

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/23/96586

Site Address: Moorlands Farm, Botley Road, West End, Southampton, SO30 3HD

Case Officer: Summer Sharpe

Description: Demolition of all existing buildings and detailed planning approval for light industrial floorspace [Use Class E(g)(ii) & E(g)(iii)] and estate office (Use Class E(g)(i).(Application Resubmission). (Amended Plans).

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
• Countryside • Solent Mitigation & Disturbance Zone • TPO trees along the eastern boundary of the site (94-E) • Flood Zone (east of application site) • SSSI (east of application site) • Urban edge & Existing Employment Sites (south-east)		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Planning App no.	Proposal	Decision
F/12/71729	Construction of dog training hall with associated dog exercise area, parking and landscaping following demolition of existing barn.	Permitted (February 2013)
F/15/77341	Renewal of planning permission F/12/71729 for the construction of dog training hall with associated exercise area, parking and landscaping following demolition of existing barn.	Permitted (December 2015)
F/18/84683	Construction of a dog training hall with associated exercise area, parking and landscaping following demolition of existing barn.	Permitted (April 2019)
O/21/91192	Demolition of all existing outbuildings and outline planning approval with details of access to be approved and all other matters reserved for redevelopment to provide light industrial floorspace [Use Class E(g)(ii) & E(g)(iii)] and warehouse floorspace [Use Class B8], conversion of existing farmhouse to provide ancillary office space [Use Class B8] and provision of an estate office [Use Class E(g)(i)].	Withdrawn (February 2022)
F/22/93835	Demolition of all existing buildings and detailed planning approval for light industrial floorspace [Use Class E(g)(ii) & E(g)(iii)], warehouse floorspace [Use Class B8] and estate office (Use Class E(g)(i).	Refused (2 October 2023). Appeal Lodged (February 2024)

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations:			
Eastleigh Ramblers:	<u>Comments 17 April 2024:</u> Objection – inadequate consideration has been given to the relationship of the proposed access road to Footpath no.10 West End.		

	<u>Comments 12 March 2024:</u> The Site Access Plan shows Footpath No 10 West End finishing at the access road when it legally continues to the Botley Road. The plan does not show the Street Lighting Column nor does it show how pedestrians are supposed to get safely to and from the Botley Road within the revised access road which will be more intensively used. We therefore object to this application on these grounds.
Parish Council:	<u>Comments 7 February 2024:</u> Object – Councillors felt this would have an urbanising effect on the countryside and also doesn't satisfy the conditions of the local plan.
EBC Ecology:	<u>Comments 24 April 2024:</u> Compared with the plans from December 2023, the red line boundary has been changed to include the site of the existing farmhouse. The farmhouse containing confirmed bat roost (last survey in June 2021) is now proposed to be demolished with an additional industrial unit. A European protected species license will probably be needed to demolish the building. The license application will need to be informed by a minimum of three bat activity surveys done within the same year as the application. mitigation and compensation for the loss of these bat roosts will be required. The biodiversity net gain metric and the December 2023 Ecological Impact Assessment must be updated to reflect these new proposals, with an additional walkover survey required to determine whether any other conditions have changed since the last walkover survey in August 2022. The SuDs pond is in a suitable location, away from vehicles and only slightly within the 20m buffer. It could have a more naturalistic shape as mentioned by the landscape officer. There is a proposed tree which is located on the edge of the SuDs pond. This tree should be moved so that it does not overlap the SuDs pond, and its roots cannot grow into the pond liner or get drowned when there is water in the pond. Leaf fall and the resultant algal growth can lead to eutrophication. The inclusion of an additional building and parking area within the red line boundary will affect the surface water drainage volume and overland exceedance flow routes. The Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy (December 2023) will need to be amended to reflect the proposed changes. The former ecology buffer zone area to the northwest would be a welcome addition to this proposal. In agreement with the landscape officer, I consider this scheme to be less acceptable than the previous layout which was refused at committee in September 2023. I agree with the landscape officer that the positioning of units A & C close to the western boundary will not allow a significant band of tree/ hedge/ understorey planting along this boundary. This limits the continuity of green infrastructure around the site boundary. <u>Comments 18 January 2024:</u> The application appears to contain a suitable ecological buffer to the SSSI and the SuDS pond is located within the area of green infrastructure. Since the red line boundary of this site is substantially different from the boundary from the previous

	application, to avoid any confusion, a 20m SSSI buffer free of all development must be marked on a site plan. Ecology did not raise an objection to the previous application, and we are not raising an objection to this application. it is acceptable in terms of ecology and surface water drainage with the addition of the information discussed below. Ecology: Compared to the previous design, this proposals removes the farmhouse and northern part of the site from the red line boundary and moves all development further away from the SSSI boundary. The ecological buffer zone would be enlarged and enhanced with additional planting and the parking areas have been moved away from the SuDS pond. The Ecological Impact Assessment provided a biodiversity gain assessment but has not updated any of the surveys done from the previous applications (F/22/93835 & O/21/91192). The last walkover survey was done in August 2022. The surveys were given an 18-month validity period. An additional ecology walkover will be required after February 2024 to confirm whether any changes have occurred on site which could affect habitats for protected species. Bat Surveys: since the farmhouse is not part of this application, those bat surveys do not have to be updated for this application, however buildings 2, 4, & 6 are still included within the red line boundary. These buildings were included in the emergence surveys in 2021 and were considered not likely to support roosting bats. They should be included in the walkover survey to determine whether any conditions have changed and whether or not they would require an additional/ updated Phase II bat survey. The updated biodiversity metric demonstrates an increase in habitat units of 22.69% and in hedgerow units of 28.22%, with the trading rules satisfied. A medium population of grass snakes were recorded on the eastern part of the site, with swallows nesting in an outbuilding. The site was considered to have moderate suitability for badgers, occasional use by hedgehogs and suitability for nesting bird. The mitigation strategy for reptiles in section 8.3 is acceptable, as the ecology buffer area will provide suitable retained habitat and includes the areas where most of the reptiles were recorded. The proposed mitigation and precautionary working methods include an updating badger walkover (8.4) and avoidance measures to protect nesting birds (8.5), lighting during the construction phase (8.7) and avoidance of entrapment during the construction phase (8.8). These can be condition in the CEMP in addition to control measures for air and water pollution including sediment (8.9). A wildlife sensitive lighting plan is required and can be condition. This must include avoidance of light spillage on boundary vegetation and towards the farmhouse, which is a known bat roost.
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	The proposed site layout-landscape mitigation and enhancement plan shows the landscape buffer along the eastern boundary as all of the area to the east of the Exolum pipeline easement. This is shown as existing rough grassland and developing scrub, with a native field hedge mix along the site boundary. The proposed UK hab map shows a buffer area of mixed scrub and does not include the pipeline easement. The LMEP shows native woodland blocks and scrub in species rich grassland along the northern boundary, and the UK hab map shows this area as species rich grassland with scattered trees. Along the northwestern boundary the LMEP shows post and rail fencing, native hedges, small woodland blocks and individual trees with scrub, while the UK hab ap shows mixed scrub along the SSSI buffer, with species rich grassland and scattered trees to the southwest of the buffer. To resolve these differences, a detailed landscape environmental management plan (LEMP) with planting specifications can be conditioned. Surface Water Drainage: The simple index approach has been used to show that the pollution hazards have been mitigated by the proposed SuDS design. Before discharge to Moorgreen Stream, surface water will pass through either permeable paving or a filter trench, a SuDS basin, a downstream defender and a sediment forebay. The package sewage treatment plant has been placed in a location where if it malfunctioned it would not be likely to contaminate the surface water drainage system. The treatment plant must have a monitored alarm system to indicate any malfunction and an emergency procedure in place to ensure that no contaminated would be possible. The treated foul effluent would flow into the proposed bioretention forebay before being discharged off site.
EBC Urban Design:	<u>Comments 19 April 2024:</u> Summary: the site is located outside the urban edge within the countryside. Units A & C are located too close to the western boundary – limiting buffer planting opportunities and increasing potential visual impact. The amended layout when adding to the equation unit E, confirms what as already a concern on the original submission – the proposed set of buildings is too cramped and will have an undesirable urbanising effect. More information is required to assess the concern raised – such as CGI's from key viewpoints. Amended Layout: I agree with the Landscape Officer comments and I also consider the amended layout a backward step compared to the refused layout. Due to the general increase on height and mass, it is considered that the set of the buildings is too cramped and will have an undesirable urbanising effect. Unit E adds on to this perception. Although the scheme, as it stands, presents less proposed floorspace compared with the refused proposal, in reality it is designed to allow for flexibility to turn all buildings into two storeys building and that has an impact in terms of height, mass and appearance given the rural context of this development. Furthermore, building A and C are too close to the western boundary, not leaving much space for reinforcing the buffer planting. Therefore, it is considered that there is potential visual impact due to the proximity of the proposed buildings

