

Report to Planning Committee

5 July 2021

Agenda Item No. 5

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Report of the Head of Economic Growth and Development

ISSUES PAPER – PLANNING APPLICATION REF. 21/01120/REMM

Reserved matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale, pursuant to 19/00753/OUTMEI) for the construction of an All Through School with MUGA, sports pitches, sports hall, car parking and associated facilities and infrastructure.

Rugeley Power Station, Armitage Road, Armitage, Rugeley

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform Members that a planning application (ref: 21/01120/OUTMEI) has been received with reserved matters details specific to access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the construction of an All Through School (ATS) with Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), sports pitches, sports hall, car parking, with associated infrastructure. The reserved matters application pertains to the outline permission (ref: 19/00753/OUTMEI) granted by the planning committee at the meeting on the 27th July 2021, for the wider redevelopment of the site. The outline permission allowed for the creation of a development platform and the demolition of existing office building and environmental centre, site clearance, remediation and mixed-use development comprising: Up to 2,300 new dwellings (Use Class C3), Up to 1.2 ha of mixed-use (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, C2, C3, D1 and D2), up to 5 Ha of employment (Use Classes B1, B2, B8), 1no. 2 Form Entry Primary School (Use Class D1), Formal and Informal Publicly Accessible Open Space, ground mounted solar panels and Key Infrastructure including new adoptable roads within the site and the provision of a new primary access junction on to the A513 and associated works. (All matters reserved except access).

1.2 The purposes of this 'Issues Paper' is to highlight to Members the fact that this strategic major application has been recently submitted to the Council and explain the process in terms of consultation and publicity. In addition, the paper will highlight the key planning issues, which will need to be considered when the full report comes before the Committee for their determination. This will allow an opportunity for Members to raise key planning issues that either they wish to be expanded upon or added to in the full report at the decision making stage. This report is therefore a precursor to the main report, which will be presented at the end of the planning application process - it is not a report for debate or decision making, but rather an opportunity to raise issues.

2. Site and Location

2.1 The application site, which extends to approximately 7 ha is located centrally within the overall 139 ha Rugeley Power Station B redevelopment site. Generally the site is relatively flat, however the site is the location of four former cooling towers and although these have since been demolished, the land around them is uneven and overgrown due to the leftover material. This is referred to as the moonscape. Some cut and fill will be required to even out this area for future development.

2.2 To the west the site is the, to be retained 400 kV substation, whilst to the south west is the 132KV Sub Station / Transformer, housed within the large scale brick building. The site is bound to the north by the proposed Riverside Park (soon to be subject of a separate reserved matters application, which is likely to be determined under delegated powers, unless called into the planning committee) and the 'Rail Way' – a car free route for cyclists, walkers etc. To the east is a small copse within which sits the model railway. Beyond that will be residential parcels of development that will come forward as part of future phases of development.

2.3 A large manmade pond referred to as the 'kidney ponds' is located to the north east of the Site. These were the former outlet for the cooled water, relating to the former cooling towers which were on site.

2.4 The wider site is located approximately 2km to the east of Rugeley Town Centre and approximately 1.6km west from the centre of Armitage with Handsacre. The site is bound by the River Trent to the north, beyond which lie agricultural fields, the A513 to the south, along with both the Hawkesyard housing estate and various large scale, predominantly storage and distribution buildings, within the Towers Business Park and the A51 to the south west.

2.5 The application site (although not the access road to serve such) is located solely within Armitage with Handsacre Parish and falls wholly within Lichfield District.

2.6 The Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Stafford Brook Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lie approximately 8km to the west of the Site. Slightly further afield is the Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC and SSSI, located approximately 8km to the north west and the West Midlands Mosses SAC and SSSI located approximately 10km to the north. Other SSSI's in proximity to the Site include Blithfield Reservoir, located 4.5km north, which is nationally important for goosander Mergus Merganser, and Gentleshaw Common, located 4.9km south, which is of interest due to the lowland heathland vegetation across this area, and the biodiversity niches it supports.

2.7 There are no built heritage assets within the application site, but there are several scattered across the surrounding rural landscape, to the east of the site, including the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area, the Grade II Listed viaduct over the this canal, the Grade II* Listed Church of St John and the Grade II Listed Spode House and Hawkesyard Priory.

