

Application No: 15/4865M

Location: LAND AT ADLINGTON BUSINESS PARK, ADLINGTON, CHESHIRE

Proposal: Full planning permission for erection of logistics warehouse (6728sqm Use Class B8) and ancillary trade sales, with associated access, parking, ecological wildlife corridor, landscaping and external works

Applicant: Euroscape Securities & Arighi Bianchi Ltd, c/o Euroscape Developments Ltd

Expiry Date: 25-Feb-2016

SUMMARY

The proposal provides a new consolidated storage facility for a long established local business and local employer which is an identifiable benefit of the proposal. The proposed scheme provides a building that reflects the character of existing buildings within the wider Business Park. It is also considered that the development would not have a detrimental impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring properties, traffic generation and highway safety, trees and flood risk subject to conditions.

The proposal would have an adverse impact upon protected species, but it is an impact that can be appropriately mitigated with conditions. However, the tests of the habitats directive would still not be met.

Balanced against any benefits of the scheme, the proposal would be an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, which encroaches into the countryside and reduces openness. Whilst it is accepted that the emerging local plan strategy proposes to remove the site from the Green Belt to reallocate it to employment land, the site currently remains as Green Belt, and substantial weight has to be afforded to any harm to the Green Belt resulting from the proposed development.

The requirement for a 3 metre high acoustic fence to protect the living conditions of neighbouring properties on the edge of the proposed service yards forms a barrier within the site and makes 17 parking spaces inaccessible. The positioning of the barrier needs to be known to be able to make a fully informed assessment of the impact on the rural character of the area to the south and east of the site. At present there is insufficient information available to make this assessment, including an absence of landscaping areas. Added to this the warehouse will result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed buildings. Having regard to weight to be afforded to the harm to the Green Belt as a matter of public interest, the uncertainty about the impact upon the character of the area, the impact upon the setting of the listed building, and the fact that the main benefit from this proposal could potentially be secured on an alternative site already allocated for employment uses, the public benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the identified harm.

Accordingly the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission for erection of a logistics warehouse with ancillary trade sales, with associated access, parking, ecological wildlife corridor, landscaping and external works.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site covers an area of approximately 2.9 hectares, which is bounded to the north and west by commercial properties on Adlington Business Park to the south by commercial and residential properties and to the east by a single dwellings and the railway line.

The site itself is an open greenfield site with an earth bund along its western boundary, and varying degrees of vegetation along the other boundaries. The majority of the site is located within the Green Belt as identified in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan. However, the western section of the site is safeguarded under policy T7 of the Local Plan for the Poynton Relief Road (the approved route for which now takes an alternative route to that proposed in the 2004 local plan). The very westernmost point of the access falls within an Existing Employment Area and the proposed access road (between the entrance to the site and the safeguarded land) is allocated as a Proposed Employment Area in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

RELEVANT HISTORY

99/1978P - OFFICES/INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSING (B1,B2 & B8) AND OPEN SPACE (OUTLINE) - Approved 29.11.1999

(Current application site formed the open space element of the permission)

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance are paragraphs:

14. Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

18-22. Building a strong, competitive economy

56-68. Requiring good design

79-90. Green Belts

126-135. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Development Plan

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan Policy

NE11 (Nature conservation interests)
BE1 (Design principles for new developments)
BE16 (Setting of Listed Buildings)
GC1 (Green Belt)
E1 (Existing Employment Areas)
T3 (Improving conditions for pedestrians)
T5 (Provision for cyclists)
T7 (Safeguarded land for proposed roads)
IMP1 (Provision for infrastructure)
IMP2 (Need for transport measures)
DC1 (High quality design for new build)
DC2 (Design quality for extensions and alterations)
DC3 (Protection of the amenities of nearby residential properties)
DC5 (Natural surveillance)
DC6 (Safe and convenient access for vehicles, special needs groups and pedestrians)
DC8 (Requirements to provide and maintain landscape schemes for new development)
DC9 (Tree protection)
DC13 (Noise)
DC63 (Contaminated land)

Neighbourhood Plan

Adlington Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 7 stage reached (Neighbourhood Area designated)

Other Material Considerations

Relevant legislation also includes the EC Habitats Directive and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

MP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
PG1 Overall Development Strategy
PG2 Settlement hierarchy
PG6 Spatial Distribution of Development
SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD2 Sustainable Development Principles
IN1 Infrastructure
IN2 Developer contributions
EG1 Economic Prosperity
EG3 Existing and allocated employment sites
EG5 Promoting a town centre first approach to retail and commerce
SC1 Leisure and Recreation
SC2 Outdoor sports facilities
SC3 Health and Well-being

