

Application No: 17/0341N

Location: Land off, University Way, Crewe, Cheshire

Proposal: Proposed construction of 5 steel frame units to be part of a commercial development of B2 and B8 use that is made up of a number of commercial units total circa 164,000sq.ft inclusive of office content. Allocated staff/visitor parking, service yards and fencing to be included with each Unit.

Applicant: Beeson

Expiry Date: 26-May-2017

SUMMARY

The application site lies entirely within an area of land allocated for employment use as determined by the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Adopted Replacement Local Plan 2011.

Policy E.1.1 advises that within such locations, B1 and uses associated with the University will be appropriate. However, the site has been marketed for a considerable amount of time for B1 use with no success; Manchester Metropolitan University's Crewe campus is set to close in 2019; the CELPS employment review seeks a flexible approach to the site which lends support to B2/B8 uses. The use would bring both strong economic and social benefits so it is considered that the principle of the development is acceptable.

The development would bring positive planning benefits such as; the creation of new employment opportunities on a site allocated for employment use and have knock on economic benefits during construction and through the supply chain.

Balanced against this benefit must be the limited dis-benefits, which would be the loss of the site to exclusively B1 office use and the temporary encroachment of the development into the 8 metre ecological buffer to the rear of the site during construction works.

All other impacts are considered to be neutral subject to the use of planning conditions.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development and a recommendation of approval is made.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to conditions

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is on scrubland located to the north-eastern side of University Way, Crewe within the Crewe Settlement Boundary.

This site is largely triangular in shape extending 3.75 hectares. The levels generally drop away from the University Way edge down to the lowest point to the far north-east of the site.

Similar development to the proposal lies to the south of the site.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of 5 steel framed units to be a mixture of B2 and B8 use with a total circa 164,000sq.ft (15,236sqm), inclusive of office content. Allocated staff/visitor parking, service yards and fencing included for each unit.

Further and revised plans have been received during the application process to address the concerns of various consultation responses. In the main the layout, form and bulk of the proposal has remained unchanged as a result. The extent of the 'red edge' boundary has been marginally extended at the rear of the site to account for earthworks.

RELEVANT HISTORY

15/0587N - An outline planning application for the provision of shared recreational open space, children's play space, landscaping and associated works - Refused 9th July 2015

15/0586N - An outline planning application for the erection of up to 106 dwellings, landscaping and associated works. All matters are reserved except access on to University Way. The application is not seeking approval of details for the internal highway / cycle / pedestrian network – Refused 9th July 2015

13/2159N - Extension of time limit for the outline application for the erection of five office buildings with associated car parking and landscaping – Approved 15th August 2015

10/1146N - Extension of Time Limit for the Outline Application for the Erection of Five Office Buildings with Associated Car Parking and Landscaping – Approved 16th July 2010

P07/0017 - Outline Application for the Erection of Five Office Buildings with Associated Car Parking and Landscaping – Approved 4th April 2007

P06/0990 - Outline Application for Five B1 Office Buildings – Withdrawn 1st December 2006

P04/0478 - New Access Road off Crewe Green Link Road – Approved 25th May 2004

P04/0226 - EIA Screening Opinion - Proposed Development of Land for Employment Uses – EIA not required 17th March 2004

P00/0953 - Construction of Crewe Green Link Road (Northern Section) – Approved 4th January 2001

P00/0620 - Request for screening opinion – EIA not required 2nd August 2000

P98/0238 - Outline application for regional distribution depot and Crewe Green Link Road – Finally disposed of 17th April 2000

7/13981 - New access road and sewers including new junction with improvement of A534 Crewe Road – Approved 19th March 1987

7/11951 - Development of a high technology site – Approved 2nd August 1985

POLICIES

Development Plan:

For the erection of B2 and B8 development in this location, the following policies within the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 would apply; E.1 (Existing Employment Allocations), E.1.1 (Crewe Business Park/Crewe Green), E4 (Development on Existing Employment Areas), NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats), NE.9 (Protected Species), NE.20 (Flood Prevention), BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.3 (Access and Parking), BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources), BE.6 (Development on potentially contaminated land) and TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards)

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, 17 – Core planning principles, 18-22 Building a strong, competitive economy, 56-68 – Requiring good design

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP):

