PLANNING APPLICATION TO REMODEL PART OF WHISTON HALL GOLF COURSE

PLANNING STATEMENT

WHISTON HALL HOTEL & GOLF CLUB, BLACK LANE, WHISTON, STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST10 2HZ

ON BEHALF OF WHISTONHALL GOLF CLUB LTD

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

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PLANNING DESIGN ENVIRONMENT ECONOMICS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement supports and accompanies the full planning application submitted by Pegasus Group on behalf of Whistonhall Golf Club Ltd for the re-modelling of Whiston Hall Golf Course.

1.2 The Golf Club at the site is a former member only club, which has seen a significant reduction in membership and participation and is now a pay and play course open to all members of the public. The current course layout and topography in the northern half suffers from poor drainage, and as a consequence, the course is expensive to manage and maintain.

2. STRATEGIC AIMS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Whiston Hall Golf Club has been financially struggling for a number of years to remain open. The Club House is a fine Victorian building which benefits from being located on the brow of a hill overlooking the surrounding Churnet Valley. Currently the site is not maximising its full potential as a golf and events destination in such a superb location, in an area where Staffordshire Moorlands District Council want to increase opportunities for tourism through the Churnet Valley Masterplan (2014).

2.2 In order to establish the course as a known destination for tourism golf and increase membership and general participation, the current course needs investment to improve the site drainage and accessibility of tees. The quality of the fairways, greens, and the challenge of the course profile and landscaping needs significant improvement to attract both tourism golfers and more members from the local area in Staffordshire. Accordingly, the applicant has employed the services of Tyger Green Design Ltd, who are specialist landscape architects for new and improved golf courses.

2.3 The proposed development has minimised the amount of material required to remodel and regrade part of the course, whilst half the course will remain open during the temporary period which inert engineering material would be imported into the site. This application consists of engineering works to improve a golf course. The importation of inert engineering materials to remodel the golf course is only temporary. The applicant would welcome the use of strict planning conditions tying the development proposal to the submitted phasing plan and phasing methodology document.

2.4 The strategic aim of the proposed development is to create an improved golf course destination, and to reinvest in Whiston Hall to create a high-class golf resort and hotel and wedding venue which will increase visitor numbers and local employment required for the running of the hotel and course.

3. FORMAT OF THE APPLICATION

3.1 The planning application comprises of the following documents:

Table 2.1 – Content of the Full Planning Application.

Document Type	Reference (where applicable)	Description
Application forms and ownership certificate	PP-07810777	Completed application forms and ownership certificate submitted via the planning portal.
Covering letter		Letter explaining the reasons for making the planning application, and summarising all of the supporting information which has been submitted.
Planning Supporting Statement	P18-0704.001a	Statement setting out what development is being applied for and an assessment of the proposed development against the relevant local and national planning policy.
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	P18-0704.002	Report assessing the impacts the proposed development would have on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape.

Heritage Desk-Based Assessment	P18-0704.RGO	Report assessing the impacts the development would have on the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets.
Ecological Impact Assessment	201190	Report assessing the level of impact the proposed development would have on ecology and biodiversity. Recommending mitigation measure to protect biodiversity.
Arboricultural Planning Statement	Version A	Report which surveys trees on site and makes recommendations to protect the trees to be retained by the proposed scheme.
Flood Risk Assessment & Surface Water Drainage Strategy	881734-R1(01)-FRA	Report assessing the impacts the proposed development would have on flood risk and surface water drainage.
Highways Statement	41858/5503	Report assessing the impacts the proposed temporary access and temporary construction traffic would have on highway safety.

Noise Impact Assessment	41858/3001	Report which models the impacts of noise from the temporary construction period, and the level of impact the construction noise would have on the nearest residential receptors.
Air Quality Assessment	443177/DAQMP/01	Report which assess the impacts the development could have on dust pollution, recommending best practice mitigation measures to ensure that dust transmission from the site is well managed.
Justification Report	WIS1JR01	Report by an expert Golf Course Landscape Architect, assessing both the golfing reasons and key planning policy reasons to justify the need for the proposed development.
Phasing Methodology	WIS1ME01	Method statement which sets out the chronology of how the temporary works would be managed and completed across five phases. The methodology sets out timings and details of the plant and machinery which will be

		used to complete the development works. This methodology must be read in conjunction with the phasing plan (drawing no. WIS1TW01

Table 2.2 – List of Drawings submitted with the planning application

Drawing Title	Drawing Reference Number
Site Location Plan	WIS1LP01
Existing Site Survey	WIS1SU01
Masterplan Proposal	WIS1MP01
Outline Planting Plan	WIS1PP01
Outline Drainage and Irrigation Plan	WIS1DR01
Sections Plan	WIS1SE01
Phasing and Temporary Works Plan	WIS1TW01
Irrigation Pump House Elevations and Floor Plan	WIS1PD01

Format of this Statement

3.1 The statement sets out the details of the proposed development and assesses the application against current and emerging local and national planning policy.

3.2 Section 2 of this statement describes the proposed application site, Section 3 sets out the planning history for the site, Section 4 describes the proposed development, Section 5 explains the need for the development, Section 6

provides an assessment of the proposal against local and national planning policy and Section 7 draws a summary and conclusion of the findings from the statement.

4. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

4.1 Whiston Hall Hotel & Golf Club is located on the eastern edge of Whiston Village. The A52 runs along the northern boundary of the site, with residential development to the west, and the remainder of the site is bounded by open agricultural land.



Satellite image of the area surrounding the site with the approximate location of the area of the course to be remodelled highlighted within the indicative red line boundary.

Site Allocations and Constraints

4.2 The site is unallocated on the Policies map for The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Local Plan 2010-2026.

4.3 The site is within a Mineral Safeguarding Areas (All minerals except coal & fireclays), and Mineral Safeguarding Areas (Surface coal & associated fireclays) on the Policies map for The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Minerals Local Plan 2015-2030.

4.4 There is a Grade II Listed Milepost at SK 041 474 located on the A52, adjacent to the site. There are no other listed buildings located within or immediately adjacent to the site boundary. Given the relatively close proximity of other grade II listed buildings within the village of Whiston to the application site, a Heritage Statement has been provided with the application which fully assesses the special significance of nearby heritage assets, as well as the level of impact the proposed development would have on their settings. The Heritage Statement also assesses the potential impact the proposed scheme would have on non-designated heritage assets.

4.5 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 as identified on flood risk maps by the Environment Agency. The site is not at risk from flooding from fluvial water sources. There are pockets within the northern half of the golf course site which suffer from poor surface water drainage, as shown in the surface water flood risk map extract below. A Flood Risk Assessment by RSK has been prepared and submitted with this planning application to demonstrate that the development will improve surface water drainage management on the site, and that the proposed development will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.



Surface water flood risk map extract

5. PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 The planning history for the site area is set out in Table 4.1 below.

Application Ref:	Applicant	Description of Development	Decision	Date of Decision
CON/2017/0011	Rob Duncan Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy	Confirmation for requirement of EIA	EIA Required ES Required	06/04/2017
CON/2017/0015	Ms Julie Castree-Denton Pegasus Group	Screening Opinion	Invalid application – no decision	N/A
SMD/2012/0450	Mr Warren Doyle Whiston Hall Golf Club	Proposed rear extension to Club House forming gym, swimming pool, fitness rooms and changing areas incorporating replacement store rooms	Refused	02/10/2012
SMD/2011/0479	Louise Staley	N/A	Invalid application – no decision	N/A
SMD/2007/0822	Mr & Mrs Cliff	Conversion of existing outbuildings to form 12 bedroom units	Approved	25/07/2007

SMD/2007/0819	Leasotel Ltd	Conversion and extension of existing storage buildings to form additional 36 bedroom units	Approved	27/07/2007
SMD/2006/0936	Leasotel Limited	N/A	Application withdrawn	26/10/2007
SMD/2006/0254	Mr & Mrs Cliff	Change of use of outbuildings to 9 No. dwellings	Refused Appeal dismissed	08/08/2006 14/08/2007
SMD/2003/0314	Whiston Hall Golf Club	Conversion of redundant outbuildings to 9 dwellings	Refused	07/10/2003
SMD/2002/0345	Mr & Mrs Cliff	Conversion of storage buildings to form12 bedroom units	Approved	07/05/2002
SMD/2000/1188	Mr & Mrs Cliff	Change of use/conversion and extension of storage building to form overnight accommodation	Approved	18/12/2000
SMD/1998/0671	Louise Wainscott	Whiston Hall Golf Club Black Lane Whiston	Approved	23/07/1998