SC4 Residential Mix
SE1 Design
SE2 Efficient use of land
SE3 Biodiversity and geodiversity
SE4 The Landscape
SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
SE6 Green Infrastructure
SE9 Energy Efficient Development
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
CO4 Travel plans and transport assessments

Strategic Site CS60 – Adlington Business Park Extension, Poynton

No substantial modifications are proposed within the recently published *Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications to the Local Plan Strategy – Proposed Changes (March 2016 Version) February 2017*

CONSULTATIONS

United Utilities – No objections subject to condition relating to drainage

Historic England – No comments to make

Network Rail – No objections subject to provisions to safeguard railway line

Environment Agency – No objections subject to conditions relating to contaminated land

Flood Risk Manager - No objections subject to conditions relating to drainage

Public Rights of Way – Further details required on how access is to be improved and what provision is made for users of the public bridleway.

Environmental Health (Noise) – No objections subject to conditions

Head of Strategic Infrastructure – No objections

Adlington Parish Council – Adlington Parish Council objects on the following grounds:

- Development in the Green Belt
- Out of character with nearby properties
- Fire risk due to the nature of the materials to be stored within the building
- Impact upon the amenity of nearby residential.

REPRESENTATIONS

Neighbour notification letters were sent to all adjoining occupants, a site notice erected and a press advert was placed in the Stockport Express.

8 letters of representation have been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Inaccurate / misleading application
- Noise nuisance from vehicle movements (24hr shift operation)
- Impact of lighting on living conditions
- Pollution impact from service yard
- Use out of character with existing office and residential uses
- Out of scale with nearest neighbours
- Impact on setting of listed building
- Highway safety
- Contrary to Green Belt policy
- Have other brownfield sites been considered?
- Loss of light / overshadowing
- Bridleway used as cut through by industrial estate workers
- Impact upon wildlife
- Security threat from people using bridleway
- Landscaped bund currently protects residents from industrial estate
- Allocation in emerging local plan should not be given any weight in determination of this application

1 letter making general comments has been received:

- Adjacent transport and haulage company is situated at end of main access road and their vehicles have to reverse down this road.

APPRAISAL

The key issues are:

- Whether the proposal is acceptable in the Green Belt
- Impact upon nature conservation interests
- Impact upon character of the area and setting of listed building
- Amenity of neighbouring property
- Highway safety

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

GREEN BELT

The applicant has stated that the proposed development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt by virtue of it amounting to limited infilling in a village, in accordance with paragraph 89 of the Framework.

The Framework does not provide a definition for what constitutes limited infilling in villages, but the local plan glossary does define infilling as “the infilling of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage (a small gap is one which could be filled by one or two houses)”. The scale of the proposed building is substantially above what would be expected for one or two dwellings. In addition the site has an area of 2.9 hectares and does not fill a gap in an otherwise built up

frontage being located to the rear of existing industrial properties and in front of dwellings. Consequently, it is not considered that the site can reasonably be identified as a small or limited gap.

The proposal does not meet any of the other criteria listed as exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt stated under paragraph 89 of the Framework or policy GC1 of the local plan. The proposal is therefore an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt. Due to scale of the development, there will also be a significant reduction in openness arising from the proposal and encroachment into an undeveloped area.

Paragraph 87 of the Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 88 maintains that local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.

The applicant puts forward the following considerations in favour of the development:

- Logical expansion of Adlington Business Park;
- Council considers “exceptional circumstances” exist to take site out of Green Belt as part of new local plan;
- Assist a long established local business in their modernisation of the business;
- Approval of Poynton Relief Road route away from the application site means no need for land within application site to be safeguarded;
- Development of the site for the Arighi Bianchi warehouse is needed now and is not able to wait for local plan to be adopted
- Quantitative need for sustainable economic development
- The development will support approximately 40 jobs - the majority of which are already employed in existing facilities in Macclesfield
- Alternative sites sought over past 11 years (explained further below);
- Existing town centre sites freed up for residential use

Very special circumstances

It is accepted that the emerging Local Plan does seek to take the application site out of the Green Belt and allocate it for employment use. The local plan strategy is now at an advanced stage, and in accordance with paragraph 216 of the Framework, the more advanced the preparation, the greater weight that it may be given. However, until the Local Plan is adopted the site remains very firmly within the Green Belt, and as noted above substantial weight has to be afforded to the identified harm to the Green Belt. The emerging Local Plan allocation alone is not considered to be sufficient to outweigh the Green Belt harm in this case.