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

PG2 (Settlement Hierarchy), PG6 (Spatial Distribution of Development), EG3 (Existing and Allocated Employment Sites), SD1 (Sustainable Development in Cheshire East), SD2 (Sustainable Development Principles), SE1 (Design), SE2 (Efficient use of Land), SE3 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity), SE4 (The Landscape), SE5 (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland), SE6 (Infrastructure), SE8 (Renewable and Low Carbon energy), SE9 (Energy Efficient Development), IN1 (Infrastructure), IN2 (Developer Contributions)

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Natural England - No objections

Environment Agency - No objections, subject to a number of conditions including; the prior submission/approval of details of the safe provision of route(s) into and out of the site, that the finished floor levels are set no lower than - Unit 1 (48.8 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)), Units 2 & 3 (49.4 metres above AOD) and the prior submission/approval of a water vole and kingfisher survey.

United Utilities – No objections, subject to a number of conditions including; that foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems, the prior submission/approval of a surface water

drainage scheme and the prior submission/approval of a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan.

Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI) - No objections, subject to a construction management plan condition to include wheel wash facilities

Environmental Protection – No objections subject to a number of conditions including; the prior submission/approval of hours of operation of units 1, 2 and 5; No plant or equipment on the facades of the buildings facing residential properties unless mitigation approved in writing by the LPA; Prior submission/approval of boundary treatment; hours of piling, the prior submission/approval of a piling method statement, the prior submission/approval of a dust mitigation scheme, the prior submission/approval of a floor floating method statement, the prior submission/approval of external lighting details, the prior submission/approval of travel plans, the prior submission/approval of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the prior submission/approval of a phase II contaminated land report. Informatives in relation to contaminated land are also sought.

Flood Risk Manager – No objections, subject to the conditions proposed by the environment agency being included with regards to the finished floor levels

Public Rights of Way Officer - No objections

Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society – No comments received at time of report

Ramblers Association - No comments received at time of report

Crewe Town Council – No objections, subject to the provision of sufficient parking and manoeuvring space for vehicles and that the buildings are of good design

Crewe Green Parish Council - Object to the proposal on the following grounds;

- Loss of land for B1 Use
- Amenity - Noise and Light pollution

REPRESENTATIONS:

3 letters of correspondence received. The concerns raised within these include;

- Highway safety - Whether adequate car and HGV parking is being provided, access to public transport (particularly for shift work)
- Amenity - Noise and light pollution

APPRAISAL:

The key issues are:

- Principle of the development
- Sustainability (Environmental, Social and Economic)
- Planning balance

Principle of Development

Policy E.1 of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan refers to existing employment allocations. Policy E.1 advises that in addition to land held by businesses and other organisations for future expansion, a number of sites have been allocated for business and industrial uses. Amongst these sites is 'Crewe Business Park / Crewe Green'. The site in question falls within this allocation.

Policy E.1.1 of the Local Plan advises that within this allocation, B1 development and any uses required by and associated with Manchester Metropolitan University are specifically detailed as being acceptable.

Policy E.1.1 states that for the avoidance of doubt, such uses include; classroom/teaching facilities, residential accommodation for students, indoor and outdoor sport and recreational facilities.

As the proposed development seeks a mixture of B2 and B8 development, although still for employment purposes, it would not be for B1 use as detailed by Policy E.1.1. The proposal would therefore be contrary to this Local Plan policy and be unacceptable in principle unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

There are however a number of material considerations since the adoption of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan which are relevant to the consideration of this planning application. These include:-

- Closure of the MMU Crewe Campus – MMU have confirmed its intention to withdraw from its Campus in Crewe in the summer of 2019. This impacts on the need for further space associated with the university which is clearly the intention of the original allocation, as noted in the justification text (para 6.18) of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan.
- As evidence to support the Local Plan Strategy, an Employment Land Review of sites was undertaken by ARUP in 2012. This considered the site (Crewe Green Business Park SU-CR01). The Employment Land Review noted that the site was a prominent site fronting onto University Way. It also notes that development as an office park may be unrealistic, with concentration of offices on Electra Way. The report notes that a flexible approach to employment uses could be considered (Appendix E1 of the Employment Land Review BE009).
- Policy EG3 (Existing and Allocated Employment Sites) point 1 (ii) refers to employment sites being protected where there is potential for alternative employment uses.

