

TWC/2024/0612

Land north/east of Greenways Farm Shop, Off Church Street, St Georges, Telford, Shropshire

Outline application for the erection of around 80no. dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping works on land North of St Georges Bypass, St Georges, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9LF***AMENDED DESCRIPTION, AMENDED ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN AND NEW PARAMETERS PLAN***

APPLICANT

Montague Land

RECEIVED

05/08/2024

PARISH

St. Georges and Priorslee

WARD

Priorslee, St Georges

THIS APPLICATION WAS DEFERRED AT PLANNING COMMITTEE 23 OCTOBER 2024 TO REQUEST AMENDMENTS

1.0 DETAILS OF AMENDMENTS TO SCHEME

- 1.1 This application was heard at the previous Planning Committee Meeting held on 23 October 2024, whereby it was agreed by Members that the application would be deferred in order to request amendments from the applicant to note a reduction in the number of dwellings proposed for this Outline Planning Application.
- 1.2 Upon receipt of the amended drawings and documents a 14-day re-consultation has been undertaken with all statutory consultees, neighbours and members of the public who had commented on the planning application previously - this Consultation Period ends 06 December 2024.
- 1.3 Members of the Planning Committee are reminded that this application is seeking Outline Planning Permission only and not Full Planning Permission. Were it an application for Full Planning Permission, the Applicant would have submitted details such as the layout of the site, the scale and type of dwellings, the appearance of houses (including elevations, floor plans, parking spaces and location of windows, etc.) and details of landscaping.
- 1.4 As a result of the application under consideration seeking Outline Planning Permission, Members are only able to consider whether the principle of residential development on this site can be accepted. Were it to be approved, the remaining details would come forward at a later date as a separate Reserved Matters planning application. The one detail that the Applicant has applied to have considered in full at this stage is the access. Officers have received full details of the access arrangements and these have been assessed by the Local Highways Authority, whose response is covered in para. 3.1, below.
- 1.5 This site is known as a windfall site, namely a site that has not been identified, either through a planning application or development plan allocation. Only a proportion of the sites that come forward seeking planning permission are sites that have been allocated in the Local Plan. The majority of sites that the Local Planning Authority receives planning applications for are windfall sites, and the Council relies on these to meet its housing targets as set by National Government.
- 1.6 Where a windfall site sits within the development boundary, or urban boundary, the principle of development is acceptable subject to matters of detail being able to comply with the other planning policies in the Local Plan. As set out above, the only

matter of detail that the Applicant has submitted for full consideration at this stage is the access and this is the part of the proposal that can be considered against the specific transport planning policies of the Local Plan.

1.7 The Applicant has amended the application description from up to 100no. dwellings to around 80no. dwellings. An amended Illustrative Masterplan has been submitted to indicate how 80no. dwellings could be accommodated on the site although, as was the case previously, this is for illustrative purposes only and is not being considered as a site plan for approval.

1.8 The Illustrative Masterplan shows the following amendments:

- the number of homes has reduced from 100no. to 80no.;
- an increased amount of open space from 9,000 sq. metres to 10,000 sq. metres (1 hectare);
- the proposed apartment block in the west of the site has been removed;
- the houses south of 46 and 48 Lodge Road have been replaced with green space;
- the site now provides two continuous green corridors, one running from Ashley Road in the west to National Cycleway 81 in the east; the other connecting Church Street in the north to The Flash in the south;
- the green corridor along the public right of way south of the moat has been broadened;
- a more relaxed form of housing is shown to the south of Park Close (Zone B) with an area suitable for bungalows identified;
- the density of development south of the moat has dropped considerably;
- a five-metre development-free zone continues to be maintained around the whole circuit of the old moat.

1.9 Importantly, and in addition, the Applicant has prepared a Parameters Plan to accompany the application. This does not comprise a layout but it does provide a number of development parameters that the Applicant is willing to commit to. This would give Members assurance over aspects of future development and it is recommended that this is conditioned as an approved plan.

1.10 The Parameters Plan draws on the comments made by statutory consultees and the comments made by Members at the previous Planning Committee. It includes the following commitments:

- reduced number of dwellings contained within development parcels (min. 75 dwellings; max. 90 dwellings);
- no facing rear windows are to be closer than 21 metres;
- the site will provide at least one whole hectare of green space;
- wherever possible, we shall provide green space which can serve both as public open space and as natural habitat;
- two continuous green corridors will be provided across the site: one running east-west and one running north-south;
- one general purpose access point to the A5 will be provided and one access for emergency vehicles only;
- the main estate road through the site will be 5.5m in width unless requested otherwise;
- informal and semi-natural children's play equipment will be provided on-site;
- an area of bungalow development south of Park Close to mitigate concerns of overlooking and broaden the housing offer.

- 1.11 Both the Illustrative Masterplan and Parameters Plan lay out the site in zones. The character and features of each zone are described as follows:

Zone A: This space forms the western end of a green corridor which runs east-west across the site and into St Georges beyond. It provides a walking/cycling link from Ashley Road into the site and is available as a shared recreation/habitat space. Informal, semi-natural children's play facilities, such as boulders and stepping stones, would be suitable here as well as community orchard or growing spaces. The existing track from Ashley Road to the water pumping station will be left unmetalled and unfenced. It will serve as a quiet walking route, with very occasional access by a maintenance van. Public vehicular access to the track will be restricted. In the southern part of the Zone is a cluster of houses arranged around a short access road. This road will connect to the A5 but will be gated so that only emergency vehicles can use it.

Zone B: This residential area sits to the north of the green corridor and provides natural surveillance (and therefore increased safety) for those using the green space. A suggested arrangement of bungalows is shown in a pinkish shade on the Illustrative Masterplan. Boundary planting will soften the appearance of this zone when viewed from the gardens to the north.

Zone C: This forms the central part of the green corridor. It is set back from the main road and will double up as a sustainable drainage corridor. A dry walkway will be maintained alongside the drainage features. Bridges and stepping stones could be provided as points of interest and the existing large trees would most likely be retained. The variable nature of the water level in the drainage corridor will allow a range of habitats to be provided which will appeal to different groups of plants. Crossing the green corridor at ninety degrees is the Public Right of Way that leads from Church Street to The Flash. This will be laid out as a broad green corridor, both for human use and biodiversity. As with Zone A, this corridor would make a good location for informal and semi-natural children's play space alongside the Public Right of Way.

Zone D: Features the green heart of the development centred around the medieval moat. It presents opportunities for use as Public Open Space as well as enhanced biodiversity/habitat planting. The 5 metre buffer will be retained around the moat. Further opportunities for community orchards and/or grow spaces are possible around the edges of Zone D (away from the moat).

Zone E: This residential area adjoins both the public right of way and the green heart of the community, providing security in the form of overlooking. The east-west green corridor runs to the south of the proposed new homes, offering an alternative walking route to both the A5 and our own proposed access road.

Zone F: At the eastern end of the site, the green corridor links to the National Cycle Route beyond. North of the green corridor, this zone will be mostly residential. It may be suitable for larger plots, which would complement those along Church Street to the north. Boundary planting will be retained and enhanced wherever possible to preserve privacy.

