

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL  
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 17 August 2016

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<b>AGENDA ITEM NO</b>	1
<b>APPLICATION NO</b>	2351/16
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Application for outline planning permission (including access, all other matters reserved) for development of business and logistics park to provide commercial floorspace principally within Use Classes B1 and B8, to include access onto the B1113 Bramford Road and a secondary means of access via Addison Way, together with the provision of estate roads and ancillary parking, servicing and landscaping.
<b>SITE LOCATION</b>	Land At Blackacre Hill, Bramford Road, Great Blakenham
<b>SITE AREA (Ha)</b>	15.55
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Curzon De Vere Ltd
<b>RECEIVED</b>	May 24, 2016
<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	August 24, 2016

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**REASONS FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE**

The application is referred to committee for the following reason :

- (1) it is a "Major" application for:-
- the erection of any industrial building/s with a gross floor space exceeding 3,750 square metres

**PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE**

1. The application follows pre-application advice given in 2013.

**SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

2. The application site is 15.5ha and is located 500m to the south of Great Blakenham, adjacent to the junction of the B1113 Bramford Road and a dual carriage link to Junction 52 of the A14. It lies directly to the south of the Orion Business Park, and to the south of the Magnus Group building, located on Addison Way, approximately 6km to the northwest of Ipswich. The site is bound to the south and west by woodland.

The land extends to 14.7ha (which combined with Addison Way comprises 15.5ha) and is L shaped, comprising two, uncultivated fields that wrap around

the southern and western sides of the Orion Business Park. Commercial uses lie to the north and east (the latter including the SITA Waste to Energy Plant). The fields to the south of the site have been granted planning permission (3655/13) for 1 million sq ft of industrial greenhouses.

Public footpath no. 21 runs to the south of the site, on the other side of a substantial tree belt. The route of the footpath is due to be diverted as part of the industrial greenhouse development.

## **HISTORY**

3. The planning history relevant to the application site is:

2351/16	Application for outline planning permission (including access, all other matters reserved) for development of business and logistics park to provide commercial floorspace principally within Use Classes B1 and B8, to include access onto the B1113 Bramford Road and a secondary means of access via Addison Way, together with the provision of estate roads and ancillary parking, servicing and landscaping.	
3191/13	Screening Opinion request for the development of proposal comprising a health centre, two data centres, frozen/chilled food distribution and production units, HQ office and HQ depot powered by the nearby energy from waste facility at Great Blakenham	15/11/2013
1297/11	Erection of 2 no aluminium warehouses	Granted 27/07/2011

## **PROPOSAL**

4. **Means of Access**

The principal means of ingress / egress to the development is to be taken from the B1113 Bamford Road, to which the site has a frontage that extends some 180m north of the adjacent traffic signal control junction. It is proposed to create a new priority junction, which has been designed such that commercial vehicles and can only enter from, and exit to, the south. In this way, all commercial vehicle movements, associated with the development, will be via the B1113 and Junction 52 of the A14.

The Applicant has reached agreement with the owner of Addison Way so that it can be used as a secondary means of access. The road is included within the 'red line' application site and the agreement provides for its repair and upgrading (to include the provision of a footpath and cycleway), between the B1113 and the site.

The junction between Addison Way, and the new internal estate road (to be called St James' Boulevard), has been designed so that cars and light vans can ingress and egress the site, with large commercial vehicles only being able to ingress. This will allow large commercial vehicles, associated with the existing business on the Orion Business Park, and the other commercial sites served by Addison Way, to exit through the development.

### **Layout**

Whilst layout is a reserved matter, the access arrangements, described above and in the Transport Assessment, dictate, to a large extent, the layout of the development.

Having accessed the site via the new priority junction onto the B1113, the main estate road (St James' Boulevard) will run along the northern boundary, with the Orion Business Park, and then turn to run up the western side of the 'northern leg'. Class B8 warehouse and distribution units will occupy that part of the site to the south of St James' Boulevard. There will be two, smaller Class B8 units in the northeast corner (accessed in the manner described above).

The 'northern leg' of the site will be laid out with Class B1 units along its western boundary and with St James' Boulevard, and a holding facility for commercial vehicles, to the east.