The other factors identified as part of the considerations in favour of the development rely heavily on the lack of availability of alternative sites.

As a prominent and long established local business in Macclesfield the applicant explains in their submission that working over several sites is inefficient and costly for them and Macclesfield town centre is very congested at peak times. Due to travel times the location of new premises has to be within 5 miles of the existing buildings (in Macclesfield), and if it had to be outside of Macclesfield, it should be closer to Manchester as most journeys are in this direction. A building of 70,000 square feet is required to accommodate all current uses apart from the retail function that will remain in its prominent position on Buxton Road in

Macclesfield. The applicants have been seeking either a site or an existing building, and note that moving out of area is a last resort as staff are locally based.

The following sites have been identified and dismissed for the reasons stated:

Tytherington Business Park, Macclesfield

Remaining land allocated for residential use with construction underway.

Lyme Green Retail & Business Park, Macclesfield

Occupation is high and there are no units available to purchase or rent that extend to over 5,000 square feet.

Hurdsfield Industrial Estate, Macclesfield

There are no units available to purchase or rent on the estate. Indeed Arighi Bianchi has had to take short term accommodation on a leasehold basis for part of their operation. This is not an acceptable long term option as it only extends to 18,000 square feet.

Stanley Green Industrial Estate, Handforth

The estate had some available land that could have potentially been used but this has now been granted planning permission for a retail park and construction is well underway.

Parkgate Industrial Estate, Knutsford

Outside the area which the company can move to without losing some of their workforce.

Adlington Park, London Road, Adlington

The site is fully developed and there are no options available other than the application site.

Poynton Industrial Estate

Fully developed and does not offer any opportunities.

Rupert Park, Poynton

It is fully let and there is no scope to build a unit to suit the needs of the company.

South Macclesfield Development Area

The site does not benefit from access and requires investment in infrastructure before it can be considered fully available for development. It is also not clear what nature this development will take.

Land off Turf Lane, Lyme Green

Granted change of use for residential development and will not be available for commercial use.

Former Rieter Scragg site, Langley

Granted planning permission for redevelopment to residential use and will not be able to provide employment land in the future.

Clarence Mill and Adelphi Mill, Bollington

Not suitable for proposed use and no scope to accommodate such a use.

Bailey Business Park, Bollington

At present two small units are available but not big enough for proposed use.

WH2, Charter Way, Hurdsfield Industrial Estate

Premises now withdrawn from the market as Astrazeneca are re-using it for their own purposes and as such is not an option.

Other sites

Arighi Bianchi has also extended their search further afield which is far from ideal in terms of the retention of existing staff but they have also looked at:

Chain and Gate, Eaton – Could not agree terms on repairing liability

Congleton Business Park, Congleton – Couldn't agree to landlord's high rental demands

Radnor Park, Congleton - poor configuration

There are others in addition to these in Holmes Chapel and Knutsford which have not proved suitable for differing reasons but mainly as it is too far away from their existing operations.

Clearly, substantial efforts have been made in the site search process and many sites are unavailable for a variety of reasons. However, Stanley Green Industrial Estate, Handforth was dismissed as *"The estate had some available land that could have potentially been used but this has now been granted planning permission for a retail park and construction is well underway."*

This is not the case; there is available land that does not have planning permission for alternative uses on two sites on opposite sides of Earl Road, Handforth. One, where planning permission was refused last year for the erection of retail units on employment land and the other where the Council is currently considering an application for a substantial retail development on employment land. These sites therefore do present possible alternative locations for the current proposal, and are allocated as employment land.

The availability of these sites undermines the considerations in favour of the development, as the same benefits arising from the proposal could potentially be achieved through the development of a non Green Belt site. Therefore, the very special circumstances required to outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt are not considered to exist. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy GC1 of the local plan and paragraph 89 of the Framework.

CHARACTER & APPEARANCE

The local area is characterised by two quite distinct areas. To the north and west of the site lie substantial commercial buildings within the Adlington Business Park, and to the south and east lie the converted barns, listed buildings, cottages and narrow lanes typical of a rural area. The rural area to the south and east is however punctuated to some degree by the railway line and more commercial buildings further to the south.