		Kingsley - change of use/conversion of barns to form holiday accommodation (revised submission)		
SMD/1998/0163	Miss L Wainscott	Whiston Hall Golf Club Whiston nr Cheadle Kingsley - renewal of permission sm93-0702 for conversion of redundant buildings to 11 residential units	Application withdrawn	09/07/2001
SMD/1985/0340	Mr T Cooper	Proposed trolley shed	Approved	11/10/1985

6. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.1 This application seeks to remodel the existing golf course to improve on-site water management, accessibility and player safety through the importation of engineering materials to regrade and reprofile part of the existing golf course, with the construction of a new attenuation pond and proposed landscaping and tree planting. The course suffers from poor layout and drainage and is expensive to manage and maintain. The proposed development also includes the erection of a small pump house building, which will be faced in stone and slate, to operate the drainage irrigation of the remodelled course. The pump house building will be located in the eastern part of the red line site area to the north of the irrigation pond, a number of new trees will be planted around the pump house to contain its setting.

6.2 It is therefore proposed to improve the playing facilities through the importation of inert engineering materials (i.e. materials that are neither chemically nor biologically reactive and will not decompose) to provide an improved accessibility and course layout across the northern half of the site (the back 9 holes). Raising of levels would be achieved through the importation of circa 100,000 m^3 of material and improvements to the playing environment (removal of Leylandii trees and the establishment of moorland habitats). This would also add the benefit of improving drainage across the north of the site and allowing play to be undertaken throughout the year. It is understood that an added benefit of the proposals would be improved access to tees for less mobile golfers.

6.3 To access the site during the temporary working period, a temporary access will be taken from the A52, on the northern boundary of the site. The application is accompanied by a Highways Statement which demonstrates that the temporary access will achieve the required visibility splays for vehicles exiting the site and will not compromise highway safety.

6.4 The proposed engineering works will be controlled in five phases to minimise impacts of the proposed development works on the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape and residential amenity, in terms of air quality and noise impacts. Each working area will be contained by top soil bunds, which will be seeded to officer a visual and noise buffer to the working area. The controlled phasing will ensure that the whole red line area is not being worked at the same time, thus keeping noise and air quality impacts managed. The proposed

application is supported by a Landscape and visual Impact Assessment, an Air Quality Assessment and a Noise Impact Assessment.

6.5 Details of the proposed phasing can be viewed on the phasing plan drawing (Ref - WIS1TW01) and the phasing methodology (Ref - WIS1ME01). The detail included within these documents and the supporting reports of this application demonstrates that this scheme has been carefully considered to use the minimum amount of engineering material required to remodel the golf course and minimise the impacts of the temporary working period.

7. NEED FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Green Tyger Design have produced a Justification Report for the proposed development works, which has been submitted with the application. This document highlights, in detail, the golfing case for the proposed improvement and remodelling of the course.

7.2 Whiston Hall Golf Club opened in 1972 and it is understood that the existing course was designed and constructed by the landowner at the time the course was first opened, with no expert golf course architect involved in the design and construction of the course. Parts of the existing course are too steep for accessibility and ease of play, some areas don't drain well, and the landscaping which was implemented consisted of a significant amount of Leylandii planting that is alien to the landscape character of the Staffordshire Moorlands. The current playing quality of the golf course is very poor, and due to the current design and gradient of the course, the grounds management is intensive and expensive, which is why the course has been left to fall into its current poor quality state. The current situation has resulted in Whiston Hall Golf Club struggling as a business, and without improvements being made to the quality of the course, it is likely to close and be lost as a leisure facility. Therefore, it is evidently clear that there are economic, social and environmental reasons for carrying out remodelling work to the northern half of the course, to save Whiston Hall Golf Club and the future potential of this site holistically to make a contribution towards leisure and tourism within the Churnet Valley, in accordance with the strategic aims of the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD.

7.3 Fundamentally, the proposed remodelling works are required to improve the drainage of the northern half of the course, which has suffered from waterlogging. The waterlogging stops play and also damages the quality of the fairways, resulting in rutting damage, as highlighted on photographs within the Justification Report. If the drainage of the site and the course irrigation is managed through an improved course design and drainage layout to the northern half of the course, there would be significant knock-on effects for the improvement and management of the course, in terms of playing quality, surface water drainage management, the creation of ponds would create net gain opportunities for biodiversity, and the potential to replace Leylandii trees with

native species planting would significantly improve the visual relationship the golf course has with the surrounding landscape character of the area.

7.4 The current layout of the golf course includes holes which cross over, in terms of tee and fairway locations, and gradients which create blind shots. Therefore, the remodelled golf course and re-arranged course layout within the northern half of the course will make amendments to avoid the current layout problems and will improve player safety accordingly.

7.5 The remodelling works are also required to improve accessibility around the northern half of the golf course, which is currently difficult for elderly/disabled golfers to negotiate with steep tees and fairways.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regs) set out those forms of development which should be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

8.2 Pegasus Group submitted a request for the Screening Opinion of the County Planning in respect of a much larger scheme in May 2017. The Screening Opinion of the County Planning Authority issued on the 27th June 2017, concluded that the proposed development is not EIA development and need not be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

8.3 It is, however, acknowledged that the previous Screening Opinion was provided in respect of a materially different, and significantly larger, scheme. Neither the applicant nor the County Planning Authority are able to rely on the previous, negative, Screening Opinion and the County Planning Authority must again Screen the development proposed prior to the determination of the Planning Application. This section of the Planning Statement addresses the application of the EIA Regs to the proposed development.

8.4 The application site extends to some 8.8 hectares and forms part of a much larger Hotel, wedding venue and golf course extending to approximately 35.5 hectares.

8.5 The exact details of the proposed development (including phased working and restoration) are set out within the phasing plan drawing (Ref - WIS1TW01) and the phasing methodology (Ref - WIS1ME01). In summary, the proposed development comprises the re-modelling of part of the golf course to provide a more accessible, safer, more manageable and more enjoyable golf course.

8.6 The application site currently operates as a golf course. The golf course would remain open during construction and would continue to operate as a golf course following the completion of construction. It is therefore appropriate, in the first instance, to consider the requirements of the EIA Regulations in relation to the re-modelling of the existing golf course.

8.7 Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations sets out these forms of development for which EIA is mandatory. All planning applications for Schedule 1 development must be

accompanied by an Environmental Statement. The proposed development does not fall within any of the descriptions of development set out in Schedule 1 and cannot, therefore, comprise Schedule 1 development.

8.8 Schedule 2 identifies those forms of development for which EIA may be required and establishes thresholds and criteria above which development is considered to be 'Schedule 2' development and must be screened to determine the need for EIA. It should be noted that Schedule 2 development need not require EIA. The key determinant of the need for EIA of Schedule 2 development is the likelihood of significant environmental effects.

8.9 Part 12(f) of column 1 of Schedule 2 identifies Golf Courses and associated developments. The applicable thresholds and criteria established in column 2 identifies that golf courses etc. are Schedule 2 development if they exceed 1 hectare.

8.10 Additional guidance is provided in the online National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) which provides indicative screening thresholds to aid screening. With regards to golf courses the indicative threshold set out is the provision of a new golf course. As the application site is an existing golf course, this indicative threshold is not exceeded, and it is unlikely that the proposed development would require EIA. Furthermore, this application is accompanied by a number of technical assessments which demonstrate that the proposed development would not give rise to significant environmental effects.

8.11 On that basis, it is considered that the proposed development does not comprise EIA development.

8.12 Nevertheless, best practice in EIA recommends avoiding a narrow scope of interpretation of the Regulations. Part 11(b) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations relates to waste disposal installations. The thresholds and criteria established by Schedule 2 identify disposal by incineration; or development which exceeds 0.5ha or is within 100m of controlled waters, as falling within Schedule 2.