towards the western boundary, aggravated by the fact that the majority of the proposed buildings have increased in height. Lastly, I endorse the Landscape officer comments regarding the requirement to produce a selected number of CGIs from key viewpoints to accurately assess the impact of the proposals on the surrounding area and on the countryside.

Comments 22 January 2024:

Summary: The site is located outside the urban edge within the countryside.

The proposed layout shows the buildings predominantly within the area of the existing buildings, minimising the encroachment into the undeveloped part of the site.

The elevations also indicate a softer design for the buildings, with varied timber cladding that creates a more 'rural' appearance appropriate for the countryside setting.

Site Context: the site lies within the countryside and adjacent an SSSI. A PRow runs alongside the northern boundary. The following comments are therefore made on the assumption that issues relating to development within the countryside can be overcome.

External Layout: the existing buildings are currently in a state of disrepair, and they do not appear to have any architectural merit. In addition, where the character of an existing place has limited or few qualities, then a new and positive character should be proposed to enhance its identity. In this context, it is considered that the proposal helps to improve the overall appearance of the site and makes a positive contribution to the character of the area. In terms of layout, it is acknowledged that the proposed arrangement will be located where the current development is, minimising the encroachment into the undeveloped area. It seems the proposal wont have a detrimental visual impact on the surrounding area, but I will defer to the Landscape comments on this matter. Whilst Unit C is framing views from those approaching the site helping with legibility and improving the sense of arrival, there is a concern that the flat roof part of the building might be putting some pressure on existing trees. Any proposal to remove trees alongside the western boundary, which are currently providing a significant level of screening, would need to be carefully considered. There is not clear indication on the site plan where cycle parking will be located. Also to avoid inappropriate mixing of pedestrian route and distinguishing it as a feature would improve safety and help create a more legible and pedestrian friendly environment. Recommendations were also provided.

Height, Form, Scale & Mass: no objection in principle, subject to landscape comments. The site is currently well-screened and it is anticipated that there wont be many opportunities for the proposal to be seen from wider views.

External Appearance & Materials: no objection in principle to the proposed architectural language nor to the material palette. However, it is important to ensure that an excessive variation of detailing is not employed in a single scheme, as it often results in a discordant composition. The external finishing materials and

	detailing are very important from an urban design perspective. These should be durable and of a high quality, reinforce the overall design concept and take account of the context of the site. Further details/ samples of materials are needed. Sustainability: • Significantly reduce vehicular dominance and prioritise pedestrian and cycle provision and links to public transport given the significant growth occurring in this area • Provide minimum parking provision • Consider creation provision for shared car club vehicles • Provide electric vehicle charging points for cars, Ebikes and other forms of micro-mobility in location that support the streetscene and do not hinder pedestrians and consider the need to future proof/ safeguard land for infrastructure to support autonomous and connected autonomous vehicles and MaaS (Mobility as a Service) • Include additional tree and soft landscape planting to reduce hard surfaces, slow surface water run-off, provide shade, and create habitats/ corridors for biodiversity.
EBC Tree Officer:	<u>Comments 30 April 2024:</u> No arboricultural objection to the amended proposal subject to the updating of the tree protection plans. <i>The development must accord with the arboricultural report reference AIA/AMS-KC/CH/MOORLANDS/001 Rev E. Reason: To retain and protect the existing trees which form an important part of the amenity of the locality.</i> <i>Notwithstanding the arboricultural information submitted to date, no excavation, demolition or development related works shall take place on site until an updated scaled and referenced tree protection plan, as per British Standard 5837:2012 (Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations), is submitted and approved by the LPA. The approved tree protection plan must be adhered to in full, and may only be modified subject to written agreement from the LPA. Reason: To retain and protect the existing trees which form an important part of the amenity of the locality.</i> <u>Comments 24 January 2024:</u> Overall, we do not consider that there is a detrimental material change from the previous iterations of this scheme. Arguably there may be a net positive change (e.g. to T27). The only minor point is that it doesn't appear clear whether the tree protection fencing continues along the redline as shown on the tree protection plan. It may be that the applicant has or intends to install hoarding along the redline, but if not, the tree protection fencing appears to stop, leaving some trees potentially exposed (e.g. T24, T25, etc.). Clarification on this matter would be required. Notwithstanding the above clarification, if you are minded to approve the application, please condition the following:

	<i>The development must accord with the arboricultural report reference AIA/AMS-KC/CH/MOORLANDS/001 Rev E. No excavation, demolition or development related works shall commence until the tree protection measures have been installed as per the tree protection plans reference TPP-KC/MOORLANDS/001 Rev F Sheets 1 and 2. Tree protection measures shall be retained in their approved form for the duration of the work and may only be modified subject to written agreement from the LPA.</i> <i>Reason - To retain and protect the existing trees which form an important part of the amenity of the locality.</i>
EBC Policy:	<u>Comments 27 February 2024:</u> Countryside: comments are provided on the acceptability of the proposal for employment development on land which is designated as countryside under Strategic Policy S5. This states that planning permission will be granted for new development in the countryside provided it meets the noted criteria such as whether it is related to the extension and replacement of existing employment use (Policy DM18). It further states amongst other things that in permitting new development in the countryside the Borough Council will seek to avoid adverse impacts such as upon the rural and woodland character and on the biodiversity of the area and seek to secure long-term beneficial management practices that will enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the countryside. The key considerations of this proposal when assessing it against the criteria in Policy DM18, extension and replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside are those which relate to the density, scale, massing, layout and height (criterion c) and avoiding detrimental impacts upon the character of the countryside (criterion d). It is observed that the footprint of some of the proposed buildings will be located on undeveloped parts of the site although less so compared to the previously withdrawn outline planning application and the refused full planning application which is currently subject to an appeal. The footprint of the employment buildings which are proposed to be located outside the existing developed parts of the site would constitute a material change of use of land designated as countryside and as such would not be acceptable. The criteria in Policy DM1, general criteria for new development will also be important to consider with regards to the overall design proposed and with regards to development not having an adverse impact on, and where possible enhancing the countryside amongst other things. It is noted that the proposal could potentially help to improve the overall appearance of the site which is currently in a state of disrepair whilst any urbanising effect would be further minimised. This is due to its location adjacent to an existing employment estate to the east provided the overall scale and massing of the proposed buildings which has been reduced further would not be considered to materially alter the character of this site. The applicant has also proposed mitigation measures which go further compared to those in the previously withdrawn outline planning application and full planning application currently subject to an appeal with regards to additional ecological enhancements that will be integrated into the fabric of the courtyard and soft landscaping plans for native flora and fauna that will result in a biodiversity net gain (BNG) benefit overall.