2.0 NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS

- 2.1 At the time of writing this report 27no. letters of representation have been received from 25no. residential properties. The comments can be summarised as follows:

Overdevelopment/Suitability of Site

- there has been enough development in St Georges and Priorslee and more houses are not needed;
- existing infrastructure is insufficient for schools/nurseries, healthcare/doctors;
- development does not benefit local residents

Housing

- no affordable housing is proposed;
- consideration of bungalows in Zone A should be more definite

Ecology, Trees and Loss of Green Space

- efforts have been made to incorporate more green space into the development;
- this is the last green space in St Georges;
- the loss of green space, plus removal of trees and hedgerows, would be adverse for wildlife such as birds, bats, hedgehogs, foxes, etc.;
- TPOs by moat have been removed

Pollution/Impacts on Amenity

- air pollution;
- loss of views across the field from adjoining houses;
- disturbance during construction period

Heritage and Archaeology

- site contains medieval moat and this should be preserved and protected;
- should not be any public access to the moat

Highways and PRow

- adding in lights to this road will cause significant traffic issues;
- too close to road;
- Miners Walk (PRow) will have an access road going across it

Play, Recreation and Open Space

- who will maintain open space;
- Zone C play area in flood plain

Other Matters

- appreciate efforts to enhance community

2.2 Any additional objections received after the publication of the report will be presented to Members at Committee.

3.0 STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS

3.1 TWC Highways: Support subject to Condition(s) and Financial Contributions:

- Full details of the main access to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of development;
- Full details of off-site improvements to the PRow linking the site to Church Road (north) and Dean Close (south) to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of development;
- Phasing and completion plan to be submitted;
- Construction of any new streets shall not be commenced until details of the proposed arrangements for future management and maintenance of the proposed street/s within the development have been submitted;
- Construction of any new estate street to be adopted shall not be commenced until full engineering details have been submitted and approved;
- Construction of any new estate street shall not be commenced until full details of the proposed street tree locations, species and planting method have been submitted to and approved;
- No dwelling shall be occupied until private roadways have been fully constructed;
- Any Reserved Matters application to include details of diversion of PRow;
- Site/Construction Environmental Management Plan

3.2 TWC Drainage: Support subject to Condition(s):

- Scheme for Foul and Surface Water Drainage;
- SuDs Management Plan;
- Exceedance Flow Routing Plan;
- Interim/temporary drainage and sediment runoff control measures;
- Provision of sewer easement for Severn Trent Water;
- Details of foul sewer connection to be agreed with Severn Trent Water

3.3 TWC Geotechs: Comment, Condition:

- Comprehensive Desk Study (as part of any Reserved Matters Application) which deals with mining, all contamination issues, settlement and differentiation. A ground investigation would also be required that identifies all constraints and how they will be dealt with.

3.4 TWC Healthy Spaces: Comment, Condition and Financial Contribution:

- Landscape Management Plan

3.5 TWC Ecology: Support subject to Condition(s) and Financial Contribution:

- Erection of artificial nesting/roosting boxes;
- Lighting Plan;
- Landscaping Plan;
- Design conditions to ensure green infrastructure buffers as shown within indicative masterplan, such as along the PRow and southern edge of site

3.6 TWC Affordable Housing: **Comment and Securing Affordable Housing Provision via s.106**

3.7 TWC Environmental Health: **Comment, Condition(s) including:**

- Noise assessment to accompany any Reserved Matters application;
- Details of acoustic noise barrier

3.8 TWC Built Heritage: **Comment**

3.9 TWC Education: **Comment and Financial Contribution**

3.10 Shropshire Council Archaeology: **Comment and Condition(s):**

- Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of archaeological work;
- Detailed design to maximise the surviving earthworks as a feature of the amenity space;
- Archaeological Management Plan to ensure the long-term survival of the moated site and its legibility within the proposed area of Public Open Space

3.11 ICB (Integrated Care Board): **Support subject to Condition(s) and Financial Contributions**

3.12 Active Travel England: **No Comment**

3.13 Shropshire Fire Service: **Comment** that consideration should be given to the information contained within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's Fire Safety Guidance document.

3.14 Severn Trent Water: **Comment**: STW would prefer a gravity discharge solution to a pumping station. The developer is asked to agree details of this with STW prior to any works on site. STW will be undertaking upgrades to the foul network following capacity investigations scheduled for 2025-2030.

4.0 COMMENTS

4.1 Overview

At the Planning Committee Meeting dated 23 October 2024, Members requested amendments to reduce the density and number of dwellings. The Applicant has responded to this as outlined above, furthermore amending the description of the development to 'around 80no. dwellings.' The result is that the density of the proposals, have reduced from 36 to 32 dwellings per hectare, with the open space excluded from the dwellings per hectare calculation. If the open space within the site is included, then the proposed density is 16 to 17 dwellings per hectare which remains very low in planning terms.

4.2 All Technical Consultees supported the application at the previous Planning Committee Meeting, with the exception of Built Heritage. All Technical Consultees have responded to the amendments and support the revised proposals subject to Condition(s), Informative(s) and s.106 Financial Contributions, including Built Heritage. The Council's Conservation Officer comments that the revised reduced density is an improvement and a satisfactory form of development is achievable should a scheme come forward for detailed consideration as part of a Reserved Matters Application in the future.

4.3 The following additional comments have been received from Ecology, Healthy Spaces, Affordable Housing and Archaeology to reflect the additional information included on the Parameters Plan:

- provision of on-site play is welcome in addition to the off-site Financial Contribution;
- provision of on-site community orchards/grow spaces is welcome;
- provision of additional habitat space is positive and welcomed;
- commitment to green buffer across south of site is positive and welcomed;
- commitment to green route along PRoW is positive and welcomed;
- supportive of wildflower meadow planting within moat to support enhanced biodiversity;
- commitment to providing bungalows is positive and welcomed, especially the accessible portion.

4.4 Parameters Plan

The introduction of a Parameters Plan, which would be Conditioned as part of any outline consent, is intended to provide a framework to shape any detailed development proposals that would come forward as part of a Reserved Matters application. It is hoped this will provide Members with some reassurances over matters of concern raised at the previous Planning Committee.

4.5 The structure of green spaces and walking routes link up throughout the site and connect with community facilities to the north and south, creating a walkable, sustainable community. The addition of informal play equipment along these routes is beneficial to creating healthy spaces, and opportunities for enhancing biodiversity have been set out.

4.6 Whilst matters of detail such as overlooking and privacy cannot be considered at this Outline Stage (because details of dwelling appearance, location of windows and the position of dwellings would be considered under a Reserved Matters Application), the Applicant has given some consideration to the relationship between potential dwellings and the existing dwellings closest to the site. The properties closest to the site are located in Park Close. In recognition of this the Applicant is proposing a zone of bungalows in this area as they would naturally have principal windows concentrated at ground floor and, therefore, overlooking between properties would be prevented by boundary treatments such as garden fencing as well as landscaping.

4.7 Affordable Housing and Bungalows

Policy HO5 seeks for 25% Affordable Housing to be provided on residential development sites within the Telford urban boundary. An Outline Planning Application would not provide details on housing type of mix at this stage although the Applicant

has agreed to providing 25% Affordable Housing should the Outline Planning Application be approved and a detailed scheme come forward as Reserved Matters Application. This would be secured via a s.106 Agreement and makes this planning application policy compliant in terms of Affordable Housing.

