

Report to Planning Committee

1 July 2019

Agenda Item No.5

Contact Officer: Mike Brown

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Report of the Director of Place and Community

ISSUES PAPER – PLANNING APPLICATION REF. 19/00753/OUTMEI

Outline planning application for the creation of 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).

LOCATION: Rugeley Power Station, Armitage Road, Armitage, Rugeley

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform Members that an outline planning application (ref: 19/00753/OUTMEI) has been received for the creation of 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 a 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, known as the former Rugeley B Power Station, extends to 139 hectares (ha) of which 55ha is located within the boundaries of Cannock Chase District Council and 84ha within Lichfield District Council.

2.2 The 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.

2.3 The site is located within two Parishes, Brereton and Ravenhill in the west and Armitage with Handsacre in the east. The parishes of Colton, Mavesyn Ridware and Rugeley border the site.

2.4 The site was until 2016 used as a coal fired power station, producing electricity for transmission to the National Grid. Much of the physical infrastructure associated with this former use of the site remains; which is largely located within the north western portion of the site, including 4 cooling towers, a chimney stack, plant buildings, electricity substations and interconnecting access tracks. To the centre of the site two electricity substations remain. The 400kv National Grid substation comprises an open air grid of frames, up to 20m in height and transformers, enclosed by a wire fence. The 132kv Western Power Distribution substation is located adjacent. Demolition of much of this infrastructure (excluding the substations) is currently being undertaken following the granting of consent for such.

2.5 To the centre of the site, there is a concentration of green open space, associated with facilities previously provided by the Sports and Social Club, which includes, a clubhouse, a model railway, football pitch, cricket pitch, bowling green, 2 tennis courts and part of the former 18 hole golf course, which extends northwards to form the boundary of the site.

2.6 To the south east of the site there are a series of ash lagoons and the Borrow Pit Lake, which is surrounded by mature trees and shrubs, along with a number of allotments. A freight railway line, previously used to transport coal into the site, intersects the site from south east to northwest. The West Coast Main Line railway runs to the north of the site.

2.7 Throughout the site there a large number of predominantly self-seeded trees, forming linear belts, sited generally around engineered embankments, which were formed as part of the former power station activities. Further structured tree and landscape planting is provided within and to the edge of the former sports and social club and associated golf course area. A Tree Preservation Order area covers these trees along with those located on the site of the former 'A Station', now developed through the Hawkesyard housing estate.

2.8 Part of the site (land around the 400kv substation and existing vehicular access off the A51) is included within the limits of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) Bill 2017 (the HS2 Phase 2a Bill) and therefore is land subject to powers of compulsory acquisition for the purposes of providing a power connection from the substation to the rail line. The site therefore falls within the HS2 Phase 2a safeguarding area, pursuant to the High Speed Two Phase 2a West Midlands to Crewe Safeguarding Directions, September 2017. HS2 now have an alternative preferred location for a power connection and deposited Additional Provision 2 before Parliament in February 2019, which seeks to remove the site from the Bill. However, until Royal Assent is granted for Phase 2a in its amended form, the site remains subject to the Safeguarding Directions.

2.9 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.

2.10 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 registered on 7th June 2019. Appendix 1 describes the site and proposals in more detail. In summary, the application seeks outline planning permission for the creation of 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).

3.2 As advised above, the site falls across the administrative boundaries of both Cannock Chase District Council and Lichfield District Council. A collaborative approach to the consideration and determination of this application began at the pre-application discussion stage and will continue through to determination and beyond.

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 this application, which determined what was to be contained within the submitted Environmental Statement (ES). The ES, which accompanies the application, contains 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 The application, in addition to the ES, is supported by an Affordable Housing Statement, Commercial Report, Design and Access Statement, Landscape Design Statement, Mineral Resource Assessment, Planning Statement, Draft Heads of Terms, Waterwork Framework Directive Assessment, Shadow Habitats Regulation Assessment, Statement of Community Involvement and Transport Assessment.

3.5 A copy of the parameters plan and Environmental Statement for the proposal will be available for viewing in the lobby area to the Council Chamber from 5.30pm onwards on the evening of the Committee on the 1 July 2019. In addition, 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).

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.

