

Committee Report

Item No: 1

Reference: 4494/16

Case Officer: Steven Stroud

Wards: Bramford and Blakenham; Barking and Somersham

Ward Members: Cllrs J Field, A Killett, and K Welsby

RECOMMENDATION:

**SUBJECT TO S106 LEGAL AGREEMENT, APPROVE RESERVED MATTERS
[COMPRISING PHASES 1 - 8]**

Description of Development

Application for approval of Reserved Matters (phases 1 - 8), pursuant to Outline Permission ref. 1969/10 (for the development known as 'SnOasis')

Location

Land at Field Quarry (also known as Masons Quarry), Bramford Road, Great Blakenham IP6 0XJ

Site Area: c.123 hectares (304 acres)

Parishes: Great Blakenham, Little Blakenham, Baylham, and Nettlestead

Application Type: Reserved Matters

Development Type: Major - Large Scale

Applicant: Onslow Suffolk Ltd

Agent: DP9

PART ONE – REASON FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

1. The application is referred to committee for the following reasons:
 - i. It provides for the erection of commercial buildings with a gross floor space exceeding 3,750 sqm.

PART TWO – BACKGROUND AND APPLICATION DETAILS

Site and Surroundings

2. The site is located approximately 1 km south-west of the village of Great Blakenham and 4km north-west of Ipswich. Access is taken from Bramford Road (B1113), opposite the former Cement Works site. The main part of the site is reached via an access road (circa 2km) from that point. The site, which covers 123 hectares (304 acres), is currently inactive but was previously worked by Blue Circle as a quarry for the extraction of clay and chalk in association with the former Cement Works located to the east of Bramford Road.
3. Access into the site from the east is gained from a wide concrete road shared with the adjacent (Viridor) landfill and recycling activities abutting the site to the north-east. The access road leads to a redundant quarry area incorporating a Site of Special Scientific Interest (“SSSI”) designated due to its geological characteristics. Further into the site is a large deep quarry chamber where the last extraction took place.
4. Despite its considerable size, most of the site it is largely unseen from any direction; partly because it is screened by existing development, partly because of the dense tree growth along significant lengths of the site boundary, and partly because, as noted, most of the site is quarried or excavated land and thus sits generally at a lower level than the land around its perimeter.
5. The western and north-western areas mostly comprise restored open land and include substantial freestanding lakes, grass and arable land. Most of this open land comprises restored former minerals working areas with the exception of the field on the north-west perimeter of the Site which has not been disturbed by previous quarrying activity.
6. The character of the land surrounding the site varies from the Gipping Valley and built-up areas to the east, to the predominantly rural area to the west (part of a Special Landscape

Area). The topography of the site is in part a wide flat plateau containing hedgerow features, although past quarrying and subsequent restoration activity has resulted in deep excavation, land re-contouring with the loss of natural topography and other features.

7. The site is not within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Nor is it within a Conservation Area. The Site does not hold any designated heritage assets; however, a number of listed buildings are within the vicinity, including:

- Shrubland Park, a grade I registered landscape, and Shrubland Hall (GII*);
- Church of St Mary (GI);
- Great Blakenham Hall (GII);
- The Bell Inn (GII);
- Malting Farmhouse (GII);
- Frogs Hall (GII);
- Tollgate Farmhouse (GII); and
- Gipping weir (GII).



[Application site highlighted in red]

Relevant Planning History / Application Details

8. An Outline planning application for the SnOasis development was first submitted to this Council in June 2004 (ref: OL/100/04). It was, and remains, a major mixed-use development, described as: *“a ski centre, holiday resort, centre of winter sports excellence, leisure and associated uses and related on and off-site infrastructure”*.
9. The original application was submitted with all matters reserved, save for access which was a detailed consideration alongside the principle of development. The Council resolved to support that application.
10. Following a ‘call in’ by the then Secretary of State, a public inquiry was held in 2007. Taking into account the recommendations of the Inspector, the Secretary of State granted planning permission in 2008.
11. A further application was received in 2010 (ref: 1969/10) to extend the timeframe within which the reserved matters application(s) were required to be submitted and to expressly provide for the phasing which is reflected in the current reserved matters application. That permission was granted in 2011, requiring the submission of reserved matters on or before 31st October 2016.
12. The outline permission granted in 2011 essentially follows the parameters set by the original 2008 permission and permits the development (and the means of access to the site), including: its character area envelopes (now described as zones), constituent elements, footprints and the maximum heights of buildings and structures.
13. The development comprises a wide range of services and facilities, including: ski slope, bobsleigh run, ice and skating rinks, conferencing and exhibition centre, sports academy and hostel, hotel, holiday lodges, casino, nightclub/bars, restaurants, cafes and other related leisure and retail offers. For the avoidance of doubt, a detailed schedule of permitted development is included at Appendix A to this report.
14. The current permission also sets requirements for how the reserved matters are to be compiled and submitted and this is identifiable from conditions 1 through 5 of the 2011 planning permission decision notice, which is appended to this report at Appendix B.

15. The reserved matters are split into eight 'phases' and correspond to the character areas already approved. They have been submitted as eight separate applications and are subject to the treatment of this report. The individual phases are described as follows:

“Phase 1: Details of the ecological mitigation - to include earth stripping and creation of the ponds in preparation for the relocation of newts.

Phase 2: Details of civils¹, drainage and structural landscaping.

Phase 3: Details of the siting, design and external appearance, of the ski dome, associated car parking and any hard and soft landscaping.

Phase 4: Details of the siting, design and external appearance, of the entertainment dome, and any hard and soft landscaping.

Phase 5: Details of the siting, design and external appearance of the hotel, car park, apartments and retail units together with any hard and soft landscaping.

Phase 6: Details of the siting, design and external appearance of the sports academy, hostel and car park together with any hard and soft landscaping.

Phase 7: Details of the siting, design and external appearance of the ice rink, conference and exhibition centre together with any hard and soft landscaping.

Phase 8: Details of the siting, design and external appearance of the log cabins and clubhouse together with any hard and soft landscaping.”

16. The precise nature of each phase is described in subsequent sections of this report, where collectively the details submitted relate to all the reserved matters identified within the outline planning permission. Consequently, this report will consider the merits of the submitted details on a 'phase by phase' [1 - 8] basis.
17. The applications are supported by a significant volume of supporting information, including a new Environmental Statement (“ES”). A schedule of the application documents received in support of the application is attached to this report at Appendix E.

¹ 'Civils' being defined as: civil works comprising the construction of roads, including the “bridge structure” alongside Viridor’s land to the north of the ski slope, drainage installations, forming levels and ground modelling, creating water features and water courses, installation of services to each phase of the development and perimeter fencing.

A new ES has been submitted alongside the reserved matters in order to ensure that the Council – and the public – remain suitably aware and can pay appropriate regard to the likely environmental effects of the development, notwithstanding that the development already benefits from planning permission. The ES will be considered under its own section of this report.

18. Officers from this Council and Suffolk County Council have also worked with the Applicant to agree heads of terms for a new s106 legal agreement. This is in order to ensure that mitigation and/or other important measures and obligations remain current and appropriate bearing in mind the time that has elapsed since the present legal agreement was entered into (more than 5 years ago). This will also form a dedicated section of this report (with heads of terms set out under Appendix C) and where the agreed heads of terms form part of the recommendation before Members.
19. The submitted reserved matters applications represent a crucial step forward in the life of this long-standing project, where officers understand that financial backing is in place and that it is intended, if reserved matters approvals are granted in accordance with the recommendations herein, to have the entire facility capable of operation by the end of 2023. As a point of planning principle, notwithstanding the passage of time the outline planning permission can be relied upon and should be at the nexus of material considerations.
20. The applications, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant (including consultation responses and third-party representations) can be viewed online at: <https://planning.baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/>. Alternatively, copies are available to view at the Council offices².

PART THREE – POLICIES AND CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Planning Policy Context

21. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires, in dealing with an application for planning permission, a local planning authority to have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as is material to the application, and to any '*other material considerations*'.

² Details of addresses and opening times are available at: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/contact-us>

22. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications under the Planning Acts be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

23. Relevant to the submitted applications, the development plan comprises the following:
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008)
 - Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review (2012)
 - saved policies from the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998).
24. Within the current development plan, those policies considered to be most important for the determination of the reserved matters applications are as follows (save for the entirety of the development plan being taken into account in any event):
- FC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - FC1.1 – Approach to Sustainable Development
 - CS3 – Reduce Contributions to Climate Change
 - CS4 – Adaption to Climate Change
 - CS5 – Environment
 - GP1 – Design and Layout of Development
 - HB1 – Protection of Historic Buildings
 - HB7 – Protecting Gardens and Parkland of Historic Interest
 - CL2 – Development within Special Landscape Areas
 - CL8 – Protecting Wildlife Habitats
 - CL9 – Recognised Wildlife Areas
 - E12 – General Principles for Commercial Development
 - T10 – Highway Considerations
 - SC4 – Protection of Groundwater
25. The Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Joint Local Plan with the Babergh District Council. The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) identifies that decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to their stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies, and their degree of consistency with national policies. The plan-making process in this instance is at a very early stage and is therefore not weighed as a determinative consideration in this instance.