### **Scale**

The final development will comprise some 64,000 sqm (approximately 700,000 sqft) of Class B8 and Class B1 floor space.

The Class B8 storage and distribution units will occupy the central and southern parts of the site, accessed from St James' Boulevard, which enters the site and then runs east - west along the boundary to the Orion Business Park. The Class B8 units will provide some 59,500 sqm of floor space and will thus, therefore, comprise the majority of the development. The units are likely to range in size from 1,200 sqm to 15,500 sqm.

The Class B1 floor space will be situated on the western boundary of the 'northern leg' of the site. Total Class B1 floor space is likely to be in the region of 4,400 sqm in six units.

The development will take advantage of the slope of the site, with the Class B8 units, located to the south St James' Boulevard, being cut into the bank (so as to reduce visual impacts). Approximate dimensions are illustrated on drawing 1823SK10-04-J. Ground level to roof height (at their southern end) will be 12m (potentially rising to a maximum of 15m). Each Class B8 unit will be provided with dedicated parking and service areas.

The Class B1 units are intended to take the form of traditional, two storey, offices. Drawing 1823SK10-04-J shows a shared parking facility. The intention is that the units will be lower than the tops of the trees which border the suite to the west.

### **Landscaping**

Consistent with the aspiration to create a high quality development, the scheme

will incorporate significant new planting and landscaping.

The Applicant proposes to plant upwards of 3,500 trees and shrubs, principally to the site boundaries, the entrance and frontage to the B1113 and along the main internal estate road (so as to create a boulevard style approach to each unit).

The overall intention is to reinforce the existing tree belt that borders the site to the west and south; create an attractive, landscaped, entrance from the B1113; and, provide a landscaped buffer zone between the development and the Orion Business Park and the other existing commercial uses to the north. The layout includes balancing lagoons / ponds, which will be landscaped so as to create an attractive environment and enhance the bio-diversity value of the site.

## POLICY

### 5. **Planning Policy Guidance**

See Appendix below.

The following documents are also considered as material for the purposes of determining planning applications and are applicable to this proposal:-

- Department for Transport - Manual for Streets (2014).
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- Suffolk County Council - Suffolk Guidance for Parking (2014, adopted 2015).

On the 6th March 2014, a number of Ministerial planning circulars were cancelled by central Government and were replaced by the Government's online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The guidance provided is advice on procedure rather than explicit policy, but has been taken into account in reaching the recommendation made on this application.

## CONSULTATIONS

- 6.
- **Great Blakenham Parish Council** – No comments received
  - **Little Blakenham Parish Council** – No objection
  - **Claydon & Whitton Parish Council** – Object: This is the time for this application to pay for the cost of a roundabout at the junction of Bramford Road, Great Blakenham and B1113. The movement at this junction of many more HGVs make this even more imperative that the SnOasis development. It is also that there be another lane created at the approach of the B1113 to junction 52 of the A14. In the interests of safety another lane should be created to allow for vehicles turning left and right and straight ahead. During rush hours and at other busy times drivers use the turn left land to enter Claydon. This is already dangerous and will be exacerbated by this development. It should be borne in mind that this road system is not only for Great Blakenham but for the whole of the highly populated Gipping Valley.

- **Suffolk County Council (Local Highway Authority)** - No objection; subject to a suite of recommended highways improvements and contributions through condition and s106 agreement (see relevant section below).
- **Highways England** – No objection
- **Suffolk County Council (Archaeology)** - No objection; subject to condition(s) relating to an appropriate scheme of investigation prior to development.
- **Suffolk County Council (Rights of Way and Access)** - No objection.
- **Suffolk County Council (Fire & Rescue)** - No objection; comments that fire hydrants are required, quantum dependent upon reserved matters.
- **Suffolk County Council (Landscape Development)** - No objection; recommend conditions. The applicant has provided a highly indicative drawing 1823SK10-04-J showing proposed tree planting. However this information does not clearly demonstrate what is likely to be practicable in terms of planting and landscaping given the likely constraints and issues associated with developing the site. It is also notable that colour choice for the buildings, in conjunction with the planting, is given significant emphasis in the application material as mitigation for the landscape and visual the impacts of the proposal.