3.6 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 The applicant has undertaken a pre-application public consultation exercise. A summary of this is provided below:

- Launch of the Community Planning Weekend including a background exhibition and presentation outlining the community engagement process (20 November 2018);
- Pre-application meetings with Cannock Chase District Council and Lichfield District Council, Staffordshire County Council (December 2018 onwards);
- Engagement with local MPs, CEOs, Ward Members and Town and Parish Councillors (December 2018 onwards);
- Informal discussions and workshops with the local community including a workshop at St Joseph's Primary School, The Hart School and Mansefield House Lunch Club (November 2018);
- Community advertising through distribution of flyers, letters and emails, as well as press advertisements and media releases (November 2018 onwards);
- Website to publicise events, give information and enable download of documents, exhibitions and presentations (November 2018 onwards);
- Email address made available for people to submit comments and ask questions (November 2018 onwards);
- Held a Community Planning Weekend (CPW) between 30 November and 4 December 2018, including presentations, exhibitions, walkabouts, dialogue workshops and hands-on planning design groups to consider the issues and create a vision and consensus masterplan for the Power Station site. The CPW team summarised the outcomes of the workshops and discussions and drew up an illustrative vision which was presented back to the community at a Report Back event on 4 December 2018;
- Broadsheet produced summarising the outcomes of the Community Planning Weekend including illustrative masterplan (December 2018);
- Reported the CPW outcomes to local parish councils and students at St Joseph's Primary School and The Hart School (January 2019);
- Held two community forums including background exhibitions on 30 January and 20 March 2019 to present updates on the emerging proposals and to develop design ideas;
- Held a series of update exhibitions which took place on 20, 22 and 23 March 2019 to review the masterplan;
- Newsletter produced summarising the emerging proposals including updated illustrative masterplan (March 2019);
- Comment forms were provided at each event for people to complete in person or return via post or email when convenient; and
- A post-submission exhibition is planned for the early phase of the statutory consultation process.

4.2 Following receipt of the planning application, the Council, as Local Planning Authority, has undertaken extensive consultation, including with statutory and non-statutory consultees. This consultation has included both Parish Councils within which the site is located and those that neighbour the site, within both Lichfield and Cannock Chase Districts. A notice was published in the local press on the 20 June 2019 and 4 site notices have also been displayed adjacent to the site. In addition, approximately 750 individual notification letters, have been sent to properties in the vicinity of the site. Cannock Chase Council have also carried out a consultation exercise in respect of the application submitted to them, consulting amongst others, Rugeley Town Council, Brereton and Ravenhill, Brindley Heath Parish Council and Armitage and Handscare Parish Council.

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, known as the former Rugeley B Power Station, extends to 139 hectares (ha) of which 55ha is located within the boundaries of Cannock Chase District Council and 84ha within Lichfield District Council.

The 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.

Proposals

The application is submitted in outline, with all matters except access reserved. The two vehicular access points, proposed to serve the site, are located to the southern and north eastern edges of the site. The location of the southern access point, off Armitage Road, has previously been agreed under the provisions of planning application 17/00453/FULM, which includes the installation of a roundabout. The northern access point will be via the existing vehicular access off the A51. Two further pedestrian access points are identified on the illustrative masterplan, one to the north of the site over the A51 and another to the western boundary onto the A513.

Briefly the scheme proposes:

- Site clearance, including some demolition;
- Site remediation activities and creation of development platform (likely to comprise removal of subsurface structures, where not undertaken as part of the consented demolition works and contamination sources);
- Up to 2,300 dwellings comprising a mix of market and affordable housing (Use Class C3) at an average density of approximately 45 dwellings per hectare. The maximum building height to be 4 storeys;
- Up to 5 ha of employment land (Use Classes B1, B2, B8);
- Up to 3.2 ha of ground mounted solar panels;
- Up to 1.2 ha of mixed-use development (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, C2, C3, D1 and D2);
- A 2.9ha, 2 form entry primary school;
- Formation a pedestrian and cycle routes, including a principle green route along the location of the current railway sidings;
- Open Space (including a 26ha riverside park), formal areas of play, and associated facilities and amenity space, including, landscaping, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems; and
- Retention of the existing 400kV and 132kV electricity substations.

The exact details of housing mix, affordable housing levels, nature and scale of the commercial buildings, including mixed use centre, and renewable energy provision are proposed to be determined at reserved matters stage. The indicative location of the developable areas are shown on the submitted illustrative masterplan.

Summary of Key Issues to be considered in the determination of the application:

- Policy and Principle of Development (including considering which Council's policies to apply and conformity with the Armitage with Handsacre Neighbourhood Plan);
- Housing Numbers and Mix;
- Affordable Housing;
- Employment land proposals;
- Commercial Sequential Impact;
- Highways Issues, including accesses, car parking provision, transport routes, sustainable transport provision and impact on the surrounding highway network including Strategic Network;
- Noise and Air Pollution Issues;
- Impact on Amenity of Existing and Future Occupiers;
- Impact on existing landscape features (including protected trees) and new landscape and planting;
- Impact on the wider landscape setting;
- Impact upon Heritage Assets including archaeology;
- Impact of Retained Electricity Substation Infrastructure;
- Education Provision;
- Loss and Provision of Sports Facilities;
- Public Open Space;
- Refuse Collection;
- Urban Design and Wayfinding;
- Pedestrian and Cycle Connectivity;
- Flood Risk and Drainage;
- Contaminated Land
- Sustainable Energy Production;
- HS2;
- Waste Management;
- Protected Species, Ecological and Biodiversity Impacts;
- Impact on the Cannock Chase and other nearby SACs; and
- Planning Obligations (including potential viability considerations).