In addition to the above, the applicant has submitted a justification note from Legat Owen, which makes the following points;

- Terms have been agreed with Cheshire East Council widening the restrictive covenant on the site to allow B1, B2 and B8 uses
- There have been 2 recent speculative industrial scheme approvals on Orion Park (off University Way) totalling in excess of 85,000sqft in 9 buildings and all units were pre-let and pre-sold, demonstrating the demand
- They have fielded enquiries about further B2 and B8 floor space and are confident that the application proposals will also all be pre-let or pre-sold

- Number of enquiries received for B1 use has been significantly lower than those for B2 and B8 use

Another consideration would be paragraph 22 of the NPPF which states that;

'Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose.... Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for the different land uses to support sustainable local communities.'

Although this statement refers to planning policies and not how planning applications should be considered, it provides a steer as to how the government want Local Planning Authorities to consider sites allocated for employment use and as such, this is a material consideration.

As a result of the above reasons in combination with the fact that application site has remained vacant for a number of years whilst being marketed for B1 employment use since 2008, it is considered that subject to the proposal adhering with all other relevant planning policies, the development of the site for B2 and B8 uses would be deemed to be acceptable.

Sustainability

The National Planning Policy Framework definition of sustainable development is:

"Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations. Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices. We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate. Sustainable development is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment"

The NPPF determines that sustainable development includes three dimensions:- economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy

an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality

built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent.

Environmental Role

Landscape

The site is located to the east of University Way and has varying levels with a general slope from west to east. There is occupied employment land to the south and agricultural land beyond the watercourse. The body of the site has been cleared of most ground cover although a single Mature Oak remains. Close to the site boundaries there is a hedgerow with post and rail fence along the road frontage, a belt of early mature trees of mixed native species lining the watercourse close to the eastern boundary which widens to an area of mature trees in a section where the river meanders. A belt of screen planting separates the site from existing employment units to the south.

The Council's Landscape Officer has advised that the majority of the existing trees and hedgerow around the site are significant landscape features worthy of retention.

During the application process a number of changes were put forward, including the re-location of the proposed attenuation pond. This re-location is welcomed by the Council's Landscape Officer. In addition, levels data has been clarified and the site edged red has been extended.

The submitted documents confirm that ground works and batters at the rear of the site would extend closer to the watercourse than originally proposed with an extended site edge red which now encompasses part of the ecological buffer required to accommodate these works.

The Council's Landscape Officer has advised that should the application be approved, a number of conditions should be secured including; the prior submission/approval of a revised landscape scheme to include at least 6 Pedunculate Oak to replace lost trees as required by the Nature Conservation Officer; Implementation of landscape proposals and the prior submission/approval of design details for all sections of retaining wall.

Forestry and Hedgerows

In the vicinity of the site there is a maturing roadside hedge along the road frontage, a single mature Oak tree within the main body of the site, a belt of early mature trees of mixed native species lining the watercourse close to the eastern boundary which widens to an area of mature trees in a section where the river meanders. A belt of screen planting separates the site from existing employment units to the south.

The application is supported by an arboricultural report by Tree Heritage dated 13th December 2016. (Ref THR 16-98). The report includes a tree survey and identifies tree constraints on an existing site plan. The survey covers 28 individual trees, two groups of trees and the roadside hedge.

The tree groups along the watercourse are graded A in the survey with several individually identified Grade A and B trees together with some lower grade trees where the river meanders. References are made to the conservation value of the trees and the findings indicate that apart from the single

mid-site tree and a small number of other trees in poor condition, most of the vegetation surveyed is worthy of retention.

The hedge is a prominent roadside feature which continues along the line of University Way. The Council's Forestry Officer has advised that the waterside tree belt is a significant feature and the trees to the south afford good screening and separation. It is also recommended that all this vegetation should be retained and protected as part of any future development on the site.

Subject to a number of conditions including; adherence to the submitted tree protection measures; the prior submission/approval of an updated Arboricultural Method statement to include an auditable programme of arboricultural supervision and implementation thereof; Proposals for the long term management of the retained woodland and ecological area (as recommended in the ecological survey) with details of a mechanism for implementation and a construction method statement, no significant forestry issues are raised.