The utilitarian design of the building is certainly in keeping with the wider business park, however, it is separated from that commercial area by an existing landscaped bund, which is presumably a legacy of earlier developments on the business park. Whether or not it was the original intention of the bund, it does currently serve to minimise the impact of the business park upon the areas to the south / east where the residential properties are located, both visually and acoustically. The bund is shown to be outside of the application site, but within

the ownership of the applicant. Such a feature between the dwellings and the warehouse development would help to assimilate such a substantial building into the quieter, more rural looking areas to the south and east of the site. However, as it stands there appears to be little scope for landscaping within the site.

In addition a 3 metre high acoustic fence is now proposed to reduce the noise impact upon neighbouring properties to an acceptable level. Such a fence will also have a significant visual impact. As currently proposed, the fence cuts off the southern half the site and prevents access to 17 of the proposed parking spaces. A revised layout has not been submitted to account for the required acoustic fence. It is therefore considered that insufficient information has been submitted to accurately assess the full impact of the proposal upon the character of the area. Additional landscaping would be required to screen the development from the south / east boundaries. Ideally, the whole development could move westwards to the location of the earth bund to provide a landscaped buffer to the residential properties and listed buildings, rather than screening the warehouse from the Business Park as is currently proposed.

SETTING OF LISTED BUILDING

A listed building lies to the south of the application site, which was formerly known as Hope Green farmhouse, and is now 2 houses. The listing states:

“C17 with mid C19 facade and C20 alterations. Mainly stuccoed brick but part in coursed squared buff sandstone rubble. Kerridge stone-slate roof and 5 brick chimneys.”

The adjacent converted barns are also listed by virtue of them lying within the curtilage of the listed building.

The conservation officer has commented on the application noting the absence of a Heritage Impact Assessment and considers that the introduction of such a large structure to the north of the existing cottages would be detrimental to the setting of this group of listed buildings.

A Heritage Impact Assessment has now been submitted, which assesses the impact upon the significance of the designated heritage asset (the listed building). The Assessment notes that *“In relation to the setting of the listed buildings, the area around the former farmhouse and barns retains is pleasant rural character set with hedges and boundary planting, helping to screen these from the nearby busy London Road and railway line to the east. To the west of the listed buildings, there is the modern office and warehouse units that form part of the current eastern edge of the Adlington Business Park. The wider area of the Adlington Business Park extends further to the west.”*

The rural character is still very evident in the area of the listed buildings despite considerable urban influences. The introduction of such a sizeable structure in relatively close proximity to the farmhouse and barns will dilute its rural setting and lead to less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building.

Paragraph 134 of the Framework states that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This is explored further in the planning balance below.

ECOLOGY

The nature conservation officer has provided the following comments on the application:

Great Crested Newts

The ecological surveys submitted in support of this application have identified a pond on the application site that supports a small population of great crested newts. The entire application site appears likely to support suitable terrestrial habitat for this species.

Due to the close proximity of the proposed development to the pond, the proposed development would in the absence of mitigation, result in a High magnitude adverse impact on this newt population as a result of the loss of a significant proportion of the available terrestrial habitat and the risk of animals being killed or injured during the construction phase.

Article 12 (1) of the EC Habitats Directive requires Member states to take requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection of certain animal species prohibiting the deterioration or destruction of breeding sites and resting places.

In the UK, the Habitats Directive is transposed as The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. This requires the local planning authority to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive so far as they may be affected by the exercise of those functions.

It should be noted that since a European Protected Species has been recorded on site and is likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development, the planning authority must consider the three tests in respect of the Habitats Directive, i.e. (i) that there is no satisfactory alternative, (ii) that the development is of overriding public interest, and (iii) the favourable conservation status of the species will be maintained. Evidence of how the LPA has considered these issues will be required by Natural England prior to them issuing a protected species license.

Alternatives

The applicant has carried out their own search for sites, and the application site was the only site found to be suitable. However, officers are aware that sites have been dismissed for reasons that are not factually correct, such as at Earl Road in Handforth. There may therefore still be alternative sites for the proposed development that would not have such an impact on protected species.

Overriding public Interest

Whilst the provision of a consolidated base for the warehouse operations of Arighi Bianchi would provide security for local jobs, as noted above this would be at the cost of substantial harm to the Green Belt and these same benefits may be provided on an alternative site. The proposal is therefore not considered to be of overriding public interest.

Mitigation

To compensate for the loss of terrestrial habitat the applicant is proposing to retain and enhance an area of terrestrial habitat and to create two new ponds on the site. The nature conservation officer advises that the retention of the existing pond in its current location is the most likely mitigation strategy to succeed and the proposed new ponds are likely to increase the resilience of the population by providing additional breeding habitat.