The National Planning Policy Framework

26. The NPPF of February 2019 contains the Government's planning policies for England and sets out how these are expected to be applied. The policies contained within the NPPF are a material consideration and should be taken into account for decision-taking purposes.
27. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At paragraph 8, this is defined as meaning that there are three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social, and environmental. The NPPF goes on to state, however, that they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged (para. 9).

Other Considerations

28. The following documents are also considered as material and especially applicable to this proposal by officers:
 - Inspector's Report to the Secretary of State (SnOasis application, 2007);
 - Secretary of State's Decision Letter (SnOasis application, 2008);
 - Suffolk County Council - Suffolk Guidance for Parking (2014), adopted 2015.
29. On the 6th March 2014, a number of Ministerial planning circulars were cancelled by central Government and were replaced by the Government's online national Planning Practice Guidance ("PPG"). The guidance provided is advice on procedure rather than explicit policy; however, it has been taken into account in reaching the recommendation made on this application.
30. The PPG is an online reference as 'living document' and is available at the following internet address: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>.
31. The relevant policies referred to above can be viewed online. Please see the notes attached to the Schedule.

Consultations and Representations

32. All of those most recent or relevant responses received prior to the completion of this report are summarised or directly quoted below, which includes public representations and consultation responses; nevertheless, all responses received are available to view on the Council's website and at its offices as detailed above. Given the lengthy/technical nature of some of the responses received, Members are directed to consider the original copies of those documents. A bundle of consultation responses will also be provided with the Committee papers.
33. Any further responses or representations will be reported through the Late Papers function and/or to Members at Committee.
34. SnOasis Parish Alliance

The SnOasis Parish Alliance comprise the following member parishes:

- Claydon & Whitton;
- Great Blakenham;
- Barham;
- Little Blakenham;
- Bramford;
- Somerhsam;
- Baylham;
- Nettlestead; and
- Needham Market.

Detailed comments have been provided in respect of ecology, site security/access, alternative site usage, visual appearance, transport, enforcement, decommissioning, illumination, amenity, public rights of way, construction methods, foul and surface water, contamination and sustainability.

Given the lengthy nature of those comments, Members are directed to consider them in full at Appendix D where the Applicant and your officers have provided commentary in response.

35. Sproughton Parish Council

- Assessments regarding the SnOasis traffic impact on the alternative route through Sproughton Village have yet to be carried out.
- Insufficient traffic impact assessment and the Environmental Statement is misleading.
- In response to applicant letter (01.01.18) the applicant has not contacted the Parish nor addressed objections; the Parish continues to object.

36. Ipswich Borough Council

- No comment.

37. Claydon and Whitton Parish Council

- Objects to the proposal, based on grounds of: unsustainable development, increased traffic generation, loss of habitat, original reports are outdated, adverse cumulative impact of development within the area, light pollution and insufficient consideration of a change in local population.

38. Suffolk County Council

- Highways – no objection subject to conditions and re-evaluation of s106 obligations to ensure mitigation remains current and necessary.
- Floods – no objection subject to specifically-worded conditions.
- Planning matters – no objection subject to collaboration between councils to agree a new s106 legal agreement.
- Minerals – no objection.
- Archaeology – no objection subject to condition(s).

39. Sport England

- Continue to support the development and where it would provide sports facilities meeting a demand.
- The development is also supported by Snowsport England and the English Ice Hockey Association.

40. Highways England

- No objection.

41. Historic England

- Do not wish to offer comments.

[Officer Comment: Historic England's response of 2017 set out that it did not wish to offer comments save for reminding the Council of relevant considerations. Its concluding recommendation stated that Historic England had 'concerns' but this was not elaborated, nor did it follow from the body of comments preceding. The most recent response from Historic England makes clear that they do not wish to offer comments and advise that heritage comments should be sought from the Council's own specialists, which has been carried out.]

42. Essex and Suffolk Water

- No objection.

43. Environment Agency

- No objection.
- As a minimum would expect to see water efficiency measures, sustainable drainage systems and water recycling measures incorporated into the development.

44. Ministry of Defence

- No objection subject to bird management plan and incorporation of design comments.

45. Suffolk Constabulary

- Comments in respect of construction/building and operational considerations.

46. Natural England

- No objection subject to conditions.

47. Suffolk Wildlife Trust

- No objection subject to conditions.

48. Place Services – Ecology (Council’s appointed consultant)

- No objection, subject to securing ecological mitigation and enhancement measures.

49. Place Services – Landscape (Council’s appointed consultant)

- No objection: “the proposal has been developed with landscape at the forefront of the design. Native planting, along with themed planting has been proposed, creating an idyllic environment for both visitors and wildlife.”
- It is recommended that a further planning condition be imposed and that the use of Holly would not be acceptable.

50. MSDC – Economic Development

- Supports the project as a major regional/national attraction.

51. MSDC – Heritage

- “The changes would not constitute anything but the lowest level of harm on the spectrum of ‘less than substantial harm”

52. MSDC – Waste

- No objection, but would like to see further details of bin management.
- Drawings appear to allow for dustcart measurement which is 30mm too narrow.

[Officer comment: A 30mm (i.e. 3cm) change to internal routes is considered to be tolerable and effectively immaterial when accounting for the scale of the drawings and the layout and presentation of the reserved matters as submitted. If necessary, this could be treated by condition in any event.]

53. MSDC – Environmental Health (Noise, Light, other Emissions)

- No objection – “No adverse comments to make”.

54. MSDC – Environmental Health (Air Quality)

- No objection/comments to make.

55. MSDC – Environmental Health (Land Contamination)

- No objection/comments to make.

56. MSDC – Sustainability Officer

- No objection.
- “The energy statement addendum dated Dec 2017 has been created in conjunction/consultation with this department and is therefore acceptable.”

57. Those public representations received are summarised as follows:

- Inadequate public transport provision, the proposed bus is insufficient for visitor numbers, consequently increasing road traffic.
- Increased air, noise and light pollution.
- The proposed ski slope will ruin the skyline and landscape.
- The proposal would destroy local wildlife and the ecological mitigation measures are insufficient.
- The proposal is unnecessary and will not benefit the local people.
- The proposal is of an unsuitable scale for the area and is overdevelopment.
- Concerns regarding the financial reputation of the developers and banks, resulting in a financially unviable proposal.
- Failure of SnOasis would lead to derelict buildings.
- Inadequate access to the site.
- The proposal is unsustainable, will not be profitable and cannot be sustained by proposed visitor numbers.
- Strain on water drainage and waste disposal.
- Fear of crime.
- Support on the condition that Great Blakenham railway station is reopened and roads are improved.
- The proposal is a great opportunity for the economy of the local area.

58. All consultee responses and representations received to date have been noted and have been taken into account when reaching the recommendations as set out below.

PART FOUR – ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION

Decision-Taking Context

59. The SnOasis development benefits from outline planning permission. The present applications for approval of reserved matters, and the decision to be taken by Members in respect of those applications, cannot undo that position nor can the mix of uses or inherent nature of the development be altered.
60. The acceptable principle and nature of development therefore being established, the matters now before Members relate to certain items that had been reserved for a later determination i.e. the scale, layout, appearance, and landscaping of the site as a whole and in respect of the constituent phases or zones of development permitted, in addition to any other matters reserved for determination at this stage i.e. Phase 1 and ecology. Members are directed to the construction of the reserved matters being cast as eight 'phases' within the outline planning permission.
61. Article 2(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 includes definitions which provide a helpful starting point and a legal basis for determining what can and cannot be considered at the reserved matters stage; bearing in mind that as noted, the principle of development has already been established and which set very clear parameters in respect of use and general presentation. That is the context against which the decisions on the reserved matters applications must be taken. Whilst the ongoing concerns of some parties are noted, it must be made clear that permission has already been granted, with the scope of assessment now limited purely to those matters as defined (or considerations related to such matters), or any requirements defined under the conditions of the outline permission which apply to the reserved matters.
62. The term scale is defined as “the height, width and length of each building proposed within the development in relation to its surroundings”.
63. Layout should be interpreted to mean “the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces within the development are provided, situated and orientated in relation to each other and to buildings and spaces outside the development”.

