

**20/01028/FUL
MAJOR**

Mr Adrian Maclaughlin

PENKRIDGE

Cllr Josephine Chapman

Dunston Business Village Stafford Road Penkridge

Proposed extension to the Dunston Business Village comprising 12 new office cabins, extension to internal access road and car parking and tree and hedge planting

1. SITE DESCRIPTION AND PLANNING HISTORY

1.1 Site Description

1.1.1 Dunston Business Village is located north of Penkridge near to the village of Dunston and is accessed off the A449 which is a major road. The business village is well connected for this reason.

1.1.2 The application relates to the business park, Dunston Business Village. Dunston Business Village is a redevelopment of a cluster of redundant agricultural buildings of various vernaculars. The conversion of the buildings to offices for small and medium sized businesses began in 2006 and is ongoing following permission for the conversion of buildings which were allocated as car parking as per the original consent. The site has an unauthorised construction yard to the north together with a car park to the west which was approved as part of a later consent. There have been a number of planning applications relating to the site in recent years, some allowing for the expansion of the Business Village outside the original approved area for car parking and log cabins, the most recent being two storey office buildings which were approved under planning permission 17/00250/FUL.

1.1.3 The site relative to this application relates to land adjoining the western edges of the site. The land measures on average 70m wide by 136m deep.

1.2 Planning History

2006, Change of use of agricultural buildings to business use B1, Refused, (06/00624/COU) allowed on appeal.

2007, Change of use of agricultural buildings to business use B1, Approved, (07/00222/COU)

2007, Change of use of agricultural building to business use B1, approved (07/00572/COU)

2008, Demolition of 3 grain silos and replacement building for B1 office use, Approved, (08/00569/COU)

2008, Change of use of agricultural barn to office use B1, Approved, (08/00570/COU)

2009, Change of use to allow B1 office usage on mezzanine floor plus provision of up to 27 external parking spaces, Approved, (09/00107/COU)

2010, Change of use of farmland to car park, Approved, (10/00013/COU)

2010, Change of use of barn 6 from garaging to office [B1(a)] and amendment to car park approved under 10/00013/COU to provide five additional spaces, Approved (10/00430/COU)

2010, Architectural improvements and raising the roof of barn 7 for office use, Approved, (10/00981/FUL)

2011, Provision of temporary office accommodation of approx. 2460sqm plus temporary additional car parking during conversion of barns 6 and 7. Freestanding log cabins on slabs, Approved subject to Section 106 agreement, (11/00892/FUL)

2011, Variation of condition 14 of planning approval 10/00430/COU - Before the approved parking area is brought into use the hardcore parking area immediately to the north of barns 6 and 7 and outlined in green on the approved plan shall be returned to its former condition (apart from the area to provide the new service road) and the materials arising therefrom permanently removed from site, Approved, (11/01026/VAR)

2013, Provision of temporary office accommodation (B1) comprising 2460 square metres, plus temporary additional car parking during the conversion of barns 6&7. Freestanding log cabins on slabs, Approved, (13/00756/VAR)

2013, Provision of office accommodation (B1) comprising approximately 2,500 square metres of floor space plus additional car parking, comprising free standing log cabins on slabs, Approved subject to S106 agreement, 13/00757/FUL

2014, Change of use from office (B1) to a bistro (A3) incorporating a single storey rear extension, approved (14/00380/COU)

2015, Demolition of barn 7m which is existing (and has planning approval for 10, 191 sq. ft. of office space over three floors - Planning Ref : 08/00570/COU). Demolition of barn 6 which is existing (and has planning approval for 17,156 sq. ft. of office space over two floors - Planning Ref : 09/00107/COU). Replacing the demolished barns with 16No. log cabins 12 of which (cabins numbered 24-35 on the proposed site layout) will be elevated on timber decking to allow ground level car parking beneath. Cabins numbered 20-23 will all be at ground level, with additional parking, approved (15/00469/FUL)

Demolition of barn 7 which is existing (and has planning approval for 10, 191 sq. ft. of office space over three floors - Planning Ref : 08/00570/COU).