Therefore in order to effectively secure and agree the details of the landscaping scheme I suggest two conditions are required. Firstly, prior to commencement, an effective landscape masterplan provide a robust outline scheme of both hard and soft landscaping, including the landform and planting of the SuDs features. This masterplan should also include details of the planting palette proposed.

On the basis of the agreed masterplan detailed schemes of hard and soft landscaping can be agreed for each phase of the development as it comes forward. Alternatively, to eliminate the need for a pre-commencement condition, the applicant may wish to produce a landscape masterplan prior to determination. This would then form the basis of the first landscaping condition, on which subsequent detailed schemes for each part of the development would be based.

- **Suffolk County Council (Floods & Water)** - No specific objection, however greater details required under RM; a condition requiring an appropriate drainage scheme is requested.
- **Corporate Manager - Sustainable Environment (Land Contamination)** - No objection; subject to advisory note.
- **Corporate Manager - Sustainable Environment (Sustainability Issues)** – Revised report is acceptable subject to conditions ensuring assessment and final certification.
- **Corporate Manager - Sustainable Environment (Other issues)** – No objection

- **Corporate Manager - Public Realm (Arboriculture)** - No objection; The only important trees likely to be affected by development at this location are situated around the perimeter of the site. Provided any development is kept a sufficient distance from them there is no reason they could not be incorporated as part of the layout design without causing significant encroachment. When a final layout is agreed we will require details regarding appropriate protection measures during construction.
- **Historic England** – Do not consider it necessary to be consulted
- **Environment Agency** - No objection; comments regarding the proximity of the development to permitted waste facilities and installations.
- **Anglian Water** - No objection
- **Suffolk Wildlife Trust** - No objection; recommend conditions.
- **Economic Development Officer** – Whilst this land has not been formally allocated for employment, it is a natural extension to the existing industrial estate around Addison Way. Its close proximity to the A14 at junction 52 makes it attractive to businesses that rely on access to the Port of Felixstowe and the Midlands via the A14. The current junction configuration of Bramford Road to the B1113 means that traffic is directed with a left turn only and minimises the traffic impact on Bramford and Sproughton. I support the mix of B1 and B8 uses and the jobs that the new buildings will bring to the area. These jobs, estimated to be around 600, will support economic growth in both the Mid Suffolk District and Ipswich Policy Area and compliment recent and planned housing growth nearby.
- **Stowmarket Ramblers** – No comments or observations to make

### LOCAL AND THIRD PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

7. This is a summary of the representations received.
- Good use of land
  - Concerns regarding the transport system to be put in place
  - Insufficient space between the existing traffic light junction and Binders to place an access road
  - Bramford Road will be congested – already busy at rush hour morning and afternoon.
  - Supportive of jobs it will create
  - Concern of landscape and visual appraisal
  - The LVA underestimates the impact on the landscape view that residents will see.
  - No view of the effect of the development on the footpath running south from Little Blakenham to the B1113.

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

**ASSESSMENT**

8. From an assessment of the relevant planning policies, supplementary guidance, site history and constraints/designations, those representations and consultation responses received and other material planning considerations, the main issues in determining this application are considered, as following:-

- The Principle of Development;
- Connectivity - Highway Safety and Sustainable Transport;
- Impact on the Landscape;
- Design and Layout;
- Resilience to Climate Change (Flood Risk/Drainage and Building Performance/Renewable Energy);
- Impact upon Residential Amenity;
- Land Contamination
- Crime and Disorder
- Biodiversity and Protected Species
- Archaeology
- Environmental Impact Assessment;
- Planning Balance and Conclusion.

**Principle of Development****National Planning Policy**

Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread that runs through the planning system (see Para. 14).

In this regard, paragraph 14 further states that:

- *“For decision-taking this means: approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:*
  - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or,*
  - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”*

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF sets out that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and that these roles are mutually dependent and should be jointly sought to achieve sustainable development.

The development plan, against which the proposal will be tested, comprises: -

- The 'saved' policies of the Mid-Suffolk Local Plan 1998.
- The Mid-Suffolk District Core Strategy 2008.
- The Mid-Suffolk District Core Strategy Focussed Review December 2012.

The Core Strategy 2008 supersedes a number of policies of the 1998 Local Plan. Similarly, the Focussed Review 2012 supersedes a number of policies as set out in the 2008 Core Strategy.

