turning trailer and microlight
- Disturbance of church services at Barthomley
- The site is within the Green Belt
- The site is adjacent to a SSSI
- Concerns that activity will take place 6 days a week with no limit on operating hours
- Concern that microlights will distract motorists
- Impact upon a PROW
- Overhead powerlines in the area
- The airfield is over a main gas pipe
- Proximity to a railway line
- Proximity to Radway Green

Letters of support have been received from 45 households raising the following points;

- A microlight field consists of a short grass strip (around 600m in length) which is created using a tractor and mower
- Lack of hangarage within Cheshire
- As part of the application for the Arclid site in 1993 the Congleton Borough Environmental Health Officer accepted that there would be no harm in terms of noise
- An agreed pattern and variable departure routes could be established
- The NPPF advises that recreational facilities should be replaced
- There were footpaths in close proximity to the Arclid site
- For 3 decades the Arclid site has operated in close proximity to residential properties, livestock and equestrian activity
- The Arclid site has been lost due to an extension to the quarry
- There is a shortage of facilities within Cheshire
- Many people who learned to fly at Arclid have gone on to have successful careers in aviation
- The NPPF supports farm diversification
- The Arclid facility provides a location where people are able to learn to fly
- The site at Arclid provides an important facility for members of the Cheshire Flying Club
- The Arclid site provided a sense of community
- This is an ideal location for a small airstrip
- Across the country there are many airstrips which coexist harmoniously with rural dwellers and livestock
- Modern microlights are remarkably quiet and much less intrusive than motorsport counterparts
- The environmental impact is low
- This development would represent a welcome local facility in Cheshire
- The closure of the Arclid site has been a great loss to the Cheshire microlight community. People are now having to travel miles to participate in this sport
- Flying a microlight is an affordable hobby
- The proposal will provide a facility for young up and coming pilots
- The microlights are not noisy and require nice weather to fly
- Having lived near the Arclid site it has been sad to see the site close
- Microlights are a pleasure to watch
- People who use the microlights try to cause as little disruption as possible



- Local residents should not be worried about noise or inconvenience
- The microlights will fly all over Cheshire and beyond
- The noise from the M6 was more of a problem for the residents near to the Arclid site
- Noise from the motorway would be greater at this site
- Will offer a facility for people training for their drivers licence
- The Government acknowledges the benefits to the local community from aviation
- Boost to the local economy
- Training will take place by experienced professionals
- The sport is highly regulated
- Microlights can only operate in daylight hours and suitable weather conditions (low wind, no rain, no fog). This will limit the use of the site especially during winter months.

Letters of general observation has been received from 1 local business and 1 household raising the following points;

- No objection to the development
- Further information is required in terms of flight frequency and direction
- Concern over the impact upon horses which maybe startled
- The site is within the Green Belt
- Proximity to the M6
- Concern that noise will disturb local residents and wildlife

An objection has been received from Cllr Addison which raises the following points;

- This site will operate for 6 days per week and the main concern relates to the impact that noise and sight of aircraft will have on local animals
- There are several farms in the area, many of which house a large amount of livestock (sheep, cows and horses).
- Horses are very likely to be spooked and this can cause harm to themselves and/or their owner
- The risk to livestock outweighs any benefits to the local economy
- The development may impact upon local equine businesses
- A large amount of construction work is due to take place in the area including the duelling of the A500 which will increase traffic in the area
- Concern over increased vehicular movements through the narrow lanes in the village
- Noise pollution and loss of privacy to local residents
- Barthomley is not a suitable location for this type of development
- If approved there should be a restriction on the number of microlights which can be stored on the site and an estimation of the number of planes which fly each week and during what times.

## OFFICER APPRAISAL

### Principle of Development

The application site is in the Green Belt.

NPPF Paragraph 149 specifies that the provision of *'appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it'*

The purposes of Green Belt are identified within paragraph 138 of the NPPF and are as follows;

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

CELPS Policy PG3 3 ii of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 (July 2017) replicates the Framework's approach to development within the Green Belt.

C&NLP Policy NE.1 sets out certain exceptions of development which are acceptable within the Green Belt, which includes 'facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation'. However, the relevant assessment within NE.1 appears to set a higher bar than that within PG3 and the NPPF in that the development must be 'essential' rather than 'appropriate'.

The second part of PG3 3ii requires that development *"preserves the openness of the Green Belt and not to conflict with the purposes of including land within it"*. Similar wording is included with Policy NE.1.

The site of the proposed airstrip, building and hardstanding is undeveloped and is free from built development.