2015, Demolition of barn 7 which is existing (and has planning approval for 10, 191 sq. ft. of office space over three floors - Planning Ref : 08/00570/COU), withdrawn

2016, Provision of a temporary car park for approx. 100 vehicles to enable the construction of 12 log cabins (Numbers 24 to 35) approved under planning approval 15/00469/FUL. For a temporary period of 18 months and the provision of a top soil earth bund for the storage of the top soil stripped from the parking area for re-instatement on completion, withdrawn (16/00497/FUL)

2017, Erection of 2no. office buildings with car parking layout amended to suit. Plus three log cabins 21,22 and 23, approved [17/00250/FUL]

2019, Installation of bore holes for ground source heat pumps, approved (19/00593/LUE)

1.3 Pre-application discussions

1.3.1 Pre-application discussions have taken place.

2. APPLICATION DETAILS

2.1 Proposal

2.1.1 Dunston Business Village has an existing 23 log cabins. This proposal seeks permission for an additional 12 log cabins. The existing internal road will be extended and a new parking area created, providing 72 additional spaces. Throughout the course of the application the size of the parking area has been reduced to reflect the Council's Parking Standards and to increase the biodiversity of the site.

2.1.2 The proposed twelve new log cabin office units will each measure 9.144m wide by 12.192m deep. (30ft x 40ft) to provide approximately 1338m² of additional office floorspace. The office space will be flexible in terms of providing smaller or larger units by simply removing partition walls between units when required. Eaves height will be 2.75m

and ridge height will be approximately 5.1m, both measured from floor level. Solar photovoltaic panels will be installed on the new office building roofs.

2.1.3 Some of the existing hedgerows within the site will be removed and replaced with a new establishment of approximately 140m of new mixed native species hedgerows alongside a buffer with a width of 5m and length of 133m. The landscape plan also involves new tree planting [small and medium trees] along the northern and western boundaries of the site. The grass areas [approx 2.9ha] on the revised site layout plan is to be planted with wildflower seed mix. A rail fence will be erected to prevent parking on these areas.

2.1.4 The proposed log cabins will match the appearance of the already established business village log cabin offices. All cabin materials (Walls, roof, doors and windows) and site finishes to match the cabins established under the previous planning application (11-00892-FUL). That is; softwood cladding which is stained in Sikken's or similar light oak stain. Doors and windows are softwood double glazed stained in a slightly darker colour. The raised decked area to the front of the cabins is constructed from treated softwood decking and left in the natural colour.

2.2 Agent Submission

The application is accompanied by:

- Planning Support Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Biodiversity and Ecological Impact Assessments
- Recycling and Waste Disposal Statement
- Travel Plan
- B1(a) Sequential Test
- Briefing Note: Scope of sequential assessment for Dunston Business Village
- Briefing Note: Economic footprint
- Briefing Note: Economic impact of proposed development
- Briefing Note: Employment land requirements for B1 Office Space
- Landscape plan

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Within the Open Countryside

3.2 Core Strategy

Strategic Objective 1 - To protect and maintain the Green Belt and Open Countryside in order to sustain the distinctive character of South Staffordshire.

Strategic Objective 2 - To retain and reinforce the current pattern of villages across South Staffordshire, and in particular protect and retain the important strategic gaps between existing settlements in order to prevent the coalescence of settlements.

Core Policy 1 - The Spatial Strategy

Policy OC1 - Development in the Open Countryside Beyond the West Midlands Green Belt

Strategic Objective 4 - To protect, conserve and enhance the countryside, character and quality of the landscape and the diversity of wildlife and habitats.

Policy EQ1 - Protecting, Expanding and Enhancing Natural Assets

Policy EQ6 - Renewable Energy

Policy EQ8 - Waste

Policy EQ9 - Protecting Residential Amenity

Policy EQ11 - Wider Design Considerations

Policy EQ12 - Landscaping

Strategic Objective 10 - To support the urban regeneration of the Black Country Major Urban Area by distributing new housing and employment growth within South Staffordshire in a way that supports existing local communities and in particular discourages out-migration from the Black Country Major Urban Area.

Strategic Objective 11 - To support the growth of a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable local economy; sustain, improve and enhance the vitality and viability of village centres and promote South Staffordshire as a tourist destination.

Strategic Objective 12 - To support thriving and sustainable communities by ensuring that local people enjoy access to jobs and key services such as social, health care, education, open space and recreation and other facilities.

Strategic Objective 13 - To reduce the need to travel, to secure improvements to public transport infrastructure and services and make it safer and easier for the community to travel to jobs and key services by sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, walking and cycling.