The following key designations are relevant: -

- Great Blakenham and Claydon Villages are designated as a Key Service Centre (Core Strategy Policy CS1).
- The site lies in the open countryside outside of the defined settlement limits of Great Blakenham and Claydon (1998 Local Plan Proposals Map).
- The site lies adjacent to, and to the south of, an employment allocation which has subsequently been developed as the Orion Business Park (1998 Local Plan Proposals Map).
- The site lies within the Ipswich Policy Area.

In addition to the provisions of the development plan, national planning guidance, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), will also be relevant to the determination of the application.

Policy FC1 confirms that the Council will take a positive approach to development proposals and grant planning permission for sustainable development, particularly where it secures, and improves, economic, social and environmental conditions in the district.

Proposals which accord with adopted policy will be granted without delay but where policies are absent, or out of date (reference the Local Plan which was adopted in 1998), Policy FC1 provides that the Council will grant planning permission, taking into account the provisions of the NPPF, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy FC1.1 indicates that, important material considerations include how a proposal addresses the context and key issues of the district, which the Focussed Review document prioritises as being the requirement to provide for the housing and employment needs of the district (Strategic Objective SO6).

The Core Strategy (as updated by the Focussed Review) seeks to direct the majority of new development to the existing towns and settlements, as they are defined in the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy CS1. Claydon and Great Blakenham are, together, defined as being a second tier Key Service Centre.

The 1998 Proposals Map defines the boundaries of the main towns and settlements, with land falling outside being treated as countryside. Policy CS2 provides that development in the countryside will generally be limited to that



falling within a number of key categories which include: -

“new-build employment generating proposals where there is a strategic, environmental or operational justification”.

Policy CS5 provide that where development is allowed in the countryside, it should positively contribute to the District's diverse character and respect landscape, bio-diversity and other environmental features. These matters are addressed below.

One of the objectives of the 2012 Focussed Review, was to update the employment policies of the Core Strategy in order to take into account the results of the Western Suffolk Employment Land Review 2009 (ELR) and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF). Statement 3 confirms that the preferred locations for employment growth are those set out in the Core Strategy. They are Stowmarket, the Ipswich Policy Area (IPA), Needham Market, Mendlesham Airfield, Eye Airfield and Woolpit Business Park. Great Blakenham, and the subject site, lie within the Ipswich Policy Area.

Statement 5 also confirms that the District needs to make significant allocations of employment land, in appropriate locations, in order to both increase the number of jobs (in order to meet forecast need) and reduce unsustainable existing levels of out-commuting.

Policy FC3 commits the Council to delivering land to provide at least 8,000 additional jobs in the District by 2006 and an indicative 11,100 jobs by 2031.

It identifies a 39.5 hectare site at Mill Lane, Stowmarket which, it is anticipated, will deliver an estimated 3,395 jobs by 2026. Even with this allocation, and taking into account all other existing commitments, the Focussed Review (para 5.25) acknowledges that there will be a shortfall of some 1,643 jobs (against the forecast need for 8,000 jobs) by 2026 and a shortfall of 4,743 jobs (against a requirement for 11,100) by 2031.

Policy FC3 provides that the land required to meet the identified shortfall (1,643 jobs - now acknowledged to be 3,113 jobs by 2026) is to be identified in subsequent development plan documents. It also confirms that the new allocations should be situated: -

- In or close to towns and Key Service Centres.
- In areas with good access to the District's major transport routes.
- In areas with good access by public transport.
- Within the six major growth areas identified in Statement 3, which includes the Ipswich Policy Area.

The application site satisfies all the above criteria. It lies adjacent, and has good pedestrian and cycle links, to the Key Service Centre at Claydon / Great Blakenham. It lies within the Ipswich Policy Area. Most importantly, it has excellent, direct, access to the A14 (and from there, the main towns in the District as well as Ipswich, Felixstowe, Harwich, the Midlands and London). Given the type of uses proposed for the site (logistics and Class B8 storage and distribution), this is a key factor which will ensure the sustainability and success

of the development.