64. Appearance means “the aspects of a building or place within the development which determines the visual impression the building or place makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture”.
65. Landscaping means “the treatment of land (other than buildings) for the purpose of enhancing or protecting the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated and includes:
- a) screening by fences, walls or other means;
 - b) the planting of trees, hedges, shrubs or grass;
 - c) the formation of banks, terraces or other earthworks;
 - d) the laying out or provision of gardens, courts, squares, water features, sculpture or public art; and
 - e) the provision of other amenity features.”
66. Notwithstanding this, the details submitted in support of the reserved matters applications are substantively similar to those which featured as illustrative material with the original application that was considered by the Secretary of State and when endorsing the recommendations of the planning Inspector.
67. For example, the heights of the buildings submitted under these reserved matters applications correspond with those already considered by the Inspector and Secretary of State in granting planning permission. That the reserved matters material follows the scope of detail already taken into account is important for two reasons: firstly, that a number of parameters have been set through the granting of the outline planning permissions, which have effectively set an ‘envelope’ of assessments and judgements about the development to be carried through to the reserved matters and the implementation of the scheme; this reflects good planning practice and it is commonplace for outline planning proposals/permissions to set very clear parameters for the development to be brought forward under that permission. This gives confidence in the robustness of assessments already made and a degree of certainty in respect of what is to be brought forward.
68. Secondly, the Inspector exercised a number of planning judgements in respect of aspects of the development to which these reserved matters accord. As an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State (and whose recommendations were endorsed by them), his views are a material consideration that officers afford a significant weighting to.

69. In respect of those parameters that are relevant to the reserved matters submissions, these are defined as 'principles' at condition no. 4 of the outline permission, requiring:

"The reserved matters shall be based on the following siting and design principles:

- a) the location and footprint of the various buildings and structures shall be generally in accordance with the locations shown on drawing. no. 2002-311/P102/G;*
- b) the siting of the ski slope, entertainment dome and ice rink / conference & exhibition centre shall be as shown on drawing. no. 2002-311/P136;*
- c) the development areas and built accommodation areas shall be generally as set out in the Schedule of Development, Rev. C, dated 19 May 2006;*
- d) the design of the Snow Dome, Entertainment Dome and Academy Dome shall be generally as shown on drawings. nos. 2002-311/P104/A, P105/C, P106/A, P107/A, P108/A, P109, P113/B, P123 and P124;*
- e) the ice rink and the outdoor speed skating area within the Academy zone shall each be designed to have a maximum spectator capacity of 1,500;*
- f) the landscaping shall be generally in accordance with the provisions shown on drawings nos. 9002-062/101/E and 9002-062/104/D."*

70. The submitted reserved matters details accord with those principles and the specific requirements set out under condition no. 5 of the permission.

71. Following the grant of outline planning permission, the key question for Members has now moved to whether the detailed form of the development proposed is acceptable (in respect of scale, layout, appearance, and landscaping). Through the grant of planning permission, it is implicit that there must be at least one acceptable form of reserved matters arising out of that permission. As noted, the scope/parameters of such an acceptable presentation was set by the outline planning permission to which these reserved matters accord. Of itself, this is an important consideration.

72. Nevertheless, the report will now move on to assess the individual acceptability of each reserved matters 'phase', before considering matters relating to the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") that has been carried out and the heads of terms proposed for a new s106 legal agreement and the reasons for that and any changes from the current agreement.

73. Lastly, the report will reach its conclusion and present a recommendation for Members taking all of the foregoing into account.

74. Applicable planning policies are cited where first relevant, however for simplicity are not repeated throughout the report.

Phase 1 – Ecology

“Details of the ecological mitigation - to include earth stripping and creation of the ponds in preparation for the relocation of newts.”

75. Phase 1 relates to the ecological mitigation and enhancement works for the scheme, incorporating earth stripping and the creation of the ponds in preparation for the relocation of Great Crested Newts (“GCN”). This affects four areas within the site and amounts to approximately 29ha of land take. It will include the construction of new ponds and habitat, protecting existing ponds, additional planting and safeguarding measures.
76. The application documents include an ES (with a dedicated ecology chapter) and various ecological reports, surveys, and updates, which details the results of survey work undertaken to identify relevant habitats and species potentially affected by the development, along with proposed strategies and opportunities for protection, mitigation and enhancement (including safeguarding the SSSI which sits within the Phase 2 land). This takes the form of a refreshed Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan (“EMMP”), which progresses and updates the original EMMP secured under the current s106 legal agreement.
77. Policy CL8 seeks to protect rare or vulnerable species, especially those protected by law. Policy CS5 seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity, protected sites, wildlife corridors and ecological networks. Improving biodiversity is one element of the environmental objective of sustainable development underpinning the NPPF. Specifically, paragraph 170 sets out the objectives of protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.
78. The present details have followed an iterative and collaborative process where during the course of the application process a number of issues relating to the ecological information submitted were raised by consultees, responded to by the Applicant with the submission of additional information, and then that information being further commented upon by the consultees.
79. Having taken all matters into account, officers endorse the position set out by the Council’s appointed ecologist which also accords with the comments received by the

Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The Council has received sufficient information to allow the reserved matters to be determined and where recommended planning conditions – all of which shall be imposed – will ensure that the development does not pose an unacceptable detriment to ecology or biodiversity. Likewise, planning obligations need to be maintained to ensure that appropriate steps can be taken – and monies made available – in the event that construction results in a decrease in farmland birds, for example.

80. It is also noted that in respect of GCN, Natural England have advised that they do not need to see any further information at this stage and have no further comments to make. Relevant licences cannot be applied for until planning matters are resolved and there are no indications that would suggest the developer would be unsuccessful in being granted them; as a matter of caution, however, preclusive conditions can be applied to ensure that such matters are resolved prior to development proceeding. Conditions are also recommended to be imposed in-line with those comments received by Place Services and Suffolk Wildlife Trust.
81. Officers are therefore satisfied that the matters submitted pursuant to Phase 1 are acceptable, accord with the requirements and principles set out under the outline permission, would comply with the development plan and the NPPF and are appropriate, subject to controls and further requirements as recommended.

Phase 2 – Civils, Drainage, and Structural Landscaping

“Details of civils, drainage and structural landscaping.”

82. Phase 2 of the reserved matters broadly covers the required civil engineering works to enable the delivery of the development. As the site masterplan/phasing plan highlights, this phase envelopes the built aspects of the development from Phases 3 thru 8 and includes the gateway and access to the site (where access has already been approved under the outline permission). The land comprising Phase 2 also includes the Great Blakenham Pit SSSI, which is partly located south-east of where the Education Centre is to be sited.
83. This submitted detail relevant to Phase 2 includes:
 - Construction of roads
 - Surface water drainage
 - Site levels
 - Creating water features

- Structural landscaping – both planting and perimeter fencing
- Education Centre (previously referred to as the Visitor Centre)
- Energy Centre

84. The following paragraphs outline the proposals for each of these matters.

Construction of roads and bridge structures

85. The site masterplan shows the location of roads being considered under Phase 2. These include the access road starting at the east of the site to connect to Phase 3 (Ski Dome), Phase 4 (Entertainment Dome), Phase 5 (hotel, apartments and retail units) and Phase 6 (Sports Academy and hostel). Roads and landscaping within each phase are considered separately in this report; this section solely considers the roads identified within Phase 2 on the masterplan.

Surface water drainage, site levels and drainage features

86. A surface water strategy has been developed to address surface water from the proposed scheme, including melted snow-water from within the facility.

87. The topography of the site is proposed to remain similar to the existing topography. The steep slope will provide the alignment of the proposed ski slope, and the western plateau will be used for the majority of the developed area proposed in the masterplan.

Structural landscaping – both planting and perimeter fencing

88. The application is supported by detailed landscaping plans, for soft planting, hard landscaped areas and water features. There is landscaping proposed in other phases of the development, this section of the report only considers the structural landscaping within phase 2.

89. The areas of landscaping being considered in this section include:

- landscaping with footpaths provided within it to the west of the site;
- to the east and north of Phase 8 (chalets and clubhouse);
- to the north and south of Phase 3 (ski dome); and
- around the access road from the main highway to within the site.

Education Centre

90. The Education Centre is located to the east, adjacent to the main access road through the site. The centre would be 93 sqm Gross Internal Area (GIA), a single-storey, flat-roofed building being 4.5m tall, and would be located outside of the main SnOasis complex, accessible without visitors needing to check-in. The small single-storey building is located adjacent to the SSSI in the south-east of the site with views overlooking it. It will include a teaching/display space, toilets and further amenity space. There is associated parking with 15 no. spaces adjacent to the building.
91. The Education Centre is proposed to be clad in timber with punched metal windows and a metal clad roof. The simple form and choice of materials cladding will ensure that it sits sympathetically within its surroundings.

Energy Centre

92. The provision of an energy centre is secured through the current S106 agreement relating to the outline planning permission. It was identified as being necessary as part of the details submitted in response to a request by the Secretary of State following the Public Inquiry. The Energy Centre (total floor area is 2,238sqm GIA) would sit within a part of the site that would not be accessible by the public and which would be close to the main servicing road, adjacent to the ski slope, and Sports Academy (phases 3 and 6). It is comprised of three buildings, one of which being two-storey (6.9m high) and the others being single-storey (9.5m high and 3.5m high respectively). It would be accessed only by maintenance staff. Vehicular access from the main service road and accessible areas will be well lit and signposted.
93. The Energy Centre would use materials to help it blend in within its surroundings especially at high level. The chimney is to be clad in timber with the main building a combination of timber cladding and metal louvres and render at low level.