Core Policy 7 - Employment and Economic Development

Policy EV5 - Rural Employment

Core Policy 11 - Sustainable Transport

Policy EV11 - Sustainable Travel

Policy EV12 - Parking Provision

3.3 National Planning Policy Framework

3.4 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Councillors: No comments received, expired 31/12/2020

Parish Council [21/01/2021]: *Object - Increased Traffic/Noise/Light and Pollution in Open Countryside, already Over-Developed*

Environmental Health: No comments received, expired 31/12/2020

Aboricultural Officer [09/02/2021]: *No objections to additional information provided.*

County Ecologist [22/02/2021]: *My previous response dated 6 January 2021 requested clarification on biodiversity net gain and on landscaping, fencing and boundaries. A hedge survey has been received which clarifies fence protection of the hedge to the east of the site. If minded to approve the application, maintenance of this fence should be a condition to prevent cars parking too close to the hedge.*

A permanent fence will be needed to protect hedge and trees to the south. This should encompass the RPA of hedge plants and any trees to BS 5837:2012: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. The layout plan does not appear to show sufficient space for this and will require amending.

Regarding biodiversity net gain in line with NPPF 170, the BIA states that

This proposed site layout results in major loss in habitat units and a major gain in hedgerow units. It is noted that further enhancements and habitats created could be attempted either on site or adjacent to site,

No proposal for such additional measures has been put forward and the existing plans still result in a net loss. The BIA goes on to suggest that the hedgerow gain, plus potential bird and bat boxes could be considered within an appraisal of net losses/ gains for biodiversity within the development. Hedge planting and bird boxes are not however usually considered as appropriate mitigation for loss of habitat units (known as trading down.) It is therefore suggested that a contribution in line with Defra recommendations is made towards off-site habitat mitigation via S106 or similar. Conditions recommended.

Further comments [23/02/2021]: I would actually advise them to go for low maintenance meadow such as Emorsgate EM1 with traditional orchard trees. This would make a nice feature as well as achieving net gain.

Local Plans [19/01/2021]: *This proposal is for the erection of 12(no.) log-cabins for B1(a) use (additional employment floorspace of 1,338m² bringing total to 9,884m²) on land to the west of Dunston Business Village along with the provision of parking which would increase the overall number of spaces by 246 (to a total of 752).*

Planning History

Whilst there is no direct planning application applicable to the site in question here, although the site has been included within previous red-line boundaries with no development being proposed on this particular site, the existing Dunston Business Village has been subject to a number of applications in recent years.

Dunston Business Village is subject to a long planning history where initially permission was granted in 2008 and 2009 for a change of use for agricultural barns to B1 office use. In short, overtime the business village has slowly extended with most of the agricultural buildings now entertaining office use alongside modern office developments.

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Open Countryside and therefore is subject to Policy OC1 which allows for the replacement of existing buildings where they are not disproportionate to the size of the original building. In this case, the site is SHELAA Site 631 currently undeveloped land to the west of the existing Dunston Business Village. Whilst in this instance the proposed building may or may not have an impact upon the Open Countryside, it is not a replacement building but rather a new one. As such, the consideration as to the acceptability of this proposal is determinant upon whether the development will have an impact upon appearance or character of the Open Countryside (see landscape/design comments below).

Development within the Open Countryside is also subject to the NPPF's Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development. The site is clearly a sustainable location for employment use and therefore meets the Presumption along with Core Strategy National Policy 1. On this note, it is important to observe that the site is located immediately adjacent to an existing successful employment area and is therefore a sustainable location for this type of development. Furthermore, it would be contrary to the sentiment of Policy EV1 to suggest otherwise as the proposal would likely see new businesses move into South Staffordshire facilitating further economic growth of the District in line with Core Policy 7 and the thrust of the NPPF. Policy EV5 identifies the circumstances in which proposals for employment development outside of development boundaries will be supported. On this occasion the application satisfies parts; C, D, E, and F. Therefore, the principle of development is in conformity with both national and local policy.

Coupling this with the supporting documentation received as part of the application, namely; Planning Statement, Sequential Assessment, Employment Land Requirements Briefing Note, Economic Impact of Proposed Development Briefing Note, and Economic Footprint Briefing Note, it is considered that this application is compliant with Core Policy 7.

Landscape/Design

Policy EQ4 and EQ11 set out the principle policy requirements relevant to the site. The site sits in a parcel of land sloping gently from east to west, in a wider landscape characterised by undulating agricultural fields bisected by transport corridors (the A449 and West Coast Mainline). The site would extend an existing business park westwards into the wider agricultural landscape. The business park itself is predominantly characterised by timber office structures with low ridge and eaves heights.