8.13 It should be noted that the development proposed in this application does not include the disposal of waste materials. The application proposes undertaking engineering works to improve the golf course. The materials to be used to complete construction are likely to comprise recovered inert materials and soils. Nevertheless, the indicative screening tables provided by the NPPG identifies

installations for the deposit, recovery and/or disposal as being caught by provisions of 11(b). The table goes on to state that installations seeking only to accept inert wastes are unlikely to require EIA.

8.14 It is therefore our contention that, even when based upon a wide interpretation of the EIA Regulations, the proposed development does not comprise EIA development. This position is further reinforced when considered alongside the adoption in 2017 of a negative screening opinion for a much larger development at the same site.

9. ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING POLICY

9.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not change the statutory status of the development plan as a starting point for decision making but states the importance of the existence of an up-to-date development plan.

9.2 Relevant local and national planning policy has been set out in verbatim within Appendix 1 of this Statement. The follow sections contain a description of the relevant local and national policy, with an assessment.

Local Planning Policy

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2014)

9.3 The Staffordshire Moorland Core Strategy (2014) contains a number of Spatial Objectives which set the main overarching objectives of the development plan document. Spatial Objectives 7 and 9 are relevant to the proposed development.

9.4 Spatial Objective 7 aims to *"to protect, provide and enhance the tourism, cultural, sport and recreation and leisure opportunities for the District's residents and visitors."*

9.5 Spatial Objective 9 aims to *"conserve and improve the character and distinctiveness of the countryside and its landscape, heritage, biodiversity and geological resources."*

9.6 Policy SS1 is an overarching policy which seeks to ensure that all forms of development contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands.

9.7 Policy SS1a surrounds the presumption in favour of sustainable development and is an overarching policy which ensures that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

9.8 Policy SD1 relates to the sustainable use of resources. Part 6 of the policy states that "*the Council will encourage developers to investigate the potential for re-using construction or construction waste materials, especially those sourced locally.*"

9.9 Policy SD4 relates to pollution, water quality management and flood risk. The policy states that "*the Council will protect people and the environment from unsafe, unhealthy and polluted environments by ensuring proposals avoid potential adverse effects; and only permitting proposals that are deemed (individually or cumulatively) to result in pollution (including air/ water/ noise/ vibration/ light/ ground contamination) if after mitigation, potential adverse effects are deemed acceptable. This may be achieved by the imposition of planning conditions or through a planning obligation*."

9.10 Policy DC1 – design considerations seek to ensure that all development is well designed and reinforces the local character and distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area.

9.11 Policy DC2 – the Historic Environment, seeks to ensure that all development proposals with the potential to affect the historic environment will either preserve or where possible enhance the character, appearance and setting of all heritage assets. The policy takes account of the desirability to maintain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and seeks to ensure that development proposals will contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.

9.12 Policy DC3 seeks to protect and enhance landscape and settlement setting quality. Part 5 of the policy states that the Council will support "*opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape*."

9.13 Policy C2 – Sport, Recreation and Open Space states that "*the Council will promote the provision of high quality recreational open space by implementing and supporting schemes that will protect, provide and improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, indoor and outdoor sports and children's play facilities throughout the district."*

9.14 Policy C3 – Green Infrastructure states that the "*Council will, through partnership working with local communities, organisations, landowners and developers, develop an integrated network of high quality and multi-functional green*

infrastructure." This includes consideration of enhancements to existing sport and tourism sites.

9.15 Policy R1 deals with rural diversification. The site is located within the countryside, however is not located within the Green Belt. As such, there is the requirement for the proposal to enhance the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promote sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitate economic activity, meet a rural community need and sustain the historic environment.

9.16 Policy NE1 seeks to protect biodiversity and geological resources and ensures that they are conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development. It is highly likely that through the proposal, biodiversity on the site will improve.

9.17 Policy T1 – Development and Sustainable Transport, seeks to ensure that "*all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development*."

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Submission Version (2018)

9.18 The Council submitted the Local Plan for examination on the 29th June 2018. Hearings were held 9th-12th October 16th-19th October, and 23rd October 2018. The latest position on the emerging Local Plan is that a consultation on the main modifications will take place in September 2019 for a period of six weeks. The following emerging policies from the submission version of the emerging plan are considered to be of relevance to the proposed development. These emerging policies can only be afforded limited weight where there are no unresolved objections and the policy is consistent with national policy within the NPPF.

9.19 Policy SS1 sets out development principles for the District and expects development and use of land to contribute positively to social, economic and environmental impacts.

9.20 Policy 1a reiterates the presumption in favour of sustainable development from the NPPF.

9.21 Policy SS9 sets out the strategy for smaller villages of which Whiston is one. Only appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland shall be provided. Whiston

Hall Hotel & Golf Club provides a golf leisure facility on the outskirts of the village to both members and non-members.

9.22 Policy SS10 outlines the strategy for other rural areas which comprises the countryside and green belt outside of the development boundaries of towns and larger villages and the open countryside surrounding the smaller villages.

9.23 Policy SS11 sets out the future aims and strategy for development within the Churnet Valley Masterplan area, which the Whiston Hall Golf Course is situated within. The emerging policy aims to add further weight to encourage tourism uses within the Churnet Valley, whilst protecting the landscape value, heritage assets and creating opportunities for the enhancement of biodiversity.

9.24 Policy SD1 encourages developers to investigate the potential for re-using construction waste materials, especially where these are sourced locally, in development schemes.

9.25 Policy SD4 sets out the measures to prevent pollution and protect water quality. The policy states that adverse effects of development will be avoiding and that impacts on air, water, noise, vibration light and ground contamination will be considered so that any impacts are acceptable or can be controlled appropriately through the imposition of planning conditions or through a planning obligation.

9.26 Policy SD5 considers flood risk and states that all applicable developments should incorporate SuDS to reduce the risk of flooding from surface water runoff and contribute to on-site flood alleviation.

9.27 Policy E4 – Tourism and Cultural Development, seeks to support and promote tourism development in areas identified as having the potential to support new tourism, including sites within the Churnet Valley Masterplan Area.

9.28 Policy DC2 – The Historic Environment, states that the Council will conserve and where possible enhance the character and setting of all heritage assets, in a manner appropriate to their significance.

9.29 Policy DC3 – Landscape and Settlement Setting, states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

9.30 Policy C2 – Sport, Recreation and Open Space, promotes the provision of high quality recreational open space, including outdoor sport sites to improve the quality and accessibility of sites.

9.31 Policy NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Resources aims to protect and enhance designated habitat areas, protected species and designated sites of wildlife importance including those of local importance as well as national importance. The policy also states that where possible, the Council will seek to deliver net gains in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development.

9.32 Policy NE2 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows, states that there will be a requirement for existing woodlands, healthy trees and hedgerows to be retained and integrated within a proposed development unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh their loss.

9.33 Policy T1 – Development and Sustainable Transport, seeks to ensure that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.

<u>Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Local Plan 2010-2026 (2013)</u>

9.34 Policy 1.2 aims to make better use of waste associated with non-waste related development. The use of non-harmful, non-hazardous waste to re-landscape the existing golf club would be a beneficial use of the inert waste material.

9.35 Policy 1.3 states that landfill of inert waste to existing quarry sites will be favoured over new landfill or landraise sites.

9.36 Policy 1.4 deals with the use of inert waste for landscaping and engineering purposes. The policy sets out six tests which must be met for development proposals for using inert waste material for landscaping or engineering purposes to be justified, as set out below:

i. *It can demonstrate that the nature and extent of landscaping and screening is reasonable and necessary;*

ii. *The amount of waste proposed to be deposited is the minimum necessary for the intended / agreed purpose;*

iii. *It will not undermine the restoration of quarries that require the inert materials for restoration purposes;*

iv. *It can demonstrate that flood risk will not be increased, and surface run-off will be managed safely;*

v. *It would not raise the level of the land to an unacceptable degree such that it would create an adverse visual impact on the landscape and/or reduce openness of the Green Belt;*

vi. *The proposals are comprehensive, detailed, practicable and achievable within the proposed timescales.*

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019)

9.37 The NPPF was originally published in March 2012, with updated versions being published in July 2018 and February 2019. The NPPF (2019) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied:

The following chapters of the NPPF are considered to be relevant to the proposed development:

- Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development;
- Chapter 4 – Decision-making;
- Chapter 6 – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy;
- Chapter 11 – Making Effective Use of Lane
- Chapter 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places;
- Chapter 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change;
- Chapter 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment;
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

9.38 The NPPG is an online Government website which provides further guidance on how policies within the NPPF should be interpreted and implemented. The NPPG contains a section on Waste development. The Waste development section contains advice on when unallocated sites can be considered. The advice states that *"there may be significant changes in, for example, technological impact and land ownership that occur over a short period of time and provide opportunities that were not anticipated."*

"If the proposal is consistent with an up to date Local Plan, there is no need to demonstrate 'need'. Where monitoring indicates that a persistent, and significant gap, exists between what has been planned for and what is occurring in reality, the waste planning authority may consider addressing this through review of the Local Plan." Paragraph: 046 Reference ID: 28-046-20141016.

10. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

10.1 The following section of this report assesses the development proposals against the identified relevant local and national planning policy.

The Principal of the Development

10.2 The proposed site area is located in open countryside beyond the development limits of Whiston village and the land is used as a golf course (D2 Leisure).

10.3 It is considered that the key policy controlling the principal of the proposed development is Policy 1.4 of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Local Plan (2013), as part of the development proposals includes the importation of inert engineering material for landscaping and engineering purposes. Policy 1.4 contains six tests, which are set out below

It can demonstrate that the nature and extent of landscaping and screening is reasonable and necessary

10.4 The Justification Report submitted with the application sets out why the northern part of Whiston Hall Golf Course within the proposed red line area needs to be remodelled. The nature and extent of the proposed development has been confined to where surface water drainage is a problem on the golf course. The working area has also been focused on part of the golf course with steep fairways and tees to make the golf course more accessible and easier to play for elderly and less mobile golfers. Evidence within the Justification Report, including the geology of the site and the trial pit findings demonstrate that only a thin layer of top soil exists below the turf, and that there are significant deposits of clay underneath the northern part of the golf course which cause the waterlogging. The works are focused on remodelled the topography of the course with the addition of new attenuation and irrigation ponds to significantly improve surface water drainage of this part of the golf course.

The amount of waste proposed to be deposited is the minimum necessary for the intended / agreed purpose

10.5 The site section drawings provided with the application (drawing no. WIS1SE01) demonstrate that the overall levels of the site will not change to any significant degree. These drawings demonstrate that the amount of inert material to be

deposited is the minimum amount required for the intended purpose of improving site surface water drainage, accessibility and a much improved golf course playing surface.

It will not undermine the restoration of quarries that require the inert materials for restoration purposes

10.6 A review of the Staffordshire Waste Local Plan was undertaken in using data from the EAs 2017 Waste Data Interrogator. This shows that in 2016 some 1,652,000 tonnes of construction and demolition waste was managed in the plan area (Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire). The proposal at Whiston includes the use of approximately 100,000m³ of construction and demolition inert wastes, using a conversion factor of 1.6 tonnes per m³, Whiston is likely to require approximately 150,000 to 160,000 tonnes of material, equivalent to the volume of material managed in just over one month for the Stoke-on- Trent and Staffordshire joint plan area.

10.7 An extension to Alrewas Quarry approved in 2017 provided an additional capacity for 2.7 million m³ of inert construction and demolition inert waste. It is anticipated that this extension to Alrewas Quarry would be filled over a 12 year period at a rate of approximately 225,000 m³ per year. The volumes required for the proposed application at Whiston would account for approximately 4% of the total volume of just the Alrewas extension, or 44% of the annual volume of material required to restore the Alrewas extension.

10.8 Based purely upon a numerical assessment of the proposals in this application and the approved quarry extension at Alrewas, the hypothetical diversion of inert material from Alrewas to Whiston would delay the restoration of Alrewas by just over 5 months, an extension of approximately 3.5% over the approved duration for Alrewas.

10.9 When the proposals at Whiston are solely compared to the restoration of the extension at Alrewas, it is evidently clear that the material required for the remodelling works at Whiston only represent a tiny fraction of what volume of inert waste material is required for the backfilling and restoration of all active quarry sites in Staffordshire. Therefore, it is strongly considered that the proposed development at Whiston would not undermine the restoration of other quarry sites within the joint waste plan area.

It can demonstrate that flood risk will not be increased, and surface run-off will be managed safely

10.10 The proposed development includes the creation of additional ponds, including an attenuation pond which will form part of the first phase of the temporary engineering works. The works have been phased so that construction phase surface water will be captured on site. The completed scheme includes several new ponds with a full surface water drainage and irrigation system with the erection of a pump house, which will ensure that surface water drainage retention and management on the site is dramatically improved, as this is one of the principal aims of improving the course and stopping the waterlogging that has been taking place on the northern half of the course.

10.11 The application is also accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment which concludes that the development will not increase the risk of flooding from surface water drainage on site or elsewhere.

It would not raise the level of the land to an unacceptable degree such that it would create an adverse visual impact on the landscape and/or reduce openness of the Green Belt

10.12 In this case, the site is not designated as Green Belt.

10.13 The section plan (drawing no. WIS1SE01) demonstrates that the overall site levels would not be increased to any significant degree. The objective of the works is to actually reduce the overall gradients of the fairways within the eastern part of the proposed red line site area.

10.14 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared and is submitted with the application. This concludes that during the operational stage of the development there would be temporary impacts on the character and appearance of the site and its relationship with the surrounding landscape. However, the introduction of native tree planting and grassland habitats which respond to the golf course design and surrounding landscape character should be considered to be beneficial to the integration of the golf course within its wider setting.

The proposals are comprehensive, detailed, practicable and achievable within the proposed timescales

10.15 A detailed phasing plan (drawing no. WIS1TW01) and phasing methodology (ref: WIS1ME01) have been provided with the application. The phasing plan has divided the proposed site area into five working phases and the accompanying phasing methodology document sets out the proposed timescales and details for what works and equipment will be included within each phase. The careful management of the proposed temporary construction period alleviates the magnitude of material impacts of the development and ensures that appropriate mitigation will be put in place to alleviate the impacts of the temporary construction period. The submission of these concise plans and the phasing methodology document demonstrates that that development has been considered and assessed in detail and is therefore a comprehensive proposal.

10.16 The supporting Highways Statement has considered the phasing and timescales being proposed and has modelled vehicle movements according to the stated timescales within the phasing methodology. The same detailed assessment of the proposed phasing details has taken place within all specialist reports. The design and timescales of the proposed phasing details evolved through assessment stages until the details and timings of the phasing details could be supported and mitigated as appropriately by all specialist consultants considering the development proposals.

10.17 The level of detail included within the proposed phasing design and methodology, the nature of the supporting information and the design evolution of the phasing details between consultants in drawing up this application demonstrates that the proposals are comprehensive, detailed, practical and achievable.

Sustainability

10.18 There are strong environmental, social and economic reasons for submitting this planning application. Whiston Hall is presently a failing business and the current quality of the golf course playing surface is extremely poor. Without investment in improving the standard and quality of the course, the Golf Club and could be lost, which in both social and economic terms, would be of detriment to the local area, as well as the strategic aims of the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD to increase leisure, recreation and tourism uses within the masterplan area.

10.19 The proposed scheme contains a number of long-term benefits for the environment, including biodiversity net gains, improved landscape character with native species trees and improved surface water drainage management for the sustain able re-use of surface water to maintain the playing quality of fairways and putting greens in drier months.

10.20 The proposed development also consists of an appropriate re-use for inert waste material, by using inert soils from construction and demolition sites to remodel the golf course, without compromising the overall supply of inert material required for quarry restorations within Staffordshire.

10.21 It is considered that the objectives of the application to create an improved golf course within the Churnet Valley Masterplan Area would be consistent with Policies SS1 and SD1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands District Core Strategy (2014) as well as emerging policies 1a, SS11 and SD1 of the submission version of the Staffordshire Local Plan (2018).

Highways

10.22 The proposed development includes the creation of a temporary access for the temporary construction period, to allow construction traffic to access the working area without utilising the existing access to the golf club on Black Lane within Whiston village. This would avoid conflict with village traffic and golf club/Whiston Hall users on Black Lane, which is a narrow rural lane.