Assessment

94. The matters to be considered under this phase are the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed buildings and relevant landscaping.

95. For the avoidance of doubt, only the roads, layout, landscaping and buildings within Phase 2 are considered in this section of the report. Applicable matters in other phases are considered within subsequent sections.

Construction of roads

96. The site access via Bramford Road (B1113) was established under the outline permission. The road and footpath layout submitted for Phase 2 has been considered for highway safety, as required by Policy T10 and paragraph 110 of the NPPF.
97. Details submitted with the application indicate an acceptable road, footpath and cycle track infrastructure layout, levels, gradients and construction specification. The road and footpath layout would result in a safe layout to the appropriate highway specification. Suffolk County Council as the Local Highway Authority has considered the details and raises no objections and the proposed roads, footways and cycleways within Phase 2 are therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with local plan policy T10 and the NPPF.

Surface water drainage

98. The surface water drainage strategy for the site has been progressed with the Applicant through the course of this application.
99. The site is located on a principal aquifer and it is therefore important to ensure no contaminants enter groundwater from this site, in accordance with Policy SC4. To ensure the proposals are in accordance with Policy CS4 paragraph 150 of the NPPF which seeks to avoid increasing vulnerability to impacts of climate change, the development needs to demonstrate that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF also seeks to ensure new development does not contribute to water pollution, and as this site is located on a principal aquifer the water quality of surface water run-off is a key issue.
100. Following extensive discussions between parties, and further information submitted by the Applicant in November 2018, agreeing a scope of necessary works, the Suffolk County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority raises no objection to the application(s). This is subject to a detailed condition being imposed upon the grant of reserved matters and which has been accepted by the Applicant.

101. Subject to this agreed scope of works being carried out, which is to be secured through condition as noted above, the surface water drainage strategy for the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with local and national planning policy.

Structural landscaping – both planting and perimeter fencing, site levels and water features

102. Core Strategy policy CS5 seeks to protect and conserve landscape qualities and encourage development that is consistent with the overall character of the area. The western half of the site is located within a Special Landscape Area (SLA). Policy CL2 of the local plan seeks that where development is proposed within SLAs there should be particular care to safeguard landscape quality, and where development does occur it should be sensitively designed with high standards of layout, materials and landscaping. These policies are considered to align with paragraph 170 of the NPPF which seeks to protect and enhance valued landscapes and recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

103. The outline permission requires that the landscaping details be generally in accordance with approved drawings that have already been considered. As noted earlier in this report, the outline permission has set parameters that the reserved matters are expected to comply with. Those requirements have been met.

104. General arrangement plans and planting plans have been submitted for the site, along with an overarching Landscape Design Statement, planting schedules, specification and matrix. The proposals were reviewed by Council's Landscape consultant. Overall, they considered that the proposals have been developed with landscape at the forefront of the design. Native planting, along with themed planting has been proposed, creating an idyllic environment for both visitors and wildlife.

105. Recommendations have been made by the Landscape consultant regarding management and maintenance of hard landscaping materials, and minor comments on the proposed species within the planting scheme. To address these concerns a further condition relating to a detailed landscape scheme (hard and soft landscaping) and management plan is proposed, which would be agreed prior to the commencement of each phase. This is welcomed and makes positive sense: the strategy presented under the cover of this submission is appropriate and accepted; however, additional focus and more specific detail can be agreed as the development is brought forward which will

enable the consultant's views (for example a restriction on the use of Holly) to be incorporated.

106. Likewise, comments received in relation to precise details of fencing treatment are noted. Officers do not consider that it is necessary for this matter to be addressed now; rather, and in agreement with the Applicant, this can be treated by condition. In respect of the number of water features proposed (and which to an extent links to the features proposed within Phase 1) the comments of the Ministry of Defence have been considered carefully. Evidently, a balance should be struck between positive amenity features and measures that would offer net gains to biodiversity, and the need to minimise risk of bird strike to aircraft. The imposition of a Bird Management Plan, as requested by the Ministry, is considered an appropriate measure to safeguard both. Both conditions would apply to the development as a whole when approving the reserved matters.
107. Subject to conditions the proposed structural landscaping is considered to be acceptable, and in accordance with local and national planning policy.

Education Centre and Energy Centre

108. Two buildings are proposed within Phase 2, as detailed above in this report. The submitted details accord with the parameters set by the outline planning permission.
109. Policy CS5 of the core strategy seeks to ensure a high quality of design is achieved that respects local distinctiveness, enhancing character and appearance of the district. Local plan policies GP1 on design and layout of development aim to seek a good standard of design. These policies are considered to be consistent with a number of paragraphs in the NPPF, which identifies good design as a key aspect of sustainable development, and high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 127 goes on to identify that developments should add to the overall quality of the area, are sympathetic to the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, establish and maintain a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and open space to support local facilities and transport networks, create places that are safe inclusive and accessible, and which promote health and well-being.
110. The scale, appearance and layout of these two buildings are considered to respect the context of the site, and other proposed development on the site. The materials are contemporary and considered to be in-keeping with the wider proposed development. The site itself is quite detached from existing built form in Great Blakenham, but within the vicinity of the Suffolk Energy from Waste Facility ("EFW"). The EFW building is of a

contemporary design, and so the relationship of the education centre to this building is considered the more significant consideration, notwithstanding that views into the site from the public realm would be limited. Both are contemporary in their design, and the proposed development is considered to be in-keeping with its context.

111. The proposed Education Centre and Energy Centre are therefore considered to be in accordance with the development plan and NPPF.
112. Whilst the particular energy strategy to be utilised by the development does not form a part of the reserved matters, it has been included as a part of the ES. Following extensive dialogue with the Council's Sustainability Officer, the final strategy document has been endorsed and demonstrates continued policy compliance and operates within the parameters set by planning obligation.

SSSI

113. The Great Blakenham Pit SSSI is located within the Phase 2 land budget and is designated for its geological importance, aiding the interpretation of the Ice Age history of southern Britain during the last 2 million years. As Natural England state, it is crucial that those interests be fully protected during construction and throughout operation of the development.
114. The SSSI comprises three parts. It is the largest part, within the south-east corner of the Site and adjacent to the main access road and Education Centre, that is capable of being affected by the development. As the Inspector noted in recommending that outline planning permission be granted, the Applicant's proposals for improved management, controlled public access and interpretation raise no objection in principle.
115. The Applicant has been clear that the proposed plans will leave the SSSI area untouched but, notwithstanding this, has worked with Natural England to agree suitable measures, culminating in detail that can be incorporated into the EMMP alongside a dedicated Geological Management and Monitoring Plan ("GMMP"). Following an iterative process, Natural England no longer raise an objection subject to conditions that will be attached to the grant of reserved matters approval.

Conclusion on Phase 2

116. The details under Phase 2 for roads, surface water features, site levels, water features, structural landscaping, the Education Centre and Energy Centre have all been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the outline planning permission. Furthermore, and

subject to appropriate mitigation, the reserved matters submitted under Phase 2 would accord with the development plan and NPPF.

Phase 3 – Ski Dome

Phase 3: Details of the siting, design and external appearance, of the ski dome, associated car parking and any hard and soft landscaping.

117. Phase 3 represents the ski dome zone and comprises the following elements:

- Main Ski Slope;
- Nursery Slope;
- Ski and Boot Hire;
- Bobsleigh Run;
- Ice Wall;
- Health and Fitness Centre;
- Medical Room;
- Children’s Play Area
- ‘Après Ski’ Bar;
- ‘Ice’ Bar;
- Ticket Booth;
- Maintenance Room; and
- Vehicular Parking.

118. The individual components within the main building are arranged over four floors with the maximum height of the ski slope building being 125.8m AOD (c.73.8m above ground) which is precisely the scale set under the outline planning permission and which was subject to the considerations of the Inspector. The ski slope itself is the landmark aspect of the SnOasis development and the element which understandably draws significant attention and warrants careful consideration, notwithstanding that its principle has already been established.

Assessment

119. The acceptability of Phase 3, like the subsequent phases, derives from consideration of the siting (layout) of development, and its scale, appearance and landscaping. First and foremost, the submitted details accord with the requirements and principles set out under the outline planning permission.