The identification, and development, of the site is also consistent with the provisions of the Mid-Suffolk Local Plan 1998. Policy E1 of that Plan (which was subsequently superseded by Policy CS11 and, more recently, Policy FC3), identified the land to the north of the subject site for industrial and commercial development (Proposal 9). This was on the basis that this site (now developed as the Orion Business Park), was well located with respect to the settlement hierarchy, existing commercial developments, the Ipswich Policy Area and the principal communications network.

The proposal is also consistent with Policy E9, which concerns the location of new employment development. Whilst this policy primarily seeks to direct new development to existing employment sites, or settlements, it provides that, and, "notwithstanding the strict control of development in the countryside, where it can be demonstrated that there is a lack of sites or premises for new businesses within nearby settlements, proposals maybe acceptable on small sites closely related to existing industrial or commercial sites or the existing built up area of a town or village...".

Similarly, Policy E10 provides that new industrial and employment development will be permitted in the countryside where it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding need and that it will contribute to the local economy and create job opportunities for nearby communities. The proposal will deliver these objectives.

Policy E9 sets out a similar location criteria to the more up to date, and relatively recently adopted, Policy FC3. As with Policy FC3, the proposal is entirely consistent with the requirements of this policy, in that there is an acknowledged need for new employment development and as the site is well located to an established employment area

The proposal is also consistent with Policy E3, which provides that, throughout the district, warehousing and haulage depots, including proposals for container compounds and handling areas, will be considered on their merits, with particular regard being given to the accessibility of the site to the primary route network. This site has direct, convenient and safe access to the A14.

Finally, and in policy terms, the proposal is also consistent with the objectives of Policies E4 and E6, in that the development of this site will help consolidate the existing commercial uses which surround it.

The Western Suffolk Employment Land Review 2009, together with the Focussed Review 2012, identifies an urgent need for additional employment land in the district. This is an ideal site from which that need can be met, in that it is adjacent to a Key Service Centre, located within the Ipswich Policy Area and has an excellent, convenient and safe links to the A14.

The site has a dual carriage link direct to Felixstowe (some 20 miles to the east), which is the largest container port in the United Kingdom (handling over 42% of all the country's containerised trade). It is the sixth busiest port in Europe and the A14 links it directly to the M1, M6, M42 'golden triangle', where many of the main logistic companies in the country are based.

The site is surrounded by existing employment uses and all necessary services are available, with sufficient spare capacity, on the site's boundaries. It is an

established employment location, with good access to a large, skilled, workforce living in Stowmarket, Needham Market and the Ipswich Policy Area.

Initial interest in the development has been strong, with the Applicant having signed confidentiality agreements for up to 70% of the proposed floor space. The development is fully funded and all those parties that have signed confidentiality agreements have indicated that they will enter into freehold or leasehold transactions as soon as practical after outline planning permission is granted.

This development will deliver up to 600 (full time equivalent) jobs by 2019/2021. It will, therefore, make a significant contribution towards the identified shortfall of employment land and it will assist the District Council to meet its commitments as set out in Policy FC3.

It will significantly enhance economic conditions in the district. The jobs that it will provide will also promote social cohesiveness and, as is explained in the following paragraphs, environmental conditions. The proposal is, in principle, a sustainable development, which is entirely in keeping with the objectives of, and supported by, Focussed Review Policy FC1.

Although the development is consistent with sustainable development principles, will help meet an identified need for additional employment land and is fully consistent with the location tests set out in adopted development plan policy, it will still be necessary to demonstrate that it accords with relevant development control criteria (as set out in Policies SB2, GP1, GP3, CL1, E3, E9, E10, E12 & CS5) before outline planning permission can be granted.

### **Connectivity - Highway Safety and Sustainable Transport**

Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that proposals must provide safe and suitable access for all and that transport networks should be improved in a cost effective way to limit any significant impact of the development on the surrounding area. Paragraph 32 also makes it clear that proposals must *only* be refused where residual cumulative impacts on highway safety would be 'severe'.

The key policies to consider from the development plan are T9 and T10 which seek development that is well laid out in terms of site access and highway safety, traffic flow and the environment.