Due to the site's topography and surroundings, the proposed site is unlikely to be prominent in views from the A449, with the primary public vantage points likely to be from public rights of way to the north (around Dunston Hall) and from longer distance views from public rights of way around 2km to the west of the site. To reduce the extent the site will be prominent in these views, the ridge line of the proposed cabins has been limited to approximately 5.4m in height, whilst a landscape buffer is proposed at the western extent of the site. These measures should ensure that the potential of the site to have a detrimental effect on the immediate environment and medium/long distance views can be satisfactorily mitigated. Therefore, subject to appropriate conditions, the site is likely to be able to satisfy the relevant elements of Policy EQ4 and EQ11.

To ensure the scheme complies with the relevant Local Plan policies, pre-commencement conditions will be required for the following:

*-Submission and approval of proposed finished floor levels for the scheme
Submission and approval of a full landscape scheme, detailing all soft and hard landscaping materials used across the site (reflecting the submitted Landscaping Plan, whilst also including other site boundaries and specifications for the surfacing materials and soft landscaping to break up the proposed parking area shown on the site layout)*

Conclusion

In summary, from a Local Plans perspective, broad support in principle for this application is provided through Core Policy 7 subject to Landscape / Design compliance as set out above. At this stage there are no concerns that this development will have a considerable adverse impact upon the Open Countryside and is therefore not in conflict with the thrust of Policy OC1.

County Highways [03/02/2021]: *There are no objections on Highway grounds subject to conditions being included on any approval*

The site was originally visited on 09/09/2020 in connection with a request for pre-application advice. The proposed development is proposed extension to the Dunston Business Village comprising 12 new office cabins, extension to internal access road and car parking and tree and hedge planting. The site is subject to an existing Travel Plan.

During the initial assessment of the proposal the Highway Authority became concerned at the proposed level of new car parking which exceeded your Authority's parking standards and issued a refusal.

On reflection the overprovision of car parking did not raise any highway safety issues and consequently the Highway Authority is revising its response. The Highway Authority accepts the proposal and conditions are recommended.

Fire Team [10/12/2020]: *Comments to be added as an informative on the decision notice*

Waste Management Unit [10/12/2020]: *No comments*

Environment Agency [10/12/2020]: No comments

Natural England [23/12/2020]: No comments

Severn Trent [31/12/2020]: *As the proposal has minimal impact on the public sewerage system I can advise we have no objections to the proposals and do not require a drainage condition to be applied.*

Flood Team [14/12/2020]: *Our records show the site to be at low risk of flooding. Considering the scale of the proposal, please see the attached Standing Advice for our response.*

Police: No comments received, expired 31/12/2020

Badger Group: No comments received, expired 31/12/2020

Campaign to Protect Rural England: No comments received, expired 31/12/2020

South Staffs Wildlife: No comments received, expired 31/12/2020

Cadent Gas: No comments received, expired 31/12/2020

Neighbours [30/12/2020]: One comment received expressing concern over:

- Expansion of the site
- Loss of views to properties along Swan Lane
- Impact on neighbouring amenity - noise/disturbance/light pollution
- Lack of public transport serving the site/ dangerous access.

A **site notice** was displayed on the 10/12/2020 and **advert** published on the 15/12/2020.

5. APPRAISAL

5.1 The application is referred to committee as it is contrary to Policy OC1 of the Core Strategy.

5.2 Key Issues

- Principle of development
- Material considerations
- Landscape and design
- Highways
- Neighbour Amenity
- Impact on ecology
- Representations
- Conclusions

5.3 Principle of development

5.3.1 The site is within the Open Countryside where development is restricted through policy OC1. Certain types of development are acceptable within the Open Countryside which includes buildings for the purposes of agriculture/forestry or small scale facilities for outdoor sport or recreation and for other uses that maintain the character of the Open Countryside.

5.3.2 The erection of twelve log cabins for office accommodation along with additional car parking [72 spaces] does not satisfy any of these exemptions and material considerations are therefore needed to overcome an automatic policy objection.

5.4 Material considerations

5.4.1 As the proposal is located within the Open Countryside there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is the golden thread running through the NPPF and is reflected in policy NP1 of the adopted Core Strategy. There are three strands to sustainability, economic, social and environmental.

5.4.2 Core Policy 7 [Employment and Economic Benefit] provides that The Council, working in partnership with businesses and local communities will support measures to sustain and develop the local economy of South Staffordshire and encourage opportunities for inward investment and further economic development of the District. The Council will support the development of creative and high technology industries at strategic employment sites in suitable locations within South Staffordshire.