- 4.8 Matters of detailed design, such as appearance and type of housing, would be considered under a Reserved Matters Application. This would include the location and size of any bungalows. By suggesting a suitable area for bungalows within the Parameters Plan, the Applicant has addressed concerns raised at the 23 October planning committee about potential overlooking and loss of privacy for the existing properties nearest the site boundary.

4.9 Ecology, Trees and Loss of Green Space

Some public representations have acknowledged that efforts have been made to incorporate more green space into the development. Other representations have raised that this is the last green space in St Georges. Members are asked to note that there is a large green space on the north side of Church Street containing play, sport and recreation facilities as well as St Georges Church.

- 4.10 To the south of the site, south of the A5 is the green space known as The Flash, which contains woodland, walking routes and a lake. The application proposed a signalised pedestrian crossing to make accessing The Flash easier and safer from St Georges, and the Council's Ecology Officer is proposing a s.106 Contribution towards enhancing The Flash for public use, which the Applicant has agreed to.

- 4.11 The Council has no records of Tree Protection Orders on this site near the moat.

4.12 Amenity

Whilst members of the public have been able to benefit from views across the site to date, it is important to note the planning fall-back position, which is that there are no rights to a view across land owner by a third party (i.e. someone else's land).

- 4.13 Potential disturbance caused during construction would be managed and mitigated via a Construction Environmental Management Plan - this would be secured via Condition.

4.14 Archaeology

A number of public representations have raised that the site contains a medieval moat and this should be preserved and protected. Shropshire Archaeology are satisfied that the 5 metre buffer being proposed around the moat is acceptable and will be sufficient for preserving the moat and protecting its setting.

- 4.15 One public representation has suggested that there should be no public access to the moat permitted. It should be noted that the existing situation is that there is public access to the moat, at the landowner's discretion. The application is not proposing anything different to this.

- 4.16 Shropshire Archaeology are satisfied that the geophysical surveys undertaken to date are acceptable and the mitigation measures proposed to protect the moat and its setting are sufficient.

4.17 Highways and PRow

The access point onto the A5 is the only matter of detail that may be considered in this application. The access road within the site would be considered as part of the layout under any future Reserved Matters Application. The relationship between the PRow within the site, also referred to as the Miners Walk, and the access road would be considered as part of a Reserved Matters Application.

4.18 Play, Recreation and Open Space

The question of who will maintain open space within the site is usually a matter for detailed consideration as part of a Reserved Matters Application. It is not a matter for considering at Outline Planning stage. These details are typically considered as part of a Landscape Management Plan (secured via Condition) and often involve a management company.

- 4.19 The play equipment incorporated within Zone C is supported by the Healthy Spaces Officer and is intended to take the form of informal play (i.e. stepping stones, semi-natural features such as rocks or logs). Again, the details of this would be considered at Reserved Matters Stage. The inclusion of on-site play and recreation demonstrate the Applicant has taken on board comments made in this regard by Members of the Planning Committee in October. The Healthy Spaces Officer has requested as a s.106 Contribution to enhance existing play facilities to the rear of St Georges Church to deliver the play and recreation requirements from this development. This combination of mitigation measures would make the development compliant with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan.

4.20 Provision of Infrastructure

There have been a number of objections that there is insufficient infrastructure within the local area regarding healthcare facilities, school places, etc.

- 4.21 In order to be policy compliant, where a new development would have an impact on local infrastructure (i.e. generating a need for more school places or an additional need for healthcare, road infrastructure or play/recreation spaces, etc.), it must either provide those new facilities on site or provide a financial contribution towards enhancing existing facilities to accommodate the new residents that would be created by a new housing development.
- 4.22 Any Financial Contributions must be proportionate to the size of the development and the need generated by the new residents only. It is not the responsibility of the Applicant to provide additional facilities to cater for the needs of existing communities.
- 4.23 In the case of this site, the Council's Technical Consultees are satisfied that the appropriate way forward is for the Applicant to provide Financial Contributions to existing facilities at existing schools, GP surgeries, play/recreation spaces and The Flash. A small amount of appropriate play equipment is suggested on-site, as described in para. 4.18. above. Affordable Housing would be provided on-site.
- 4.24 These Financial Contributions are known as Planning Obligations and would be secured through a s.106 Legal Agreement. These are detailed in the section below.

5.0 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

- 5.1 Section 106 Contributions would be reduced in proportion to the reduction in dwellings proposed.
- 5.2 Any planning consent would be conditional on the agreement of a s106 Agreement to secure the following (plus indexation). It should be noted that the figures referenced are on the basis of a scheme for 80 dwellings, however should this figure be varied, this will be calculated on a formula to be provided within the s.106:
- Education: £710,275 (Primary £524,559; Secondary £185,716);
 - Highways: £68,146;
 - Affordable Housing: 25% to be provided on-site;
 - Healthy Spaces: £166,561.96 (Play); £52,000 (Sport and recreation);
 - Ecology: £80,000 (The Flash Local Nature Reserve);
 - NHS: £71,661;
 - Bus Shelter upgrades - £20,000
- 5.3 In determining the required planning obligations on this specific application the following three tests as set out in the CIL Regulations (2010), in particular Regulation 122, have been applied to ensure that the application is treated on its own merits: a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; b) directly related to the development; c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This application is seeking to establish the principle of residential development for this site through an Outline Planning Application. The site lies within the urban boundary of Telford and represents a windfall site. Windfall sites are necessary to enable the Council to meet its government set housing targets. The principle of development can be accepted within the urban boundary Telford.
- 6.2 The Applicant has responded to the concerns raised by Members at Planning Committee on 23 October and reduced the number of dwellings being applied for from 100no. to around 80no. houses. Public representations received have acknowledged the efforts to enhance the community.
- 6.3 The Applicant has also submitted a Parameters Plan committing to features such as a 5 metre buffer around the moat, green buffer along the south of the site and PRoW route and areas for on-site play, accessible housing and community grow spaces.
- 6.4 This Parameters Plan shows how the site can be structured around a network of walkable routes and recreation spaces, which would benefit future residents as well as existing residents, who would be able to use these outdoor facilities when crossing the site to The Flash or the play area behind St Georges Church, for example. The Parameters Plan would be Conditioned to ensure future development is designed in accordance with it, should a Reserved Matters Application come forward.
- 6.5 The Applicant has demonstrated how a detailed scheme, were one to be brought forward through a Reserved Matters Application, could meet the relevant policies of the Local Plan. All technical consultees support the scheme on this basis subject to Conditions, Informative(s) and/or s.106 Contributions to deliver off-site infrastructure.

Off-site works to the play area behind St George's Church and The Flash would benefit existing and new residents.

- 6.6 Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The site is located within the urban boundary of Telford, is sustainably located and is seeking permission for the principle of development for residential purposes.
- 6.7 The loss of the green space is acknowledged, however, it is not protected and other green spaces do exist nearby for the purposes of recreation, wildlife habitat and play. The Applicant has demonstrated that this Outline Planning Application complies with the relevant policies of the Local Plan and there are no other material considerations that would warrant the refusal of this planning application.