The most recent comments of the Local Highway Authority (LHA) confirm that the development is considered to be acceptable in highway terms, subject to securing an appropriate package of contributions and improvements imposed by planning condition and through a s106 agreement. Having considered the development on its own merits, the following comments are taken directly from the LHA's most recent response:

*"The Transport Assessment is generally acceptable. The B1113 (Bramford Road) is a local access lorry route. The proposed access would restrict 'design' articulated HGVs from leaving the site and proceeding north through Great Blakenham. Likewise, it is not intended to facilitate the right turn manoeuvre from the B1113 to the site. This design discourages HGV trips through the village and should have the benefit of reducing delay southbound on the B1113. The minor disadvantage of preventing linked trips by HGVs between the new*

*development and Orion Business Park is considered acceptable; such trips would have to reroute via the A14 junction 52 roundabout.*

*A Traffic Regulation Order is required in order to legally prohibit the above manoeuvres. The County Council will promote such a TRO provided that its costs in doing so are paid prior to commencement of construction of the access and as such require a contribution of £10,000 (any balance unspent to be returned) to be secured via a S106 Planning Obligation. A temporary TRO would be made pending the permanent TRO.*

*The proposed link road between Addison Way and the site Access for HGVs could physically limit the size of vehicle able to negotiate it with the use of vehicle restraint kerbs but the design shown in Appendix K to the Transport Assessment (TA) would need to be amended to facilitate fire tender use if such kerbs were used. Alternatively, normal kerbs could be used and a condition could be imposed prohibiting HGV use, which may provide flexibility. It is not a condition that the County Council considers necessary for safe access but it may be merited on other amenity grounds.*

*The Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and Designer's Response is considered acceptable.*

*It is considered that an additional length of footway cycletrack (approximately 345m) is warranted on the west side of Bramford Road from the proposed facility on Addison Way north towards Gipping Road so that pedestrians and cyclists don't have to cross Bramford Road twice ('minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians' NPPF para. 35). There are a number of details, such as improvements to assist crossing Mason's site access, that may be needed."*

On that basis, the following contributions have been recommended and agreed with the applicant in respect of the following highway safety and transport improvements:-

- Traffic Regulation Order Contribution - £10,000 payable at least 8 months prior to the proposed opening of the new estate road access with the B1113.
- Travel Plan including free shuttle bus during morning and evening peak hours serving the site, Great Blakenham and Claydon.
- Travel Plan Evaluation and Support Contribution of £1,000 per annum from occupation of the first unit(s) that would trigger the requirement for a full travel plan, until five years after the final commercial unit is occupied to cover the cost of Suffolk County Council resource to fully engage with the travel plan process
- Measures to prevent parking on the site access road in the vicinity of the new access
- Footway cycle track improvements scheme on the west side of the B1113 Bramford Road north of Addison Way to form a contiguous off carriageway route to Gipping Road. To be provided prior to first occupation of any of the units.

Given the scale and nature of development and the potential impacts posed to the local highway network, the agreement of a full Travel Plan is also considered necessary and this has been confirmed and agreed with the applicant. The

precise details and associated costs related to the Travel Plan would be known once the precise quantum and mix of development is put forward through the reserved matters stage and can be secured by way of legal agreement.

With regards to parking, there would be sufficient space at the quantum and density of development proposed to achieve off road parking in accordance with the parking standards. Likewise, there is no inherent reason why a safe internal layout could not be achieved. The detailed layout and design would be dealt with at the reserved matters stage.

In respect of highway safety and connectivity the application is therefore considered favourably.

### **Impact on the Landscape**

The NPPF states that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be recognised in decisions. Policies GP1 require development proposals to reflect local characteristics, protect the landscape of the District and state that landscaping should be regarded as an integral part of design.

In this instance the applicant has provided an indicative layout which includes perimeter planting for the proposal and indications through the Design and Access Statement that an extensive green infrastructure package can be delivered. The information supplied is considered to be sufficient to enable an assessment to be made against the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposal.

Accordingly the SCC Natural Environment Team (Landscape Development Officer) and the Council's own arboricultural specialist, have raised no objection to the development subject to appropriate conditions. This will include the submission of a landscape masterplan to be submitted concurrently with the first submission of reserved matters which can then be delivered across the phased development as each unit comes forward under detailed layout considerations. Consequently the development is considered to have an acceptable visual impact on the landscape.