5.4.3 Core Policy 9 [Rural Diversification] provides that The Council will support the social and economic needs of rural communities in South Staffordshire. Development should be designed to be sustainable; seek to enhance the environment; and should provide any necessary mitigating or compensatory measures to address harmful impacts.

5.4.4 The application is accompanied by the following supporting documentation: Planning Statement, Sequential Assessment, Employment Land Requirements Briefing Note, Economic Impact of Proposed Development Briefing Note, and Economic Footprint Briefing Note.

5.4.5 Dunston Business Village is a well-established location for small and medium sized enterprises that extends to approximately 2.4 hectares. The site currently provides the equivalent of 658 Full Time Equivalent jobs across fifty different businesses; and has had occupancy rates of 100% for several years. It has become a hub for high technology businesses that provide jobs for local people with varied skill sets. 95% of employees at the site live within 20 miles of the site.

5.4.6 This proposal would provide an additional employment floorspace of 1,338m², bringing total to 9,884sqm on site. The sequential assessment provided by WSP Indigo outlines the economic benefits of the site. This including the construction employment with total construction costs of the scheme totalling £2.43 million. The proposed commercial offices will provide approximately 232 jobs based on the employment density of 12 FTE jobs per square metre.

5.4.7 There is a need for additional office space in the district as evidenced by the Council's Stage 1 Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) carried out by the consultancy firm Warwick Economics and Development.

5.4.8 The submitted Briefing note [employment land requirements] provides that the EDNA identifies a need for 2.1 hectares of B1 office use space over the planning period from 2018 to 2038. The Council has an available land supply for B1 office space is 0.75 hectares. This leaves a balance of 1.35 hectares as the net need for B1 office use over the planning period.

It is estimated that the proposed development at Dunton Business Village will meet 25% of this requirement.

5.4.9 The Economic Footprint document submitted also explains how the direct employment supported across Dunston Business Village will result in additional worker expenditure in the local economy (for example as workers buy lunch and socialise after work), benefiting local businesses and enterprises. WSP | Indigo have made a conservative estimate that 60% of the workforce would spend £6 per day on food and drink and socialising on 232 days per annum. Applying the figure calculated, the direct employment supported at Dunston Business Village, generates an additional gross spend of circa £549,562 in the locality annually.

5.4.10 The site is located on the A449 with junction 13 of the M6 a short distance to the north with the Main Service Village of Penkridge to the south. There is a pedestrian link to Penkridge along with easy access to highway routes. Therefore, the accessibility of the location is considered to be sustainable in those terms. The site has been successful locally and therefore the site makes a strong contribution to the local rural economy by attracting businesses to South Staffordshire and has a waiting list of businesses wishing to move onto the site. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with policy CP7 of the Core Strategy.

5.4.11 Policy EV5 [Rural Employment] identifies the circumstances in which proposals for employment development outside of development boundaries will be supported. On this occasion the application satisfies parts; C, D, E, and F, which are noted below.

c) the development is not capable of being located within the development boundaries of a village, by reason of the nature of the operation or the absence of suitable sites;

d) it is supported by an appropriate business case which demonstrates that the proposal will support the local economy which in turn would help sustain rural communities. The Council will adopt the approach set out in Core Policy 7 for the redevelopment, modernisation and expansion of businesses;

e) the development would not adversely impact on the economy of the service villages;

f) the development is accessible by a choice of means of transport including walking, cycling and public transport;

g) the local highway network is capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed development.

5.4.12 As noted above there are material considerations weighing in favour of the proposal, i.e. the application site is within a sustainable location, adjacent to a successful business village with 100% occupancy rates, contributes to the demand for office spaces in south Staffordshire and will add value to the local economy through the provision of permanent well-paid jobs and temporary jobs throughout the construction period.

5.4.13 The proposal complies with the core aims of with national policy and local plan policies CP7, CP9 and EV5.

5.5 Landscape and Design

5.5.1 Policy EQ4 states that the design and location of new development should take account of the characteristics and sensitivity of the landscape and its surroundings, and not have a detrimental effect on the immediate environment and on any important medium and long distance views.

5.5.2 Policy EQ11 requires that new development respect local character and distinctiveness, including that of the surrounding development and landscape [...] by enhancing the positive attributes whilst mitigating the negative aspects[.] In terms of scale, [design] and materials, development should contribute positively to the street scene and surrounding buildings, whilst respecting the scale of spaces and buildings in the local area. This is echoed by the Councils Design Guide.