Ski Dome/Slope Building

120. The centrepiece of the entire development is the ski centre complex including the international competition-standard slalom ski-run which is intended to deliver a 'National Centre for Winter Sporting Excellence'.
121. There is no doubt that the Ski Dome phase (more accurately and primarily represented as a sloped structure) will be a powerful visual statement like no other in the District, or beyond. It is incredibly difficult to think of any traditional design references that would be relevant in terms of creating a structure that may be said to be 'in-keeping' with any established local character. It is what it is. It is part of a tourism attraction that contains components of a scale that are designed to reproduce an authentic mountain skiing experience and, such use and scale already being permitted, it is also considered difficult to suggest that the scale and form should be anything less striking, given what it has to accommodate and bearing in mind its siting is also fixed by the outline planning permission.
122. The Applicant has chosen to make the appearance of much of the complex and particularly the Ski Dome phase dramatically striking and futuristic. The character reflects the nature of the activity that will occur within it and Members will need to judge its aesthetic merits on that basis: it is a one-off and will make its own statement. Where the outline permission expressly requires this element to 'generally conform' to the previously considered and approved drawings (in fact they are largely identical), it is hard to imagine how else they might or indeed ought to be presented.
123. The Ski Dome ski slope, as was expected at the time of determining the outline application, will be visible within the wider landscape. Physically it will announce the presence of the complex within that context and as a matter of judgement it is likely to become something of a unique Mid Suffolk and East Anglian landmark. It will be dramatic and will capture the sense of energy and excitement associated with the skiing centre within it and its associated services and facilities.
124. The principle already having been accepted, the Council is wed to the creation of a striking centre-piece structure that would command attention. It cannot be disguised as anything other than what it is. It cannot be cloaked in a contrived pastiche skin of a traditional local form because one doesn't exist that would be relevant. In short, this approach is implicit in the outline planning permission.

125. However, as noted, the nearby EWF building is of itself a distinctive and contemporary architectural landmark, and there is no reason to consider that the design and appearance of the Ski Dome phase is in any sense offensive to local character by comparison.
126. Taking advantage of the terrain, much of the Phase is below the general ground level of the site, within a landscaped valley. General building heights across the site will be restricted to no more than 79m AOD, however the ski run will rise to a height of 125.8m AOD (which represents an above ground level of c.73.8m) in order to provide a gradient and overall length of run that the Applicant considers will qualify it as an international-standard slalom run.
127. The upper part of the Ski Dome phase will rise gently into the air to create an overarching structure that hangs apparently unsupported, save for graceful curved legs set back far from the leading edge of the structure.
128. A range of potential cladding options have been suggested but the Applicant considers that this is a matter that can be reserved by planning condition. Officers agree that this is a matter, whilst undoubtedly needing to be treated with the utmost care, that can be dealt with after approval of the reserved matters; it is typical – especially for large-scale and complex proposals – for detailed finishes to be reserved for later consideration in that fashion.
129. No signage is proposed as part of the submitted applications. Such matters would be treated, if necessary, by further planning application(s) and advertisements are controlled under separate Regulations³.
130. Matters relating to lighting, light-spill, and night-time illumination are relevant given the prominence of this Phase and the glazed, west-facing elliptical façade/aperture at the top of the ski slope. Appropriately-worded planning conditions are capable of ensuring that there would be no unacceptable impacts in that regard (including in consideration of residential amenity); both through glazing treatment (or other such design solution) and lighting control/management.
131. Other than the management of lighting above, this Phase (similar to all other Phases of the reserved matters) pose no other issues in respect of residential amenity. The uses are already permitted, noise and operational controls are conditioned as a part of the outline planning permission, and sensitive receptors are considered to be separated from the development by a significant degree.

³ The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

132. The Ski Dome phase is the only part of the development that is considered capable of posing a material impact upon heritage assets. The Council must attribute considerable importance to the desire to keep such assets from harm; this is what Section 66 of the listed buildings Act means in practice. As stated repeatedly throughout this report the development benefits from planning permission, and heritage matters were considered when giving consent. Further, the siting, scale, and general design of the Ski Dome element has already been fixed and the reserved matters must comply with those parameters.
133. The planning Inspector did not consider that the development would be harmful to heritage assets. In assessing the reserved matters details, your Heritage officers consider that there would be a degree of harm, albeit of a very low nature: that it would “*not constitute anything but the lowest level of harm on the spectrum of ‘less than substantial harm’*”. Whilst your planning officers are inclined to favour the position set out by the Inspector, even if adopting a cautious stance and accepting that there would be an element of adverse effect to the significance of various assets within the vicinity, such harm – even if slightly more than trifling or nugatory – would nevertheless pale in insignificance when weighed against the considerable public benefits that would accrue in allowing development to proceed. That position has not changed and therefore this Phase can be approved in-line with local and national planning policy and in accordance with the statutory duties imposed upon the Council as decision-taker.
134. Taking into account the foregoing, and even acknowledging the wide visibility of the Ski Dome building, its prominence – articulated by its scale and design – is not considered to conflict with the development plan or NPPF.
135. Further, it must be borne in mind that, as noted above, this element already has planning permission and that its siting, scale and general appearance have already been fixed (and are being adhered to). The siting, design and external appearance of this phase are therefore held to be appropriate.

Parking

136. The quantum of parking is fixed by the outline planning permission. Nevertheless, the presentation is considered to be acceptable and officers endorse the view of the Local Highway Authority, who raise no objection.

Landscaping

137. Similar to the considerations relevant to Phase 2 in the preceding section of this report, the submitted landscape details are considered acceptable, subject to conditions as recommended by the Council's Landscape consultant.

Conclusion on Phase 3

138. The details under Phase 3 for the Ski Dome phase have all been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the outline planning permission. Subject to conditions, the siting, design and external appearance of the Phase is acceptable, as too are the submitted parking and landscaping details. The design is considered to be appropriate by the context set by the development and would be of a suitable quality having regard for its individual circumstances and of local and national planning policy, proposing a design that is distinctive in its own right.

Phase 4 – Entertainment Dome

Phase 4: Details of the siting, design and external appearance, of the entertainment dome, and any hard and soft landscaping.

139. Phase 4 represents the Entertainment Dome zone, arranged over three levels, and comprises the following elements:

- Bowling Alley (and Bar);
- Nightclub;
- Casino;
- Snooker/Pool Hall;
- Bars and Restaurants;
- Family Entertainment Centre;
- Cinema (Four Screen);
- Food Court;
- Climbing Facility;
- Supporting Retail and Leisure Space; and
- Ancillary Space, W.C.s, etc.

140. Despite being arranged over three levels, the Entertainment Dome is low-set with a large proportion of the building being subterranean. With a shallow-domed roof it takes a

simpler form – though no less bold in design – than the adjacent Ski Dome and would have a maximum height of 69m AOD or approximately 15m above ground. As such, it would not be readily perceptible from outside of the site boundaries.

141. It is indicated that the upper half of the building will be timber clad punctuated by areas of glazing. The lower portion of the building will alternate between glazing and solid brickwork. The dome is identified as being metal clad. As with the other Phases of the development, detailed external finishes would be secured by condition.
142. The Entertainment Dome building will be linked to the Ski Dome not just at ground floor but also at an elevated level by a metal and glass bridge, enhancing connectivity. This will inevitably become a viewing platform from which the surrounding buildings and spaces can be appreciated; an unusual vantage point and one that may enhance the overall appreciation of the contemporary ski-village environment.

Assessment

143. The submitted details accord with the requirements and principles set out under the outline planning permission.

Entertainment Dome

144. The scale, appearance and siting/layout of the Entertainment Dome building is considered to respect the context of the site, and other proposed development within the site. That it would be largely divorced from the public realm enables it to define itself architecturally, though it is not incoherent when placed against the other phases of the development.

Landscaping

145. Similar to the considerations relevant to Phase 2 in a preceding section of this report, the submitted landscape details are considered acceptable, subject to conditions as recommended by the Council's Landscape consultant.

Conclusion on Phase 4

146. The details under Phase 4 for the Entertainment Dome have all been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the outline planning permission. Subject to

conditions, the siting, design and external appearance of the Phase is acceptable, as too are the submitted landscaping details.

Phase 5 – Hotel, Car Park, Apartments, Retail (The Village)

Phase 5: Details of the siting, design and external appearance of the hotel, car park, apartments and retail units together with any hard and soft landscaping.

147. Phase 5 of the overall development, identified as the ‘Village’, is located on an area of land that is located centrally on the overall application Site, having a given area of 4.73 hectares. The development on this land would consist of the following elements:

- Hotel
- Pavilion apartments
- Village Centre
- Village apartments
- Convenience Store
- Long Stay car park
- Service yard

148. The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application advises that the development in this location has been arranged in order to create an ‘...Alpine resort town centre environment...’ that is designed to create movement and activity. The applicable area abuts Phase 4 of the development and therefore the Entertainment Dome element of that phase would have a significant impact on Phase 5. The arrangement of built form in Phase 5 would position the proposed hotel building at the northern end of the phase, with an arc of village apartments (partially enclosing a formal soft landscaped area), a village centre, and a convenience store forming the central element of the development phase. This cluster of development would be immediately adjacent to the Entertainment Dome and would therefore form a significant group within the overall scheme. A further arc of pavilion apartments would be located in the southern element of Phase 5 – these buildings would contain a surface parking area. The individual elements of the phase are described and assessed in further detail below.

Hotel

149. The Inspector identified that, after the Ski Dome (ski slope) building itself, the Hotel would be the highest building on the overall SnOasis site, with its ridge at 74 metres above AOD

(save for two towers which slightly exceed that but not by a significant degree). The present reserved matters submission is effectively consistent with that analysis.