### **Design and Layout**

Delivering quality urban design is also a core aim of the NPPF which states (at paragraph 56) that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning. At paragraph 64 the NPPF further states that permission should be refused for poor design that fails to take opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. The NPPF also encourages the use of local design review.

This application is submitted in outline where the matters of layout and building design are reserved. However, it is good practice for an applicant to demonstrate that the site can be developed in an acceptable way.

The proposal is in keeping with its context which comprises to the north and east, existing large scale commercial uses. The site is a natural infill for employment development which will consolidate this established employment location.

To this end the applicant has submitted an indicative layout and a detailed

Design and Access Statement along with other details that provide an indication as to how the delivery of the scheme is envisaged. This demonstrates that the proposal is capable of producing a high quality development which will enhance existing environmental conditions, in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of policies SB1, GP1, GP3, CL1, E3, E9, E10, E12 & CS5.

In particular the development is considered to be in keeping with the character of existing and committed development and is capable of being laid out in a manner which both reflects its intended use, whilst at the same time responding to the topography of the site, surrounding land uses and the important landscape features along its boundary. In addition the development does not result in the loss of high quality agricultural land.

### **Resilience to Climate Change (Flood Risk/Drainage and Building Performance/Renewable Energy)**

The NPPF gives great weight to sustainable development, which is considered to be a 'golden thread' running through the planning system. Adaption to, and resilience against, climate change is a key consideration of sustainable development in the NPPF. This is echoed in the Core Strategy and associated Focused Review.

Policy CS3 states that all non-residential development proposals over 1,000 sq metres will be required to integrate renewable energy technology in order to provide at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements and additional sustainable construction measures.

The 'sustainability' of the proposal and its resilience to climate change can be broken down into a number of key issues, such as the accessibility of the proposed development and its design quality (discussed above), the scheme's resilience to climate and social change and the buildings performance. Other important aspects of sustainable development, such as ecology, open space provision and safeguarding heritage are discussed elsewhere in this report.

A key issue when considering 'resilience' is whether the development has been designed to adapt to issues presented by climate change, such as an increased risk of flooding from heavy rain or high energy prices. In this instance the application site is considered to fall within 'Flood Zone 1' and as such there is a very low probability (less than 1 in 1000 annually) of river or sea flooding.

However, due to the scale of the proposal a detailed flood risk and drainage assessment/scheme has been submitted. Initial details relating to the management of surface water drainage have also been provided, however it is considered that precise and appropriate details can be secured by way of condition; where an objective assessment could be made based upon the final layout and scale of the development.

The geology of the site appears to be underlying sands and gravels, with silt and clay overburden in areas, where exposed the sands and gravel yielded fair to good rates of permeability. It is therefore considered, following deep trial pits, that the site can drain satisfactorily to the sands and gravel throughout by percolation. The final location and nature of infiltration features will be determined by the detailed layout at submission. However, in order to demonstrate how a compliant drainage solution could be achieved, an indicative plan has been submitted which shows an eastern catchment area of 3.2ha which

is able to accommodate a 1 in 100 year storm (+climate change) within a section of open infiltration basin linked to a cellular system below car parking. To the west the larger catchment of 8.3ha is stored within a deep open infiltration basin. The Flood and Water Authority have confirmed they are satisfied that a satisfactory drainage solution can be provided within the site and have raised no objection to the application.

Where the application has been made in outline form, details relating to the overall sustainability and energy efficiency of the scheme cannot be objectively determined at this stage. However, such matters can be dealt with at the reserved matters stage when passive solar gain or renewable energy details, for example, can be explored and building performance would be better known at this detailed design stage. Consequently conditions are recommended to secure this.

### **Impact upon Residential Amenity**

One of the core planning principles within paragraph 17 of the NPPF is that Local Planning Authorities should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, and this is also required by policy GP1 of the Local Plan.

The application is in outline with the layout reserved. However, the site is in an area dominated by commercial development and there are only a limited number of residential properties in the vicinity. This is reflected by the small number of representations received in relation to the development. Therefore the development is considered to be appropriate and would not result in any detrimental impact on either residential occupiers or those employed in the nearby buildings on the neighbouring estate.

Concerns regarding the construction of the development have been noted. It is considered appropriate, as would be standard on most Major schemes, to secure agreed details of a suitable management plan.