7.0 DETAILED RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Based on the conclusions above, the recommendation to the Planning Committee on this application is that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION** (with the authority to finalise any matter including conditions, legal agreement terms, or any later variations) subject to the following:

- A) The applicant/landowners entering into a Section 106 Agreement with the Local Planning Authority (subject to indexation from the date of committee), with terms to be agreed by the Development Management Service Delivery Manager, relating to:
- i) Education: £710,275 (Primary £524,559; Secondary £185,716);
 - ii) Highways: £68,146;
 - iii) Affordable Housing: 25% to be provided on-site;
 - iv) Healthy Spaces: £166,561.96 (Play); £52,000 (Sport and recreation);
 - v) Ecology: £80,000 (The Flash Local Nature Reserve);
 - vi) NHS: £71,661;
 - vii) Bus Shelter upgrades - £20,000

It should be noted that the figures referenced are on the basis of a scheme for 80 dwellings, however should this figure be varied, this will be calculated on a formula to be provided within the s.106.

- B) The following Condition(s) (with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):

Condition(s)

Time Limit Outline

Time Limit Reserved Matters

Time Limit – Submission of Reserved Matters

Standard Outline – Some Matters Reserved

Reserved Matters in accordance with Parameters Plan

No more than 85no. dwellings to be permitted as part of Reserved Matters

General Details Required

Details of Materials

In accordance with Ecological Survey
Erection of artificial nesting/roosting boxes
Lighting Plan
Site Environmental Management Plan
Landscaping Plan
Landscape Management Plan
Scheme for Foul and Surface Water Drainage
SuDs Management Plan
Provision of Sewer Easement for Severn Trent Water
Exceedance Flow Routing Plan
Interim/Temporary Drainage and Sediment Run-off Control Measures
Full details of the main access to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of development
Full details of off-site improvements to the PRow linking the site to Church Road (north) and Dean Close (south) to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of development
Phasing and completion plan to be submitted
Construction of any new streets shall not be commenced until details of the proposed arrangements for future management and maintenance of the proposed street/s within the development have been submitted
Construction of any new estate street to be adopted shall not be commenced until full engineering details have been submitted and approved
Construction of any new estate street shall not be commenced until full details of the proposed street tree locations, species and planting method have been submitted to and approved
No dwelling shall be occupied until private roadways have been fully constructed
Any reserved matters application to include details of diversion of PRow
Written scheme of investigation for a programme of archaeological work
Detailed design to maximise the surviving earthworks as a feature of the amenity space
Archaeological Management Plan to ensure the long-term survival of the moated site
Noise assessment to accompany any reserved matters application
Details of acoustic noise barrier
Geotechnical desk study, ground investigation and mitigation report
Details of foul sewer connection to be agreed with Severn Trent
Development in accordance with plans

*****ORIGINAL COMMITTEE REPORT*****

THIS APPLICATION IS BEING HEARD AT PLANNING COMMITTEE DUE TO A SIGNIFICANT LEVEL OF PUBLIC OBJECTION

On-line Planning File:

<https://secure.telford.gov.uk/planning/pa-applicationssummary.aspx?applicationnumber=TWC/2024/0612>

1.0 SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 It is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to Condition(s), Informative(s) and the Applicant entering in to a Section 106 Agreement to secure Financial Contributions towards Education,

Affordable Housing, Ecology (Local Nature Reserve), Highways, Bus Shelter Upgrades, Play and Recreation, and Healthcare Facilities.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site lies in the St Georges area of Telford and measures 4.78 hectares. It currently comprises grasslands and scrub. Residential dwellings border the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the site. The A5 forms the southern boundary.
- 2.2 A Public Right of Way (PRoW) runs from Church Street to the north and passes between residential properties before crossing the application site from north to south.
- 2.3 There is a remnant part of a moated site located within the development site - this is not a Scheduled Monument.
- 2.4 An existing foul sewer pumping station is located in the western part of the site. This has been incorporated into the indicative site layout plan.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application seeks Outline Planning Permission with all Matters Reserved except access for a residential development of up to 100no. dwellings. As access is the only matter being considered in full detail at this stage there are no details on numbers or types of dwellings.
- 3.2 The application is a resubmission of an application that was withdrawn in January 2024. At that time a number of consultees had concerns with the principle of developing this site based on the information provided, including highways, ecology, archaeology and environmental health. The Applicant has sought to address those concerns with this resubmission.
- 3.3 An Illustrative Masterplan has been submitted to demonstrate how 100no. dwellings could be accommodated within the site. Formal planning approval is not being sought for this plan and the applicant has provided it to give an indication of a likely density and layout were the outline application to be approved. Once the undevelopable areas such as the medieval moat are deducted from the site, this works out as a density of approx. 36 dwellings per hectare.
- 3.4 The site is not public land and the owner could erect fencing under Permitted Development at any time to close off the site; the only public access through the site is the PRoW and this is shown to be retained as part of the proposals.
- 3.5 The application originally sought permission for 120no. dwellings, however the Applicant has reduced this during the course of the application in response to consultee comments and advice from Officers. At the time of writing this report, the amended 100no. dwelling application is the subject of a re-consultation. Any

comments received from consultees or members of the public after the preparation of the report will be reported to Members.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 TWC/2023/0837- Outline application for residential development up to 120no. dwellings - Withdrawn 29.01.2024

5.0 RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.2 Telford and Wrekin Local Plan (2011-2031):

SP1: Telford

SP4: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

HO1: Housing Requirement

HO4: Housing Mix

HO5: Affordable Housing Thresholds and Percentages

HO6: Delivery of Affordable Housing

HO7: Specialist Housing Needs

NE1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

NE2: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

NE4: Provision of Public Open Space

NE5: Management and Maintenance of Public Open Space

COM1: Community Facilities

C3: Implications of Development on Highways

C5: Design of Parking

BE1: Design Criteria

BE8: Archaeology and Scheduled Ancient Monuments

BE9: Land Stability

BE10: Land Contamination

ER11: Sewerage Systems and Water Quality

ER12: Flood Risk Management

6.0 NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 The application has been publicised through a Site Notice, Press Notice and direct neighbour notification.

- 6.2 The Local Planning Authority received 269no. neighbour representation objecting to the scheme on the basis of the first consultation, the following summarised issues were raised:

Overdevelopment/Suitability of Site

- there has been enough development in St Georges and Priorslee and more houses are not needed;

- this is not an allocated housing site and it is not sustainable;
- proposal hasn't considered any resident comments made on previous (withdrawn) application;
- plans show densely spaced housing of low quality;
- St Georges and rural small community feel – this would be lost;
- houses are unlikely to be affordable;
- existing infrastructure is insufficient for schools/nurseries, healthcare/doctors

Ecology/Loss of Green Space

- this is the last green space in St Georges and its loss would cause a reduction in visual amenity, mental health and wellbeing;
- the loss of green space would be adverse for wildlife such as birds, bats, hedgehogs, foxes, etc.