10.23 The application is supported by a Highways Statement, which includes details of speed surveys taken along the northern boundary of the proposed site area, which considered the position of a proposed temporary access on to the A52. Lateral visibility splays at the proposed junction were calculated using 85th percentile vehicle speed data collected on the A52. A visibility splay of 2.4m x 215m can be achieved to the east of the proposed construction access junction and a visibility splay of 2.4m x 160m can be achieved to the west of the junction, which is in accordance with current junction design standards.

10.24 Trip generation associated with the proposed development during construction has been calculated within the supporting Highways Statement in order to assess the traffic impact of the proposed development on the local highway network. Taking account of the volume of material and an average truck load, on average there will be two laden trucks arriving at the application site to deliver the inert

material and two empty trucks departing from the application site per hour between 7.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. A total of four truck movements per hour on average equates to only one vehicle movement every 15 minutes which will have no material traffic impact on the local highway network.

10.25 It is therefore considered that the supporting information within the Highways Statement demonstrates that the application would accord with Policy T1 of the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014), Policy T1 of the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (submission version 2018) and paragraphs 108 and 109 of the NPPF.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

10.26 The proposed site area is located in the open countryside, approximately 4.9km to the south-west of the Peak District National Park Boundary.

10.27 Given the location of the site in an open rural setting, which was previously regarded as a Special Landscape Area in the superseded 1998 Staffordshire Moorland Local Plan, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been produced and is submitted with the planning application.

10.28 The LVIA concludes that during the construction phase of the development there would be loss of trees and grass to allow for the remodelling of the existing golf course. Proposed tree planting on the periphery of the site and between the land ownership boundary tree planting is proposed in the first available planting season at the start of the construction period. Proposed tree planting and grassland habitats will be planted after each construction phase of the development with native species which will be consistent with surrounding landscape features. The proposed vegetation has been designed to work with the design of the golf course and wider landscape character.

10.29 During the temporary working period there would be changes to the landscape character of the site through the increase in levels of the landform within the site and vegetation loss following the construction stage of the project. The introduction of tree planting which is native will be introduced along with grassland habitats which respond to the golf course design and surrounding landscape character should be considered to be beneficial to the integration of the golf course within its wider setting. Whilst the LVIA acknowledges some moderate adverse impacts to visual effects on the landscape during the temporary

construction period, the proposed planting scheme is considered to provide significant long term benefits in terms of ensuring the successful assimilation of the golf course into the surrounding landscape.

10.30 Given the temporary nature of the proposed development works, the findings of the LVIA and the proposed phasing and planting plans for the development, it is considered that the proposals would comply with Spatial Objective 9 and Policies DC3 and C3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014), policies SS11, DC3, NE2 of the emerging Staffordshire Moorland Local Plan (submission version 2018), as well as paragraph 170 of the NPPF

Ecology

10.31 The application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment which considers the impacts of the proposed development on protected species and the existing habitat of the golf course. The assessment provided includes extensive desk-based and site survey work.

10.32 The Ecological Impact Assessment concludes that the proposed development will contribute to biodiversity net gains through the creation of additional, and enhancement of the current baseline terrestrial habitats, including habitat connectivity across the application site, the identified Zone of Influence within the Ecological Impact Assessment and with the surrounding landscape.

10.33 The Ecoloigical Impact Assessment considers that the golf course remodelling creates the opportunity to enhance the biodiversity of the site through the replacement of large numbers of Leylandii trees with native deciduous species. These deciduous trees will be planted to improve the ecological quality and functionality of the baseline lines of trees and to create greater diversity of habitat mosaics through the positioning of trees in clusters amongst the lines of trees.

10.34 The recommended mitigation measures for the protected species listed within the Ecological Impact Assessment measures are believed to be consistent with requirements for nature conservation within Policy NE1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014), Policies NE1 and NE2 of the emerging Staffordshire Local Plan (submission version 2018) and paragraph 170 of the NPPF.

Air Quality

10.35 The temporary construction period will involve the cut of material for the new ponds, the importation of inert material for remodelling and the movement of HGV's and construction vehicles listed within the phasing methodology document. Given the nature of the development, an Air Quality Assessment has been completed and is submitted in support of this planning application.

10.36 The Air Quality Assessment has been completed in accordance with the Institute of Air Quality Management guidelines and concludes that the risk of dust impacts affecting human health and ecology are considered to be low.

10.37 Section 7 of the Air Quality Management plans sets out recommended control and mitigation measures for ensuring dust transmission from the construction site during the temporary working period is minimised and managed appropriately.

10.38 The Air Quality Management Plan demonstrates that the risk of air pollution from the proposed scheme will be of low risk and can be managed and mitigated appropriately in accordance with Policy SD4 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014), Policy SD4 of the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (submission version 2018) and paragraph 181 of the NPPF.

Noise

10.39 A Noise Impact Assessment has been conducted for the development proposals which involved capturing background noise data on site to develop accurate background noise level data. Noise monitoring equipment was placed in close proximity to the nearest residential receptors to the proposed site area in six locations.

10.40 Based on the results of the environmental sound survey and following British Standard noise impact guidance, the threshold values for potential significant effects have been determined at each of the six noise sensitive residential receptors surrounding the site area. A computer acoustic model has been produced based on details of the proposed construction plant provided by the potential construction operator and reference sound levels contained within the British Standard. The model has been used to calculate the noise levels due to construction activities at each of the assessed residential receptors. The results of the assessment indicate that construction noise levels associated with

construction activities are likely to be below the level that is an indication of a potential significant effect.

10.41 The Noise Impact Assessment also considered the potential noise impact of increased traffic movements on the A52. Based on guidance contained in Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, the assessment concludes that the increase in road traffic noise level due to the proposed construction is likely to be negligible.

10.42 The submitted Noise Impact Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development would not give rise to any potential significant effect as a result of the background noise levels increasing during the temporary construction period. The noise model used within the assessment considered the proposed level of vehicle movements to and from the site and the exact type and nature of construction equipment that will be present on site during the works, as including within the phasing methodology document. Accordingly, the proposed scheme is considered to comply with Policy SD4 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014), Policy SD4 of the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (submission version 2018) and paragraph 180 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage

10.43 Although the proposed site area is not located within an identified area of flood risk, being located within Flood Zone 1, the site area does exceed 1 hectare, and therefore a Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken and is submitted with the application.

10.44 The proposed development will increase capacity on site for the retention of surface water run-off, with the addition of three new ponds. The proposed outline drainage and irrigation plan (drawing no. WIS1DR01) has been designed to drain the playing surface of the golf course more efficiently to remove the current waterlogging problem within the northern half of the course. The additional retention capacity of surface water in the new ponds will be fed into an irrigation pond as the end point. Water from the irrigation pond will be pumped, as and when required, around the golf course to water fairways and putting greens in drier months of the year, so that a mains water supply is not used for water sustainability.

10.45 Due to the increased capacity upon the existing drainage system for the northern half of the course the Flood Risk Assessment concludes that the proposals will

follow best practice regarding site drainage to ensure that any surface water runoff from the development is managed, ensuring flood risk is not increased elsewhere. The proposed development will not alter the impermeable area on site. Surface water from the proposed remodelling will be attenuated and discharged directly to the nearby watercourse as in the current situation, not exceeding the current discharge flow rates. In order to prevent flooding, both on and off the site attenuation and controlled discharge will be utilised to control surface water flows to the current greenfield rate. The outline drainage plan has been designed to store the volume of water associated with a 1 in 100 year rainfall event, providing a betterment over the existing surface water drainage scenario on site. Therefore, it is considered that the development proposals would comply with the objectives of Policy SD4 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014), Policy SD5 of the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (submission version 2018) and paragraph 163 of the NPPF.

Heritage

10.46 There are no designated heritage assets within the proposed site area, however, to fulfil the requirements of the NPPF given the site's proximity to a number of grade II listed buildings, and with the former Cauldon Low Tramway route running through the golf course to the south of the site area, a Heritage Desk-Based Assessment has been provided and is submitted with the application which assesses the potential impacts that the proposed development could have upon the settings of such assets identified within the Heritage Assessment.

10.47 In terms of potential for archaeology on site the assessment concludes that archaeological heritage assets recorded within the vicinity of the site by the Staffordshire HER appear to be mostly related to agriculture and industrial works. As such, the potential for significant remains dating to the post-medieval or modern period within the site is considered to be low.