	Employment Provision: The principle of employment development would be acceptable and would contribute to the Council's wider employment land supply targets whereby a total of 1,076.68sqm (GIA) of new employment floorspace is proposed. With regard to criterion h in Policy DM18, the development would not by itself or cumulatively with other recently permitted schemes undermine the Council's strategy for the development of employment-related floor space (see Policy S4). This is due to the loss of existing employment floorspace on protected employment sites and the development of some employment allocations for other uses over recent years. It is also noted that the applicant has further reduced the floorspace of this latest proposal in order to focus this principally within the existing built areas of the site. BREEAM: the applicant has submitted a BREEAM pre-assessment with the latest proposal. This targets a score of 79.77% which translates to a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating. This is in accordance with Policy DM2, Environmentally sustainable development of the adopted Local Plan which has a requirement for BREEAM 'Excellent' or BREEAM 'Very Good' plus 'passivhaus' certification including a 15% improvement in predicted carbon emissions. The applicant should ensure that a drop off in credits to a 'Very Good' rating is avoided in the later stages of the assessment. Conclusion: the proposal for redeveloping the site for employment uses will be acceptable provided that the proposed biodiversity related mitigation measures are considered to outweigh any loss to the proposed undeveloped areas of countryside within the curtilage of the site. It is observed that development proposed on the undeveloped countryside will be less substantial compared to the previously withdrawn outline planning application and full planning application currently subject to appeal due to a lower overall amount of floorspace proposed. This will help to further ensure that the overall character of the site is protected in accordance with Strategic Policy S5 of the 2016-2036 Local Plan. The Council's Design Team may also be able to provide a view of the proposal. Comments on ecology, highways, access and traffic related matters will also help to inform whether the revised proposal will be acceptable in principle.
EBC Environmental Health:	<u>Comments 19 April 2024:</u> The site setting is set back from the community and close to the M27, a source of high noise and air pollution. Offices located in the eastern corner more distant from the pollution. For short term exposure in handling storage, the effects of air pollution will be reduced and not of a magnitude we would advise against for short term or occasional use. A proportionate Construction and Environmental Management Plan would be appropriate. Contaminated Land conditions requested. <u>Comments 7 March 2024:</u> The uses proposed include general industrial which clearly has the potential to impact on the adjacent residential use through noise, air and other impacts. The application does not contain any information to show how noise and other impacts, that might

	be expected to arise from industrial uses, have been considered in terms of their effect on the residential use. Whilst the location is close to the M27 and inherently noisy, additional care needs to be taken in circumstances where even small increases in noise levels are proposed due to the already high noise levels and their impacts on health and wellbeing of the occupants of the residential dwelling. As we have not been provided with information to show how significant adverse impacts have been avoided, and adverse impacts otherwise reduced to a minimum we are unable to support the application at this time. Altering the layout to provide screening of the residential use from the proposed uses would be beneficial, as would removing the E(g)(iii) use as this is the most likely to impact the residential use. Restricting the hours of use would also assist in reducing impacts.
EBC Landscaping:	<u>Comments 12 April 2024:</u> This application draws the red line to a tighter area and regrettably excludes the buffer ecology zone which was a positive aspect of the refused scheme. I regard this proposal as a backward step compared to the previous layout. The site is covered by following designations: Countryside, and TPO trees along the eastern boundary. Other nearby designations that need to be considered: Moorgreen Meadows SSSI (east of application site), Public Footpath 10, and Strategic Gap (amended) lies to the north. In summary, my primary landscape concerns are: 1) Site layout - differs little from a common light industrial facility and fails to respond in a significant way to the countryside setting 2) Architecture of the buildings - is only a slight variation on typical light industrial buildings and will have an urbanising effect 3) Appearance and mass of the buildings - will not 'fully integrate' with the countryside setting 4) Double storey heights of units - potential increased visual impact 5) Units A & C located too close to the western boundary - limiting buffer planting opportunities 6) Landscape within the core of the site - limited opportunities for tree planting 7) Public footpath - potential adverse impact on setting of footpath and views into site I am content that there will be limited impact on the Moorgreen Meadows SSSI and the Strategic Gap due to the proposed landscape buffers. In order to accurately assess the impact of the proposals, the applicants should submit a select number of CGI's from key viewpoints. DAS: The screening (along the western boundary) is not continuous and there are gaps from which the site will be seen, especially in winter months when deciduous trees defoliate. This is a key view from the M27 where a gap in the vegetative screen allows an open view into the site. Wellington Park industrial/ commercial estate is also screen by vegetation in Summer months, in winter there are some filtered views.

Public Right of Way and Screening: The route of the existing public footpath is of mixed quality, and in places along the western edge of the site the route is tight and the existing boundary fencing is ugly, dilapidated and exposed. A full assessment along the footpath route is required to ensure unattractive views of the site are not created at lower levels by the erection of the mesh fence indicated on the landscape plan. There are some key views from the footpath looking south towards the site and these need to be screened. The photographs included in the DAS are of views along the route of the footpath. Further work is required to take photos from the footpath looking into the site so that an accurate assessment can be made of potential visual impact.

Site Layout: Compared to the previous refused layout this proposal appears to be very similar to other local light industrial centres and is laid out in a predictable and uninspiring manner. Positive sustainability elements, such as green roofs, have been omitted and the height of the proposed units has increased. I am concerned that units A and C have been located so close to the western boundary. The positioning of these buildings increases potential visual impact on views from the west and limits the space available for meaningful screen planting. These buildings should be pulled off the boundary to create sufficient space for substantial tree and hedgerow planting. I will comment in more detail on landscape issues when reviewing the ACLA landscape plan, however the DAS states 'Trees and vegetation are introduced within the development with new vegetation proposed between buildings. This allows the ecological buffers, landscaped boundaries and developed core of the site to be visually and ecologically 'stitched' together. Corridors of vegetation that promote biodiversity are created throughout the site'. The trees introduced within the development are limited in number and generally located in 'island' beds. Many of the planting beds are too close to buildings to allow trees to be planted and will only be isolated areas of shrub planting. It is not true that the developed core of the site is visually and ecologically 'stitched' together.