Pollution/Impacts on Amenity

- noise pollution;
- air pollution;
- there will be too many bins and not enough space to store them;
- loss of privacy to surrounding houses and their gardens

Heritage and Archaeology

- site contains medieval moat and this should be preserved and protected;
- it is medieval land that has not been ploughed by modern methods and this needs a full geophysical survey

Highways and PRow

- concern about how PRow might be affected;
- the road serving the site is busy and an additional junction will be dangerous raising concerns about increases in traffic;
- adding in lights to this road will cause significant traffic issues which do not exist today. Slowing the road down will affect the A5 roundabout significantly;
- existing heavy congestion around school drop-off/pick-up times

Drainage

- site is close to flash ponds and existing drainage system cannot cope;
- the plans show a sewerage pumping station

Land Stability

- concerns over land stability

Other

- devaluation of existing houses

6.3 A second round of consultation expires 22 October 2024, in response to the Applicant amending the description of the proposal and providing a more detailed Illustrative Masterplan. An amended site notice has been advertised specifying the proposal is now seeking up to 100no. dwellings.

6.4 At the time of preparing this report 40no. Objections have been received. No new issues have been raised that were not raised as part of the previous round of consultation. Any additional objections received after the publication of the report will be presented to Members at Committee.

7.0 STATUTORY REPRESENTATIONS

7.1 The following comments were received in response to the 120no. dwelling scheme.

7.2 St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council: **Object:**

- significant public objection to this objection;
- site is not allocated in Local Plan;
- infrastructure cannot cope with extra school and healthcare demand;
- will create additional pollution, carbon emissions and congestion;
- public transport, especially for the elderly, has not been properly considered;
- local bus stops are more than 400m away;
- increase in traffic on surrounding roads;
- loss of green space and biodiversity enjoyed by local residents;
- harm caused to archaeological feature
- Indicative Site Layout Plan is too vague and flexible

7.3 Cllr. Rachael Tyrrell: **Object:**

- this development does not form part of the Local Plan and is therefore contrary to identified local development needs;
- the issue of drainage has not been addressed;
- this is a site of important historical interest as a Roman moat. Whilst the development build is not proposed directly on this site, it is immediately adjacent and the impact of the proximity of the build is a concern. The Archaeological Assessment is limited. It is only a desk based report, no site inspection has taken place and no test excavations have been carried out. It refers to the planning authority's provisions in the Local Plan 2018 for their preservation (para 1.3.7). The report acknowledges its own limitations;
- there is no LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play) provision;
- this demonstrates an overdevelopment of the site;
- the plans indicate a lack of parking, which will lead to multiple vehicles being parked on roads;
- this application is curiously silent on the property type;
- highways and safety; access to the development will be a new junction off the A5 Telford Way. This is a busy road leading from the problematic Limekiln

- Roundabout (which is still waiting for new white lines and the subject of local complaints);
- during construction, traffic will use alternative local roads through St Georges and Priorslee. Priorslee Avenue is already very busy with the substantial development in Priorslee and the secondary school Holy Trinity Academy, access off Teece Drive off Priorslee Avenue;
 - the development would also lead to loss of amenity and Green Spaces, which also is home to flora, fauna and wildlife
 - quality Affordable Housing is required but this application does not satisfy that need.

7.4 Cllr. Richard Overton: Object:

- the proposals fall outside the local plan designations and policy maps, and as grey land should not be considered. Within the current review of the Local Plan, this area is also not identified as being needed to meet housing allocations to 2040 and so is speculative development and does not need to be considered in the supply of housing;
- the number of houses proposed is over-development of the site and is only proposed to maximise profit and not the needs of local people;
- currently residents find it hard to get into a local GP and our very popular school is always oversubscribed, there are no plans to increase capacity at the school due to maximising Sport England recreation land needed. the infrastructure to meet the homeowners needs are not being addressed and will cause negative impact on the current population of St. Georges in their current need to access public services plus an impact on more traffic on the highway network;
- the current streets close by to the development already have issues over drainage and over the years we have had problems with capacity, therefore their drainage plans do not go far enough and to connect to an existing connection at the pumping station will be a challenge and not really answered in their plans so will be a challenge to policies ER11, climate change has had a real impact on weather and rainfall and their options for sustainable urban drainage would not go far enough in helping take water away using existing culverts and their SUD proposals so is not compatible with policy ER12;
- the highway network (St Georges bypass) is an integral part of Telford & Wrekin network and the plan to have access and egress on to a busy main road will cause more congestion and danger which is not needed including the added impact of crossings, which will create more congestion and increase carbon which we are trying to reduce due to our climate change policies, the road has always been a danger having had my brother knocked over on that road crossing to work many years ago;
- this impact will be a challenge to policy C3 and also no real alternatives to the car are offered with the site being where it is located and designed for the car, therefore not helping with policy C1 as no current bus provision goes past the site and what future plans are the developers proposing to pay for a bus route;
- the site is by an historic moat and had a public right of way through good agricultural land which will be required in future food production and the protection of the moat is needed. The development is so close to the historic

moat and could be damaged through any development close to the proximity of such a part of our heritage. No development anywhere near this site special historic moat should be allowed;

- the land is currently owned with public access with wildlife corridors and accessible green space with good biodiversity all will be lost through this plan and no real buffer zones are proposed between this development and the current residential properties and therefore is against policies NE1, NE2 and NE3 of The Local Plan.

7.5 Cllr. Paul Thomas: Object:

- there are currently already very large, c. 2000 housing developments, within the Priorslee area including Redrow, Miller Homes, Avant, Lioncourt, Vistry and Shropshire Homes;
- although not all complete, these have already put significant strain on support services such as GP's and dentists which are unable to cope with the significant increase in demand whilst local primary schools are already oversubscribed;
- the increased traffic along both Telford Way and the major arterial route, Castle Farm Way, will increase noise and pollution and impact traffic flow particularly as more traffic light-controlled junctions and pedestrian crossings are introduced. This is already a source of concern from residents who live along the routes;
- the application lacks any detail on the proposed type of dwelling, has no on-site play areas and, although it is not public land it is rich in history, diverse flora and fauna and enjoyed by the community;
- drainage is also a specific concern which is not adequately addressed;
- the Transport Assessment refers to access to buses 'within a 400m range'. In reality, this isn't achievable. It is worth noting that the lack of bus services in the area is a continued source of complaints. Further, there is no bus service that currently serves Telford Way and no provision within the application for any additional bus service. Residents on this development will, therefore, be reliant on their own transport – this will result in the need for adequate car parking which is not addressed within the application;
- this application should be rejected on the basis that it is speculative, is not required, and fails to address drainage, transport and the importance of the archaeological heritage of the site.

7.6 TWC Highways: Support subject to Condition(s) and Financial Contributions:

- Full details of the main access to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of development;
- Full details of off-site improvements to the PRow linking the site to Church Road (north) and Dean Close (south) to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of development;
- Phasing and completion plan to be submitted;
- Construction of any new streets shall not be commenced until details of the proposed arrangements for future management and maintenance of the proposed street/s within the development have been submitted;

- Construction of any new estate street to be adopted shall not be commenced until full engineering details have been submitted and approved;
- Construction of any new estate street shall not be commenced until full details of the proposed street tree locations, species and planting method have been submitted to and approved;
- No dwelling shall be occupied until private roadways have been fully constructed;
- Any Reserved Matters application to include details of diversion of PRow;
- Site/Construction Environmental Management Plan

7.7 **TWC Drainage: Support subject to Condition(s):**

- Scheme for Foul and Surface Water Drainage;
- SuDs Management Plan;
- Provision of sewer easement for Severn Trent Water;
- Exceedance Flow Routing Plan;
- Interim/temporary drainage and sediment runoff control measures

7.8 **TWC Geotechs: Comment, Condition:**

- Comprehensive Desk Study (as part of any Reserved Matters Application) which deals with mining, all contamination issues, settlement and differentiation. A ground investigation would also be required that identifies all constraints and how they will be dealt with.