The airstrip would be grass and it is understood that this would be created by a tractor and mower. Although there would be some minor visual change in the appearance of the field it would still appear as an undeveloped field with a mown strip in the centre. There would be a very minor change in the appearance of this field and it is considered that this would preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposed building and the laying of the hardstanding would result in the loss of openness, as there would be built development in a location which is currently free from development. On this basis the proposed development would fail to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and conflicts with the purposes of including land within it.

As a result the proposed development does not fall within the exceptions set out in paragraph 149 of the NPPF. In accordance with paragraph 147 of the NPPF inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

### Very Special Circumstances

No Supporting Statement has been provided in support of this application to demonstrate very special circumstances have been identified by the applicant. The letters of support are noted but it is not considered that this represents very special circumstances.

Bearing all the above in mind, the application does not preserve the openness of the Green Belt and on this basis the development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. No very special circumstances have been identified and planning permission should not be granted. The proposed development is therefore unacceptable in principle and conflicts with the NPPF, CELPS Policy PG3 and saved C&NLP Policy NE.1.

### **Design**

Policy SD1 states that wherever possible development should 'provide a locally distinct, high quality, sustainable, well designed and durable environment'.

The proposed building is designed to appear as an agricultural shed and in purely design terms there is no objection to this proposed development.

### **Built Heritage**

Concern has been raised about the impact of the development upon the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings at Barthomley. It is also noted that there are closer listed buildings at Mill Farm (Grade II), Cherry Tree Farm (Grade II) and Churchfields Farm (Grade II\*).

The noise of microlights flying over these heritage assets would be limited to a short period of time as they fly past overhead. The heritage assets will also be subject to noise from the M6 and the A500. As a result, it is not considered that the development will impact upon these heritage assets.

### **Trees and Hedgerows**

Policy SE5 of the CELPS states that development which would result in the loss of hedgerows that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, or landscape character of an area will not be permitted except where there are overriding reasons for allowing the development and there are no suitable alternatives.

The field which would contain the airstrip is linear in its form and is enclosed with by traditional hedgerows and trees. The access between the proposed building and the airstrip would utilise an existing field gate.

No trees would be removed as part of this application and the development is of a sufficient distance to the surrounding trees. As such there would be no impact upon the surrounding trees.

This proposed development is contrary to Policy SE5 of the CELPS.

## **Amenity**

A large number of the objections refer to the impact of the development upon residential amenity in terms of noise and privacy.

Policy BE.1 (Amenity) of the C&NLP states that new development will be permitted provided that it does not prejudice the amenity of the occupiers of the adjacent property by reason of overlooking and noise and disturbance.

Policy NE.17 (Pollution Control) states that development proposals will not be permitted that would be likely to lead to any permanent and unacceptable increase in noise levels in the surrounding area.

Policy RT.16 (Noise Generating Sports) states that development proposals for noisy an intrusive recreational activities should be located on sites where the impact on the amenity of the adjacent area and nearby residents can be minimised and the use will not conflict with the quiet enjoyment of other recreational users of the countryside.

Policy SE12 of the CELPS (Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability) states that the Council will seek to ensure all development is located and designed so as not to result in a harmful impact on air quality or noise which would detrimentally affect amenity or cause harm.

## Noise

The issue of noise is raised within a number of letters of objection. The British Microlight Aircraft Association (BMAA) Code of Best Practice identifies that considerate pilots will do all they can to minimise the effect that the noise of the aircraft will have on the residents in the local area. It then states that the;

*'basic layout of the circuit pattern should seek to avoid flying close to houses whilst the aircraft is using high power settings. This can be achieved by routing the climb path away from houses although this should not be done in a way that can compromise the safety of the aircraft in the event of a power failure'*

In this case it is noted that there are residential properties in close proximity to the application site. The site is also in close proximity to the M6.

In this case the noise from flying microlights is controlled via the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and any noise would be limited to a very small point in time when the microlight passes over a certain point on the ground.

The main impact in terms of noise is from the take-off and landing of the microlights. The impact will be greater for take-off when the power used is at its greatest.

In this case no Noise Assessment has been submitted as part of this application. Therefore insufficient information has been submitted with the application, in order to adequately assess the impact of the proposed development having regard to noise from the proposed use of the site.

In the absence of this information, it has not been possible to demonstrate that the proposal would comply with policies BE1, RT16 and NE17 of the C&NLP and Policy SE12 of the CELPS.

#### Noise Impact upon livestock

Concerns have been raised over the impact of the development upon livestock, and specifically in relation to horses and a nearby riding school to the west of the site. The concern relates to horses being spooked and the potential harm to riders and the animal.

