

The Borough Council has been consulted by Cheshire East Council on an application for outline planning permission for major residential development.

This is a resubmission of an earlier outline planning application (Cheshire East ref. 13/4081C, NULBC ref. 348/213) which was refused by Cheshire East Council due to the loss of open space.

This 4.61 hectare site is located in the southern part of Alsager within the urban boundary. The current uses on the site are the Cardway Cartons factory, an associated aggregates storage yard and an area of scrubland that is protected as open space within the adopted Congleton Borough Local Plan. Cardway Cartons are due to relocate elsewhere in Cheshire East, leaving this site vacant.

This outline planning application is for the construction of up to 110 residential dwellings. The resubmitted scheme increases the amount of open space proposed to be provided on the site from 0.44 hectares to 0.76 hectares.

For the Borough Council's comments to be taken into account by Cheshire East Council in their decision, they must be received by them by 30th June 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cheshire East Council be advised that the Borough Council has NO OBJECTIONS to the application.

Reason for Recommendation

Your officers consider that the development of 110 dwellings in this location will not have a significant impact on the Borough. It would be in line with the submitted Cheshire East Local Plan and it can be considered against existing local planning policies within the adopted Congleton Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Borough Council when consulted on the previous scheme last year did not raise any objection to that proposal. The inclusion of an additional 0.32 hectares of open space within the resubmitted proposal has no bearing upon the Borough Council's position.

KEY ISSUES

The Borough Council has been consulted by Cheshire East Council on this outline proposal, which would involve the demolition of the existing industrial units on Cardway Business Park and redevelopment of the site to accommodate up to 110 new dwellings. This is a resubmission of an earlier outline planning application which was refused by Cheshire East due to the loss of open space involved. The resubmitted scheme increases the amount of open space proposed to be provided on the site from 0.44 hectares to 0.76 hectares – an increase of 0.32 hectares.

The site falls with the urban boundary of Alsager as defined by the 'settlement zone' on the Congleton Borough Local Plan Proposals Map. This is a location where development is viewed favourably under policies PS3 and PS4 of the Congleton Borough Local Plan. The

same settlement zone boundary for this part of Alsager is proposed to be carried forward in to the Cheshire East Local Plan. Policy PG6 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Document proposes that 1,600 new homes are to be accommodated within Alsager in the period up to 2030.

The Cardway Business Park and the nearby Twyfords site to the north are both proposed to be allocated for the development of 550 new homes under CS12 of the new Local Plan. Most of the Twyfords site already has approval for 335 dwellings under planning application 11/4109C and there is an additional area of land in this northern part that could accommodate any additional capacity from CS12 that is left over should this current planning application be approved.

The Borough Council has submitted representations jointly with Stoke-on-Trent City Council on the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Document and these were presented to Planning Committee on 22nd April 2014. The representations did not object to proposed site allocation CS12, however they did object to the calculation of future windfall development which is likely to drive the housing requirement in the new plan beyond the high growth figure of 29,128 new dwellings. The resulting high growth could undermine regeneration programmes in north Staffordshire and could also see speculative development undermining the site allocations proposed within Cheshire East.

Following the suspension of the Examination for the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, an Objective Assessment of Housing Need has been published by ORS, acting on behalf of Cheshire East Council, on 13th May 2015. This identifies a need for a maximum of 36,000 new dwellings in Cheshire East between 2010 and 2030. The findings of this study are likely to increase the housing requirement identified in the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy when it is republished.

In light of this, your officers believe that the redevelopment of this site, which is in accordance with proposed allocation CS12 for residential use, is preferable to speculative residential development taking place elsewhere in Cheshire East and should therefore be supported.

As was previously indicated an additional consideration for Newcastle-Under-Lyme would be the loss of the businesses in this location which may be providing employment opportunities for local residents within the Borough. Policy E10 of the Congleton Borough Local Plan aims to restrict the redevelopment of existing employment sites to other uses, unless it can be shown that the employment use is no longer suitable or that there would be substantial benefit in permitting alternative uses. Policy EG3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Submission Document reiterates this by stating that existing employment uses are to be protected unless they are no longer suitable or viable and there is no potential for modernisation, alternative use or occupation from other employment industries.

The existing businesses on Cardway Business Park are due to relocate to more suitable premises elsewhere within the next five years. Whilst no new location has been identified within the submitted planning application documents, the Planning Statement does state that this will be a 'more suitable employment site' in Cheshire East. It is therefore not possible at present to determine whether or not the relocation of the existing business on the site would have a detrimental or beneficial impact on Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough. The Borough Council did not raise any objection on "loss of employment" grounds last year and in the absence of any apparent change in circumstances it is difficult to see how it could now reasonably do so.

Material Considerations relevant to this recommendation:-

Congleton Borough Local Plan Review (2005)

Policy PS3: Settlement Hierarchy
Policy PS4: Towns
Policy GR1: New Development
Policy GR6: Amenity and Health
Policy GR9: New Development (Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision)
Policy GR10: New Development (Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision)
Policy GR18: Traffic Generation
Policy GR19: Infrastructure
Policy GR20: Public Utilities
Policy GR22: Open Space Provision
Policy NR1: Trees and Woodlands
Policy E10: Re-use or Redevelopment of Existing Employment Sites
Policy H1: Provision of New Housing Development
Policy H2: Provision of New Housing Development
Policy H4: Residential Development in Towns
Policy H13: Affordable and Low-Cost Housing
Policy RC2: Protected Areas of Open Space

Cheshire East Local Plan

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy: Submission version was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 20 May 2014. The Examination commenced on 16th September 2014 and was suspended on 15th December 2014 following the publication of the Inspector's Interim Views. Further work is currently being undertaken by Cheshire East Council in order to address the concerns raised by the Inspector, with a view towards completing this work by the end June 2015. Following this, the Inspector will make a decision as to whether or not the Examination hearings should resume.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)
Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014)

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026 (CSS)

Policy SP1: Spatial Principles of Targeted Regeneration
Policy ASP5: Newcastle and Kidsgrove Urban Neighbourhoods Area Spatial Policy

Background Papers

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Cheshire East Council Local Plan Submission Development Plan Document
- Planning Inspectorate letter to Cheshire East Council 15/12/14 re: Formal Request to Suspend the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Examination
- Joint letter to Cheshire East Council 16/11/13 re: Local Plan Strategy Pre-Submission version.
- Joint letter to Cheshire East Council 25/04/14 re: Local Plan Strategy Submission version.
- Report to Planning Committee on 22nd July 2014; "Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy"
- Report to Planning Committee on 26th August 2014; "Application for Major Development – Cardway Business Park, Linley Lane, Alsager; Cardway Ltd/Knights LLP; 348/213"

- Minutes of Cheshire East Council Southern Planning Committee on 22nd October 2014;
13/4081C Cardway Business Park, Linley Lane, Alsager
- Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (2009)

Date report prepared

11th June 2015