3. Summary of Proposals

3.1 The application was received initially on the 16 June 2021 and registered as valid following receipt of some outstanding information on the 23 June 2021. Appendix 1 describes the site and proposals in more detail. In summary, the application comprises reserved matters details specific to access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the construction of an All Through School (ATS) with Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), sports pitches, sports hall, car parking, with associated infrastructure.

3.2 As advised above, the site falls solely within the administrative boundaries of Lichfield District Council. As with the outline consent however, a collaborative approach with Cannock Chase District Council is required, given the wider site is located within both administrative boundaries. Such an approach will apply to the consideration and determination of this application, which began at pre-application discussion and will continue through to determination and beyond into subsequent reserved matters submissions.

3.3 As required under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017), a Scoping Opinion was undertaken, prior to the submission of the base outline consent for this site, which determined what was to be contained within the submitted Environmental Statement (ES). The ES, which accompanied the outline application, contained reports specific to Socio-Economics, Air Quality, Built Heritage, Ecology, Water Environment, Noise and Vibration, Ground Conditions, Landscape and Visual Impact and Transport and Access.

3.4 This reserved matters application is supported by the following documentation:

- Landscape Management Plan;
- Design Statement;
- All Through School Design Brief;
- Sustainable Drainage Strategy, including Water Quality Assessment;
- Drainage Plans;
- External Lighting/ LUX Plots and CCTV;
- External Sports Pitch Lighting/ LUX Plots;
- Environmental Noise Report;
- Highways Statement;
- School Travel Plan;
- Planning and Sustainability Statement;
- Sustainability Framework Comparison;
- Ecological Mitigation Strategy; and
- Habitat Management Plan.

3.5 A copy of the proposals, including the plans and all associated documents are available on the Council's website by visiting the planning application search page at www.lichfielddc.gov.uk (viewed by entering the application number: 21/01120/REMM).

3.6 Members are invited to raise issues in relation to the current application, which they may feel require further clarification or detail when the application is reported to you in full for determination.

3.7 Members are also invited to discuss the application further with either Mike Brown (Planning Case Officer) or Claire Billings (Planning Development Manager) outside of the Committee meeting, if there are specific issues of detail on which you require further clarification.

4. Consultation and Process

4.1 Following receipt of the reserved matters application, the Council, as Local Planning Authority, is undertaking consultation, including with statutory and non-statutory consultees. This consultation includes the Parish Council within which the site is located and those that neighbour the site, within both Lichfield and Cannock Chase Districts. A notice is to be published in the local press on the 1 July 2021 and 3 site notices displayed adjacent to the site. In addition, individual notification letters, have been sent to properties in the vicinity of the site.

5. Recommendation

5.1 The Planning Committee are recommended to note the item for information and raise any relevant planning issues on which they require further clarification and which are requested to be addressed in the subsequent report to Planning Committee when this application is formally considered.

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF SITE AND PROPOSALS

Site and Location

The application site, which extends to approximately 7 ha is located centrally within the overall 139 ha Rugeley Power Station redevelopment site. Generally the site is relatively flat however the site is the location of four former cooling towers and although these have since been demolished, the land around them is uneven and overgrown due to the leftover material. This is referred to as the moonscape. Some cut and fill will be required to even out this area for future development.

To the west the Site is the, to be retained 400 kV substation, whilst to the south west is the 132KV Sub Station / Transformer, housed within the large scale brick building. The Site is bound to the north by the proposed Riverside Park and the 'Rail Way' – a car free route for cyclists, walkers etc. To the east is a small copse within which sits the model railway. Beyond that will be residential parcels of development that will come forward as part of future phases of development.

Background

This outline permission to develop this site (ref 19/00753/OUTMEI) was granted subject to a Section 106 Agreement dated 7th April 2021. Schedule 5 of the S106 Agreement provides details in respect of the delivery on-site of both a Primary School Option and ATS Option. This includes a planning obligation stating that the ATS should be provided prior to construction of the 400th dwelling. The S106 agreement also includes details relating to the transfer of the ATS site to the County Council as soon as reasonably practical (before completion of 399th dwelling or before 1st September 2024).

The Land Use Parameter Plan, approved under Condition 3 of the outline planning permission, shows two options for development of the education parcel within the Site – either an All Through School and shared playing fields or Primary School Site and playing fields. This flexibility and 'either/or' option was sought given that the delivery of the ATS is subject to external funding arrangements. The approved Building Heights Parameter Plan, detailed that the school should not be higher than three storeys in height or 15m above existing ground levels (+/-2m).