It is accepted that the issue could result in harm to an existing business within the countryside and this issue was considered by an Inspector when he dismissed the appeal at Northern Dairies, Groby Road, Crewe

Insufficient information has been provided in relation to noise, the proposed flight paths and which direction the microlights will take-off/land.

As a result there would be some conflict with Policy EG2 (Rural Economy) which states that the Council will '*encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses*' and Policy SC1 (Leisure and Recreation) of the CELPS which states that the Council will seek '*to protect and enhance existing leisure and recreation facilities*'.

There would also be conflict with Policy BE.1 which states that development should not result in an adverse effect on other use of land.

#### Privacy

A number of the letters of objection have raised the issue of privacy caused by microlights flying over dwellings within the vicinity of the site.

This issue was considered as part of an appeal decision at Out Rawcliffe, Wyre Borough Council. As part of this appeal decision the Inspector found that;

*'As aircraft landing and taking off pass relatively close at low altitude to dwellings near the runway, I can well understand the concern expressed by local residents about loss of privacy. At these critical times, however, I would expect the pilot to be concentrating rather more on aircraft control than on what people might be doing in their homes. Even when a twin seat aircraft were in use the likelihood is that is that, given the appellant operates a microlight flying school, the second seat would be operated by an instructor. Again, I would expect there to be little time or inclination to observe domestic activities on the ground. Aircraft flying in circuit or in entry/exit lanes would be at greater altitude giving rise, in my opinion, to negligible loss of privacy. Overall, I doubt whether in reality there us any significant loss of privacy'*

The same conclusions would apply to this application and in terms of privacy the development would comply with Policy BE.1 of the C&NLP.

### Air Quality

Concern has been raised in terms of increased air pollution. In this case the site is not in close proximity to any Air Quality Management Area and the Councils Environmental Health Officer has raised no objection to the application in terms of the impact upon air quality.

### **Ecology**

#### Designated Sites

The site is in close proximity to the Midland Meres & Mosses – Phase 2 Ramsar, Oakhanger Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Black Firs & Cranberry Bog SSSI and Sandbach Flashes SSSI.

Natural England have stated that the application could have potential significant effects on these designated sites, and that they require further information in order to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation.

Without a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) the proposed development is contrary to Policy SE3 of the CELPS and Policies NE.6 and NE.7 of the C&NLP.

The disturbance of wildlife and the impact upon protected species has been raised within a number of the letters of objection. This issue has been considered by the Councils Ecologist and he has confirmed that he does not raise any objection in terms of the impact upon wildlife and protected species.

### **Highways**

The existing farm access taken from Radway Green Road is to be used for this application. The highways officer has stated that this is a suitable standard of access that can accommodate the light traffic that will be accessing the site.

There is long site access road that leads to the farm that has 26 car parking spaces. It is not considered that traffic associated with the flying of Microlights will be intensive and that it would impact upon the operation of the public highway.

Local residents have raised concerns that the development would cause a distraction to vehicles travelling on the M6. In this case the Highways Agency have been consulted and raised no objection in relation to this issue.

The development complies with Policies CO2 of the CELPS, Policy BE.3 of the C&NLP.

### **Public Rights of Way (PROW)**

There are a number of PROW within the vicinity of the site as follows;

- Barthomley FP10 runs along the access to the farm heading north
- Barthomley FP9 runs east-west just to the south of the existing farm complex. The siting of the proposed building will encroach across the line of FP9
- Barthomley FP8 is located to the west of the site and is outside the red edge of the application site

Policy RT.9 of the C&NLP states that *'permission will not be granted for any development which would prejudice public access onto or through the network unless specific arrangements are made for suitable alternative routes'*.

The PROW Officer notes that there is currently no proposal for the path to be suitably diverted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) by the applicant that they object to the planning application.

As a result the proposed development is contrary to Policy RT.9 of the C&NLP.

### **Hazardous Installations**

The application site is impacted by two hazardous installations; the munitions factory at Radway Green and a gas pipeline which runs through the landing strip.

Major hazard sites/pipelines are subject to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, which specifically includes provisions for the protection of the public. However, the possibility remains that a major accident could occur at an installation and that this could have serious consequences for people in the vicinity. Although the likelihood of a major accident occurring is small, it is felt prudent for planning purposes to consider the risks to people in the vicinity of the hazardous installation.

In this case the Council has consulted with the Health and Safety Executive who have advised that the assessment indicates that the risk of harm to people at the proposed development site is such that HSE's advice is that there are sufficient reasons on safety grounds, for advising against the granting of planning permission in this case.