Appearance and Mass: The DAS states 'The proposed buildings have been designed with materials to allow the scheme to not only blend into the surrounding greenery, but to also reflects the site's agricultural past. The design solutions proposed for the 5no. units at Moorlands therefore allow the scheme to be fully integrated within a countryside setting'. Although the use of Larch and metal cladding may reflect the sites rural location, the design of the buildings is predictable and uninspiring. I think it is an overstatement to say that the design solutions for these buildings allow the scheme to 'be fully integrated within a countryside setting'. The design of the buildings is only a slight variation on typical light industrial units, and will be perceived as such by the observer, and would represent a significant urbanising impact on the countryside setting. I note that the units are described as single storey, when in reality they are all two storey with an increased height of almost 1m from the previous scheme. Any increase in height will raise concerns with potential visual intrusion, especially in mid-distance views. In order to accurately assess the impact of the units in the scene, I suggest that the

applicant submits a select number of CGI's from key viewpoints (from M27 and footpath). These should ideally be based on winter views to represent the worst-case scenario in terms of potential visual impacts.

Proposed site sections: I think these adequately demonstrate my concerns regarding the design, heights and massing of the proposed units. I do not think that the proposed units have been specially designed to respect the countryside setting and it is evident that they will have an urbanising effect.

Sustainability/ Green Infrastructure: As mentioned above the positioning of units A & C so close to the western boundary will not allow a significant band of tree planting along this section of the site. The DAS states 'Clad with natural materials and agricultural in character, the development will be in keeping with the other buildings located within the countryside. These designs will deliver a clear contrast and separation with the more typical industrial/commercial units located to the south'. I would challenge the suggestion that the proposed units represent a clear contrast with more typical industrial units. The main difference appears to be in the mix of external materials (which is welcomed).

Proposed boundary screening: The planting and SuDS's pond in the NE sector of the site is welcomed, although the form/shape of the SuDS pond should be designed in a more naturalistic manner. Further detail is required on the envisaged planting matrix here. The DAS states 'Dense boundary screening, combined with multiple layers of planting within the site, will blend together with the proposed building designs. The development therefore becomes visually fragmented and will blend in with the surrounding vegetation'. I do not agree that there are multiple layers of planting within the site that will visually fragment the development.

ACLA Landscape Enhancement & Mitigation Plan Rev B: The drawing needs to be updated as it still shows the existing farmhouse retained. Further detail is required on the reconfigured entrance and any required clearance of existing vegetation. The new native understorey mix should be located on plan for maximum screening effect where gaps in existing cover (requires further site work to accurately plot existing vegetation and where gaps occur). Details are required on any existing boundary fences to be retained and where the 2m high mesh fence is proposed. The enclosure types to all boundaries should be indicated on plan. There appears to be a gap in existing vegetation along the route of the public footpath. Since the red line is tight to the edge of the road this leaves no room for new planting. This stretch should be fenced to screen views of the access road from the footpath. The landscape plan indicates 2 rows of conifers along the access roads. The larger central line of conifers have maximum impact in the scene and should be retained, but there is scope to remove the thinner westerly line of conifers and to replace these trees with a native hedgerow mix and individual native trees. Units A & C are located very close to the western boundary leaving insufficient space for effective

	hedge and understorey planting. Some tree planting is also required here to filter views at the upper level and bolster screening but at present there is insufficient room to plant canopy trees. Unit A is particularly close to the public footpath and will potentially negatively impact views into the site, especially at upper levels. The proposed woodland planting along the northern edge of the site will be crucial in screening views from the public footpath towards the site. Whilst I support the aim of establishing woodland blocks, I suggest that a new native mix hedgerow (min. 3m wide) is planted along the boundary to re-create a field hedge. This hedge will ensure there is screening at lower levels within the first 5 years while the woodland blocks establish and grow on. Some scattered standard native trees are also required along this edge since the woodland blocks will no doubt be planted as small transplants. Areas of scrub and species rich grass should be clearly defined to aid maintenance. The SuD's area requires a considered design approach to re-create a natural effect within this buffer zone. The attenuation and bioretention forebay are currently overly engineered and sensitive re-design is required to ensure a more naturalistic effect. There are only 6 proposed trees indicated in this buffer zone and this is inadequate for such a large area. I am generally happy to see trees on this site planted as selected standards that will be quicker to establish than larger stock. The native field hedge mix along the eastern boundary should include some individual native trees (where the planting is outside the easement) to bolster high level screening along this edge. The area over the easement should be developed as a wildflower meadow to maximise biodiversity. The opportunities for tree planting in the core of the site are limited and it is regrettable that there is no tree planting adjacent units B & D. The thin planters in front of units B & D could be combined to create a wider soft landscape strip sufficient for at least some hedge planting (note: the landscape plan and site plan do not match in this area). It is disappointing that green roofs have been dropped from the scheme as these would have helped reduce any urbanising impact on the countryside setting. Details of surfacing types are needed with a variety of materials that will avoid bland sweeps of a single surfacing type. The new exit drive could be a low-key reinforced gravel surface for a softer effect.
HCC Countryside:	<u>Comments 19 April 2024:</u> No objection – subject to a condition ensuring there would be no obstruction caused to Footpath 10.
HCC Highways:	<u>Comments 18 January 2024:</u> No objection – subject to conditions. Site Access Junction: access will be upgraded to a formal bellmouth junction with associated tactile paving, capable of taking both the level of vehicle flows anticipated for the development, along with the increased weight of vehicle requirements. Drawings have demonstrated that the appropriate visibility splays are achievable, even when taking into account the fall in levels to the west, and that two-way vehicles can easily pass each other at the site access to ensure that a wait on the highway (whilst one vehicle exits as another enters) is not required. A S278 agreement would be required.