5.5.3 The site sits in a parcel of land sloping gently from east to west, in a wider landscape characterised by undulating agricultural fields bisected by transport corridors (the A449 and West Coast Mainline). The site would extend an existing business park westwards into the wider agricultural landscape. The business park itself is predominantly characterised by timber office structures with low ridge and eaves heights. The proposed log cabins will reflect the appearance of the already established business village log cabin offices.

5.5.4 Due to the site's topography and surroundings, the proposed site is unlikely to be prominent in views from the A449, with the primary public vantage points likely to be from public rights of way to the north (around Dunston Hall) and from longer distance views from public rights of way around 2km to the west of the site. To reduce the extent the site will be prominent in these views, the ridge line of the proposed cabins has been limited to approximately 5.4m in height and a landscape buffer is proposed at the western extent of the site. These measures should ensure that the potential of the site to have a detrimental effect on the immediate environment and medium/long distance views can be satisfactorily mitigated.

5.4.5 Core Policy 3 provides that The Council will require developments to be designed to cater for the effects of climate change, making prudent use of natural resources, enabling opportunities for renewable energy efficiency and helping to minimise any environmental impacts.

5.5.6 The Business Village has recently obtained planning permission for the installation of bore holes for ground source heat pumps (19/00593/LUE) and the site benefits from 3 x 30KW Solar arrays and 1 x 150KW Ground Source Heat Pump. Solar photovoltaic panels will be installed on the new office building roofs meeting the aim of Core Policy 3.

5.5.7 Therefore, subject to appropriate conditions, the site is likely to be able to satisfy the relevant elements of Core Policy 3, Policy EQ4 and EQ11.

5.6 Highways

5.6.1 The County Highways officer has raised no objections to the proposal as the site is subject to an existing travel plan and there are no highway safety issues. The new car parking arrangements have been revised to provide 72 spaces, in addition to the existing spaces around the site, along with a new cycle shelter. The parking standards in the Appendix 5 of the Core Strategy require 1 space per 20 sq m gross floor space, and this proposal would meet this requirement. There are therefore no highway concerns, subject to appropriate conditions. The proposal is compliant with Policy EV12 of the Core Strategy.

5.7 Neighbour Amenity

5.7.1 Policy EQ9 states that new development "should take into account the amenity of any nearby residents".

5.7.2 There is a neighbouring property to the south of the site which adjoins the southern boundary of the site, which is also under a B1 use.

5.7.3 A letter of concern has been received from a neighbouring property along Swan Lane with regards to noise and disturbance. The proposed extension would bring the business site closer to the residential properties along Swan Lane, however there would still be a separation distance of around 100m. Swan Lane is positioned off the busy A449 and given that B1 office uses are considered to be compatible with residential uses as they can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity, I do not consider that the proposed extension of the business park would cause any material harm on the neighbours amenity. A loss of view is not a material planning consideration.

5.7.4 Subject to a condition for the use to remain as B1 office use, I consider the proposal to be in accordance with policy EQ9 of the Core Strategy.

5.8 Impact on ecology

5.8.1 EQ1 provides that developments should not cause significant harm to habitats of nature conservation, including woodlands and hedgerows, together with species that are protected or under threat. Support will be given to proposals which enhance and increase the number of sites and habitats of nature conservation value, and to meeting the objectives of the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan. These principles are echoed and supported through the Sustainable Developments SPD 2018.

5.8.2 The revised site layout, with the inclusion of the grassed areas [approx 0.29ha] to be planted with wildflower seed mix now results in a minor gain of habitat units and a major gain in hedgerow units. As agreed with the Ecology officer, a monetary contribution is no longer required towards off-site habitat mitigation. Conditions will be attached ensuring the implementation of the landscape scheme along with fencing to protect the existing hedgerows and the wildflower areas.

5.8.3 Subject to appropriate conditions there is no conflict with Policy EQ1.

5.9 Representations

5.9.1 The concerns expressed by the neighbour has been addressed in the main body of the report.

5.9.2 The Parish Council has raised concerns over the further expansion of the site, however, as addressed in the report there are material considerations weighing in favour of the proposal.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 I consider that the proposal for the erection of twelve new log cabins and associated parking area to be contrary to local plan policy OC1. There are however material considerations weighing in favour of the proposal.

6.2 Dunston Business Village represents sustainable development in accordance with the aims of the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF and policy NP1 of the adopted Core Strategy. The extension would be adjacent to a successful business village with 100% occupancy rates and contribute to the demand for office spaces in south Staffordshire. The scheme will add value to the local economy through the provision of permanent well-paid jobs and temporary jobs throughout the construction period.