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.

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LOCATION PLAN

19/00753/OUTME1
Rugeley Power Station
Armitage Road
Armitage

Scale:

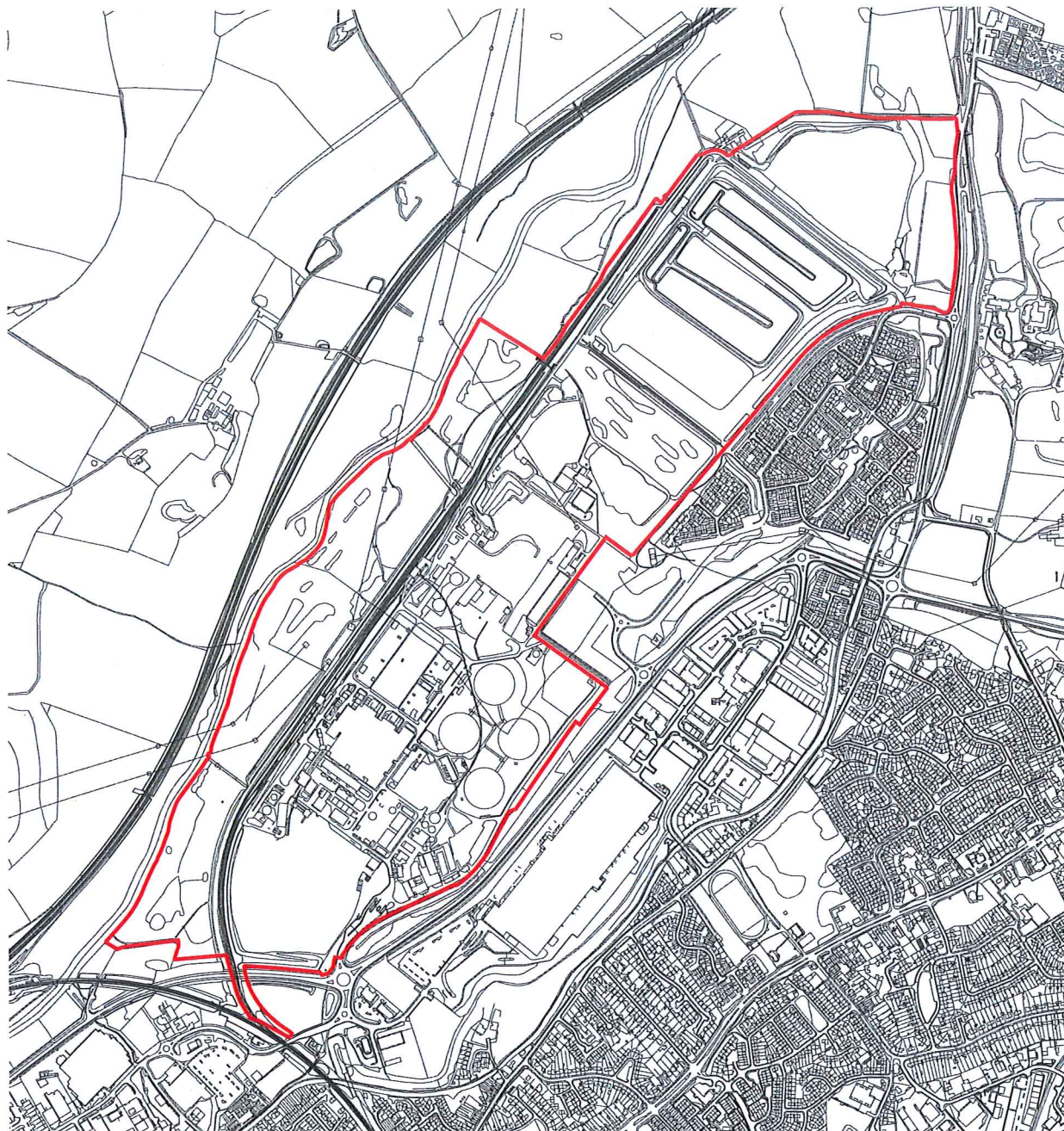
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BLOCK PLAN

19/00753/OUTME1
Rugeley Power Station
Armitage Road
Armitage

Scale: 1:3,000

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