10.48 The site is not considered to form part of the setting of a Grade II Listed milepost located to west of proposed works. The proposed works will result in a minor change to the backdrop of the milepost when viewed from the roadside, but this will not impact upon the milepost's heritage significance.

10.49 The farmhouse and one of the barns at Locker Farm are Grade II Listed Buildings located to the west of the proposed development site beyond the A52. The site is not considered to contribute towards the heritage significance of the farm

buildings through setting. Some partially screened visibility anticipated between the Listed Buildings and site during the works, but this would not be considered to impact upon their heritage significance.

10.50 The 1804 Cauldon Low Tramway is a non-designated heritage asset which abuts part of the area of proposed works to the south. Despite the close proximity of the tramway to the site, here does not appear to be any historic functional link between the site area and the tramway. The proposed works will not raise ground levels above the remaining tramway earthworks so will not impact upon visibility to the asset. The proposed development will not have any impact upon the heritage significance of the 1804 route of the Cauldon Low Tramway.

10.51 Given the findings of the Heritage Desk-Based Assessment it is concluded that the development proposals would comply with Policy DC2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014), Policy DC2 of the emerging Staffordshire Local Plan (submission version 2018) and paragraphs 189, 196 and 197 of the NPPF.

Arboriculture

10.52 The proposed scheme involves the loss of existing trees, many of which are non-native species or have been identified through the Arboricultural Survey as being unfit for long-term retention. The loss of trees will be mitigated by the quantity and quality of the proposed planting scheme for the remodelled golf course, as indicated within the submitted planting plan (drawing no. WIS1PP01).

10.53 The position of category A trees identified has influenced the design evolution of the proposed scheme, with the attenuation pond moving after survey work was carried out in order to protect the Root Protection Zones of the category A trees identified from the survey work.

10.54 The Arboricultural Planning Statement concludes that providing the tree protection recommendations contained within the report are followed, the proposed development of the site can be successfully achieved without causing undue harm to those trees identified for retention. The findings of the Arboricultural Planning Statement also suggests that the large number of trees being removed will be more than balanced by the proposed replanting scheme, as the current tree stocks are non-native and many are in decline. Whereas the proposed planting scheme uses native species and will bring the site into harmony with the surrounding landscape providing long term improvements to its

overall aesthetic and ecological contribution to the area. Therefore, it is considered that the proposals would comply with Policy DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014), Policy NE2 of the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and paragraph 170 of the NPPF.

11. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

11.1 This planning application seeks permission to re-model part of the existing Whiston Hall golf course using inert engineering materials to re-grade and re-profile the topography of the course and putting green surfaces. The proposed re-modelling works would significantly improve the quality of the golf course by creating improved accessibility and grounds management of fairways and putting greens for a more enjoyable playing experience.

11.2 The improved golf course would help to establish Whiston Hall as a tourism and golf leisure venue which would be consistent with the strategic objectives of the adopted Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD. The long-term strategic aim for the site is to make Whiston Hall an improved venue for weddings, corporate/private function events and golf leisure.

11.3 The creation of new attenuation and irrigation ponds together with the regrading of the surface topography of the course would significantly improve surface water drainage, and surface water attenuation capacity away from the fairways and greens which have suffered from waterlogging. The water gathered within the irrigation pond would be used to water greens and fairways during drier months, which would reduce water consumption from a mains supply in managing the golf course. The proposed attenuation pond forms part of the first phase of proposed works and would be utilised to ensure that even during the temporary construction phase, the development works would not increase the risk of surface water flooding elsewhere.

11.4 The remodelled golf course would create more shallow gradients around tees, fairways and greens which would improve course accessibility for elderly and less mobile golfers.

11.5 The supporting Ecological Impact Assessment concludes that improvements to existing ponds, with the creation of new ponds and new native species tree planting will create net gains for biodiversity and protected species. The net gains should be afforded weight in accordance with part d.) of paragraph 175 of the NPPF.

11.6 The removal of Leylandii trees and the replacement with native species planting will improve the landscape character of the golf course.

11.7 The proposed use of inert materials from the local area to remodel the golf course as part of the engineering works is a sustainable re-use of the inert material. Only the minimum amount of material required for the works would be utilised, and assessment within this Statement demonstrates that the proposed amount of material required to complete the remodelling works would.

11.8 The proposed engineering works are temporary and would be managed carefully through a detailed phasing plan and methodology. The temporary nature of the works, and the controlled phasing would contain the material impacts of the development works, ensuring that the impacts are contained and mitigated ensuring that the temporary construction period does not give rise to any significant or adverse impacts on amenity or landscape quality. The level of detail included in this application through the phasing design and supporting information demonstrates that the development would use the minimal amount of inert material required for the remodelling works, and that the timescales indicated for the temporary working period within the phasing methodology are fully achievable. It is also important to consider that at least 9 holes on the golf course will remain open during the temporary working period, and that the golf course use of the land at Whiston Hall will not cease or change as a result of these proposed remodelling engineering works.

11.9 This Planning Statement has determined that the proposed development would be compliant with the adopted local development plan for Staffordshire Moorlands District and the adopted joint waste plan for Stoke and Staffordshire. The proposals are further supported by policies within the NPPF and the adopted Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD from Staffordshire Moorlands District. When weighed in the planning balance there are a number of significant benefits that the scheme would deliver including leisure improvements to the quality and accessibility of the golf course, biodiversity net gains and landscape improvements with a significant amount of native species tree planting. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development should be granted consent, subject to the use of any planning conditions deemed necessary to make the temporary impacts of the development works acceptable in accordance with the phasing methodology and supporting reports submitted with this application.

APPENDIX 1 – Relevant Local Planning Policy

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2014)

SS1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Core Strategy (and, where relevant, with polices in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

DC1 – Design Considerations

All development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD. In particular, new development should:

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;
- be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance;
- create, where appropriate, attractive, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private) in accordance with policy C3, landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of active design;
- incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the local and global impact of the development, and to adapt to climate change, in accordance with policy SD1;
- protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping;
- promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate, in accordance with policy NE1;

- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;
- ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed;
- ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community.

Policy R1 – Rural Diversification

All development in the rural areas outside the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitates economic activity, meets a rural community need and sustains the historic environment.

Appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest by virtue of the scale, nature and level of activity involved and the type and amount of traffic generated or by other effects such as noise and pollution.

Wherever possible development should be within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion. Where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement.

Within the Green Belt, inappropriate development which is otherwise acceptable within the terms of this policy, will still need to be justified by very special circumstances.

Priority will be given to the re-use of rural buildings for commercial enterprise, including tourism uses, where the location is sustainable, and the proposed use does not harm the building's character and/or the character of its surroundings.

NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Resources

The biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development by:

1. Resisting any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site alone or in combination with other plans or projects unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met.
2. Conserving and enhancing any Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly (either individually or in combination with other developments) have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
3. Conserving, and enhancing regional and locally designated sites. The Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests including ancient woodland, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- there is no appropriate alternative site available; and
- all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and

- appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible
- the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.

4. Supporting opportunities to improve site management and increase public access to wildlife sites including supporting the objectives of the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
5. Ensuring development where appropriate produces a net gain in biodiversity and ensuring that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for.
6. Ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/or re-creation of biodiversity through its proposed nature, scale, location and design. The Staffordshire Moorlands Biodiversity Opportunity Map, in conjunction with the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, will be used to guide biodiversity enhancement measures to be included in development proposals as appropriate to the nature and scale of development proposed and other environmental interest, in particular supporting opportunities to increase grassland and heathland habitats including supporting targets in the UK and Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.
7. Protecting and enhancing habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity as identified in legislation, and recognising and implementing appropriate measures, including landscape-scale conservation management, to take account of the fact that the distribution of habitats and species will be affected by climate change.
8. Recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict.
9. Ensuring the provision and protection of green infrastructure networks in line with Policy C3.

The Council submitted the Local Plan for Staffordshire Moorlands for examination on the 29th June 2018. Hearings were held 9th – 12th October, 16th – 19th October, and 23rd October 2018. A six week consultation on the main modifications is expected to begin in September 2019.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Submission Version (2018)

Policy SS1 - Development Principles

The Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities;
- quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;
- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community;
- increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce;
- a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment;

- development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings;
- development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.
- support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.