150. The Hotel would be one of the key visual 'events' within the overall development, and the largest example of the architectural approach that would be taken on the Site. Apart from the Ski Dome building, it would be the highest building on the Site and would serve as a focal point for the overall development.
151. In terms of size, the proposed hotel would be arranged over five storeys above ground level, with two taller rotunda features included at its south-eastern end. The building would have a horizontal emphasis, with vertical elements (including the rotundas) introduced at various points that would assist in breaking up the overall massing of the building. This is particularly notable on the façade of the hotel that would face south, towards the remainder of the Village phase and, hence, would be its main public 'face'. This approach would assist in creating a building of more 'human scale', notwithstanding its substantial size. In addition, the proposals include the provision of active frontage at ground floor level, via the creation of the hotel arrivals point and other commercial units. These elements, in combination would help to underpin the pivotal role that this building would have within the overall development.
152. The Hotel would be constructed using a combination of render, timber, timber cladding, and metal roofs. Due to the nature of the proposed use of this building, a significant proportion would be glazed.

Pavilion Apartments/Village Apartments

153. As well as the main accommodation offer within the hotel building, stand-alone apartments would also be provided within this phase of the development. This additional accommodation would consist of Village Apartments and smaller Pavilion Apartments.
154. The Village Apartment building is a significantly-sized, crescent-shaped three-storey building that forms a key element within the central cluster of development within Phase 5. This building would have a strong contemporary appearance, and it would be located within a formalised landscape setting. In terms of the palette of materials proposed, these are indicated to match those used on the hotel building, notwithstanding that detailed external finishes would be secured through condition. The ground floor of this building would be utilised for commercial purposes (containing 9 no. units for restaurant and bar space) with the remainder of the building used for accommodation space, comprising 50 no. apartments.

155. In relation to the Pavilion apartments, these would be simple, traditionally-proportioned buildings, indicated to be constructed using the same external materials as those on the main hotel building i.e. render, timber cladding and pitched metal roofs, with significant glazed areas, which serve to add verticality to the overall design. Each of the 6 no. buildings would contain accommodation on two floors (each floor containing 4 no. apartments) and the main access to each building would be visually-emphasised by a two-storey entrance feature set centrally on a main elevation, defined in part by the use of a metal edging feature.

Village Centre

156. The Village Centre building is located in a central position within the village area. It is a two-storey triangular-shaped building which would contain a large retail unit at ground level. The building would also contain two kiosk units located at the northern and southwest corners of the triangle. The first floor of the building would be utilised for office space, including an internal courtyard space.

157. In terms of overall appearance, the architectural approach taken is similar to that found on the main hotel building. Indeed, it is noted that this building would also incorporate rotunda features that would mirror those on the hotel. Such an approach would, it is felt, assist in creating a visual cohesion and coherence across this phase of the development.

Convenience Store

158. This building is would be a simple flat-roofed structure which would, again, be constructed using the same materials as those used elsewhere in this phase i.e. render and timber boarding. Glazed curtain walling would be located at various points on the building's elevations. This particular building would incorporate a deep eaves feature that would be clad in metal flashing. In terms of location, the building would be positioned immediately adjacent to the Entertainment Dome that would be provided as part of Phase 4 of the overall development.

Car Parking

159. This aspect of the Phase would incorporate a long-stay car park and a day-visitor surface car park. In terms of location the proposed day-visitor surface parking would be located at the southern end of the overall Phase 5 site – positioned adjacent to surface car parking areas that would be located as part of Phase 4. That said, the submitted plans indicate

that the eastern boundary of this particular car park would be adjacent to a linear landscaped area, that would also contain tree planting. In addition, the western boundary would abut the line of the Pavilion Apartments.

160. The proposed long-stay car parking area for this particular phase would be located at two levels below the ground floor level of the Hotel. At ground level, vehicular access to this basement parking area would be via a ramp within a landscaped space.
161. It is noted that the area below ground level would also incorporate a service yard facility, that would be accessible by service vehicles, and also the electric baggage carts that would distribute staying guests' luggage to those staying in the Resort area units proposed as part of Phase 8.

Landscaping

162. The overall landscaping scheme submitted for this Phase follows principles that are established across the site as a whole.
163. In the case of landscaping proposals for Phase 5 the proposed scheme would have a clear spatial relationship with the associated development and buildings. In fact, the design of some buildings, and the layout of others, would help to define landscaped areas. For example, the curved design of the Village Apartment building would 'frame' a formal landscaped area, including a lake, located immediately to the west. Similarly, the arrangement of the Pavilion Apartments, would take the form of an arc within a linear landscaped feature. In combination, the landscaped areas to the north and the south would combine to create a significant soft edge to this phase of the development, and a visual 'buffer' adjacent to the Phase 8 development.
164. Similar to the considerations relevant to Phase 2 in a preceding section of this report, the submitted landscape details are considered acceptable, subject to conditions as recommended by the Council's Landscape consultant.

Assessment

165. The submitted details accord with the requirements and principles set out under the outline planning permission.
166. The Village will be one of the main experiences of the SnOasis development, both for staying guests and day visitors. This phase would, spatially and operationally, be closely

linked with the Entertainment Dome element of development proposed as part of Phase 4, and the overall group would have a particular status within the overall development. The 'anchor' building within this particular phase is clearly the Hotel, which would also be the largest example of the design approach that is taken on the site. Individually, and as a group, the proposed detailed design approach taken would, it is felt, be an appropriate response to the status of this part of the site.

Conclusion on Phase 5

167. The details under Phase 5 have all been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the outline planning permission. Subject to conditions, the siting, design and external appearance of the Phase is acceptable, as too are the submitted landscaping and parking details.

Phase 6 – Sports Academy, Hostel, and Car Park

Phase 6: Details of the siting, design and external appearance of the sports academy, hostel and car park together with any hard and soft landscaping.

168. Phase 6 of the SnOasis development, which would cover an area of 4.18 hectares, abuts the northern boundary of Phase 5; the elements of which are described in more detail in the previous section of this report. The development incorporated within Phase 6 of the SnOasis proposal includes:

- Sports Centre/Academy;
- Hostel;
- Ice/Speed Skating Rink;
- Car Parking; and
- Servicing Areas.

169. The western portion of the Phase 6 area would be accommodated by hostel buildings, while in the central portion would be the sports academy. The eastern portion of the site would be occupied by the ice rink. This phase of the development also includes main car park for staying guests. A road to the main service yard within Phase 5 would pass underneath the seating area to the north of the ice rink. The individual elements of the development are described and assessed in further detail below.

Sports Centre

170. The Sports Centre building proposed for this phase would take a simple architectural form, comprising in essence a large single-volume hall, that would contain two sports courts, and a visually-subsidiary element that would contain squash courts, changing rooms, administration areas stores etc. A viewing gallery would be available at first floor level.
171. Each element of the building would be defined by use of a mono-pitched roof. The simplicity of the architectural approach would be underpinned by the use of a limited range of finishes.

Hostel

172. The hostel facilities proposed as part of Phase 6 would comprise 9 no. two-storey blocks in a mainly semi-detached arrangement apart from the northern-most detached block. Each block would contain 16 no. bedrooms and 4 no. community rooms with self-catering facilities. The architectural approach taken with these buildings aims, according to the Design and Access Statement, to reflect the Suffolk vernacular. These buildings would repeat the simple architectural approach that is taken with the Village Apartments in Phase 5. It is considered such an approach would help to establish a continuity of built form whereby, for example, residential use buildings were immediately distinguishable by the use of a particular architectural approach and use of a particular palette of materials.

Speed Skating Rink

173. The most significant single structure within the development proposed for Phase 6 would be the Speed Skating Rink that would occupy the eastern part of the land allocated for this phase. The rink would incorporate a skating circuit, similar in shape to a traditional athletics track, and the central area within the rink would be occupied by a series of sports courts. An elevated seating area for spectators would be located on the north-western boundary of the rink. The rink and the seating area would be covered by a tensile roof structure, whereas the central space would not be covered. The overall appearance of the rink would be a bespoke design, and it would not appear as a 'roofed' building in the traditional sense. It is noted that the arrangement of built form is such that the rink and the sports centre building would be built on the same north-east/south-west axis and would have an immediate spatial relationship with each other. In contrast, the hostel buildings' formalised arrangement would be within a significant landscaped space.

Car Parking

174. Car parking provision within Phase 6 of the SnOasis development would consist of basement parking provision on two levels, located directly below the speed skating rink – thereby not being visible at ground level. The submitted drawings show a significant amount of parking being provided at two basement levels – similar to the proposals for the Hotel building, immediately adjacent to the speed skating rink, to the south west. Indeed, the floor area plans submitted show that the basement level parking provision for Phases 5 and 6 being linked as part of an overall below-ground parking provision.