Design

Policy BE.2 of the Local Plan advises that new development will only be permitted so long as; it would achieve a high standard of design, would respect the pattern, character and form of the surroundings and would not adversely affect the streetscene in terms of scale, height, proportions and materials used.

The revised proposal seeks the erection of 5 large commercial/industrial units comprising of a mixture of B2 and B8 Use.

3 of the 5 units would be positioned parallel to University Way to the south-west of the site, between units 1 and 5 an existing access point would be widened and a road would extend into the site and a further 2 units, one of which would be subdivided would be positioned to the rear. Although not ideal in so far as the units would be inward facing from the public highway, such a layout does have benefits with regards to the screening of parking from public vantage points.

On the site frontage, the existing hedgerow with University Way would be retained as would a green buffer strip which is an important characteristic of the development along this stretch of University Way in order to both reduce the impact of the built form of the streetscene, but also to provide opportunities for landscape planting.

For the above reasons, the layout of the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

The form of large, rectangular warehouse style units would be characteristic of the adjoining development to the south of the site where in February 2016 3 units were granted permission (ref: 15/4903N) and are now largely completed. Further south beyond this more recent development are further, similar developments to the proposal. As such, the form of the development is considered to be acceptable.

In relation to scale, all 5 units would be of differing sizes with regards to footprints which would range from 4,232sqm to 2,024sqm. The maximum height of the units would range between 10.8 metres (unit 5) and 11.8 metres (Unit 2). This scale would largely reflect the scale/height of the similar development to the south.

The appearance of the units has been subject to negotiation during the application process to seek as much visual interest as possible in order to avoid dead frontages.

As a result of initial concerns, the applicant agreed to make the following changes to the elevations to improve their design and impact upon the streetscene

Units 1 & 5

- Entrance canopy projection and glazing design extended further along the office the gable elevations
- Road-side elevations broken-up with a curtain walling/translucent cladding detail which returns partially to gable elevations

Unit 2

- Layout handed to act as an attractive focal point when entering the new access road and provides an attractive outlook onto woodland

Unit 4

- Road-side elevation broken-up with a curtain walling/translucent cladding detail which returns partially to gable elevations

These design amendments provide a degree of interest and represent a design improvement upon the original proposals.

It should be noted that levels are a significant factor in the consideration of the design of the scheme. In particular, to the north of the existing access into the site off University Way , the land drops away significantly. As demonstrated by an indicative streetscene plan provided during the application, much of the scale, mass and bulk of the largest unit, unit 1 would be not readily be viewable from the highway.

As a result of the above reasons, it is considered that the layout, form, scale and appearance of the proposal would be acceptable.

Highways Implications

The site has a single access point taken from University Way with a ghost island right turn facility.

The Council's Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI) has advised that it is clear that the level of traffic associated with a B2/B8 development is much lower than a B1 office development and there is a significant reduction in trips overall. Although the number of HGV's will increase due to the nature of the B2/B8 use, the HSI has advised that these can be accommodated on the main highway routes to and from the site. Overall, the HSI advises that the change to a B2/B8 use for the site would be a benefit to the highway network as the number of trips to site will be reduced from that previously granted permission.

There are 180 car parking spaces indicated to serve the development and this includes 10 disabled spaces. Cycle parking has also been provided, 21 Sheffield Stands are shared at each of the units. The site is accessible to pedestrians and cyclists and there are bus services on Crewe Road and

Electra Way. Additionally, the accessibility of the site was assessed as part of the previous permission for Office use and was considered acceptable.

There is an existing access point in place on University Way to serve the development and the internal road will tie into this access although some widening is proposed.

The HSI concludes that because the traffic generation of B2/B8 use would be much lower than the generation of B1 use development on the site as previously approved, this is considered to be a benefit in highway terms.

The HSI advises that the parking provision does accord with CEC standards and there is sufficient turning space provided within each plot to accommodate HGV's.

As such, subject to a construction management plan condition (which should include wheel wash facility details), no objections on highway safety grounds are raised.