	Internal Site Layout: whilst it is understood that the site would not be for adoption by HCC under a S38, an assessment of the information provided have been undertaken. From its access junction with Botley Road, access into the site is via a private internal road. This is initially of a sufficient width to cater for two-way traffic for approx. 45m and ensure that (given the anticipated vehicle flows as outlined) back up onto the highway does not occur. After this point, there is a narrowed section of approx. 100m which restricts two-way traffic to some extent, particularly that of an articulated lorry and car passing before the access road splits into dedicated in and out lanes. It would be recommended that the developer investigates additional passing places on the narrowed section, to enable easier movement of vehicles, however it is not anticipated that any issues would affect the highway. Once into the development area of the site, the layout provides a two-way circulation road with formal parking to the side of this. Vehicle tracking drawings demonstrate that the layout is suitable for the access and turning of delivery vehicles with a turning head at the north-eastern end, and there looks to be sufficient space for multiple deliver vehicles to be accommodated, though movement will be very tight. Parking: whilst the quantum of parking has not been assessed, as this is for EBC as Local Parking Authority, it is noted that 33 car parking spaces and 18 cycle parking spaces have been provided. In terms of parking layout, this has been reviewed and would be acceptable with adequately sized parking bays and aisle widths of sufficient size to allow for easy turning in and out of spaces. It would however be recommended that 0.3m step out strips are afforded for spaces adjacent to landscaping. With regard to cycle parking, no details of either type or location have been provided, and so this should be via condition, to be agreed and in place prior to occupation, the internal access road proceeds into site. Trip Generation: Whilst trip generation is outlined within the associated Transport Technical Note, it is noted that this has been calculated on a development proposals of 1,359sqm of development (180sqm officer / 1,179sqm industrial), where as the application form outlines a significantly lower development proposals of 1,077sqm of development (162sqm of office / 915sqm of industrial). As such, the trip rates provided obviously give a fully robust assessment and suggest that, when considering proposed less existing development, there would be just 14 additional trips in the AM peak (9 in/ 5 out), 11 additional trips in the PM peak (3 in/ 8 out) and 125 additional trips in a daily period (63 in/ 62 out). Clearly in terms of an indivial development, this additional trip generation is minimal in the key peak hour periods, when set against the existing traffic flows in the local highway network such as the B3035 Botley Road from which the site is accessed. In terms of accumulative impact when considered in conjunction with other development in the area, there will however be a need to improve highway related infrastructure in the local area for the benefit of future users. As such, developer contributions are requested. Developer Contributions:
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	As outlined in the submitted Highways Technical Note, developer contributions were agreed for a previous application F/22/93835. It is onwards suggested that these agreed contributions are pro-rata'd down in accordance to the development now proposed compared to that previously proposed. The developer suggested contribution figure of £32,707 (plus indexation), which is acceptable. The exact utilisation of this funding will be outlined as part of any S106 agreement covering: 1) Highway improvements on West End Highway Street, through which some users of the development site will undoubtedly travel, 2) Junction improvements on the Tollbar Way corridor, through which some users of the development site with undoubtedly travel; and 3) Sustainable transport improvements (bus, cycle and/ or pedestrian in the local vicinity of the site anticipated to be utilised by users of the development site. Conditions: Access Construction Provision No occupation of the development shall start on site until the access, including the footway and/or verge crossing shall be constructed in accordance with the S278 process, with lines of sight provided in accordance with the approved plans. The lines of sight splays shown on the approved plans shall be kept free of any obstruction exceeding 0.6m in height above the adjacent carriageway and shall be subsequently maintained so thereafter. Reason: To provide satisfactory access and in the interests of highway safety. Access Road Provision No occupation of the development shall start on site until the access road, including any areas of widening shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plans. The access road shall be kept free of any obstruction and shall be subsequently maintained thereafter. Reason; To provide satisfactory access and in the interests of highway safety. Construction Method Statement No development shall start on site until a construction method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, which shall include: (a) A programme of and phasing of demolition (if any) and construction work; (b) The provision of long term facilities for contractor parking; (c) The arrangement for deliveries associated with all construction works; (d) Methods and phasing of construction works; (e) Access and egress for plant and machinery; (f) Protection of pedestrian routes during construction; (g) Location of temporary site buildings, compounds, construction material and plant storage areas; (h) Details of the methodology for ensuring dirt is not transferred onto the highways from the site (i.e. wheel washers), and onwards mitigation should this fail, such as the employment of mechanical road sweepers, and the subsequent refresh of street lining (as and when required) should this be damaged during the
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	process. Demolition and construction work shall only take place in accordance with the approved method statement. Reason: In order that the Planning Authority can properly consider the effect of the works on the amenity of the locality. Car Parking Before use of the development is commenced 33 car parking spaces shall be provided within the curtilage of the site and subsequently maintained and kept available solely for that purpose, in accordance with the details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Reason: To ensure adequate car parking provision within the site. Cycle Store – Details Required Before use of the development is commenced, plans and particulars showing details of the provisions of cycle storage within the site must be submitted and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details before the use of the development is commenced and shall be retained thereafter. Reason: To ensure adequate provision within the site.
HCC Flood Authority:	<u>Comments 19 April 2024:</u> Thank you for consulting us on the amended details. I can't see that any of the drainage has been amended, therefore we have no additional comments. <u>Comments 12 January 2024:</u> No objection. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and is generally at very low risk of flooding from surface water. Brownfield runoff rates have been calculated, however the existing drainage has not been confirmed. Proposed discharge rates would achieve betterment over the estimate brownfield rates for the design storm events. Flood exceedance flow routes have been considered. The peak rainfall allowance used is appropriate for development with a shorter lifespan than residential development. Attenuation features have been proposed that meet the quantity and quality requirements for surface water drainage. Water quality and SuDS maintenance details have been provided.
National Highways:	<u>Comments 22 April 2024:</u> We are satisfied that amendments will not have significant impact to the safe and efficient operation of the SRN (M27 Motorway) and our previous response dated 23 January 2023 recommending 3 conditions still stands. <u>Comments 23 January 2024:</u> Recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted, relating to; drainage, boundary and landscaping.
Environment Agency:	<u>Comments 11 April 2024:</u> Our previous response dated 30th January 2024 still stand. <u>Comments 30 January 2024:</u> No objection – subject to conditions.

	These relate to development on land affected by contamination, verification report, and previously unidentified contamination.
Southampton Airport:	<u>Comments 17 April 2024:</u> The proposals have been examined from an aerodrome safeguarding perspective and does not conflict with safeguarding criteria. We therefore, have no objection to this proposal. Given the nature of the proposed development it is possible that a crane may be required during its construction. We would, therefore, draw your attention to the requirement within CAP 1096 the Guidance to crane users on the crane notification process and obstacle lighting and marking. <u>Comments 23 January 2024:</u> Given the nature of the proposed development it is possible that a crane may be required during its construction. We would, therefore, draw your attention to the requirement within CAP 1096 the Guidance to crane users on the crane notification process and obstacle lighting and marking.
Southern Water:	<u>Comments 30 April 2024:</u> The comments in our response dated 23 January 2024 remain unchanged. <u>Comments 23 January 2024:</u> Please see Southern Water records showing the approximate position of water distribution main in the development site. The exact position of the public assets must be determined on site by the application in consultation with Southern Water, before the layout of the proposed development is finalised. The impact of any works within the highway/access road on public apparatus shall be assessed and approved in consultation with Southern Water, under a NRSWA enquire in order to protect public apparatus. It is possible that a sewer now deemed to be public could be crossing the development site. Therefore, should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation of the sewer will be required to ascertain its ownership before any further works commence on site. We have restrictions on the proposed tree planting adjacent to Southern Water sewers, rising mains or water mains and any such proposed assets in the vicinity of existing planting. The Environment Agency should be consulted directly by the applicant regarding the use of a private wastewater treatment works which disposes of effluent to sub-soil irrigation. SuDS can be adopted by Southern Water (under certain circumstances and should the developer request this).
Natural England:	<u>Comments 29 January 2024:</u> No objection – subject to appropriate mitigation being secured. (CEMP & SuDS details).

Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan:

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036

Policies: S1 (Sustainable Development), S4 (Employment Provision), S5 (Countryside), S11 (Transport Infrastructure), S12 (Footpaths, cycleways & bridleways), DM1 (General Development Criteria), DM2 (Environmentally Sustainable Development), DM3 (Adaption to Climate Change), DM4 (Zero or Low Carbon Energy), DM6 (Sustainable Surface Water Drainage), DM8 (Pollution), DM11 (Nature Conservation), DM13 (Transport), DM14 (Parking), DM15 (Safeguarding Existing Employment Sites), DM17 (Agricultural Development), and DM18 (Extension & Replacement of Non-Residential Buildings in the Countryside).

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Planning Obligations (2008), Biodiversity (2009), Environmentally Sustainable Development (2009), Quality Places (2011), and Trees & Development (2022).

Site Visit	Yes ☒	No ☐
A site visit was not undertaken as part of this application, but was undertaken 20 October 2022, as part of the previous application (F/22/93835).		

Assessment:

Site & Surroundings

The application site comprises a 1.71ha piece of land, situated to the north of Botley Road (B3035) accessed via a road which runs parallel with the M27. The site itself comprises a derelict farmstead, with a number of run-down buildings. An existing industrial site is located to the immediate south east of the site.

The application site falls within the designated countryside, with TPO'd trees and SSSI to the east of the site. The western boundary is also bound by trees, providing some screening to the M27. To the immediate south-east of the application is the outskirts of Hedge End Industrial Centre which falls within the urban edge and is also a designated employment protection site. This area comprises a mixture of usages including retail, commercial and industrial. Further west of the application site and M27 there are residential estates, also falling within the urban edge. To the south-west of the site is the Ageas Bowl.

Proposal

This application proposes the demolition of all existing buildings and detailed planning approval for light industrial floorspace [Use Class E(g)(ii) & E(g)(iii)], warehouse floorspace [Use Class B8] and estate office (Use Class E(g)(i)).

The application, following amendments, proposes 5no. separate industrial buildings:

Units A:

This unit is proposed to be situated north-west of the centre of the site, and would be orientated at a slight angle. This would have a footprint of approx. 470m², with a length of approx. 35.2m and width of approx. 13m.8m. This would have a pitched roof with a maximum height of approx. 7.9m and eaves height of approx. 5.8m. There would be some fenestration at first floor level on all elevations. There would also be an attached bin store (to the south) and bike store (to the north). These would both project approx. 3m from the main unit with a width of approx. 4.8m and a flat roof height of approx. 2.2m.

Unit B:

This unit is proposed to be situated to the north-east of the centre of the site, set in from the northern and eastern boundaries. This would have a footprint of approx. 325m², with a length of approx. 23.8m and width of approx. 13.8m. This would have a pitched roof with a maximum height of approx. 7.9m and eaves height of approx. 5.8m. There would be square fenestration on each elevation in varying positions/ levels. The proposed floor plans show there would be an attached bin store (to the east) which would project 3m from the main unit with a width of approx. 4.5m and a flat roofed height of 2.2m. (The plans also show there to be another projecting element on the side north-west elevation, however this is not shown on any other elevation).

Unit C:

This unit would be situated towards the western boundary of the site, to the south of Unit A, and to the north of the main vehicular entrance point. This would have a footprint of approx. 94m², with a length of approx. 9.8m and width of approx. 9.7m. This would have a pitched roof with a maximum height of approx. 7.2m and an eaves height of approx. 5.7m. There would be fenestration of varying sizes and styles at both ground and first floor level. There would also be a bin and bike store attached to the unit (west). These would project varying amounts from the unit, bike store (3m) and bin store (2.5m). These would also have varying widths bike store (4.7m) and bin store (approx. 3m) with a shared flat roof height of approx. 2.2m.

Unit D:

This unit is proposed to be located towards the south-eastern part of the site, set in from both the southern and eastern boundaries. This would have a footprint of approx. 456m², with a length of approx. 35.2m and width of approx. 13.8m. This would have a pitched roof with a maximum height of 7.9m and an eaves height of approx. 5.8m. There would predominantly be fenestration at first floor level, however there would be a column of 3 windows on the north-western and south eastern elevations. There would be an attached bin and bike store (to the north), which would project approx. 3m from the unit and would have a length of approx. 9.3m and a flat roof height of 2.2m.

Unit E:

This unit is proposed to be located towards the southern part of the site, to the south-west of Unit D and east of the vehicular exit point, in a similar location to the existing farmhouse. This would have a footprint of approx. 201.6m², with a length of 19.3m and width of approx. 10.5m. This would have a pitched roof with a maximum height of 7.9m and an eaves height of 5.8m. There would predominantly be fenestration at first floor level, however (as per Unit D) there would be a column of 3 windows on the north-western and south eastern elevations. There would be a detached bin and bike store, located to the west of the main unit. This would have a footprint of 9.3m by 3m and a flat roofed height of 2.2m.

The material palette for the whole development would comprise a combination of; larch cladding (laid both horizontally and vertically) (mostly) at ground floor level, zinc cladding (mostly) at first floor level and zinc roofing. Fenestration and rainwater goods have not been specified. Further, units A, B, C and D have solar panels indicated on their roofs, however full details have not been provided.

The 5no. industrial units would be set in from all red line boundaries, focused around a central parking area. There is a circular movement for vehicles through the site, with only one designated entrance and exit. There would be 1no. SuDs pond situated to the north-eastern part of the site, to the north-east of units B and D. This would fall partly within the 20m buffer from the SSSI.

Previous Application, Comparison & Background

As set out within the history section of this report, planning application referenced “F/22/93835” was refused by the Planning Committee, with a decision being issued by the Council 2 October 2023, whereby the reasons for refusal read:

- 1) The proposed construction of 4no. industrial units would result in an unacceptable urbanising impact which would be detrimentally harmful to the countryside, thus the proposals would be contrary to Policies S5, DM1 and DM18 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).
- 2) The proposed development would result in an adverse impact upon the nearby Moorgreen Meadows SSSI (north and east) by reason of its close proximity and sensitivities of the flora associated with the SSSI (marsh orchid), thus the proposals would be contrary to Policies DM1 and DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), the Council’s Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2009), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).
- 3) In the absence of a planning obligation to secure financial contributions towards sustainable transport and public art, the proposals are unacceptable, contrary to Policies S1, S11, DM1 and DM13 and DM38 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), the Council’s Public Art Strategy (2015-2019), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

This application sought to reduce the extent of the application site (shown on the red line plan), and retain the existing farmhouse. Following consultee comments, concern was raised with regard to the potential impact of the industrial units upon a residential dwelling. As such the agent submitted amended plans altering the red line, demolishing the existing farmhouse and introducing a fifth industrial unit (Unit E). This amended scheme is the one which the Council will base their decision.

Principle

The application site falls within designated countryside and, as such policy S5 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) is of relevance. This policy sets out that there are specific criteria which development must comply with in order for it to be acceptable within the countryside. Section 1 notes types of development which would be compatible within the countryside, and Section 2 sets out what development will seek to do to ensure the proposals do not have an adverse impact upon the countryside.

Section 1(a) of policy S5 notes that proposals that provide employment through agricultural development and extension and replacement of existing employment uses can be acceptable but would be subject to Policies DM17 and DM18.

Policy DM17 relates to agricultural development. As the proposals relate to industrial buildings, this Policy would not be applicable.

DM18 relates to the extension and replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside. From a site visit, it was noted that there were some buildings on site, however these are fairly dilapidated. As a result, this Policy could be loosely applied.

Policy DM18 does however set out further criteria of relevance (Section 1 a-h and Section 2). The most relevant parts of this Policy are: *(b) the extension or replacement building is for a non-residential use, (c) the extension or replacement building would not have an urbanising effect on the countryside in terms of its density, scale, massing, layout and height, (d) access, car parking, landscaping and services can be provided without having a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside, (e) so far as possible to property is sustainable located in terms of accessibility by means of transport other than the private*

car, (f) the extended building or its replacement would be located within the existing curtilage unless its relocation or extension would contribute to improving the character and quality of the local area, (g) in the case of a replacement building, the proposal also includes the demolition of the building to be replaced, and (h) the development would not by itself or cumulatively with other recently permitted schemes undermine the Council's Strategy for the development of employment-related floorspace (Strategic Policy S4).

Comments from the Council's Landscape Officer, Urban Design Officer and Ecologist note that the proposals would have an adverse urbanising effect as a result of the density, scale, massing, layout and height, and in particular the siting of Units A & C which do not allow for sufficient landscaping along the western boundary. The Council's Policy Officer noted that some of the proposed buildings would be located on undeveloped parts of the site (albeit less than previous schemes). They commented that the footprint of the employment buildings which are proposed to be located outside the existing developed parts of the site would constitute a material change of use of land designated as countryside and as such would not be acceptable under Policy DM18. However, the Policy Officer concluded that the development may be acceptable if there were other material factors that were considered to outweigh the policy conflict.

The other factors considered within the Policy Officers comments included; design matters and employment provision. In relation to design, they concluded that the proposals could improve the overall appearance of the site which is currently in a state of disrepair whilst any urbanising effect would be minimised (albeit they deferred the judgement of this to the Council's Landscape and Urban Design Officer). In terms of employment provision, it is acknowledged that the proposals would provide employment opportunities (albeit the exact amount of employees is unknown).

To the immediate south-east of the application site is the urban edge and an existing employment site (Hedge End Retail Park). The proposals would therefore be similar in nature to those to the immediate south-east of the site. As such, and with specific regard to the principle of employment development, the proposals would be considered acceptable and would contribute towards the Council's wider employment land supply targets, supported by Policies S4(d) and DM18 1(h).

Whilst the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to employment provision, due to the concerns raised by the Council's Landscape Officer, Urban Design Officer, and Ecologist it is not considered that the benefits of employment provision would outweigh the adverse harm arising upon the countryside in terms of the urbanising impact of the development. Ultimately, the proposals are considered to be contrary to Policies S1, S5, and DM18 in this regard.

Design & Impact upon the Countryside

Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulates that all new development should respect the character and appearance of urban areas, take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character, appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbouring, and be compatible in terms of mass, scale, layout density, design and siting.

The amended plans introduce a fifth industrial unit (Unit E), which would create a more cramped environment, especially given the loose grain of existing dilapidated buildings on site. Further worsening the layout is the positioning of the units around the parking provisions, whereby this would introduce a significant amount of hard surfacing, with limited landscaping within this specific area thus would appear harsh, especially given the countryside siting. The DAS notes that there is landscaping within the site to allow for green corridors, but the Landscape Officer has noted that these would not be sufficient.

It is acknowledged that all units are set in from the boundaries by varying degrees, and also respect a 20m ecology buffer to the SSSI (east). However, and as per comments from the Urban Design and Landscape Officer, units A & C are particularly close to the western boundary (with the M27). The Council's Ecologist has also raised concern with this close proximity noting that this does not allow for sufficient planting along this boundary. Given that views could be obtained in to the site it is considered important to protect and enhance the existing screening along this boundary. The Council's Urban Design Officer has also noted that there is potential visual impact as a result of the close proximity of the buildings towards this boundary, made worse by their overall heights.

Turning to the buildings themselves, all units would exceed 7m in height with most falling just shy of 8m. Whilst this height is not uncommon for industrial type buildings, this would be out of context for their countryside location. The units would also have fairly large footprints, albeit noted that the floorspace is technically less when compared to the previous schemes, however, in reality all units are two-storeys in nature. As a result of the dimensions, the proposals are considered to be overtly urbanising. The materials are considered appropriate, however the overall size and massing of the units, combined with their cramped layout, would result in an urbanising effect upon the countryside.

Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states *'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents'*. Due to the inappropriate layout, size and massing of the development, the proposals are considered to result in an unacceptable urbanising effect, which would have an adversely harmful impact upon the countryside and wider vantage points. The proposals are therefore not considered to address the first reason for refusal of the previous scheme.

Overall, and to conclude, the proposed industrial units, as a result of their cramped layout, height and massing of the buildings which would result in an undesirable urbanising effect detracting from the intrinsic qualities of the countryside, thus being contrary to the policies, and SPD. In accordance with Paragraph 139 of the NPPF, this development is not considered well designed, nor does it reflect local design policies, thus warranting refusal.

Impact upon Neighbouring Amenities

Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) amongst other matters, stipulates that all new development should not have an unacceptable impact upon residential amenities of both new and existing residents.

Originally the application sought to retain the existing farmhouse, whereby Environmental Health raised some concern. Following the receipt of amended plans, the residential element has been removed and therefore the previous assessment within planning application referenced F/23/93835 setting out the impact upon neighbouring amenities would still be relevant.

"Due to the location of the application site, separation distances (approx. some 80m) and the proposed siting of the proposals they are unlikely to have any adverse impact upon any residential amenities. Whilst it is noted that there is a public footpath around the application site, due to the siting of the proposals within the site, this is not considered to result in an adversely harmful impact upon this footpath.

The proposals would be situated to the north-west of existing industrial/ commercial units, and therefore would be compatible with the established surroundings and are unlikely to have an adverse impact upon these amenities.

Overall and to conclude, the proposals are not considered to have an adverse impact upon the neighbouring amenities and would therefore be acceptable in this regard."

Highway Safety & Parking

Policy DM13 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) requires that development is or could be well served by public transport, cycling and walking and it includes measures which minimise its impact on the existing highway network. Policy DM14 of the same Plan requires that an appropriate level of car parking be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards. The policy provisions are consistent with the requirements of the NPPF and in particular those of paragraphs 107 and 108.

Due to the nature of the proposals, National Highways and the Local Highway Authority (LHA) have been consulted. Neither consultee raised objection, but did recommend conditions be imposed in order to make the development acceptable.

The LHA advised that the site access would be acceptable, providing adequate visibility splays, albeit a S278 agreement would be required. They provided comments on the internal site layout noting this would also be appropriate, whilst acknowledging that it would not be up for adoption by HCC. They also reviewed trip generation, which was noted to take a more cautious approach (utilising a larger building footprint than that proposed). As a result of the trip generations developer contributions were requested. Developer contributions will be expanded upon within the 'Planning Obligations' section of this report.

Turning to parking, 37no. vehicle parking spaces (including 2no. disabled bays) are proposed with 4no. bike stores providing 24no. cycle spaces. The LHA advised that the parking layout is acceptable with adequately sized parking bays and aisle widths allowing for easy turning in and out of spaces. However it was recommended that a 0.3m step out strip be afforded for spaces adjacent to landscaping. Originally when the application was submitted 4no. units were proposed, with the application form noting that there would be 21no. full time employees. In this scenario the LPA would be satisfied that there would be sufficient parking provisions. However, the proposals have since been amended whereby a further industrial unit has been introduced. No updated figures on employees has been provided, as such, the total amount of employees for the whole site is unknown. It would be assumed that the additional industrial unit would increase the amount of full time employees. However, given the previous number of 21 full time employees compared to the 37no. vehicle spaces and 24no. cycle spaces, it is considered that there would be a sufficient buffer. It is unlikely that the addition of 1no. industrial unit would result in the need for any significant amendment to parking provisions. As such, and despite the lack of information on employees, a balanced approach has been taken, thus would not warrant reason for refusal.

As such, and had the proposals have been acceptable in all other regards the recommended conditions could have been imposed.

Ecology & Trees

Policy DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulates that the Borough Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers to; protect, conserve and enhance areas subject to international, national and local nature conservation designations, and promote the net gain of biodiversity on all sites through the protection, enhancement and connection of existing provisions and new habitats and features compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough.

It should be noted that the previous application was refused with regard to the adverse impact the proposed development would have had upon the Moorgreen Meadows SSSI and the impact this would have had on associated flora (marsh orchids). As part of the appeal the following report was submitted "Natural England, Moorgreen Meadows SSSI Whole Feature Assessment, July 2023". This report confirmed that in 2013 the SSSI was

in an unfavourable condition but was recovering. The latest report concludes the SSSI remains in an unfavourable condition with grassland declining; wet woodland recovering and Marsh Orchid absent since 1999. This report has also been submitted as part of this planning application, and therefore addresses the former reason for refusal.

Due to the nature of the proposals the Council's Tree Officer and Ecologist have been consulted.

The Council's Tree Officer raised no objection to the amended proposals, subject to conditions. As such, and had the proposals have been acceptable in all other regards, these conditions could have been imposed.

The Council's Ecologist originally raised no objection (as the farmhouse was proposed to be retained and was not included within the red line boundary). However, following amendments, this brought the existing farmhouse back into the red line boundary. The existing farmhouse is a known bat roost and therefore further surveys were requested. The Council's Ecologist also noted that the previous walkover reports would need to be updated (the last walkover survey was August 2022) to reassess the conditions of the land, and whether any protected species could be impacted.

Further to this, the Council's Ecologist echoed the concerns of the Council's Landscape Officer whereby the positioning of units A & C are considered to be too close to the western boundary thus would not allow significant planting along this boundary. Arguably this boundary is one of the most important, as this screens the development site from the M27. Views can be obtained from the M27 into the site, however the extent of the views depends on the seasons (due to the nature of the deciduous tree'd boundary this varies). However, and as a result of the close proximity of a couple of the units to this western boundary, this would limit the continuity of green infrastructure around the site boundary to the detriment of the surroundings.

At the time of determination, no updated or additional ecology surveys had been provided. Therefore, there is insufficient information to determine that the development would be acceptable in relation to ecology impacts.

Drainage

Policies DM3 and DM6 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulate that new development must provide sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) wherever feasible, and naturalised filtration should also be included.

In terms of drainage, the Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE), National Highways (NH), Southern Water (SW), the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA), and the Council's Ecologist provided comments.

The LLFA raised no objection to the proposals. The following consultees: EA, NE, NH and SW requested conditions to be imposed. Had the proposals have been acceptable in all other regards, these requested conditions could have been imposed.

The Council's Ecologist noted that the SuDS pond is in a suitable location, however could have a more naturalistic shape. They also noted that the inclusion of an additional building and parking area (following amendments) would affect the surface water drainage volume and overland exceedance flow routes. As such, the Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy (December 2023) would need to be amended. No updated version of this report has been submitted and therefore there is insufficient information to determine that the drainage proposals are acceptable.

Contaminated Land

Policy DM8 of the submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulates that development will not be permitted if it is likely to cause loss of amenity or impact upon public health or other unacceptable environmental impacts; including land contamination.

As part of the Environmental Health Officers comments, it was noted that the Council's Contaminated Land Officer requested additional information via conditions. The Environment Agency also recommended contaminated land conditions. Had the proposals have been acceptable in all other regards, these conditions could have been imposed to make the development proposals acceptable.

Sustainability

Policy DM2 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) requires new development to be environmentally sustainable. In this instance, the proposals would result in development above 500sq.m floorspace (measured externally), therefore must achieve BREEAM 'excellent' (or equivalent). This Policy is also supported by the Council's Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD.

The application has been supported by a BREEAM Pre-Assessment, which seeks to demonstrate how sustainability will be integrated into the development. This proposes a pre-assessment target score of 79.77% and an 'excellent' rating. It has therefore been, principally, demonstrated that the proposals could be Policy compliant and achieve BREEAM excellent rating. Had the proposal have been acceptable in all other regards a condition would have been imposed requiring formal certification to be submitted to the LPA within 12 months of occupation.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The proposals have been considered against the criteria within the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the Regulations) and the provisions of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The development is not of a type described in Schedule 1 of the Regulations whereby an Environmental Statement will always be required. Whilst the proposals are of a type described in Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations (10 Infrastructure Projects), the development is not located within a sensitive area (albeit noted that there is SSSI located to the north/ east of the application site) and the area of the development (0.93ha) is significantly below the relevant threshold in Column 2 (5 hectares – as set out within The Town and Country Planning and Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 which amended the 2017 Regulations). In accordance with the provisions of the Regulations and the Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 4-017-20170728), projects which are described in the first column of Schedule 2 but which do not exceed the relevant thresholds or meet the criteria in the second column of the Schedule, or are not at least partly in a sensitive area, are not Schedule 2 development and, therefore, do not need to be screened by the Local Planning Authority. An Environmental Statement is therefore not required.

Planning Obligations

In accordance with the guidance contained within the NPPF, Policies S1 and DM38 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036, the Council's 'Planning Obligations' SPD and the requirements of Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations, there is a requirement for developers' contributions to ensure on and off-site provision for facilities and infrastructure made necessary by the development, or to mitigate against any increased need/pressure on existing facilities.

Had the proposals have been acceptable in all other regards, the following matters are likely to have been required as part of a S106 Agreement, (please note the below would also have been subject to negotiations and agreement with the applicant):

- Sustainable Transport
- Public Art

The projects and measures identified for contribution expenditure will comply with the 3 tests set out in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy 2010, in that the monies would go towards the projects which are directly related to the development, and are fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. The contributions would be index-linked to ensure the contributions rise in line with the costs of providing the identified projects/measures. The obligations are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms and to meet the needs generated by the new residents and the potential impact on existing services and facilities. Given their absence, this would form a reason for refusal.

Equalities Act:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2021 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020-2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF and development plan do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and Local Plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Local Plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF aims for the need for housing to be met, and Policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 14,580 dwellings to be provided by 2036. The NPPF and Policies, S1, DM2, and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. The proposed development would aim to achieve BREEAM 'excellent' and would incorporate features such as sustainable drainage and potential use of solar panels. These such measures would accord with the objectives of the climate change policies.

Conclusion:

To conclude, the proposals would result in additional employment opportunities, contributing positively towards the aims and objectives set out within Policy S4 of the Local Plan. However, this is not considered to outweigh the adverse harm arising to the countryside by way of having a detrimentally urbanising effect. The proposals are therefore contrary to Policies S1, S5, DM1, DM11, and DM18.

Reasons for Refusal:

- 1) The proposals, by reason of their cramped, dense layout, and inappropriate height and massing would result in an urbanising effect, detrimentally harmful to the character and intrinsic qualities of the countryside. The proposals are therefore contrary to the requirements of Policies S5, DM1, DM11 and DM18 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).
- 2) Due to there being records of a number of protected species (badgers, bats, birds and reptiles) nearby to the site, and a bat roost within the farmhouse to be demolished, an updated walkover survey and bat surveys are required. In the absence of these reports, it is not possible to determine whether the development would have an adverse effect on these protected species. The proposals are therefore contrary to Policies DM1 and DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).
- 3) Insufficient information has been provided with regard to surface water drainage to ensure that there would be no adverse risk of on-site flooding, or pollutants being released into the nearby watercourse which ultimately feeds into the River Itchen (SAC). The proposals are therefore contrary to Policies DM1, DM3, DM6, DM8 and DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).
- 4) In the absence of a planning obligation to secure financial contributions towards sustainable transport and public art required to make the development acceptable, the proposals are contrary to Policies S1, S11, DM13 and DM38 of the Eastleigh Borough local Plan (2016-2036) and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☐**REFUSE** ☒