Landscaping

175. The proposed landscape proposals for this phase of development indicate that both the hostel buildings and the sports centre would be located within a large area of soft landscaping, including grass and tree/shrub planting, punctuated by access ways linking this phase with other areas of the overall development. The scale of the Speed Skating Rink is such that it occupied much of the eastern half of the phase's site area. However, the remaining areas between the rink and the boundary would contain additional planting.
176. Similar to the considerations relevant to Phase 2 in a preceding section of this report, the submitted landscape details are considered acceptable, subject to conditions as recommended by the Council's Landscape consultant.

Assessment

177. The submitted details accord with the requirements and principles set out under the outline planning permission.
178. The proposed Speed Skating Rink will be a unique, bespoke building on the site and due to its scale would also assist in wayfinding; being a prominent visual element within the context of the overall scheme of development. Furthermore, it would comprise the northernmost element within a group of key buildings, including the adjacent hotel, Academy Dome, Entertainment Dome and, of course, the Ski Dome phase itself. This group would have a fundamental role in establishing the overall character of the site.
179. As a part of this group it is considered that the use of a striking architectural approach is important, and one which this building successfully achieves. In comparison, other

buildings in this phase would be of relatively modest appearance. However, as individual elements of built form, they are considered to have architectural merit. The Sports Centre would have a simple form and appearance that did not visually compete with the Speed Skating Rink. Its landscape setting would assist in ensuring that it appeared as an 'event' within 'parkland'. Although proposed as part of Phase 6, the hostels would read as part of the wider 'Resort' accommodation area proposed under Phase 8 and would therefore not appear incongruous in this location. The proposed design and external treatments for the hostels would link with the chalets proposed to the west, and although the built form would be in a semi-formalised arrangement, it would be located in landscape equivalent to the Phase 8 site.

Conclusion on Phase 6

180. The details under Phase 6 have all been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the outline planning permission. Subject to conditions, the siting, design and external appearance of the Phase is acceptable, as too are the submitted landscaping and car parking details.

Phase 7 – Ice Rink, Conference, and Exhibition Centre (Academy Dome)

Phase 7: Details of the siting, design and external appearance of the ice rink, conference and exhibition centre together with any hard and soft landscaping.

181. Phase 7 of the SnOasis development covers a site area of 1.57 hectares, and within this phase a two-storey elliptical building to the north of the Ski Dome building would be erected, which is identified as the Academy Dome. This building would contain an exhibition and conference centre and a theatre, as well as an ice rink. The building would be of significant size but its design is such that it would be relatively low in comparison with the Ski Dome phase that would be located to the south, particularly when bearing in mind that the building is partially below ground. The proposed materials palette comprises brick faced walling, timber cladding set in a metal frame, glazed curtain walling and a metal roof.
182. The proposed organisation of uses within the building is such that the Exhibition and Conference Centre would be located at basement level, with the Ice Rink (and associated Ice Café) located at ground floor level. A theatre space would occupy the northern end of the building, over two floors. The individual elements of the development are described and assessed in further detail below.

Ice Rink

183. The proposed Ice Rink within the Academy Dome building would occupy a central position on the ground floor of this building. This would consist of the rink area, associated spectator seating, changing facilities, WCs, stores etc. The associated Ice Café would be located adjacent to the rink and also the main entrance to the building. The submitted plans also indicate a series of 4 no. conference rooms located on this level of the building, directly to the north of the rink.

Conference/Exhibition Centre

184. The proposed Conference and Exhibition centre would be located at basement level within the Academy Dome and would be accessed via lift facilities (accessible by disabled persons) and 4 no. stairwells. As may be anticipated the centre consists of a large single space that occupies much of the building at this level. Smaller rooms located on the periphery of the main space would contain additional conference spaces, as well as offices and stores, WCs etc.

Theatre

185. The proposed Theatre within the Academy Dome would be located at the northern end of the building and would occupy space over two floors (i.e. a ground and basement level). The stage would be located at basement level and one auditorium level would also be accessed via the basement. The second auditorium level would be at ground floor level.

Car Parking

186. This particular phase of the overall development does not include the provision of an individual area of car parking. However, it is noted that the location of Phase 7 is within close proximity to the underground car parking provision located under the Speed Skating Rink that forms part of Phase 6 and clearly the opportunity for shared use exists in this case.

Landscaping

187. The provision of landscaping in this phase consists in the main of an arced landscaped area to the north of the Academy Dome building. Although the Speed Skating Rink is

located close to the Academy Dome, to the north-west, the proposed landscape would act as a visual soft buffer between the two buildings. The treatment of this space would include some wetland planting, which is a reflection of the opportunities for landscape treatments offered by the topography of the site.

188. Similar to the considerations relevant to Phase 2 in a preceding section of this report, the submitted landscape details are considered acceptable, subject to conditions as recommended by the Council's Landscape consultant.

Assessment

189. The submitted details accord with the requirements and principles set out under the outline planning permission.
190. One of the smaller phases in terms of land take, Phase 7 would provide the Academy Dome, which would contain a number of individual uses. It would form part of the key group of buildings on the site. As noted elsewhere, this building would be partially set below ground level and the proposed landscaping to the north would be an intrinsic part of the overall design approach taken in this phase. It is considered that the proposed building design would be an appropriate response to its landscape setting – incorporating as it does a curved 'organic' appearance.

Conclusion on Phase 7

191. The details under Phase 7 have all been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the outline planning permission. Subject to conditions, the siting, design and external appearance of the Phase is acceptable, as too are the submitted landscaping details.

Phase 8 – Log Cabins and Clubhouse (The Resort)

Phase 8: Details of the siting, design and external appearance of the log cabins and clubhouse together with any hard and soft landscaping.

192. Phase 8 sits to the west of the main Village area of the development and covers one of the larger areas of land within the overall Site, which abuts Phases 1, 2, 5 and 6. This particular phase is identified in the application as the 'Resort' area; containing the bulk of the staying guest accommodation on the overall site. The proposal consists of the provision of 350 chalets (the log cabins) and a Country Club building (the club house). The proposed development on the site would include single chalets and groups of

terraced units accessed via a footway network across the phase site. The focal space at the centre of the chalet site would be a large circular lake feature. The proposed Country Club building would be located at the north-western boundary, with a direct spatial link provided between this building and the lake by a straight avenue path. In addition, the site for this Phase would abut a large lake area to be located adjacent to its northern boundary. Chalets at the northern edge of the site would be orientated to face this feature and the Country Club building would have terraced views as well. Indeed, the submitted design proposes the creation of a small island within the lake that would accommodate 7 detached chalets, linked to the remainder of the site by a footway. The individual elements of the development are described and assessed in further detail below.

Chalets

193. The proposed development includes a range of four types of chalet on this site as follows:

- Chalet Type 1 – 4 bedroom detached (27 no.)
- Chalet Type 2 – 3 bedroom detached (129 no.)
- Chalet Type 3 – 3-bedroom end of terrace (136 no.)
- Chalet Type 4 – 2-bedroom mid terrace (58 no.)

194. The chalets would be single-storey traditionally-styled buildings with pitched roofs. Detailed external material finishes would be treated by condition. Such an approach also takes into account the discussions that have taken place between the SPA and the Applicant where it has been agreed that the proposed roofing materials are to be changed [see Appendix D].

Clubhouse

195. The Clubhouse building would obviously be of larger scale than the chalet accommodation to which it would relate. However, the architectural approach taken with the building, and if securing complementary materials, would mean that it would read as an integral part of the overall Phase 8 'family' group of buildings; a visual synergy would be achieved. Space within this building would be over two floors, with bar areas and ancillary areas on the ground floor and a restaurant and associated terraced areas on the first floor.

Landscaping

196. As advised in the information supporting the application, the aim is to create an area where accommodation is provided within a parkland setting, and it is noted that this phase of the development would contain particularly significant new planting, including trees, in order to assist. That said, two main water features – one within this phase and one within an abutting phase to the north – would also create a distinctive landscape character for this phase and assist in the creation of a sense of place. Indeed, the central lake feature would, in combination with the orientation of footways across the site, assist in creating a legibility to what would be a reasonably dense development.
197. Similar to the considerations relevant to Phase 2 in a preceding section of this report, the submitted landscape details are considered acceptable, subject to conditions as recommended by the Council's Landscape consultant.

Assessment

198. The submitted details accord with the requirements and principles set out under the outline planning permission.
199. Compared to other key buildings within the overall SnOasis development, the design of the chalets and associated clubhouse building are understated and simple. However, as a planning judgement it is felt that this approach would be appropriate given their use. The simplicity of the design of buildings, and the informality of the layout of built form are considered to combine successfully with the landscaping approach taken in this phase.

Conclusion on Phase 8

200. The details under Phase 8 have all been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the outline planning permission. Subject to conditions, the siting, design and external appearance of the Phase is acceptable, as too are the submitted landscaping details.

Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA")

201. The purpose of EIA is described by the PPG as follows:

“The aim of Environmental Impact Assessment is to protect the environment by ensuring that a local planning authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes this into account in the decision-making process.”⁴

202. The original planning application was supported by an ES and subject to an EIA and it was concluded that the ES was of sufficient standard to meet the regulations in force at that time. The 2011 application was further supported by updates to the original ES.
203. Under the EIA Regulations⁵ a decision-taker is not permitted to grant planning permission, or any subsequent consent, unless an EIA has been carried out in respect of that development.
204. The SnOasis development already benefits from planning permission and an EIA has previously been carried out. However, in light of the passage of time that has elapsed it was agreed with the Applicant that a new ES would be provided to support the reserved matters submissions. This was a cautious decision, however one which ensures that the Council and the public continue to have sufficient understanding of the likely environmental effects of the development. The ES supports the applications in the sense of identifying if any additional mitigation measures to those already secured by the Outline planning conditions and the s106 Agreement are required.
205. Due to local concerns, officers instructed the Impact Assessment Unit of Oxford Brookes University (“IAU”) to undertake an independent peer review of the ES and to support the refreshed assessment of likely environmental impacts and effects. IAU are an impartial and independent party who are leading practitioners in EIA matters.
206. Following a process whereby the Applicant provided additional details and addenda at the request of IAU, the IAU concluded that overall the ES was satisfactory. Recommendations were also made particularly in respect of securing environmental management plans in respect of ecology and construction by condition; this is agreed.
207. Officers endorse the opinion presented by IAU and consider that the applications are supported by environmental detail and information sufficient for Members to take an informed and robust decision.

⁴ Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 4-002-20140306.

⁵ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended).

S106 Agreement and Obligations

208. A s106 legal agreement⁶ is currently attached to the SnOasis permission. It includes a wide-range of planning obligations which at the time of entering into the agreement were considered appropriate.
209. Strictly speaking, Members are quite entitled to determine the reserved matters applications that are before them; the s106 agreement remains in force and binds the development and the permission that is already in place. However, officers of both this Council and the Suffolk County Council consider that it is important, given the passage of time that has elapsed, that obligations and any related contributions remain appropriate and sufficient to address the likely impacts of the development, accounting for the reserved matters application submissions and supporting environmental information.
210. In reviewing the current legal agreement, it is apparent that individual obligations can be described as being either: essential to remain; no longer required; or capable of being treated by another means, whether that be through planning condition⁷ or alternative obligation. One example of the first is the 75% renewable energy obligation imposed by the Secretary of State; an example of the second would be where monies have already been paid or mitigation measures/obligations already discharged.
211. In consideration of the third example, where the Council ought to give consideration to whether an alternative obligation would be suitable, the main change in circumstances since the 2011 permission relates to the provision of the railway station, originally the subject of a separate permission (which has since lapsed), on the basis that it is no longer possible to secure the rail operator's agreement to stop at the proposed new station.
212. Accordingly, an alternative arrangement is proposed, and has been agreed in principle between your officers and those at the Suffolk County Council, to secure improvements to Stowmarket Station (for improved access between platforms) and operate a shuttle bus from that station. The impacts of such have been assessed and were presented as a part of the ES. The LHA raises no objection in transport terms subject to further obligations.

⁶ Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

⁷ The NPPF advises that planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts by condition i.e. planning conditions are preferred.

213. In accordance with the wording of the current obligation, and by way of comfort, the proposed replacement obligation would be clear that SnOasis cannot operate until those improvements have been made.
214. Members should note that Abellio Greater Anglia have already made a bid for funding to implement the provision of a new footbridge with lift access. That bid has been supported locally, at a council level, and by Jo Churchill MP. The Applicant has discussed the bid with Abellio and has pledged their support as a part of the nomination process. Officers consider that this demonstrates that such improvements are both feasible and welcome, as well as being necessary to support the SnOasis development.
215. A detailed schedule of the Heads of Terms (“HoT”) proposed to be entered into for the purposes of a new s106 agreement is included at Appendix C to this Report. Members will note that the HoT will address if and why an existing obligation is to be removed or amended.
216. Given the importance of the obligations recommended to be secured, officers have agreed with the Applicant that the grant of reserved matters approvals must be contingent upon the securing of the new s106 agreement, where the obligations therein will continue to ensure that the development is sufficiently controlled and any likely adverse impacts mitigated appropriately.

PART FIVE – CONCLUSION

217. The submitted reserved matters applications represent a crucial step forward in the life of this long-standing project, where officers understand that financial backing is in place and that it is intended, if reserved matters approvals are granted in accordance with the recommendations herein, to have the entire facility capable of operation by the end of 2023.
218. Regardless, the approval of reserved matters Phases 1 – 8 is a significant milestone in bringing the development forward and demonstrating confidence that it can be achieved. Whilst time has passed since planning permission was first granted, permission remains extant and as with any development the commercial considerations of delivery are first and foremost for the developer. It continues to be the case that the development would yield considerable economic benefits that would outweigh the adverse impacts,

consistent with the decision to grant outline planning permission and where the likely environmental effects of the development continue to be known.

219. In granting outline planning permission, it has to be accepted that there is at least one form of development that would be acceptable at the reserved matters stage. Furthermore, the parameters and principles of such development have been set, fixing the siting, scale, and general design of Phases. The submitted reserved matters applications accord with those parameters.
220. In any event, officers have undertaken to review the merits of reserved matters details framed against the entirety of the development plan and in respect of those policies which are most important for the determination of the application.
221. After careful assessment, your officers consider that the applications meet the wider thrust of the suite of planning policies that comprise the development plan. Notwithstanding the development plan, the proposed development is nevertheless considered to align with the planning policies contained within the NPPF.
222. Members continue to be informed as to the likely environmental effects of the development and where mitigation is to be amended to move with changes following the original EIA exercise and permission, and in light of the details that have been submitted, these will be secured.
223. In the absence of any justifiable or demonstrable material consideration indicating otherwise, it is considered that the proposals are therefore acceptable in planning terms and that there are no material considerations which would give rise to unacceptable harm.
224. A positive recommendation to Members is therefore given below.

...

RECOMMENDATION

That Members resolve to approve the following:

(1) That authority be delegated to the Acting Chief Planning Officer to grant approval of the reserved matters applications under reference 4494/16 [Phases 1 – 8], subject to the prior completion of a Legal Agreement pursuant to s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, or accepted Undertaking, to secure obligations including those listed at Appendix C to this Report and related terms to their satisfaction.

(2) And that such approvals be subject to planning conditions, to the satisfaction of the Acting Chief Planning Officer, including:

- **Approved Drawings and Documents;**
- **Construction Environmental Management Plan (“CEMP”);**
- **Construction Logistics Plan;**
- **Archaeology;**
- **Great Crested Newts (“GCN”) Licence;**
- **Badgers Licence;**
- **Biodiversity CEMP for GCN;**
- **CEMP for other Species/Additional Biodiversity CEMP;**
- **Drainage Details;**
- **Drainage Systems Details;**
- **Construction/Servicing Vehicle Management Plans;**
- **Details of Coach, Car, and Cycle Parking;**
- **Biosecurity Protocol/Plans;**
- **External Finishing Details inc. Sample Materials;**
- **‘Secured by Design’ Details;**
- **Refuse/Recycling Details;**
- **Bird Management Plan;**
- **Further Hard/Soft Landscaping Details (inc. Perimeter Fencing);**
- **Delivery and Servicing Plan;**
- **Waste Management Strategy;**
- **Operational Strategy/Management Plan;**
- **Lighting Design Scheme (amenity/ecology/dark skies);**
- **Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (25 Years);**
- **Landscape Management Plan;**

- **Biodiversity Monitoring Strategy;**
- **Emergency Access Details;**
- **Construction Hours;**
- **Energy and Sustainability Details;**
- **Approved Landscaping Details: Planting and Aftercare;**
- **Piling Controls;**
- **Geological Management and Monitoring Plan;**
- **Ski Dome Elliptical Aperture Treatment (Light/Amenity);**
- **As further recommended by the Local Highway Authority, including:**
 - i. **Construction of Toucan Crossing;**
 - ii. **Construction of Vehicular Access from Roundabout;**
 - iii. **Site Access Roundabout;**
 - iv. **Surface Water Drainage;**
 - v. **Tourism Signage Details;**
 - vi. **B1113 Pedestrian Crossing Improvements;**
 - vii. **Stowmarket Station Improvement Works;**
 - viii. **Travel Plans;**
 - ix. **Cycleway Improvements.**

(3) That, in the event of the Legal Agreement or Undertaking referred to in Resolution (1) above not being secured or accepted to the satisfaction of the Acting Chief Planning Officer within six months, they return the applications under reference 4494/16 to Members for further consideration.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – SCHEDULE OF DEVELOPMENT PERMITTED

APPENDIX B – OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION DECISION NOTICE

APPENDIX C – PROPOSED S106 HEADS OF TERMS

APPENDIX D – SNOASIS PARISH ALLIANCE RESPONSE / COMMENTARY

APPENDIX E – SCHEDULE OF APPLICATION DOCUMENTS