Following the grant of the outline consent, a Wave 14 free school application was made to the Department of Education, with the John Taylor Multi Academy Trust as the sponsor, to create an ATS, from nursery to Post-16, in Rugeley. The Department of Education (DfE) have now confirmed their approval to part-fund the ATS, alongside the Applicant. Staffordshire County Council as Education Authority are supportive of an ATS. The DfE funding is based upon the school being open in September 2023, with occupation based on a single year cohort joining annually.

Proposals

The application comprises reserved matters submissions relating to the erection of an All Through School with associated facilities. The school will have a total Gross External Area of 13,312 sq m. The building will comprise a mixture of two and three storey blocks, with a maximum height of 12.73 metres to the parapet, with the tallest plant and machinery expected to be up to 13.46 metres (subject to further detail to be submitted).

The spine road acts as the primary route within the proposed development connecting directly to the A51 and A513. The spine road is not included within this RMA but full details of such shall follow later in

2021, via a separate reserved matters application and will be delivered ahead of the school's opening in September 2023.

Briefly the scheme proposes:

- A 52-place nursery,
- A 2 Form of Entry Primary School, accommodating a cohort of 472 pupils;
- A 5 Form of Entry Secondary School, accommodating a cohort of 950 pupils;
- Post-16 sixth form provision, accommodating a cohort of 200 pupils;
- Ancillary facilities including all weather sports pitches, MUGA, sports hall, car parking and associated facilities.
- 5.21 hectares of sports facilities, comprising 2.32 hectares of natural grass pitches, 2.69 hectares of artificial / all-weather pitches and 0.2 hectares of MUGA pitches / courts.
- Community access outside of the school hours of operation to the below noted facilities. During term time this will be between 18:00-21:00 Monday-Friday, 08:30-21:00 Saturday and 08:30-16:00 on Sundays. During the school holidays, the Saturday opening times will be applicable Monday to Friday. As required by the S106 Agreement, these times are to be agreed via a Community Use Agreement prior to the occupation of the ATS.
 - Sports Hall;
 - Activity Studio;
 - Three Flood Lit Tennis Courts/MUGAs;
 - Floodlit All Weather Pitches for football & Hockey;
 - Grass Football Pitch (subject to daylight hours and pitch condition); and
 - Grass Rugby Pitch (subject to daylight hours and pitch condition).
- There are a number of play areas to be retained solely for use by the school, including the primary school playground and pitch to the east of the site.
- 110 parking spaces in the primary and secondary areas, alongside 33 spaces in the overspill car parking area. Up to 111 of these spaces within the secondary and overspill parking area can be used for community use; and
- The school has been designed to high environmental and sustainability criteria and will be net zero carbon.

The combined staff requirement for the ATS is 107 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) persons.

Summary of Key Issues to be considered in the Determination of the Application:

- Policy and Principle of Development (largely established by the outline consent, so compliance with this permission and associated legal agreement);
- Highways Issues, including accesses, car parking provision, transport routes and sustainable transport provision;
- Noise, Air and Light Pollution Issues;
- Impact on Amenity of Existing and Future Occupiers;
- Impact on existing landscape features and new landscape and planting;
- Impact on the wider landscape setting when considered against the approved building heights parameters plan;
- Impact upon Heritage Assets;
- Impact of Retained Electricity Substation Infrastructure;
- Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area;
- Education Provision;
- Loss and Provision of Sports Facilities;
- Refuse Collection;

- Urban Design and Wayfinding;
- Pedestrian and Cycle Connectivity;
- Flood Risk and Drainage;
- Contaminated Land,
- Archaeological Impact;
- Sustainable Energy Production;
- HS2;
- Waste Management;
- Protected Species, Ecological and Biodiversity Impacts (compliance with CEMP / HMPs); and
- Impact on the Cannock Chase and other nearby SACs.

Members are invited to comment on the detail of any of the above issues and to identify any matters, which they consider have not been highlighted at this stage.

LOCATION PLAN

21/01120/REMM

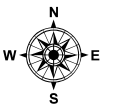
Former Rugeley Power Station
Armitage Road Armitage Rugeley

Scale: 1:7,000

Dated: June 2021

Drawn By:

Drawing No:



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