6.3 The design of the scheme is acceptable, and the log cabins will match the appearance of those already on site. The low ridge height and the landscape buffer will ensure that no significant harm is caused on the character or appearance of the open countryside; and a B1 office use is compatible with residential uses. The amount of parking is satisfactory, and no concerns have been expressed by the Highways Department over safety. The revised site layout plan has resulted in a minor gain of habitat units and a major gain in hedgerow units.

6.4 In light of the above I consider permission should be granted at the site subject to a number of conditions.

7. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE Subject to Conditions

Subject to the following condition(s):

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of 3 years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.
2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings: DBV_RF_003 received 17/11/2021, DBV_RF_001 REV D received, 23/02/2021 and RSE_3020_D4_PG1 Rev V3 received 24/02/2021.
3. Prior to the erection of the log cabins, the existing and finished floor levels for the development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval.
4. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the parking bays have been provided in accordance with submitted Drg. No.DBV-RF-001 Rev. D the subject of this consent and shall thereafter be retained at all times for their designated purpose.
5. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until details of the proposed weatherproof cycle store have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The proposed cycle store shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to the development being first brought into use and shall be retained for the life of the development.
6. The materials to be used on the walls and roof of the log cabins shall match those of the existing buildings unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
7. The premises shall be used for offices and for no other purposes (including any other purpose in Class E of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 [as amended), or any other subsequent equivalent order, no development within the following classes of development shall be carried out to the building(s), the subject of this approval, without the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority:
 - a. Schedule 2, Part 7, Class A - extensions etc of shops or financial or professional premises
 - b. Schedule 2, Part 7, Class E - hardsurfacing
 - c. Schedule 2, Part 20, Class AA - new dwellinghouses on detached buildings in commercial or mixed use
9. The landscape scheme shown on the approved plan(s) RSE_3020_D4_PG1 Rev V3 shall be implemented concurrently with the development and completed within 12 months of the completion of the development. The Local Planning Authority shall be notified when the scheme has been completed. The planting, hard landscaping (and any other introduced features shown on the approved plan(s) shall be retained and maintained for a minimum period of 10 years by the property owner from the notified completion date of the scheme. Any plant failures that occur during the first 5 years of the notified completion date of the scheme shall be replaced with the same species within the next available planting season (after failure).
10. Prior to the occupation of the units. details shall be provided of the location and type of permanent fencing to be installed and maintained to south of proposal to protect tree and hedge lines. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained as such for the lifetime of the development.
11. All site works including removal of rubble piles, must comply with recommendations in 5.4.1 iv, 5.4.2.v, vi, 5.4.4 viii and 5.4.6 xi of the Ecological Impact Appraisal (EclA)(RammSanderson, December 2020)
12. Before the site is brought into use, the rail fence as shown on the Landscape plan RSE_3020_D4_PG1 Rev V3 shall be installed and retained as such for the lifetime of the development

Reasons

1. The reason for the imposition of these time limits is to comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. In order to define the permission and to avoid doubt.
3. To safeguard the amenity of the area in accordance with policy EQ11 of the adopted Core Strategy.
4. In the interest of highway safety
5. In the interest of sustainability

6. To safeguard the amenity of the area in accordance with policy EQ11 of the adopted Core Strategy.
7. To safeguard the amenity of the area in accordance with policy EQ11 of the adopted Core Strategy.
8. To protect the character and appearance of the open countryside in accordance with Policy OC1.
9. To safeguard the amenity of the area in accordance with policy EQ11 of the adopted Core Strategy.
10. To safeguard the amenity of the area in accordance with policy EQ11 of the adopted Core Strategy.
11. To comply with Policy EQ1.
12. To comply with Policy EQ1.

Informative

1. Staffordshire Fire Team

FIRE MAINS, HYDRANTS AND VEHICLE ACCESS

Appropriate supplies of water for fire fighting and vehicle access should be provided at the site, as indicated in Approved Document B Volume 2 requirement B5, section 15 and 16.

I would remind you that the roads and drives upon which appliances would have to travel in order to proceed to within 45 metres of any point within the property, should be capable of withstanding the weight of a Staffordshire firefighting appliance (G.V.W. of 17800 Kg).