All proposals for development will be considered in the context of the District-wide Spatial Strategy and with regard to both its direct and indirect cumulative impact over the longer term. New development will make effective use of land and the best use of previously developed land and buildings.

Policy 1a – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with polices in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Policy SS 9 – Smaller Villages Area Strategy

Whiston is identified as a smaller village.

These settlements shall provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

1. Enhance community vitality by:
    - Protecting and enabling services and facilities which are essential to sustain rural living;
    - Improving connections by public transport and other transport measures to neighbouring larger villages and market towns;
    - Supporting the provision of local, mobile and electronic services which increases the range and quality of services
    - Supporting the implementation of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Local Green Spaces

2. Meet community, social or economic need by:

- Enabling limited new housing development, including small infill schemes in accordance with Policy H1
- Allowing for rural exceptions housing in appropriate locations (in accordance with Policy H1). This will be additional to the housing provision for the rural areas.
- Enabling small-scale new employment development including 'live-work' developments which are for a rural enterprise or an existing authorised business use;
- Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises
- Supporting the development of appropriate ICT and new means of communications to enable homeworking and small businesses reliant on e-technology.

Ensure that new development reflects and enhances each village's special character and heritage by protecting and enhancing the setting and historic character of the village, including heritage assets.

Any development proposal that might have the potential to affect a European or Ramsar Site must itself be subject to appropriate assessment.

Policy SS 10 – Other Rural Areas Strategy

The other rural areas comprise the countryside and the green belt outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages and the open countryside surrounding the smaller villages.

These areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

3. Sustain the rural economy by:

    - Enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified;
    - Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises;
    - Supporting the development of appropriate ICT and new means of communications to enable homeworking and small businesses reliant on e-technology;

4. Enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by:

- Giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape;
- Limiting uses which generate a substantial number of regular trips in areas that are not well served by public transport;
- Ensuring renewable energy schemes are of an appropriate scale, type and location;
- Recognising and conserving the special quality of the landscape in the Peak District National Park (in accordance with Policy DC3);
- Encouraging measures which protect and enhance the biodiversity, geological resources and heritage of the District.

5. Enhance tourist opportunities by:

- Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS12 and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD;
- Allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policy E4);
- Establishing strong linkages between recreational and tourist resources;
- Recognising and developing the close linkages to the Peak District National Park.

Any development proposal that might have the potential to affect a European or Ramsar Site must itself be subject to appropriate assessment.

Policy SS 11 - Churnet Valley Strategy

The Churnet Valley is identified as an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration. The Churnet Valley Masterplan provides a comprehensive framework for development in the Churnet Valley and development should be in accordance with the Masterplan. Within this area particular support will be given to the following forms of development and measures:

- short stay and long stay visitor accommodation;
- the expansion of existing tourist attractions and facilities and the provision of compatible new tourist attractions and facilities;
- measures to enhance, protect and interpret the landscape character and heritage assets of the Churnet Valley;
- measures to remediate and restore derelict land, buildings and features including the appropriate redevelopment of sites;
- actions to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the valley, including the maintenance, buffering and connection of designated sites and actions to mitigate climate change;
- measures that support and integrate the heritage transport infrastructure of the valley, sympathetically with enhancing and developing links to strategic footpaths, cycle and horse riding route;
- measures to improve connectivity and accessibility to and within the Churnet Valley by sustainable transport means having regard to the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Any development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area. Strong sustainable development and environmental management principles should also be demonstrated. The consideration of landscape character will be paramount in all development proposals in order to protect and conserve locally distinctive qualities and sense of place and to maximise opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features.

Complementary and sensitive highway improvements to access routes and/or measures to support other alternative means of access will be required to serve any developments which generate significant additional demand for travel.

Development shall be in accordance with the Churnet Valley Masterplan

Policy SD 1 - Sustainable Use of Resources

The Council will require all development to make sustainable use of resources, and adapt to climate change. This will be achieved by:

1. Having regard to the BMV agricultural classification of the land, with a preference for the use of lower quality over higher quality agricultural land. Development should also aim to minimise soil disturbance and to retain ecological connectivity as far as possible
2. Supporting or promoting proposals that remediate brownfield sites affected by contamination.
3. Re-use of sites affected by mining activity will be supported, provided that any mining legacy is appropriately addressed and it can be demonstrated that the site is safe and stable for the development proposed.
4. Supporting development that is located and designed to minimise energy needs and to take advantage of maximised orientation (subject to design and landscape policies) to achieve energy savings in line with Policy SD3.
5. The Council will require applicants for all major-scale planning applications (10 or more residential units or 1,000+ square metres floor area) to demonstrate that they have considered the energy efficiency, water conservation, sourcing of construction materials, and site orientation aspects of the scheme, and where possible the feasibility of integrating micro-renewables. The degree of detail expected will depend on the scale/complexity of the proposal.
6. The Council will encourage developers to investigate the potential for re-using construction or construction waste materials, especially those sourced locally (which can include those minerals available on site, as appropriate) and integrates where possible on-site waste management facilities.

Policy SD 4 - Pollution and Water Quality

The Council will protect people and the environment from unsafe, unhealthy and polluted environments by ensuring proposals avoid potential adverse effects; and only permitting proposals that are deemed (individually or cumulatively) to result in pollution (including air/ water/ noise/ vibration/ light/ ground contamination) if after mitigation, potential adverse effects are deemed acceptable. This may be achieved by the imposition of planning conditions or through a planning obligation.

When considering planning applications, the Council will require developers to have regard to the actions and objectives of all relevant River Basin Management Plans and related Plans affecting the District in striving to protect and improve the quality and capacity of water bodies in or adjacent to the District. Planning permission shall only be granted where the proposal makes provision for the protection (and where feasible, enhancement) for water quality and waterside habitat, and water resources where applicable.

In the case of development within Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) applicants should demonstrate how site layout has sought to mitigate potential pollution to public water supply. A quantitative and qualitative risk assessment and groundwater protection mitigation strategy may be required subject to consultation with relevant bodies.

Policy SD 5 – Flood Risk

All applicable developments should incorporate sustainable drainage measures (SuDS) to reduce the risk of flooding from surface water runoff and contribute to on-site flood alleviation, as well as contributing to wider Council objectives such as its emerging Green infrastructure Network; to enhancing biodiversity and recreation opportunities; landscape character etc. Developers should undertake early discussions with the Lead

Local Flood Risk Authority to ensure that SuDs can be fully integrated into the final development layout.

Where appropriate suitable measures to deal with surface water arising from development proposals will be required to minimise the impact to and from new development. In such cases the Council will expect applicants to demonstrate how their proposals manage surface water run-off sustainably and, where discharge to public sewer is proposed, clear evidence needs to be demonstrated why alternative options are not available. On greenfield sites developers should aim to not increase surface water runoff rates. On brownfield sites developers should aim to reduce surface water runoff to the greenfield rate wherever practical. Approved development proposals will be expected to be supplemented by appropriate maintenance and management regimes for surface water drainage. On larger sites involving phased development and/or involving multiple landowners the Council will where appropriate encourage applicants to engage in early discussion with utility providers and LLFA for the achievement of coordinated, holistic drainage strategies across the whole site over time.

When considering planning applications, the Council will have regard to all relevant Catchment Flood Management Plans affecting the District. In all cases the Council will work with developers, stakeholders and landowners to encourage and promote implementation of natural flood risk management measures which will contribute towards flood risk reduction as well as achieve wider environmental benefits.

Policy E 4 - Tourism and Cultural Development

New tourism and cultural development which promotes the distinctive character and quality of the District will be supported having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS5 to SS10 and Churnet Valley Strategy Policy SS11.

In addition:

1. New tourist, visitor and cultural accommodation, attractions and facilities should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering either:

A) good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or
B) in locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or
C) in areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.

In exceptional circumstances, developments in other locations may be supported where a rural location can be justified.

2. New accommodation, attractions and facilities should:

A) support the provision and expansion of tourist, visitor and cultural facilities in the rural areas where needs are not met by existing facilities; and
B) all development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance.