There was a concern that the extent of retained terrestrial habitat was insufficient to maintain the existing population of Great Crested Newts. Natural England have advised that in their view animals associated with the site would be able to access off-site habitats and that the retention of the population on site was preferred due to the risks associated with the translocation of a small population of animals to an offsite location. In conclusion Natural England have advised that mitigation 'Option 1' would be licensable and on this basis should be considered likely to maintain the favourable conservation status of the local newt population.

However, for the reasons stated above, it is considered that requirements of the Habitats Directive would not be met.

Breeding birds

If planning consent were to be granted a condition requiring a nesting bird survey is recommended.

TREES

The site is a relatively flat area of unmanaged open grassland with trees and hedges located on and close to the boundaries of the plot.

The Arboricultural statement identifies a single individual tree (T1), ten groups of trees (G1 – 10) and two hedges (H1- 2) within the site. Apart from H1 the identified trees and hedges are all scheduled for retention, and can be protected within the proposed layout in accordance with current best practice BS 5837:2012. Tree protection details will be required but this can be dealt with by condition. There is a hard standing incursion within the northern aspect of the RPA associated with G7. This can be satisfactorily accommodated within a suitable and detailed method statement and resolved also by condition.

HIGHWAYS

The proposed development will generate 50 trips in the morning peak in total, and 24 trips in the evening. As this proposal is for a B8 (warehouse & distribution) use the trips are mainly off-peak made by HGV's and the Strategic Infrastructure Manager considers the level of movements indicated in the peak hours to be a reasonable estimate.

There are currently relatively high levels of traffic using the A523 London Road although not at capacity levels. Given the number of additional trips likely to be generated by the development the Strategic Infrastructure Manager does not consider that the development would result in a severe impact on the A523.

The proposed site is an extension of the Adlington Business Park and therefore there has to be an acceptance that the location of the site is suitable for industrial use. The site can be accessed on foot as it will be connected to the Adlington Park and also cycle access is possible. There are bus services that operate on the A523 although these services are relatively infrequent services.

35 staff are proposed to be based at the new warehouse building, and the scheme will provide 70 car parking spaces including 6 disabled spaces. Parking provision is below the standards set out in the emerging local plan strategy, which includes the following guideline parking ratios for B8 (warehouse & distribution) employment units:

- 1 space per 60sqm and 1 lorry space per 200sqm

Application of these recommended parking standards to the proposed development 6,728sqm would suggest 112 spaces (including 6 spaces at disabled standard) and 34 lorry spaces are required. In this case, the Strategic Infrastructure Manager raises no objections to the proposed level of parking provision, which is considered to be sufficient for a business, which would be based on a core staffing level of 35 operational staff.

However, it should be noted that no information has been provided on the ancillary trade sales element of the proposal and exactly how this would operate. This may have an impact upon the level of parking required. Any further details will be reported as an update.

The Public Rights of Way Unit has also raised a query relating to the impact of the development upon the bridleway. This matter also needs to be clarified.

CONTAMINATED LAND

Comments are awaited from the Contaminated Land team. However the Environment Agency has noted that historic contaminated land reports have been produced but these are considered to be out of date as they are at least 14 years old. Therefore no suitable information has been provided to consider the risks to controlled waters from contamination. Appropriate conditions are therefore recommended.

AIR QUALITY

Comments from Environmental Health on air quality matters are awaited and will be reported as an update.

FLOOD RISK

The Flood Risk Manager has reviewed the proposals and there are no objections in principle to the proposed development on flood risk grounds. A condition is recommended requiring a drainage strategy to be submitted.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

AMENITY

Policy DC38 of the local plan sets out the guidelines of space between buildings. For habitable rooms facing non residential buildings, the recommended distance for 1 or 2 storey buildings is 21 metres front to front and 25 metres rear to rear. For 3 storeys or upwards the distances are 28 metres front to front and 32 metres rear to rear. This is required to maintain an adequate standard of light, privacy and space between buildings. The existing dwellings are two-storey and the proposed warehouse, whilst taller than the dwellings has a small mezzanine at first floor, and therefore also considered to be two-storey.

On the opposite side of the bridleway adjacent to the southern boundary of the application property are a small group of dwellings. Owl Barn and Cherry Tree Barn would be the closest buildings as they sit immediately adjacent to the bridleway which separates the application site from these dwellings. The distance to the proposed building at the nearest point would be approximately 50 metres.