AUTOMATIC WATER SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS (SPRINKLERS)

I wish to draw to your attention Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's stance regarding sprinklers.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) would strongly recommend that consideration be given to include the installation of Automatic Water Suppression Systems (AWSS) as part of a total fire protection package to:

- Protect life, in the home, in business or in your care.
- Protect property, heritage, environment and our climate;
- Help promote and sustain business continuity; and
- Permit design freedoms and encourage innovative, inclusive and sustainable architecture.
- Increase fire fighter safety
- The use of AWSS can add significant protection to the structural protection of buildings from damage by fire.

Without this provision, the Fire and Rescue Service may have some difficulty in preventing a complete loss of the building and its contents, should a fire develop

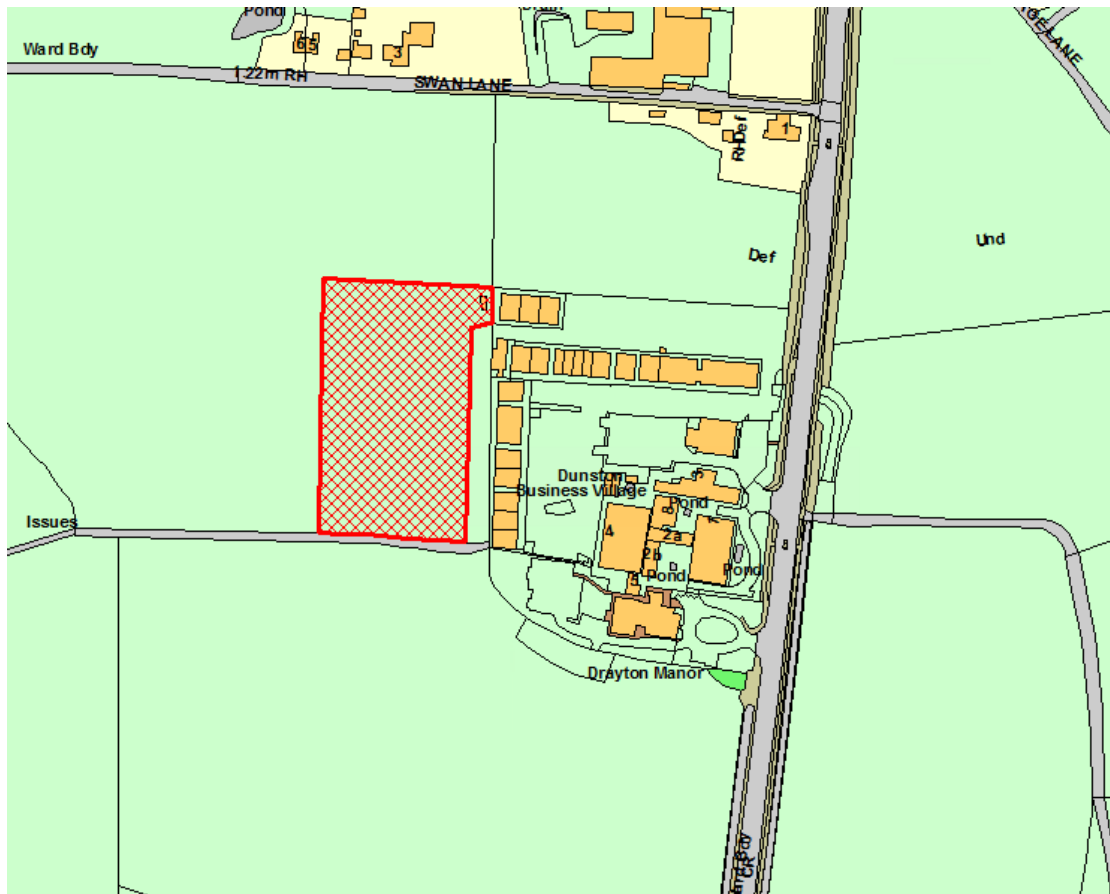
beyond the stage where it cannot be dealt with by employees using first aid fire fighting equipment such as a portable fire extinguisher.

SFRS are fully committed to promoting Fire Protection Systems for both business and domestic premises. Support is offered to assist all in achieving a reduction of loss of life and the impact of fire on the wider community.

Early consultation with the Fire Service when designing buildings which incorporate sprinklers may have a significant impact on reducing financial implications for all stakeholders.

Further information can be found at www.bafsa.org.uk/ the website of the British Automatic Fire Sprinklers Association Ltd.

Proactive Statement - In dealing with the planning application the Local Planning Authority has worked in a positive and proactive manner in accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.



Dunston Business Village, Stafford Road, Penkridge