Ecology

The application is supported by various ecology reports. The impact upon specific ecological matters is considered below;

Designated Sites

The application site falls within Natural England's SSSI impact risk zone for non-residential developments of over 1 hectare. Natural England have reviewed the proposals and advised that they are satisfied that the development would not have a detrimental impact the Sandbach Flashes SSSI.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

A balancing pond adjacent to the application site has been identified as being potentially suitable for great crested newts. The pond however was constructed relatively recently and the Council's Nature Conservation Officer has advised that it is likely to be too isolated to have been colonised by GCN's. It is therefore advised that this species is not reasonably likely to be affected by the proposed development.

Woodland

The small area of woodland located to the north west of the application site appears on the national inventory of Priority habitats. Habitats of this type are a material consideration for planning. However, the woodland is located outside the red line of the current application and so should not be affected by the proposed development.

Hedgerows

Native hedgerows are a priority habitat and hence a material consideration. There is an existing hedgerow located along the frontage of university way. Whilst the submitted landscape plan refers to the retention of the existing roadside vegetation the existing hedgerow is not clearly shown as being retained. The Council's Nature Conservation Officer therefore recommends that this hedgerow be conditioned to be retained.

Badgers

The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has advised that there is a known badger sett in the small area of woodland to the north of the red line of the current application that continues to be active. To avoid any adverse impact on badgers the submitted original survey report recommends that an 8 metre buffer be provided along the Englesea and Valley brooks and also that an undeveloped 30 metre buffer around the sett be maintained. Based upon the submitted layout plans it would appear that these recommendations have been incorporated into the proposed scheme. Although it is recognised that the protective fencing would fall within this buffer, it is not considered that this would be sufficient to warrant refusal of the application as it would be a temporary measure.

As the status of badgers on a site can change in a short timescale, the Council's Nature Conservation Officer recommends that if planning consent is granted a condition should be attached which requires an updated badger survey and mitigation strategy to be submitted prior to the commencement of development.

Common Toad

A small number of common toads were recorded on site during the reptile survey. This species is a priority species and hence a material consideration. The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has advised that the proposed development will result in the localised loss of some terrestrial habitat for this species. The proposed attenuation pond could potentially provide a suitable breeding pond if designed appropriately. Given the significant benefit of an additional pond for this species a condition is proposed to ensure that the attenuation pond is designed appropriately to ensure it is suitable for this species.

Reptiles

There are records of common lizard on this site from a few years ago. However, no evidence of this species was however recorded during the updated survey. The Council's Nature Conservation Officer therefore advises that reptiles do not present a constraint on the proposed development.

Bats

Evidence of bat activity in the form of a minor roost of a relatively common bat species has been recorded within a tree proposed for removal as part of the proposed development. The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has advised that the usage of the tree by bats is likely to be limited to single-small numbers of animals using it for relatively short periods of time during the year. The Officer advises that the loss of the tree supporting the roost is, in the absence of mitigation, likely to have a low impact upon bats at the local level and a low impact upon the conservation status of the species as a whole.

The submitted report recommends the installation of bat boxes on the nearby trees as a means of compensating for the loss of the roost and also recommends the supervision of the works to reduce the risk posed to any bats that may be present when the works are completed.

*EC Habitats Directive
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010*

ODPM Circular 06/2005

The UK implemented the EC Directive in the Conservation (natural habitats etc) regulations which contain two layers of protection:

- A licensing system administered by Natural England which repeats the above tests
- A requirement on local planning authorities (“lpas”) to have regard to the directive’s requirements.

The Habitat Regulations 2010 require local authorities to have regard to three tests when considering applications that affect a European Protected Species. In broad terms the tests are that:

- The proposed development is 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
- There is no satisfactory alternative
- There is no detriment to the maintenance of the species population at favourable conservation status in its natural range.

Current case law instructs that if it is considered clear or very likely that the requirements of the directive cannot be met because there is a satisfactory alternative, or because there are no conceivable “other imperative reasons of overriding public interest”, then planning permission should be refused. Conversely, if it seems that the requirements are likely to be met, then there would be no impediment to planning permission be granted. If it is unclear whether the requirements would be met or not, a balanced view taking into account the particular circumstances of the application should be taken.

Overriding Public Interest

The provision of mitigation would assist with the continued presence of bats.

Alternatives

There is an alternative scenario that needs to be assessed, this are:

No development on the site

Without any development, specialist mitigation for bats would not be provided which would be of benefit to the species.