7.9 **TWC Healthy Spaces: Comment, Condition and Financial Contribution:**

- Landscape Management Plan

7.10 **TWC Ecology: Support subject to Condition(s) and Financial Contribution:**

- Erection of artificial nesting/roosting boxes;
- Lighting Plan;
- Landscaping Plan;
- Design conditions to ensure green infrastructure buffers as shown within indicative masterplan, such as along the PRow and southern edge of site

7.11 **TWC Affordable Housing: Support subject to Condition(s) and S106**

7.12 **TWC Environmental Health: Comment, Condition(s) including:**

- Noise assessment to accompany any Reserved Matters application;
- Details of acoustic noise barrier

7.13 **TWC Built Heritage: Object**

7.14 **TWC Education: Comment and Financial Contribution**

7.15 **Shropshire Council Archaeology: Condition(s):**

- Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of archaeological work;
- Detailed design to maximise the surviving earthworks as a feature of the amenity space;
- Management Plan to ensure the long-term survival of the moated site and its legibility within the proposed area of public open space

7.16 **NHS: Support subject to Condition(s) and Financial Contributions**

7.17 **Active Travel England: No Comment**

7.18 **Shropshire Fire Service: Comment** that consideration should be given to the information contained within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's Fire Safety Guidance document.

8.0 APPRAISAL

8.1 Having regard to the Development Plan Policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the planning application raises the following main issues:

- Principle of Development
- Design and Layout
- Impact on Amenity of Adjacent Properties and Future Occupants
- Built Heritage and Archaeology
- Highways impacts
- Healthy Spaces
- Drainage
- Land Stability and Contamination
- Ecology and Trees
- Other Matters
- Planning Obligations

8.2 **Principle of Development**

The application is located within the urban area of Telford and Wrekin Council. The Application Site is considered 'white land' insofar as it is not allocated on the Local Plan Proposals Map.

8.3 The site in question sits within the urban boundary of Telford, as shown on the adopted Proposals Map. Under Policies SP1 and SP4 of the adopted Local Plan, the principle of development within the urban boundary can be supported provided the proposed development meets the requirements of other policies within the Local Plan.

8.4 Significant objections have been raised about the lack of facilities available locally for schools, doctors/dentists/pharmacies, play facilities and bus provision. Section 106 Financial Contributions towards improving and/or delivering these services and facilities have been requested by the relevant consultees to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development - these are listed under Section 8.38 - Planning Obligations.

8.5 Design and Layout

The design and layout of the site is not for formal consideration at this stage, as this is an Outline Planning Application and not a Full Planning Application. Were this outline application to be approved, a detailed layout and appearance of buildings would come forward at a later stage under a separate planning application known as 'Reserved Matters.'

8.6 To assist Officers and Members, an Illustrative Masterplan has been submitted to show how the site could be laid out to accommodate up to 100no, dwellings and meet the policies of the Local Plan. This Illustrative Masterplan does not contain details such as bedroom numbers but can be used to assess whether acceptable garden sizes and distances between principal windows could be achieved.

8.7 The illustrative layout has taken account of comments from a number of consultees on matters which they would wish to see incorporated at reserved matters stage, were this outline application to be approved. These include comments pertaining to ecology, archaeology and healthy spaces.

8.8 Based on the Illustrative Masterplan, separation distances between the existing houses surrounding the site and the proposed dwellings are sufficient to maintain privacy levels and facilitate an acceptable level of screening and/or landscaping. There are a number of new plots which would not seem to achieve a 21 metres separation distance between facing principal windows and, were the application to be approved and come forward at Reserved Matters stage, this would need to be given further consideration. It may be that where plots cannot achieve an acceptable separation distance they need to come forward as bungalows rather than two-storey dwellings. This would be a detailed matter for future consideration, subject to the Outline Planning Application being Granted.

8.9 Impact on Amenity of Adjacent Properties/Uses

Based on the Illustrative Masterplan, separation distances between the existing houses surrounding the site and the proposed dwellings are capable of being sufficient to maintain privacy levels and facilitate an acceptable level of screening and/or landscaping. There are a number of new plots which would not seem to achieve a 21 metre separation distance between facing principal windows and, were the application to be approved and come forward at Reserved Matters stage, this would need to be given further consideration. It may be that where plots cannot achieve an acceptable separation distance they need to come forward as bungalows rather than two-storey dwellings. This would be a detailed matter for future consideration, subject to the Outline Planning Application being granted.

8.10 With regards to noise, a Noise Assessment has been submitted with this application. It should be noted that as this is an Outline Planning Application with any matters reserved that a specific comment on impacts on properties cannot be provided as any layout would be subject of a future Reserved Matters application.

8.11 The acceptability of noise levels for the proposed dwellings and their garden areas is determined by a proposed speed reduction along the A5 from 60mph to 45mph. The Local Highways Authority have confirmed this is the case. A noise barrier is proposed but this may not mitigate noise impacts for all properties and their external amenity areas, meaning revisions to the illustrative layout may be required at Reserved Matters stage.

8.12 The Council's Environmental Health Specialist has advised that the properties nearest the A5, as shown on the illustrative masterplan, risk their external amenity areas being too close to the road and suffering from noise disturbance. This may also be the case for properties close to the access point. This would be a detailed consideration for Reserved Matters stage, were this application to be approved.

8.13 Built Heritage and Archaeology

The Council's Conservation Officer advises the site is not within a Conservation Area, is sufficiently distant from any statutorily Listed built heritage assets and largely screened by existing intervening development, such that there are no reciprocal views. However, portions of the application site have views of Grade II Listed St George's Church Tower which would need to be preserved. The existing area has a semi-rural character, with narrow streets and long views over fields to the tree screening for the A5 and the woodlands beyond.

8.14 The built form is a mix of ages and styles, almost exclusively pre-1970's dwellings, with a large number of mid-century bungalows and two-storey semi-detached and detached dwellings, interspersed with numerous traditional buildings ranging in built form from terraced cottages to a Manor House. The dwellings are all set well back from the street front, on generous plots with large gardens which add to the semi-rural character of the area. Although the traditional buildings around the site perimeter aren't statutorily Listed or on the Council's Register of Buildings of Local Interest, many still possess architectural and historic merit and would be considered non-designated heritage assets. The proposed plans have the potential to affect the setting of these heritage assets.

8.15 The Council's Conservation Officer considers that the originally proposed development density of up to 100 dwellings is far too great for the surrounding area and the built grain would be jarringly at odds with the generous plot sizes of the existing buildings at the edges of the site. As such the Conservation Officer considers the proposed development density would cause harm to the semi-rural character of the neighbourhood and the settings of the non-designated heritage assets, contrary to local policy BE1(i, ii, iii, iv, v).