To the south east of the application site, Hope Green Cottage sits detached from the other dwellings, between the application site and the railway line. Based on the levels information submitted with the application, the proposed building will have a ridge height 3.2 metres higher than Hope Green Cottage, and will be located approximately 28 metres from the nearest point of the dwelling. The property also has an outbuilding closer to the boundary with the application site, which will be approximately 14 metres from the side elevation of the warehouse building. A substantial conifer hedge is located on the boundary, which will reduce the impact of the warehouse upon the outbuilding.

Whilst there will be a significant change to the views from the properties that border the site from open field to warehouse, having regard to the distances and relationships outlined above, a satisfactory degree of space, light and privacy will be retained between the warehouse and the existing dwellings.

Noise

The proposed warehouse facility and associated site parking, is located on the edge of Adlington Business Park; in close proximity to noise sensitive receptors (dwellings). Therefore, a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) has been submitted by the applicant, which assesses the noise impact upon the nearest noise sensitive properties.

The NIA identifies that a "Significant Adverse Impact" on the nearest residential properties would result without mitigation. A 3m acoustic fence is therefore recommended to line the lorry access route to the southern access point. This mitigation method would reduce noise emissions to 3.5dB below background level - "Low Impact", which would be acceptable.

It is noted that Hope Green Cottage is located at the south east boundary of the application site and has not been identified as a noise sensitive receptor. Therefore in order to protect residential amenity of all noise sensitive receptors (including Hope Green Cottage), it is recommended that the 3m acoustic fencing is extended along the south east boundary to the line of the proposed warehouse building.

Environmental Health recommends that once the proposed development is operational, a noise assessment is undertaken within 6 months to ensure that the submitted Noise Impact Assessment is correct and if it is identified that additional mitigation is required, appropriate works shall be submitted to the LPA and undertaken accordingly.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

With regard to the economic role of sustainable development, the proposed development will help to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of land for employment as well as bringing direct and indirect economic benefits to Poynton and Adlington including additional trade for local shops and businesses, jobs in construction and economic benefits to the construction industry supply chain.

The proposal will also serve to secure the future of a long established local employer in the area for the foreseeable future.

PLANNING BALANCE

The fact that the proposal provides a new consolidated storage facility for a long established local business and local employer is an identifiable benefit of the proposal. The proposed scheme provides a building that reflects the character of existing buildings within the wider Business Park. It is also considered that the development would not have a detrimental impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring properties, traffic generation and highway safety, trees and flood risk subject to conditions.

The proposal would have an adverse impact upon protected species, but it is an impact that can be appropriately mitigated with conditions. However, the tests of the habitats directive would still not be met.

Balanced against any benefits of the scheme, the proposal would be an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, which encroaches into the countryside and reduces openness. Whilst it is accepted that the emerging local plan strategy proposes to remove the site from the Green Belt to reallocate it to employment land, the site currently remains as Green Belt, and substantial weight has to be afforded to any harm to the Green Belt resulting from the proposal. The requirement for a 3 metre high acoustic fence to protect the living conditions of neighbouring properties on the edge of the proposed service yards forms a barrier within the site and makes 17 parking spaces inaccessible. The positioning of the barrier needs to be known to be able to make a fully informed assessment of the impact on the character of the area. At present there is insufficient information available to make this assessment. Added to this the warehouse will result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed buildings. Having regard to weight to be afforded to the harm to the Green Belt as a matter of public interest, the uncertainty about the impact upon the character of the area, the impact upon the setting of the listed building, and the fact that the main benefit from this proposal could potentially be secured on an alternative site already allocated for employment uses, the public benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the identified harm.

Accordingly the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposal is an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework, which reduces openness and encroaches into the countryside. The development is therefore contrary to policy GC1 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It is not considered that very special circumstances exist to justify the approval of inappropriate development in the Green Belt.**

- 2. The proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework and that harm is not outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.**
- 3. The proposed acoustic fence severs the site and makes 17 parking spaces inaccessible. Insufficient information has therefore been submitted to make a fully informed assessment of the impact of the proposal upon the character of the area to the south / east of the site and the extent of landscape screening that can be provided.**
- 4. A European Protected Species has been recorded on site and is likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development. Due to the environmental harm identified, there are no reasons of overriding public interest to allow the proposal. In addition the proposal may be able to be accommodated on an alternative site. The proposal therefore fails to meet the tests of the Habitats Directive.**

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 Regulation has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Board, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