The Council’s Nature Conservation Officer advised that if planning consent is granted the proposed mitigation/compensation is acceptable and is likely to maintain the favourable conservation status of the species of bat concerned. As such, it is recommended that the mitigation be conditioned.

The submitted report recommends that four semi-mature oak trees are planted as part of the landscaping of the site to compensate for those trees lost. If planning consent is granted, the Council’s Nature Conservation Officer also recommends that this matter be secured by condition.

To avoid any adverse impacts on bats resulting from any lighting associated with the development, the Council's Nature Conservation Officer recommends that if planning permission is granted, a condition should be attached requiring any additional lighting to be agreed with the LPA.

Englesea Brook and Valley Brook

These water courses occur approximately 20 metres from the eastern boundary of the application site. The north western corner of the application site is 11 metres from Valley Brook at one point and 13 metres at another.

These water courses have the potential to support a number of protected species, however provided all construction related activity is restricted to the red line of the application site, it is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact. A condition should be attached to ensure that measures are submitted for the safeguarding of these water courses during the construction process.

Nesting Birds

A condition to protect nesting birds and a condition seeking the prior submission/approval of breeding bird features are also proposed.

It should be noted that the Environment Agency have requested a Water Vole and Kingfisher survey. Following informal discussions with the Council's Nature Conservation Officer, due to the provision of the buffer zone to the rear of the site, it is not considered that such surveys are necessary in this instance.

Flood Risk/Drainage

Flooding

Parts of the north and north-eastern sections of the site fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3 due to their proximity to Valley Brook. As such, the application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

This report has been reviewed by both the Environment Agency and the Council's Flood Risk Manager (FRM).

In response, the Environment Agency (EA) have advised that they have no flood risk objections, subject to a number of conditions including; the prior submission/approval of details of the safe provision of route(s) into and out of the site, that the finished floor levels are set no lower than - Unit 1 (48.8 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)), Units 2 & 3 (49.4 metres above AOD).

The Council's FRM supports the conclusions raised by the Environment Agency.

As such, subject to the recommended EA conditions, it is not considered that the proposal would create any significant flooding issues.

Drainage

United Utilities have advised that they raise no objections to the proposals, subject to a number of conditions including that foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems, the prior

submission/approval of a surface water drainage scheme and the prior submission/approval of a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan.

Environmental Conclusion

The application would have a limited impact upon the landscape in this commercial part of Crewe located within the Crewe Settlement Boundary. The scheme would be of an acceptable design that would not create any issues with regards to highway safety and ecology subject to conditions where appropriate.

As a result, it is considered that the developments would be environmentally neutral.

Social Role

Job Creation

A significant social benefit of the proposed scheme would be the job creation that the erection of the B2 and B8 units would create.

Amenity

Policy GR6 (Amenity and Health) of the Local Plan, requires that new development should not have an unduly detrimental effect on the amenities of nearby residential properties in terms of loss of privacy, loss of sunlight or daylight, visual intrusion, environmental disturbance or pollution and traffic generation access and parking.

Given the location of the application site in an industrial / university area of Crewe, there are no nearby neighbouring dwellings that could be impacted with regards to loss of privacy, light or visual intrusion as the closest residential property to the site would be over approximately 80 metres away.

In relation to environmental disturbance, the applicant submitted an acoustic report during the application process at the request of the Council. In response, the Council's Environmental Protection Officer has advised that the proposal should not create any significant noise concerns, subject to a number of conditions including; the prior submission/approval of hours of operation of units 1, 2 and 5; No plant or equipment shall be installed on the facades of the buildings facing residential properties unless mitigation approved in writing by the LPA; Prior submission/approval of boundary treatment;

In relation to other environmental matters, the Council's Environmental Protection Officer has no objection, subject to a number of conditions including; hours of piling, the prior submission/approval of a piling method statement, the prior submission/approval of a dust mitigation scheme, the prior submission/approval of a floor floating method statement, the prior submission/approval of external lighting details, the prior submission/approval of travel plans, the prior submission/approval of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the prior submission/approval of a phase II contaminated land report. Informatives in relation to contaminated land are also sought.

Social Conclusion

As a result of the job creation benefits of the scheme, it is considered that the development would be socially sustainable.