8.16 The concerns of the Council's Conservation Officer are acknowledged. The large spacious plots in the immediate area would not typically be replicated in a contemporary development and the density of approx. 36 dwellings per hectare would be an efficient use of land based on excluding the undevelopable areas such as the moat.

8.17 Shropshire Archaeology advises the archaeological surveys undertaken are acceptable for an outline stage application. Were a reserved matters application to come forward then more details surveys would be required. The initial Illustrative Masterplan has been amended to incorporate a 5 metre buffer between the medial moat and the possible route of the spine road. This has been welcomed by Shropshire Archaeology, who advise it will ensure the retention of the stratigraphic relationship between the earthworks of the moated site and the associated ridge and furrow.

8.18 Shropshire Archaeology also recommend that tree planting be avoided in the areas to the south and east of the moated site (along the indicative access road) in order to reinforce the openness and legibility of the moated site as a feature of the proposed

development. Restricting tree planting would also retain visibility and surveillance across the proposed amenity space. These recommendations seek to ensure that the proposals would not result in substantial harm to the heritage significance of the moated site and its immediate setting, should a Reserved Matters application be submitted.

8.19 Highway Impacts

Policy C3 requires all development to mitigate site specific highway issues. In this instance this is achieved by the creation of a three arm signalised junction on Telford Way. The preliminary junction design has been capacity tested to a future year of 2034 and therefore will be over-engineered to begin with, in order to meet the additional growth in the area and to negate any westbound queuing that could otherwise compromise the traffic merge exiting Limekiln Bank Roundabout. The junction arrangement includes dedicated signal controlled pedestrian crossing facilities over Telford Way and the speed limit in the junction vicinity will be reduced to 40mph as part of the works. The scheme has already been Safety Audited by a third party, as part of the initial design process, with no non-mitigatable concerns raised. The signal junction proposed will work on an intelligent controller system, to ensure the free flow of traffic on Telford Way is maintained and the development arm can have green time regulated when necessary to ensure this.

- 8.20 The traffic generation from the site has been assessed, under worse case conditions, to produce circa 65 two-way peak hour trips – so just over one a minute. The current peak hour flows on Telford Way exceed 1,000 vehicles an hour; therefore the impact of an additional 65 trips per hour from the proposed development cannot be considered to be severe against this context. The Local Highways Authority consider the additional trips will not represent a material impact further away from the site after distribution and dissipation of traffic has taken place. However, a Strategic Highways Contribution, derived from the site's trip generation is being sought as part of the proportionate, cumulative impact strategy which is applied to all new larger developments in the Borough.
- 8.21 The site sits adjacent to one of Telford's primary footway/cycleway corridors, which links the site to the Town Centre to the south and Donnington to the North - the development site connects directly to this infrastructure.
- 8.22 There are no bus stops along this stretch of Telford Way due to the absence of bus routes along it. However, bus provision is reactive to the viability appraisal by operators and, if routing along Telford Way is proposed in the future, then safeguarding provisions can be made in the detail for the highway junction works to include caged stops with supporting infrastructure if necessary.
- 8.23 The current closest bus stops to the site lie off the mini roundabout at Stafford Street and West Street, to the west of the site. Contrary to the claims made in the applicant's Transport Assessment these are actually circa 800-900 metres from the centre of the development site. This distance is consistent with a 10-minute walk and is, therefore, not considered unreasonable in terms of accessibility. These existing stops serve a number of services, these being 5, 5A, 5B, 5E, 6 and 7, which link to much of wider Telford. Consequently, although they are more than a 5 minute walk away, the actual route choice and frequency available is better than a scenario where a closer bus stop would have a limited service. Section 106 contributions are requested for the upgrade of existing bus stops along Stafford Street.

8.24 The Local Highways Authority (LHA) has assessed the application against the tests under Para 115 of the NPPF and advised they have no grounds to object to the proposals. The LHA have recommended a number of conditions to make the development acceptable as well as requesting S106 contributions of £85,940 towards the TWC Transport Growth Strategy.

8.25 Healthy Spaces

The Illustrative Masterplan indicates no onsite play and recreation provision is intended. Therefore, in order to achieve policy compliance the proposal would need to make financial contributions towards the improvements of nearby play and recreation facilities. An appropriate sum has been calculated in accordance with the Council's recent Play, Recreation and Open Space Needs Assessment, as the area of St Georges and Priorslee has a deficit of play and recreational space provision, based on an estimated calculation of 300 bedrooms across the 100 dwellings proposed, we will be requesting the following contributions of; £260,253.06 for play. Additional contributions of £65,000.00 are requested for the provision of sport and recreation in the area.

8.26 As part of wider Council approaches to the use of open space and current national health and wellbeing agendas, Healthy Spaces will be additionally seeking to provide opportunities for food growth, through allotment contributions of £9,814.85. Alternatively Healthy Spaces would accept the onsite provision of community growing space, which, if accepted, will need to be incorporated into any Landscape Management Plans until suitable stewardship is acquired.

8.27 Drainage

Were this Outline Planning Application to be approved, detailed drainage design would follow at the Reserved Matters stage as part of the detailed appearance, layout and landscaping.

8.28 At this stage the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) are satisfied that, in principle, there is an acceptable drainage scheme that can be delivered to meet local planning policies. This would be designed and delivered as part of a more detailed scheme subject to this application being approved.

8.29 Land Stability and Contamination

From a geotechnical perspective, there are no objections to the principle of developing this site for residential purposes, subject to appropriate information being submitted with any future Reserved Matters application(s) to demonstrate the conditions of the site, in particular the northern part affected by the former sand quarry.

8.30 The Council's Geotechnical Specialist requests Condition(s) be attached to any grant of Outline Planning Consent requiring a comprehensive desk study (as part of any Reserved Matters application) which deals with mining, all contamination issues, settlement and differentiation. A ground investigation would also be required that identifies all constraints and how they will be dealt with.

8.31 Ecology and Trees

This site is currently comprised mostly of stock grazed modified grassland fields. A small area of other neutral grassland was identified through the ecological

assessments, this area has a more diverse structure however is still of lower ecological value. Hedgerows and several mature trees are present in the boundaries of the site, under current plans these are largely to be retained which is positive for the overall biodiversity impact of development.