The National Grid who operate the gas pipeline running through the site have also been consulted and issued a holding objection as they would like to know how the field will be converted to a landing strip together with mitigation to protect the gas pipeline.

The proposed development is contrary to Policy BE.21 of the C&NLP.

## **Benefits**

There is support for this application from a large number of residents and it is accepted that the site will offer a leisure/sporting facility for flyers of microlights. The NPPF states at paragraph 106 that Local Planning Authorities should '*recognise the importance of maintaining a national network of general aviation airfields, and their need to adapt and change over time – taking into account their economic value in serving business, leisure, training and emergency service needs, and the Government's General Aviation Strategy*'. This weighs in favour of the application.

The provision of a facility for local microlight enthusiasts is also a benefit of the proposed development. There is support for recreation and sport within the NPPF (paragraph 98) and policies SC1, SD1 and SC3 of the CELPS. A number of the letters of support also reference the former facility at Arclid which has now closed. However, in this case no assessment of need has been provided and this makes it difficult to conclude on the amount of weight which can be attributed in this case.

Finally, there will be benefits to the local economy as part of this development but again no details are provided within the application which makes it difficult to conclude on the amount of weight which can be attributed in this case.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION**

The proposed development does not preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed development is inappropriate within the Green Belt and no very special circumstances have been identified. The proposed development is therefore unacceptable in principle and conflicts with CELPS Policy PG3, saved C&NLP Policy NE.1 and the NPPF.

Insufficient information has been provided in relation to noise and the impact upon residential amenity and an adjacent riding school cannot be determined. The proposed development is contrary to Policies BE1, RT16 and NE17 of the C&NLP and Policies EG2, SC1 and SE12 of the CELPS and the NPPF.

The site is in close proximity to the Midland Meres & Mosses – Phase 2 Ramsar, Oakhanger Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Black Firs & Cranberry Bog SSSI and Sandbach Flashes SSSI. The application could have potential significant effects on these designated sites, and no Habitat Regulations Assessment has been provided. The proposed development is contrary to Policy SE3 of the CELPS and Policies NE.6 and NE.7 of the C&NLP and the NPPF.



The development would encroach upon a PROW and insufficient information has been provided in relation to this issue. The proposed development is contrary to Policy RT.9 of the C&NLP.

A major hazard pipeline crosses the site and insufficient information has been provided in relation to this issue. The proposed development is contrary to Policy BE.21 of the C&NLP.

There are no issues in terms of the impact of the development upon built heritage, trees, highways and air quality. The development complies with the Development Plan in relation to these issues.

The benefits of the proposed development are noted. However it is not considered that these benefits outweigh the harm identified and on this basis the application is recommended for refusal.

**REFUSE for the following reasons;**

**1. The proposed development is located within the Green Belt and in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposed development does not preserve the openness of the Green Belt. No very special circumstances have been identified and planning permission should not be granted. The proposed development is therefore unacceptable in principle and conflicts with Cheshire East Local Plan Policy PG3, saved Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan Policy NE.1 and the NPPF.**

**2. No Noise Assessment, proposed flight paths or details of the direction of take-off/landing has been submitted as part of this application. The Local Planning Authority consider that insufficient information has been provided in order to adequately assess the noise impact of the proposed development upon residential amenity and a nearby riding school. In the absence of this information, it has not been possible to demonstrate that the proposal would comply with policies BE1, RT16 and NE17 of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan and Policies EG2, SC1 and SE12 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy and the NPPF**

**3. The site is in close proximity to the Midland Meres & Mosses – Phase 2 Ramsar, Oakhanger Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Black Firs & Cranberry Bog SSSI and Sandbach Flashes SSSI. The application could have potential significant effects on these designated sites, and no Habitat Regulations Assessment has been provided. It is not possible to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation. Therefore, the proposed development is contrary to Policy SE3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, Policies NE.6 and NE.7 of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan and the NPPF.**

**4. The proposed building would be sited on the route of Public Right of Way Barthomley FP9. No details have been provided to demonstrate how the PROW could be diverted. The development would prejudice public access onto the PROW and the proposed development is contrary to Policy RT.9 of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan.**

**5. A major hazard pipeline crosses the site, there is a risk of harm to people at the proposed development site and there are sufficient reasons on safety grounds, for advising against the granting of planning permission in this case. No information has been provided to show how the field will be converted to a landing strip together with mitigation to protect the gas pipeline. The proposed development is contrary to Policy BE.21 of the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan**

**In order to give proper effect to the Committee`s intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Development Management in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice.**