Economic Role

The proposed development of 164,000sq.ft (15,236 sqm) of B2 and B8 uses would bring significant job benefits.

In addition, it is accepted that the construction of an industrial development of this size would bring the usual economic benefit to the closest shops in Crewe for the duration of the construction, and would potentially provide local employment opportunities in construction and the wider economic benefits to the construction industry supply chain.

As a result of the above, it is considered that the development would provide strong economic benefits and would therefore be economically sustainable.

Planning Balance

The application site lies entirely within an area of land allocated for employment use as determined by the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Adopted Replacement Local Plan 2011.

Policy E.1.1 advises that within such locations, B1 and uses associated with the University will be appropriate. However, the site has been marketed for a considerable amount of time for B1 use with no success; Manchester Metropolitan University's Crewe campus is set to close in 2019; the CELPS employment review seeks a flexible approach to the site which lends support to B2/B8 uses. The use would bring both strong economic and social benefits so it is considered that the principle of the development is acceptable.

The development would bring positive planning benefits such as; the creation of new employment opportunities on a site allocated for employment use and have knock on economic benefits during construction and through the supply chain.

Balanced against this benefit must be the limited dis-benefits, which would be the loss of the site to exclusively B1 office use and the temporary encroachment of the development into the 8 metre ecological buffer to the rear of the site during construction works.

All other impacts are considered to be neutral subject to the use of planning conditions.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development and a recommendation of approval is made.

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to the following conditions

- 1. Time (3 years)**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. Materials as per application**
- 4. Landscape (scheme to include at least 4 Pedunculate Oak) - Prior submission / approval**

5. Landscape - Implementation
6. Boundary treatment - Prior submission / approval / implementation
7. Retaining wall - design details and sections - Prior submission/approval
8. Levels - Prior submission / approval / implementation
9. Tree Protection - Implementation
10. Updated Arboricultural Method statement to include an auditable programme of arboricultural supervision and implementation thereof - Prior submission / approval / implementation
11. Woodland and Ecological Management Plan - Prior submission / approval / implementation
12. Construction Management Plan (to include wheel wash) - Prior submission / approval / implementation
13. Hedgerow frontage retention
14. Bat mitigation strategy - Implementation
15. Attenuation pond design - Prior submission/approval/implementation
16. Bat friendly lighting proposals - Prior submission / approval / implementation
17. Updated badger survey and mitigation strategy - Prior submission / approval / implementation
18. Nesting birds survey - Prior submission / approval / implementation
19. Provision of features for nesting birds - Prior submission / approval / implementation
20. Proposals for the safeguarding of the adjacent watercourses during the construction process - Prior submission / approval / implementation
21. Prior submission/approval of details of the safe provision of route(s) into and out of the site
22. The finished floor levels should be set no lower than - Unit 1 (48.8 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)), Units 2 & 3 (49.4 metres above AOD).
23. Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems
24. Piling method statement - Prior submission / approval / implementation
25. Dust mitigation scheme - Prior submission / approval / implementation
26. Floor Floating Method Statement - Prior submission / approval implementation
27. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure - Prior submission / approval / implementation
28. Phase II contaminated land report- Prior submission / approval / implementation
29. Prior submission/approval of hours of operation of units 1, 2 and 5
30. No plant or equipment shall be installed on the facades of the buildings facing residential properties to the northeast unless mitigation approved in writing by the LPA

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation), in consultation with the Chair (or in her absence the Vice Chair) of Strategic Planning Board, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

Application for Full Planning

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Development in accord with approved plans
3. Materials as application
4. Landscaping - submission of details
5. Landscaping (implementation)
6. Landscaping to include details of boundary treatment
7. Tree protection
8. Retaining wall
9. Levels
10. Updated AIA
11. Woodland Management Plan
12. Construction Management Plan
13. Hedgerow Retention
14. Bat mitigation
15. Attenuation pond
16. Bat lighting
17. Updated Badger
18. Nesting Birds
19. Nesting bird features
20. Watercourse Mitigation
21. Identification of routes
22. Floor Levels
23. Drainage system
24. Piling
25. Dust mitigation
26. Floor Floating Method Statement
27. Electric Vehicle
28. Phase II
29. Hours of use
30. No plant or equipment
31. NPPF
32. Hours of construction
33. Contaminated land
34. Highways