- 8.32 A small area of young trees has been planted in recent years along the northern boundary of the site, as identified in section 3.3.4 of the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). This area should be protected from development and included within landscaping management should development receive consent.
- 8.33 Current Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations show some areas of loss and some areas of gain onsite. The site was assessed to have baseline values of 12.10 habitat units, 5.15 hedgerow units and 1.05 watercourse units. Under BNG legislation, the submission of a Biodiversity Gain Plan post-determination must outline how an overall 10% gain will be achieved for these values. Under initial proposals a net loss of 5.15 habitat units (42.57%) is predicted. The Council's Ecology Officer has advised that the original indicative layout is unlikely to enable the development to meet the 10% BNG target and recommended a reduction in the number of residential units proposed to enable more delivery of biodiversity offset onsite. This advice has been taken on board by the developer, resulting in the amended scheme for 100no.dwellings supported by an illustrative layout. However, the Council's Ecology Officer advises that the density of the proposed development remains of concern as it will consequentially result in less open green space on site and prevent delivery of onsite biodiversity.
- 8.34 With regards to priority and protected species, this site currently has relatively poor connectivity to other natural habitats, the nearest being a mixed broadleaved woodland area to the south separated from the site by the busy A5. Poor connectivity and a lack of biodiverse, ecologically valuable habitats make the site on the whole unlikely to host protected species.
- 8.35 This site is part of a wider Green Infrastructure (GI) network, providing green space and access to people and wildlife in the area. Further site design should embrace this function and provide space for people and wildlife to use post-development. In particular, the current Public Right of Way (PRoW) through the site provides an opportunity to create a 'green corridor' through the proposed development linking public open space in the north to green buffers and woodland beyond the A5 to the south. Habitats within public open space and green infrastructure areas should be varied to support biodiversity and recreational needs.
- 8.36 Design and layout with ecology and green infrastructure in mind aids compliance with Policy NE1 which details the need to "ensure that new developments are designed to be ecologically permeable through the protection and enhancement of existing wildlife corridors, core areas and stepping stones and the provision of new connections which shall be integrated and linked to wider biodiversity features". The provision of a continuous 'green buffer' along the southern site boundary is supported to provide a green corridor along the line of the A5. The amended indicative masterplan provides more opportunity for green infrastructure and biodiversity than the originally submitted plan. However, a further reduction in the number of units and overall layout could provide a wide range of benefits including increasing biodiversity, improving amenity value, and enabling more natural drainage of water. Sensitive design, especially along the route of the PROW, will enhance the development for biodiversity, benefit potential future residents and encourage sustainable travel through the site to green areas beyond for new residents and those already in the

area. The Council's Ecology Officer has recommended planning conditions to secure these green infrastructure buffers at Reserved Matters stage.

8.37 Para. 6.1.1.4 of the supporting text for Policy NE1 emphasises the importance of protecting green spaces within the borough. To offset the impacts of losing the green space and the increase in numbers of residents likely to be using the nearby green spaces as a result, a financial contribution is requested to improve habitat and environmental quality at The Flash to the south of the site with the intention that it can achieve the status of Local Nature reserve. For these reasons a Section 106 Contribution of £100,000 is sought for maintenance and habitat management associated with the increased use of The Flash arising from the proposed development.

8.38 Other Matters

Planning applications may only be determined based on material planning considerations. Devaluation of property is not a material planning consideration and cannot be taken into account.

8.39 Planning Obligations

Any planning consent would be conditional on the agreement of a S106 agreement to secure the following (plus indexation):

- Education: £880,741 (Primary £650,453; Secondary £238,298);
- Highways: £85,940;
- Affordable Housing: 25% to be provided on-site;
- Healthy Spaces: £260,253.06 (Play); £65,000 (Sport and recreation); £9,814.85 (Allotments);
- Ecology: £100,000 (The Flash Local Nature Reserve);
- NHS: £89,576;
- Bus Shelter upgrades - £20,000

8.40 In determining the required planning obligations on this specific application the following three tests as set out in the CIL Regulations (2010), in particular Regulation 122, have been applied to ensure that the application is treated on its own merits: a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; b) directly related to the development; c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 This application is seeking Outline Planning Permission to develop this site for residential purposes, up to 100no. dwellings. The site is not allocated within the Local Plan although it is within the Telford urban boundary where the principle of development is supported subject to the proposal demonstrating it can meet the requirements of the policies within the Local Plan.

9.2 The loss of the existing green space and the level of public objection received on this matter is acknowledged, however, as this is not public land the land owner could fence it off under Permitted Development and restrict access to the public except for traversing the PROW. The Council's Ecology Officer has requested Section 106

contributions to improve the Local Nature Reserve to the south to mitigate for the loss of green space and public amenity.

- 9.3 Statutory consultees, with the exception of Built Conservation, support the scheme and have requested Condition(s) and/or Financial Contributions to mitigate the impact of the proposed development, where those impacts cannot be accommodated onsite. These include Financial Contributions towards improved education, play/recreation/sport facilities, healthcare facilities, Local Nature Reserve and highway/public transport facilities. Affordable housing would be provided onsite secured at 25% of the overall development. Subject to these condition and financial contributions being agreed, Officers consider the proposals can achieve policy compliance.
- 9.4 Access is being considered in full detail as part of this application and the Local Highways Authority support the application as discussed above.
- 9.5 Were the application to be approved, details matters such as layout, scale, appearance and landscaping would come forward at a later date through separate planning application(s) known as reserved matters. Many of the matters of details raised by consultees would be addressed at that stage.
- 9.6 On balance, therefore, the proposal is deemed to be compliant with the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031 and the guidance contained within the NPPF.

10.0 DETAILED RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 Based on the conclusions above, the recommendation to the Planning Committee on this application is that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION** (with the authority to finalise any matter including conditions, legal agreement terms, or any later variations) subject to the following:

C) The applicant/landowners entering into a Section 106 agreement with the Local Planning Authority (subject to indexation from the date of committee), with terms to be agreed by the Development Management Service Delivery Manager, relating to:

- viii) Education: £880,741 (Primary £650,453; Secondary £238,298);
- ix) Highways: £85,940;
- x) Affordable Housing: 25% to be provided on-site;
- xi) Healthy Spaces: £260,253.06 (Play); £65,000 (Sport and recreation); £9,814.85 (Allotments);
- xii) Ecology: £100,000 (The Flash Local Nature Reserve);
- xiii) NHS: £89,576;
- xiv) Bus Shelter upgrades - £20,000

D) The following Condition(s) (with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):

Condition(s)

Time Limit Outline

Time Limit Reserved Matters

Time Limit – Submission of Reserved Matters

Standard Outline – Some Matters Reserved

General Details Required

Details of Materials

In accordance with Ecological Survey

Erection of artificial nesting/roosting boxes

Lighting Plan

Site Environmental Management Plan

Landscaping Plan

Landscape Management Plan

Scheme for Foul and Surface Water Drainage

SuDs Management Plan

Provision of Sewer Easement for Severn Trent Water

Exceedance Flow Routing Plan

Interim/Temporary Drainage and Sediment Run-off Control Measures

Full details of the main access to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of development

Full details of off-site improvements to the PROW linking the site to Church Road (north) and Dean Close (south) to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of development

Phasing and completion plan to be submitted

Construction of any new streets shall not be commenced until details of the proposed arrangements for future management and maintenance of the proposed street/s within the development have been submitted

Construction of any new estate street to be adopted shall not be commenced until full engineering details have been submitted and approved

Construction of any new estate street shall not be commenced until full details of the proposed street tree locations, species and planting method have been submitted to and approved

No dwelling shall be occupied until private roadways have been fully constructed

Any reserved matters application to include details of diversion of PROW

Written scheme of investigation for a programme of archaeological work

Detailed design to maximise the surviving earthworks as a feature of the amenity space

Management Plan to ensure the long-term survival of the moated site and its legibility within the proposed area of public open space

Noise assessment to accompany any reserved matters application

Details of acoustic noise barrier

Geotechnical desk study, ground investigation and mitigation report

Development in accordance with plans