Policy DC 2 - The Historic Environment

1. The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.
2. Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.
3. All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.
4. Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.
5. Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Staffordshire County Council.
6. Development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of buildings at risk in line with NPPF policy will be welcomed by the Council.
7. The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and Masterplanning.

Policy DC 3 - Landscape and Settlement Setting

The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

1. Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have an adverse impact of significance to the character of the countryside or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence;
2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence;
3. Supporting development which maintains the biodiversity qualities of any natural or man-made features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds;
4. Supporting identification and implementation of natural flood management measures that will contribute towards delivering a reduction in local and catchment-wide flood risk and impacts of climate change and other multiple benefits;
5. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;
6. Recognising and conserving the special quality of the landscape in the Peak District National Park, and ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the National Park.

Policy C 2 - Sport, Recreation and Open Space

The Council will promote the provision of high quality recreational open space by implementing and supporting schemes that will protect, provide and improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, indoor and outdoor sports and children's play facilities throughout the district, in accordance with the updated Open

Space Study, Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Sports Facility Assessment (2017) and successor documents. Where there is a proven deficiency, qualifying new residential development will be expected to make provision, or a contribution towards provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities which are necessary and reasonably related in form and scale in accordance with the recommendations set out in the above studies. Further guidance will be set out in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD.
In addition:
1) Existing areas of open space, recreational land and buildings including school playing fields and amenity open space will be protected from development, unless:
a) suitable alternative provision is made which is at least as accessible and at least equivalent in terms of size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality and is capable of being maintained adequately through management and maintenance agreements; or
b) an assessment has been undertaken to demonstrate the facility is surplus to requirements; or
c) any loss of provision would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.

2) New sport, recreation and open space facilities should:
a) be located in accessible locations and supported by the local transport infrastructure;
b) protect the residential amenity of the area;
c) be of an appropriate quality, scale and form compatible with the local area, especially if the site is located outside the settlement boundary in the open countryside;
d) not harm interests of acknowledged importance; and
e) be designed so that they are fit for purpose.

3) Applications to improve the use and availability of existing outdoor sports and recreation provision such as the creation of artificial grass pitches and introduction of ancillary facilities such as changing rooms, artificial surfaces or floodlighting will be permitted provided that they:
a) are directly related to the needs of the facility and are proportionate in scale;
b) can be satisfactorily and economically serviced;
c) do not have an unacceptable impact on existing neighbours;
d) meet the above criteria for new sport, recreation and open space facilities; and
e) are acceptable in other respects e.g. design, landscape impact, appropriate in green belt etc

4) The Council will encourage securing community access to schools to maximise the use of existing sports provision outside of the school day and the co-location of community infrastructure wherever possible.
Any of the above development should be consistent with the updated Open Space Study, Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Sports Facilities Assessment and the guidance in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD.

<u>Policy NE 1 - Biodiversity and Geological Resources</u>

The biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development (and having regard to relevant ecological evidence) by:

1. Resisting any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site (or successor designation) alone or in combination with other plans or projects unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions

to protect such sites can be fully met. Any development with a potential to adversely affect a European site/s through construction activities should ensure that Ciria construction guidelines are followed including environmental good practice on control of dust and water pollution.

2. The Council will not normally permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly (either individually or in combination with other developments) have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Where an adverse effect on the site's notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

3. Conserving, and enhancing regional and locally designated sites. The Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests, unless it can be demonstrated that:
a) there is no appropriate alternative site available; and
b) all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and
c) appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible
d) the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.

4. Expecting all development where possible seeks to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable, developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative. Where any mitigation and compensation measures are required, they should be appropriately scheduled and managed according to the nature, size and scale of the development so as to minimise impacts that may disturb protected or important habitats and species.

5. Supporting opportunities to improve site management and increase public access to wildlife sites including supporting the objectives of the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

6. Ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/or re-creation of biodiversity through its proposed nature, scale, location and design. The Staffordshire Moorlands Biodiversity Opportunity Map, in conjunction with the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, will be used to guide biodiversity enhancement measures to be included in development proposals as appropriate to the nature and scale of development proposed and other environmental interest, in particular supporting opportunities to increase grassland and heathland habitats including supporting targets in the UK and Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

7. Protecting and enhancing habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity as identified in legislation, and recognising and implementing appropriate measures, including landscape-scale conservation management, to take account of the fact that the distribution of habitats and species

will be affected by climate change.

8. Recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict.

9. Ensuring the provision and protection of green infrastructure networks in line with Policy C3.

Policy NE 2 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

The Council will protect existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, in particular, ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows from loss or deterioration.
This will be achieved by:

- Requiring that existing woodlands, healthy trees and hedgerows are retained and integrated within a proposed development unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh their loss;
- Requiring new developments to provide tree cover that secures a good level of sustainability through tree retention, planting and soft landscaping, including where possible the on site replacement of any trees that are removed with sufficient tree planting to replace or increase the canopy cover on-site as appropriate. Landscaping schemes will also be required to mitigate against negative landscape impact and complement the design of new development and make provision for future maintenance. Where it is not possible to secure this new or replacement tree planting within the site, the Council will work with applicants to ascertain if a suitable site(s) can be found off-site for replacement planting in the locality;
- Resisting development that would directly or indirectly damage existing ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows.

The Council will refer to its adopted Tree Strategy in the consideration of proposals; and will in general seek to retain as many trees and as much hedgerow on site as possible.

Policy T1 - Development and Sustainable Transport

The Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.

2. Ensuring that major development is located in areas that are accessible by sustainable travel modes or can be made accessible as part of the proposal.

3. Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 8.

4. Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres, and link with or extend identified walking or

cycling routes. In addition applicants should also consider how their schemes can enhance the existing path network in line with the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also give consideration to the protection of non-definitive public footpath routes in addition to definitive routes.

Development which generates significant demand for travel or is likely to have significant transport implications (as identified within a Transport Assessment) will, where appropriate:

- Contribute to improved public transport provision
- Contribute to junction improvements, traffic management and highway infrastructure
- Provide proactive facilities and measures to support sustainable transport modes including on-site features to encourage sustainable travel methods e.g. cycle path links, cycle storage facilities, bus stops etc Provide and actively promote travel plans.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Local Plan 2010-2026 (2013)

Policy 1.2 – Make better use of waste associated with non-waste related development

All major development proposals should:

i. Use /Address waste as a resource;
ii. Minimise waste as far as possible;
iii. Demonstrate the use of sustainable design and construction techniques, i.e: resource-efficiency in terms of sourcing of materials, construction methods, and demolition;
iv. Enable the building to be easily decommissioned or reused for a new purpose; and enable the future recycling of the building fabric to be used for its constituent material;
v. Maximise on-site management of construction, demolition and excavation waste arising during construction;
vi. Make provision for waste collection to facilitate, where practicable, separated waste collection systems; and,
vii. Be supported by a site waste management plan.

Policy 1.3 – Construction, demolition and excavation waste

Recycling of construction, demolition & excavation waste and the diversion of inert waste to quarries requiring backfill for restoration purposes will be favoured over new inert landfill / landraising proposals.

Policy 1.4 – Use of waste for landscaping, screening, engineering purposes or for the improvement of agricultural or forestry land

a) Where inert waste is to be used for the improvement of agricultural or forestry land, or for landscaping, screening or engineering purposes to enable non waste development to proceed, the applicant should demonstrate that the proposal addresses the following:

i. It can demonstrate that the nature and extent of landscaping and screening is reasonable and necessary;
ii. The amount of waste proposed to be deposited is the minimum necessary for the intended / agreed purpose;
iii. It will not undermine the restoration of quarries that require the inert materials for restoration purposes;
iv. It can demonstrate that flood risk will not be increased, and surface run-off will be managed safely;
v. It would not raise the level of the land to an unacceptable degree such that it would create an adverse visual impact on the landscape and/or reduce openness of the Green Belt;
vi. The proposals are comprehensive, detailed, practicable and achievable within the proposed timescales.

b) Where non-inert (organic) waste is to be spread on land for the primary purpose of waste disposal, the proposed development should address the following:
i. The amount of waste proposed is appropriate to the scale of the farm holding and for carrying out the proposed agricultural activities/operations; and
ii. It has a demonstrable benefit for agriculture or nature conservation.
In the case of spreading compost, the material spread must meet the recognised quality standards to no longer be regarded as waste.