### **PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION**

At the heart of the balancing exercise to be undertaken by decision makers is Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; which requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development would have a number of significant benefits, including the delivery of a major quantum of employment land in a sustainable location. When taken as a whole, and as a matter of planning judgment, the proposal is considered to adhere to the development plan (where those applicable policies are considered to be consistent with the NPPF), other material planning considerations including the NPPF, and imposed statutory duties and responsibilities. The proposal is consequently considered to represent a sustainable form of development, where there exists a presumption in favour of such development in accordance with paragraph 14 of the NPPF and Policy FC1 of the Core Strategy Focused Review.

This presumption in favour of sustainable development is further reinforced by

advice relating to decision-taking in the NPPF. Paragraph 186 of the Framework requires Local Planning Authorities to "*approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development*". Paragraph 187 states that Local Planning Authorities "*should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible*".

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 a positive recommendation to Members is given below.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- (1) That the Planning Lead - Growth and Sustainable Planning be authorised to secure a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, to provide:-
  - Travel Plan details and provision, as agreed with SCC;
- (2) That, subject to the completion of the Planning Obligation in Resolution (1) above, the Planning Lead - Growth and Sustainable Planning be authorised to grant Outline Planning Permission subject to conditions including:-

### General

- Time limit for reserved matters (standard)
- Definition of reserved matters
- Approved plans; red-lined SLP and masterplan (only in so far as relating to access)
- Development to be completed in accordance with ecology details

### Prior to commencement/installation (where relevant)

- External lighting/illumination details
- Archaeology WSI/Assessment
- Surface water drainage details
- Tree protection details
- Landscape management plan
- Fire hydrant provision details
- Construction management plan

### Concurrently with Reserved Matters

- Phasing details (inc. trigger points for each successive phase)
- Proposed levels and finished floor levels details
- External facing materials details
- Energy efficiency details
- Hard landscaping scheme (inc. boundary treatments and screen/fencing details)
- Soft landscaping scheme

### Highways



- Details of accesses, including gradient and surfacing
- Surface water discharge prevention details
- Estate roads and footpaths details and implementation requirements
- Visibility Splays
- Off road cycle improvements
- Signage
- Details of parking and turning
- External Lighting
- Cycle Parking

Philip Isbell  
Professional Lead - Growth & Sustainable Planning

Gemma Pannell  
Planning Officer

## **APPENDIX A - PLANNING POLICIES**

### **1. Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the Core Strategy Focused Review**

- Cor1** - CS1 Settlement Hierarchy
- Cor2** - CS2 Development in the Countryside & Countryside Villages
- Cor3** - CS3 Reduce Contributions to Climate Change
- Cor4** - CS4 Adapting to Climate Change
- Cor5** - CS5 Mid Suffolks Environment
- CSFR-FC1** - PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- CSFR-FC1.1** - MID SUFFOLK APPROACH TO DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- CSFR-FC3** - SUPPLY OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

### **2. Mid Suffolk Local Plan**

- GP1** - DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF DEVELOPMENT
- CL9** - RECOGNISED WILDLIFE AREAS
- CL8** - PROTECTING WILDLIFE HABITATS
- H17** - KEEPING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AWAY FROM POLLUTION
- SB2** - DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATE TO ITS SETTING
- CL11** - RETAINING HIGH QUALITY AGRICULTURAL LAND
- E3** - WAREHOUSING, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION, AND HAULAGE DEPOTS
- E4** - PROTECTING EXISTING INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS AREAS
- E6** - RETENTION OF INDIVIDUAL INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL SITES
- E9** - LOCATION OF NEW BUSINESSES
- E10** - NEW INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE
- E12** - GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR LOCATION, DESIGN AND LAYOUT
- T9** - PARKING STANDARDS
- T10** - HIGHWAY CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT
- T11** - FACILITIES FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS
- T12** - DESIGNING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
- T13** - BUS SERVICES

### 3. Planning Policy Statements, Circulars & Other policy

**NPPF** - National Planning Policy Framework

#### **APPENDIX B - NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS**

Letter(s) of representation(s) have been received from a total of **3** interested party(ies).

The following people **objected** to the application

The following people **supported** the application:

The following people **commented** on the application: