



Applicants:

Ford Motor Company
Limited

Application No:

11/0038/OUTWND

Date Registered:

03/05/2011

Expiry Date:

02/08/2011

Grid Ref:

455640 (E) 262821 (N)

Ward:

Drayton

Daventry UDA Planning Committee Paper

Report by Director of Planning and
Development

Date of Committee Meeting: 26/07/2011

Agenda Item: 5

Description: Outline planning application for development to provide up to 23,000 sq metres of B2 (General Industrial) and/or B8 (Storage and Distribution) with ancillary offices, and providing associated servicing and car parking. All matters reserved except for Access.

Address: Land to the North of the Ford Parts Distribution Centre, Royal Oak Industrial Estate, Royal Oak Way South, Daventry, Northants, NN11 8NT

1. Recommendation

1.1 The application be **Refused** for the following reasons:

- The proposed development would have an unacceptable cumulative visual impact upon a Special Landscape Area by virtue of the proposed height and footprint of the building and the levels of the site when assessed against the context of the existing form of development located to the immediate north and south of the application site in non-compliance with Policies GN1, GN2 (A and G) and EN1 of the Daventry Local Plan (1997).

- The applicant has failed to demonstrate that surface water and associated attenuation storage can be acceptably managed on the site. The Environment Agency have objected to the application on the basis of a submitted Flood Risk Assessment being considered non-compliant with the guidance contained within PPS25: Development and Flood Risk.

2. Description of Site

- 2.1 The site lies within the Royal Oak Industrial Estate - an area allocated for industrial development under Policy EM4 of the Daventry District Local Plan (1997). This Industrial Estate is located at the western edge of Daventry and comprises a variety of industrial buildings, the most prominent of which is the Ford Parts Distribution Centre.
- 2.2 The application site itself is 7.49Ha in area, is accessed via Royal Oak Way North and is located immediately north of the extant Ford Parts Distribution Centre. To its eastern side the site contains a floodlit full-size football pitch formerly used by Daventry United Football Club and an associated Social Club building. Both aforementioned facilities are currently vacant and disused. The western side of the site is open and grassed; the applicant has indicated that this area was last used for informal play pitch activity in association with the football club.
- 2.3 The site exhibits a varied topography with the site falling away substantially to the south, i.e. towards the existing Ford building. The steep and varied terrain in this area of the site precludes any potential development. There is also a steep embankment, all-be-it less pronounced, located at the northern edge of the site falling down to the adjacent industrial building beyond, which houses a Tesco distribution centre. The main body of the site therefore constitutes a raised plateau, which slopes gently from east (Royal Oak Way North) to west where it is bound by rolling open countryside. This countryside to the west is designated as a Special Landscape Area within the Daventry Local Plan.

3. Description of Proposal

- 3.1 The proposals involve the demolition and removal of the Social Club building and all play pitch facilities in addition to the development of a freestanding industrial unit with a gross internal floor space of up to 23,000 sq m. The proposed use is flexible, whereby either B2 (General Industrial) or B8 (Storage and Distribution), or a mix of B2 and B8 can be developed in association with ancillary B1 Offices.
- 3.2 Site access is to be maintained via Royal Oak Way North, although this is to be relocated to the northern end of the eastern boundary of the site (as opposed to its existing central location).
- 3.3 Although this application is in outline form with all matters reserved apart from Access, indicative layout and elevation drawings have been provided by the applicant. These details seek to set the parameters for the scale and form of the development which then would form the basis for any future reserved matter application(s).
- 3.4 The approximate footprint of the building would be 240 x 80m with ancillary office accommodation being located within the eastern side of the building (facing Royal Oak Way North). The indicative elevations detail an eaves height of 13.65m and a ridge height of 15.7m.

- 3.5 The area to the south-west of the site is currently laid out in the form of an off-road 4x4 track, but this is not intended to make up part of the proposals. The plans indicate existing soft landscaping being predominantly retained and supplemented where possible. Servicing would be provided to the immediate north of the proposed building with car parking positioned mainly to the immediate south and also to the east fronting Royal Oak Way North.

4. Policy Considerations

WNDC Purpose

- 4.1 Under S136(1) of the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, WNDC as an Urban Development Corporation has a statutory “objective” to deliver the regeneration of the area. The Secretary of State has determined that WNDC should have development control powers for certain types of development in order to carry out its objective. The proposal is consistent with the Corporation’s objectives.

National Policy:

- 4.2 PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development: Planning and Climate Change

PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

PPG13: Transport

PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

PPG24: Planning and Noise

PPS25: Development and Flood Risk

Development Plan:

- 4.3 East Midlands Regional Plan (2009): Policies 1, 2, 35, 46, 48

DDC Local Plan (1997): Policies GN1, GN2, GN3, EN12, EN42, EM4, CM7, CM8, RC2

Other Material Considerations:

- 4.4 WNDC Planning Principles (2009): Set out in this document are WNDC’s three corporate objectives: 1. To deliver development and infrastructure that enables regeneration and growth in Northampton, Daventry and Towcester; 2. To ensure that new development is supported by appropriate jobs, infrastructure and town centre regeneration; 3. To ensure that new development meets the Government’s design quality and environmental standards and is integrated into existing communities.

WNDC Manual for Design Codes (2009)

WNDC Sustainability Manual (March 2010)

WNDC Interim Planning Obligations Strategy (June 2011)

5. Representations.

DDC Development Control:

- 5.1 The proposed development for enhancement of B2 and B8 on an existing industrial estate is considered to be acceptable in principle as it would provide local employment and contribute to economic growth. However, in submitting the reserved matters consideration should be given to the design, scale, layout and landscaping to ensure that the development reflects local character and distinctiveness and that the proposed design secures at least 15% of their proposed energy from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources unless it can be demonstrated that it is not feasible or viable. Daventry District Council fully endorses the comments of the WNDC letter (dated 3rd June 2011) and Sport England's recommendations.

DDC Environmental Health:

- 5.2 The nearest residential property is approximately 600m away. There is no objection in principle to this proposal. However further acoustic assessments shall be required at detailed planning stage. Further information is required as to whether the 4x4 track constitutes part of the application; formalisation of the track could increase its use.

DDC Engineer:

- 5.3 No direct comments received from this department.

DDC Landscape Assessment:

- 5.4 No direct comments received from this department.

DDC Planning Policy:

- 5.5 No direct comments received from this department.

NCC Archaeology:

- 5.6 The borehole and geophysical surveys undertaken within the northern area provided information that suggests that it is unlikely that archaeological deposits have survived within this area. In light of this information I would advise that no further archaeological investigation will be required within this area should permission be granted.

NCC Development Management:

- 5.7 New development schemes place additional demand for fire and rescue resources, NCC applies a contribution rate of £145 per 100 sq m of non-residential development towards local fire and rescue infrastructure costs, which equates to £33,350. This

contribution would be utilised at the Fire Station that nearest serves the development. The development will also require 4no. fire hydrants to be installed at the same time as the rest of the water infrastructure and prior to any dwellings / commercial buildings being occupied. The final locations of which are to be agreed with the Northants Fire and Rescue Water Officer. The total planning obligation sought for fire hydrant provision on this development is £3,208 and index linked.

NCC Planning Policy:

- 5.8 The applicant should demonstrate how the development meets the requirements of the policies contained within the Northamptonshire Minerals and waste Development Framework (MWDF) Core Strategy (adopted May 2010). Part of this requires all developers to prepare a Waste Audit to accompany planning applications to allow for informed decision making and consideration of waste management issues throughout the planning process.

NCC Rights of Way:

- 5.9 No comments received.

NCC Sustainable Transport:

- 5.10 The principle of the development is considered to be acceptable subject to suitably worded planning conditions to secure footway connections in to the site, a pedestrian/cycle crossing at the Yeomanry Way roundabout with associated footway links to Royal Oak Way South and Thames Road, and 2no. bus shelters at the existing bus stops on Royal Oak Way South.

Daventry Town Council:

- 5.11 Any comments to be reported verbally

Anglian Water:

- 5.12 No comments received.

Environment Agency:

- 5.13 Object in light of the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). The details of the submitted FRA are not yet fully compliant with Annex E of PPS25. The proposed scale of the development may present risks of flooding on-site and/or off-site if surface water run-off is not effectively managed. The FRA should consider the flood risk posed from the Welton Arm and Newnham Arm of the River Nene as well as the River Leam. It is preferred that the existing drainage route (east to west) is retained. Calculations should be provided to support the recommended volume of storage required and the methods of attenuation are not detailed. SUDS features such as swales and ponds should be considered as they would add to the amenity and ecologic value of the site.

- 5.14 *Further comments 07/07/2011:* Maintain our previous objection. The FRA should contain confirmation from Anglian Water that there is sufficient capacity in the surface water sewers to accept the calculated discharge from the proposed development. Any reduction in flow volumes to the River Leam would have a detrimental impact on the watercourse and would be considered unacceptable.

Highways Agency:

- 5.15 The proposed development is predicted to have a minimal impact on the A5/A45 junction. Given the scale of the development and likely operational impact upon the Strategic Road Network it is not considered that the development should be conditioned against the SBA4 scheme at the A5/A45 junction. The submitted Travel Plan should be revised and secured by way of an appropriately worded planning condition.
- 5.16 *Further comments 11/07/2011:* In response to WNDC's letter dated 29/06/2011 outlining the view that the proposed development would reduce the existing capacity at the A5/A45 junction and should therefore contribute to a fair and proportionate share of the costs towards the improvements of the strategic infrastructure serving the area – the A5/A45 works and/or the Daventry Relief Road, the Agency accepts this view and supports the Corporation's approach.

Natural England:

- 5.17 The proposal does not appear to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes, or have significant impacts on the conservation of soils, nor is the proposal EIA development. The protected species survey has identified that reptiles may be affected by this application. Using Natural England's standing advice it is concluded that the survey detailed no evidence of reptiles being found on the application site. The Local Planning Authority should assess all species protected by domestic legislation against Natural England's standing advice.

Northants Bat Group:

- 5.18 Agree with the findings of the Bat Survey. Further work is to be carried out in respect of a tree and club house. Some form of enhancement may be in order dependent upon the results.
- 5.19 *Further comments 18/06/2011:* In respect to the additional Bat Survey, the findings are agreed with. Built-in bat bricks are a recommendation contained within the Survey and may need to be conditioned.

Northants Police:

- 5.20 No formal objection, although the following recommendations are made. All units to have secure perimeter boundaries, secure well lit accesses and active frontages. Views into the site should be unimpeded by too much soft landscaping. Car parking should be located in front of each of the buildings while footpaths and cycleways should not

run along rear boundaries to premises. A secure holding area for HGVs should be provided while CCTV should be used to enhance security. It is hoped that the applicant shall contact Northants Police prior to the submission of reserved matters to discuss the Secured by Design element of the BREEAM accreditation.

Ramblers Association:

- 5.21 Regret the loss of the extensive green open spaces in the vicinity of Ford Sports, but would not object to industrial development. It is requested that stretches of green open space are provided to break up the monotony of the proposed development.

Sport England:

- 5.22 The development will prejudice the use, or lead to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field, therefore Sport England respond as a statutory consultee and consider the application against its playing fields policy. The applicant's Open Space Review concludes that the existing site is redundant and does not provide any public recreational or sports use; the former private uses have been relocated. The Daventry Open Space, Sport, Recreation and Facilities Strategy (OSSRF), which was produced for DDC in 2009, suggests that any new pitches should be provided in the residential growth areas. The West Northants Sports Facilities Strategy estimates that one full sized Artificial Grass Pitch will be required within Daventry to meet estimated demand by 2026. The OSSRF recommends that contributions to public open space provision should be sought from all business development.
- 5.23 It is considered that the applicants have submitted sufficient evidence to suggest that the loss of this playing field would not have a significant impact upon the provision of sports facilities within the immediate Daventry Town area. The retention of sports facilities on this site would not therefore meet the identified location of future demand, i.e. the growth areas to the east of Daventry. Sport England would not raise an objection to the loss of the playing field subject to the provision of an appropriate commuted sum in accordance with Policy RC2 of the Core Strategy towards the provision or enhancement of existing community facilities. A holding objection is issued until such time that further evidence is submitted.

Wildlife Trust:

- 5.24 Welcome the submission of the 'Ecological Appraisal Report' as a supporting document as well as specific protected species surveys, the broad scope and content of which are both acceptable and satisfactory. It is not however clear whether or not the ecologists have assessed the most recent version of the Northamptonshire County Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) document. Also, the ecologists do not appear to have carried out the recommendations for further survey work contained within the Bat Roost Potential Report, this should be undertaken prior to the determination of the application. In addition, the ecologist's recommendations should be fully implemented and the impacts upon local biodiversity of increased artificial lighting should be

considered. Any soft landscaping elements should be provided for by the use of native species only.

- 5.25 *Further comments 08/07/2011:* Having read through the further information submitted including the Bat Roost Survey Document dated 14th June 2011 it is considered that this information is acceptable, understandable and satisfactory in all respects. The Wildlife Trust now has no outstanding issues or concerns in direct relation to this particular application.

Cllr Colin Poole:

- 5.26 No comments received.

Cllr Annette Dunn:

- 5.27 No comments received.

Cllr Chris Eddon:

- 5.28 No comments received.

Cllr Chris Long:

- 5.29 No comments received.

6. Notifications and Responses

- 6.1 Neighbour notification letters were sent out to close proximity neighbours and 4no. site notices were erected adjacent to the site (2no. on Royal Oak Way South to the frontage of the application site and 2no. at the rear (west) of the application site where a footpath runs). The application was also advertised in the local press by virtue of being classified as a Major Development. No responses were subsequently received.

7. Site History

- 7.1 The Ford site has been the subject of previous planning applications. The main site was granted planning consent for the Ford parts depot in 1966 (DB/66/63), a further extension was permitted in 1970 (DB/70/63). Further buildings for storage, handling of packing cases, offices, plant room, sports club facilities and clubhouse were granted and constructed within the wider Ford site during the 1970s and 1980s.

8. Considerations

The key points for consideration are: Principle, Open Space & Play Pitch, Noise & Amenity, Visual Impact, Ecology, Access & Highways, Crime Prevention, Sustainability, Flood Risk & Drainage, Archaeology, Planning Obligations

Principle

- 8.1 The application site lies within an area allocated for industrial development under Policy EM4 of the Daventry District Local Plan. This policy seeks to safeguard existing B1, B2 and B8 uses in such areas by setting a presumption against changes of use to uses that fall outside of the aforementioned use classes. In this context the principle of introducing additional B2 / B8 usage is considered to be acceptable.
- 8.2 In addition, Policy EC10 contained within PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth urges Local Planning Authorities to adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning applications for economic growth subject to consideration against a number of criteria. This includes long term sustainability, accessibility by a choice of means of transport, high quality and inclusive design, impact on economic and physical regeneration and the impact upon local employment.
- 8.3 It is not possible at outline application stage to assess the proposals against all of the criteria set out above. However, at this point it can be stated that the proposals will create additional local employment. The matters relating to sustainability, accessibility and design will be addressed either by way of a s.106 agreement, planning conditions or consideration of reserved matters application(s).

Open Space & Play Pitch

- 8.4 The application site includes a playing field, which constitutes a formal senior-sized football pitch with flood lighting. It is privately owned by the applicants and was last used by Daventry United before they relocated elsewhere within the town. Also within the site is an associated Sports and Social Club building which is vacant and disused.
- 8.5 PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation sets requirements for local authorities to undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities and should include audits of existing open space. PPG17 defines that open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value – so incorporating land in both public and private ownership and incorporating outdoor sports facilities.
- 8.6 The Daventry Open Space, Sport, Recreation and Facilities Strategy (OSSRF) was carried out and published on behalf of DDC in 2009. The OSSRF represents up-to-date and locally specific guidance that responds to PPG17's assertions that open space standards are best set locally. The OSSRF identifies no immediately evident current deficiencies in outdoor sports facilities and recommends the protection of existing outdoor sports provision, with priority being given to increasing the quality of existing sites (paragraph 7.48 on p98). The OSSRF recommends the accrual of S106 contributions from new development sites to cater for the future population growth, which is predicted to the eastern side of the town. As a further note, the OSSRF recommends that contributions to public open space should be sought from all business development.

- 8.7 To set the context further, there is also a document called the Sports Facilities Strategy for West Northamptonshire which was prepared for the West Northants Joint Planning Unit (April 2009), which suggests that by 2026 there would be a need for a number of new facilities and facility improvements (including 1no. artificial grass pitch in the Daventry district).
- 8.8 To set the local policy context, retained Policy RC2 of the Daventry Local Plan states that planning permission will not be granted for development that causes the loss of existing areas of open space and other recreation or amenity areas including school playing fields. However Policy RC2 of the emerging Core Strategy for the region does offer some flexibility in terms of the consideration of the loss of existing open space when replacement facilities can be provided or where proposals will bring about significant community benefit that outweighs the open space loss.
- 8.9 Sport England (SE) have submitted comments as a statutory consultee on the basis that the land has been used as a playing field at some point during the last five years and remains undeveloped. SE have assessed the scheme in light of its own playing fields policy which opposes the grant of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field unless it meets one of the defined exceptions. The exceptions are as follows: a proven excess of provision, the use is ancillary to the playing field, the site is incapable of forming part of a pitch, an equivalent or better replacement will be provided elsewhere, an alternative sports use is proposed that outweighs the loss.
- 8.10 SE has commented upon the applicant's Open Space Review (OSR), which concludes that the existing site is redundant and does not provide for any public recreational or sports use. The OSR states that the development does not result in the loss of sports facilities used by the public. SE consider that the applicants have submitted sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the loss of the playing field in this instance would not significantly impact upon the provision of sports facilities within the immediate Daventry Town area and that any future demands for sports pitches will be required within the growth areas to the east of Daventry. The site does not meet the location of future demand.
- 8.11 WNDC officers concur with thoughts of SE. There are notable football facilities available within close proximity to the site- accessed off Browns Road to the south of the site. It is also noted that there is no realistic likelihood of a recreational use coming forward upon the site given its private ownership and the desire to release the site for commercial development. It is considered that the loss would be better mitigated elsewhere subject to an appropriate level of contribution being secured for replacement. SE have issued a holding objection upon the application until such time that further evidence is submitted in respect to an appropriate contribution.

Noise & Amenity

- 8.12 The application site is not located within close proximity to any residential dwellings (at least 600m away), which diminishes the site's potential to create an undue level of

disturbance. The DDC Environmental Health Officer (EHO) has commented with no objections in principle. Further acoustic assessment can be carried out at detailed planning stage if required.

- 8.13 The EHO has expressed concern in respect to the extant 4x4 track located within the undevelopable south west corner of the development site, which appears to be shown upon the proposed plans also. Any formalisation of this track would be resisted by the EHO given the potential high levels of noise and disturbance that could be created. The applicant has subsequently confirmed that a 4x4 track shall not form part of the final scheme and submitted a revised site plan accordingly. Officers consider that an appropriately worded planning condition should be attached to any approval making it clear that 4x4 activities do not form part of the development.

Visual Impact

- 8.14 Policy GN2 (A) of the Daventry Local Plan (1997) states that planning permission shall normally be granted for development provided that it is of a type, scale and design in keeping with the locality and not detracting from its amenities. Policy GN2 (G) also states that permission shall normally be granted provided that it will not adversely affect a Special Landscape Area. Whilst the site does not lie within the defined Special Landscape Area, it is located within close proximity of it. It is therefore considered that Policy EN1 applies also. Special Landscape Areas are designated in recognition of their special environmental qualities. Policy EN1 seeks to control development within such areas to protect its character and states that development will normally be permitted for development provided that it does not adversely affect the character of the local landscape.
- 8.15 Officers acknowledge that the site does not lie within the Special Landscape Area but it is considered that the character of that area can be materially affected by development directly adjoining it, with particular regard to views experienced within that area. In this particular instance there are views to the site from different points to the west within the Special Landscape Area.
- 8.16 The impact of views from the Special Landscape Area to the Royal Oak Industrial Estate has previously been acknowledged as an important issue as the land located between the designated Special Landscape Area and the application site was designated as an Environmental Improvement Area, within which planting would be provided to soften the edge of the industrial area.
- 8.17 As stated within this report the site forms a plateau and is the highest point along the western edge of the industrial estate. The application submission includes a proposed layout along with elevations of the building illustrating the size parameters of the proposals. In assessing the proposals due regard must be had to the existing form of development along this edge of the industrial estate.
- 8.18 The site to the north is occupied by Tesco's and the building has a substantial footprint and measures 12 metres in height to ridge. The site lies below the application with the difference in site levels being some 4.5 metres. It is blue in colour and extends along

the ridge when viewed from the Special Landscape Area to the west. As such the building does have a visual presence in the landscape.

- 8.19 To the south of the site is the existing Ford Parts Distribution Centre. That site lies some 9 metres below the application site and the building measures 10.5 metres in height. Like the Tesco's building it extends along the edge of the industrial estate. It is coloured grey and does have a presence in the landscape when viewed from the Special Landscape Area to the west. The extent of the impact does change depending on the viewpoint but in all cases its impact is not as significant as the Tesco's building primarily due to the fact that the site levels are lower.
- 8.20 In light of the above considerations it is therefore recognised that the existing development along this edge of Daventry does have a visual presence in the landscape when viewed from the west of the site. The key consideration therefore is the impact that this proposed development would have based on the parameters of the scheme submitted. The particular relationship between the proposed site layout, levels, building height and those of the adjoining developments is central to establishing that impact, both the building as an individual entity and the cumulative impact of the building and existing development.
- 8.21 The site levels as proposed will be some 4.5 metres above the Tesco's site to the north and some 9 metres above the Ford site to the south, emphasising the plateaued nature of the site. The plans submitted with the application illustrate a building height to ridge of 15.7 metres. The proposed site levels and the building height result in a physical relationship whereby the building would be 8.5 metres higher than the Tesco's building and 13 metres higher than the Ford building. This is considered to be a significant difference that will result in a considerable visual presence in the landscape.
- 8.22 To fully assess that impact the applicant was requested to submit a number of Computer Generated Images (CGIs) from various locations to the west. Those locations were agreed with the applicant and include viewpoints from Flecknoe, the A425 and a bridleway to the north of Staverton (south west to the application site). Those viewpoints from Flecknoe, located to the west of the application site, do illustrate the aforementioned difference in height compared to adjoining development. Those viewpoints to the south west also illustrate that height difference but also show the visual presence of the length of the proposed building sitting above mature landscaping which frames ridgeline views from Staverton and the bridleway. The shape of the site is such that the proposed building is sited at right angles to adjoining buildings, therefore from the west the end of the building is visible in comparison to the longer elevations of adjoining buildings which also face west.
- 8.23 In light of the scale of the proposed building, the proposed site levels and its relationship to the surrounding area, it is considered that it would have an unacceptable visual impact and adversely affect the Special Landscape Area. The proposed building would punctuate the skyline due to its height, mass and prominence. It is also considered that in the context of the surrounding form of development, the proposal would result in an unacceptable cumulative impact upon the Special

Landscape Area, which could not be mitigated through further landscape screening. The existing visual appearance of the industrial estate is not considered to benefit the Special Landscape Area but this proposal would exacerbate that impact to an unacceptable level.

- 8.24 The applicant has made reference to a scheme at Apex Park which was approved by the Corporation in mid 2010. That scheme also proposed commercial development on the edge of Daventry. In that particular case it was recognised that it would have a visual impact but on balance it was not considered that it would inherently be any more significant than the relationship between the countryside and urban edge currently defined by existing industrial estates in this general location. Amendments secured to the scheme relating to gradient, ground/floor levels and the provision of increased landscaping was considered to represent an improvement to the scheme in the context of the wider landscape.
- 8.25 In this particular application it is not considered that additional landscaping would improve the situation due to the topography of the site and surrounding area. It is officer's view that any amended scheme should incorporate a change in site levels, i.e. digging out the site and a reduction in the length of the building to reduce its prominence in the landscape when viewed from the south west and north of Staverton.
- 8.26 In light of the above considerations, it is considered that based on the parameters of the application the proposed building would have an unacceptable impact upon the Special Landscape Area. The proposed height, footprint and site levels of the building assessed together with the existing form of development would have an unacceptable cumulative visual impact when viewed from the Special Landscape Area. This would be contrary to Policies GN2 (A and G) and EN1 of the Daventry Local Plan.

Ecology

- 8.27 The application is accompanied by an Ecological Appraisal Report which incorporated an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey to map the baseline conditions of the site. This Survey identified that the habitats within the site are considered to be of value within the zone of influence only, although collectively they provide a mosaic of habitats suitable for certain protected species. A Bat Roost Survey was undertaken in respect to the clubhouse and mature ivy-clad trees on site. Badger activity was identified and a Badger Survey Report was undertaken. Habitats suitable for reptiles were identified (i.e. south-facing embankments) therefore a Reptile Survey was undertaken.
- 8.28 The Bat Roost Survey concludes that no further survey work is required following no evidence of bat roosting being found and the likelihood of bats roosting at the site is considered to be very low. Given the site's location adjacent to open countryside offering foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, purpose built bat bricks/tubes should be installed where practicable.
- 8.29 The Badger Survey has indicated that it is evident that badgers are present in the area although it is unlikely that the badger population is using the site extensively for foraging

at the present time. A subsidiary sett lies in close proximity to the proposed development and will be disturbed during construction and by the operational use of the site, although the sett is able to be maintained in the long term in accordance with appropriate mitigation measures. A licence will therefore be required to be obtained from Natural England to disturb this site, which would involve the provision of appropriate mitigation measures to be incorporated within a detailed Method Statement. Subject to these measures being undertaken the development could be implemented without significant adverse ecological impact.

- 8.30 A Reptile Survey was carried out at an optimal time of year and no reptiles or presence of reptiles was found. The application site is therefore of negligible value for reptiles and the development of the site can be implemented without significant adverse ecological impacts upon reptiles.
- 8.31 Both Natural England (NE) and the Wildlife Trust (WT) have been consulted upon the application. NE commented that the application does not appear to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes and directed the Corporation to NE's standing advice on protected species. Having assessed the standing advice in respect to the species-specific surveys discussed above, it appears that adequate mitigation measures have been suggested in respect to Bats and Badgers to allow the application to proceed. These would be secured via condition should the application be approved.
- 8.32 The WT initially requested clarification that the applicants had assessed the most recent version of the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and that the full suggested Bat survey work had been carried out. The WT subsequently confirmed acceptance following clarification from the applicant.

Access & Highways

- 8.33 The Highways Agency has confirmed no objection subject to a Travel Plan condition being imposed. The principle of the development is also considered to be acceptable by the Local Highway Authority (LHA) subject to planning conditions being applied to ensure that the access junction is provided to include footway connection into the site. The LHA has also suggested that an at grade pedestrian/cycle crossing is provided on Leamington Way at the southern end of Royal Oak Way South in addition to pedestrian link from here to Thames Road. They have also suggested the provision of 2no. bus shelters at existing bus stops on Royal Oak Way South.
- 8.34 Officers are supportive of a condition being applied to secure the provision of access in accordance with the relevant submitted plan. It is however noted that the requested provision of crossings and pedestrian links at the southern end of Royal Oak Way South are proposed to be secured through application 11/0032/OUTWND, which is being processed concurrent with this application and relates to a site located adjacent to Leamington Way at the southern end of the existing Ford Distribution Centre. It is appropriate for these link improvements to be sought in association with 11/0032/OUTWND given its location in immediate proximity to Leamington Way. They

are not directly related to this particular application. The provision of bus shelters on Royal Oak Way South can be secured through the s.106.

Crime Prevention

- 8.35 Northants Police submitted no objection to the scheme subject to a series of recommendations relating to the detailed design of the scheme. The applicant has responded to the matters raised and confirmed that they will be addressed at reserved matters stage. These issues relate to perimeter boundary treatment, secure rear access, active frontages, the provision of secure holding areas for HGVs and the use of CCTV. Northants Police have confirmed acceptance in respect to comments made by the applicant and anticipate further pre application discussions prior to the submission of any future reserved matters.

Sustainability

- 8.36 The submission contains no reference to the sustainability measures to be incorporated within the built scheme. There is no initial rating assessment against BREEAM standards, which is suggested to accompany all application submissions in accordance with the requirements of the Corporation's Sustainability Manual (2010). In this instance, given the outline nature of the application and the lack of certainty at this stage associated with the precise form of development that is to come forward, it is considered that this matter can be adequately dealt with via an appropriately worded planning condition. This condition would require an initial rating assessment (detailing the achievement of a BREEAM Excellent rating or other rating to be agreed in writing) to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development in addition to securing details of post-construction assessment.
- 8.37 In addition, should the application be approved, a further planning condition should be imposed to secure on-site renewable energy provision to meet a minimum of 10% of the overall energy needs of the development. This level is consistent with the minimum 10% articulated within the Energy and Development SPD (2007). DDC has requested that a figure of 15% be secured. However, it is not considered reasonable to require this as there is no sound planning basis to support this requirement.

Flood Risk & Drainage

- 8.38 The Environment Agency (EA) submitted an objection to the original application in light of the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) being adjudged to be non-compliant with the requirements of PPS25: Development and Flood Risk. They have sought clarification that surface water runoff is to be effectively managed and that flood risk posed by the Rivers Nene and Leam have been properly considered. They also added that calculations should be provided to support the recommended volume of storage required and the methods of attenuation should be detailed- preferably SUDS.
- 8.39 A revised FRA was submitted, but the objection was maintained by the EA even though significant progress has been made. The EA require confirmation from Anglian Water that

there is sufficient capacity in the surface water sewers to accept the calculated discharge from the proposed development. Also, any reduction in flow volumes to the River Leam would have a detrimental impact on the watercourse and would be considered unacceptable – the EA require clarification accordingly. At this moment, insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that surface water and associated storage are to be acceptably dealt with. The recommendation for the resolution of the application should reflect this insufficiency as a reason for refusal. Members should note that liaison is continuing between the EA and the applicant in respect to the FRA; there remains the possibility that the aforementioned may be resolved or part-resolved prior to the Committee meeting. Any updates shall be offered verbally to Members on the night of the Committee.

Archaeology

- 8.40 NCC Archaeology have confirmed that the borehole and geophysical surveys undertaken within the area provided information that suggests that it is unlikely that archaeological deposits have survived within this area. In light of this information it is advised that no further archaeological investigation will be required within this area should permission be granted.

Planning Obligations

- 8.41 The Corporation has adopted its Interim Planning Obligations Strategy (IPOS), which endorses a standard approach to accumulating contributions towards infrastructure improvements across West Northamptonshire Development Corporation's area.
- 8.42 In accordance with IPOS the Corporation's starting point for B2 and B8 development is £25 per sq m. I.e. 23,000 sq m x £25 = £575,000. Negotiations in accordance with IPOS shall be required prior to the issuing of any planning permission at the site. As part of these discussions careful consideration would need to be applied to ensure that planning obligations comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations that came into force in April 2010. These Regulations state that obligations must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 8.43 Preliminary discussions have occurred with the applicant in this context. Potential Heads of Terms have been drawn from the infrastructure list contained within IPOS and subsequently put to the applicant. These Heads constitute the following: Green Infrastructure, Public Realm, Cultural Investment, Transport, Community Cohesion, Training- Construction Futures, Monitoring, Formal Sports and Recreation. The applicant has requested greater clarity in respect to the current need for / impact upon the aforementioned infrastructure requirements within the vicinity of the site.
- 8.44 To given an idea of what these Heads would entail, the Public Realm and Cultural Investment contributions would be associated with town centre investment and improvements. This application would provide economic development on the

outskirts of the town and therefore away from the core central area of the town. Expenditure within the town centre would mitigate against any potential negative effects of investment within an out-of-centre location and would incentivise town centre trips and associated bus travel to and from the centre of town. The Public Realm contribution would also potentially incorporate the Local Highway Authority's request for financial contributions towards enhancements to bus stop infrastructure.

- 8.45 In respect to Transport, WNDC officers have noted the sizeable indicative floor areas of the proposed units and their associated trips, which would reduce the existing capacity at the A5/A45 junction. It is therefore considered that a fair and proportionate share of the costs toward the improvement of strategic infrastructure serving the area should be sought (i.e. A5/A45 works and/or Daventry Relief Road). The Highways Agency was written to by officers explaining this approach; they subsequently accepted the Corporation's view and approach on this matter. In addition, the Local Highway Authority has raised the possibility of a monetary contribution being applied to improving current local bus services.
- 8.46 A Community Cohesion contribution would allow for monies to be diverted to local community group initiatives and events, which is particularly relevant given the local residential community that abuts the south of the site and the area of green and open character that would be lost to the area should this scheme come forward.
- 8.47 The Construction Futures requirement has been formally adopted by the Corporation's Board and it is considered by officers that the strategy can be properly applied to this development in order to make it necessary in planning terms. The obligation would result in apprentices and/or work placements being employed on site during construction, therefore directly related to the development. The level of training sought is calculated on the basis of the predicted cost of development as required by Construction Futures. In respect to Monitoring, this is a standard Head generally applied to all applications.
- 8.48 The Formal Sports and Recreation contribution would be inherently linked to Sport England's 'holding objection' to the application. An appropriate figure would need to be negotiated with the applicant to be apportioned against the provision of new sports facilities and/or improvements to existing facilities so as to mitigate the loss of an existing playing field on the application site. Sport England would be central to these negotiations.
- 8.49 It is also noted that the NCC Development Management section has requested contributions in accordance with their own adopted Planning Obligations Framework and Guidance Document, which includes a contribution rate of £145 per 100 sq m of non-residential development being applied to local fire and rescue infrastructure costs and a further contribution of £3,208 to cover the installation of 4no. fire hydrants. WNDC officers note that fire suppression measures are covered by building regulations and should therefore not normally be secured by way of a planning obligation. The

notable contribution to fire and rescue infrastructure costs that is requested is not considered relevant to the application nor compliant with the IPOS.

9. Conclusion

The proposed development would have an unacceptable cumulative visual impact upon a Special Landscape Area by virtue of the proposed height and footprint of the building and the levels of the site when assessed against the context of the existing form of development located to the immediate north and south of the application site in non-compliance with Policies GNI, GN2 (A and G) and EN1 of the Daventry Local Plan (1997).

SITE PLAN

