

LAND TO NORTH OF SHELTON BOULEVARD, THE SOUTH OF NEWPORT LANE AND IN BETWEEN FESTIVAL WAY AND THE A500 (QUEENSWAY), AND LAND AT GRANGE LANE, WOLSTANTON

CITY OF STOKE-ON-TRENT COUNCIL

17/00834/FUL

The application, which is accompanied by an Environmental Statement, is for full planning permission for a link road known as the Etruria Valley Link Road between Shelton Boulevard, Festival Park across the Fowlea Brook and the West Coast Main Line railway connecting to the Wolstanton/A500 roundabout junction. It is a cross-border development involving works within the City and the Borough and each Authority is the Local Planning Authority (decision maker) for the extent of the overall development that falls within its administrative area.

The City Council as a Local Planning Authority are expected to determine the application that is before them at a meeting of their Planning Committee on the 21st August.

The City Council are the applicant.

The works within Newcastle involve:

- Enlargement and improvement of the double (dumbbell) roundabouts at the Wolstanton Grange Lane/A500 junction with a new spur heading towards the railway line.
- Provision of shared footway/cycleway around the dumbbell roundabouts and on the southern side of the road link between the two, including the provision of a zebra crossing on the Wolstanton Retail Park access
- Construction of a mini-roundabout to replace the existing traffic light controlled junction at Grange Lane/Church Lane and associated highway widening.
- Relocation of pedestrian crossing points on the Grange Lane and Church Lane (south) approaches to that junction.
- Alteration of gate and improvements of the footpath to St Wulstan's RC Church and St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School (from Grange Lane) involving resurfacing, provision of ramp and lighting.
- Redevelopment of the former coalyard to the east of the A500 to create ecological habitat.

Part of the application site lies within Wolstanton Conservation Area and in part adjoins Wolstanton Marsh, a Green Heritage Network as defined on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The 16 week period for the determination of this application expired on the 7th February 2018; whilst the applicant did agree to extend the determination period the latest agreed date has passed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Subject to confirmation from Highways England that the amended proposals are acceptable**

PERMIT subject to the following conditions;

- i. Time limit conditions**
- ii. Approved plans**
- iii. Prior approval of details of a surface water drainage system for the A500 trunk road.**
- iv. Prior to commencement submission and approval of a detailed programme of phasing.**
- v. Prior approval of earthworks and ground alteration works required due to the realignment of the southbound A500 off slip road**
- vi. A Construction Environmental Management Plan to include a range of best practice construction phase dust mitigation measures and to take account of any cumulative impact of this development taking place at the same time as the Highways England A500 improvements**
- vii. Landscaping scheme which identifies the trees that are to be removed, those that are to be retained and replacement tree planting is secured**
- viii. Tree protection measures for the retained trees**
- ix. Prior approval of the details of the maintenance access to the former coal yard site**
- x. Prior to first use of the Etruria Valley Link Road (EVLN) the proposed junction improvement at the junction of A527 Grange Lane and the A500 shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans including any amendments required by the Road Safety Stage 2 and 3 Audits.**
- xi. Prior to first use of the EVLN the proposed junction improvement at the junction of A527 Grange Lane and Church Lane shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans including any amendments required by the Road Safety Stage 2 and 3 Audits.**
- xii. Prior to the commencement of the development details of the proposed viaduct carrying the EVLN over the railway shall be submitted and approved by the LPA and shall thereafter be provided in accordance with the approved details.**
- xiii. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, prior to the commencement of the development full details of the pedestrian/cycle crossing facilities to the cycle route provided through the junction between Grange Lane and the EVLN shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA. The facilities shall thereafter be provided and retained in accordance with the approved details prior to first use of the EVLN.**
- xiv. Prior to first use of the proposed development, details shall be submitted and approved in writing indicating an adequate Traffic Management Arrangement for the future maintenance of the road lighting columns within the underpass beneath the A500 at the A500/Grange Lane junction.**
- xv. All reasonable and appropriate conditions recommended by Highways England**

- B. That the above decision be communicated to the City Council and that the City Council be advised that the Borough Council has no objections to the City Council granting application 61768/FUL subject to such conditions as your officers consider may be required to ensure a consistency of approach to matters such a pedestrian and cycle facilities**

Reason for Recommendation

This is a strategically significant highway proposal which is in accordance with development plan and regeneration strategies for the area. The development would improve traffic congestion and traffic flow, provided enhanced connectivity between May Bank/Wolstanton and the City Centre, and would unlock the Etruria Valley Enterprise Area for future development opportunities and regeneration in the local region providing greater opportunities for employment for the residents of the Borough and the City. It is considered that, subject to confirmation from Highways England that the amended proposals now received are acceptable, and provided the scheme is undertaken in accordance with the conditions listed above, it should be permitted

Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority has worked in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with the planning application

Officers have been in discussions with the applicant to address concerns raised by consultees and this has resulted in amended and additional information and plans being submitted.

Key Issues

1.1 The proposal which is the subject of this application (the Scheme) forms part of a larger development for a new road between the A500 and the Etruria Valley site and beyond that to the City Centre.

1.2 The new Etruria Valley Link Road is almost fully within the boundary of Stoke City Council and this is the subject of a separate planning application which will be determined by the City as the relevant Local Planning Authority. The elements of the Scheme that fall within the Borough, and as such are part of the application to be determined by the Borough, are set out above.

1.3 The key issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

- Is the principle of development acceptable?
- Is the loss of employment land arising from the development acceptable?
- Would the proposed development have any adverse impact upon highway safety?
- Would there be any adverse impact on public amenity?
- Would the development be acceptable in terms of the impact on the form and character of the area?

2.0 Is the principle of development acceptable?

2.1 The applicant has identified that the overall aim of the Scheme is to reduce traffic congestion and improve traffic flows, reduce severance, provide enhanced connectivity to the City Centre and unlock the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Area – Etruria Valley Site for future development opportunities and regeneration in the local region by increasing accessibility to this and other key sites, including Middleport, Burslem and Wolstanton. This aim is supported by and is in compliance with the following Development Plan policies:

- Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) policy ASP2 relating to the Inner Urban Core Area of Stoke which indicates that it is proposed to develop certain transport infrastructure proposals including an Etruria Valley Park and Ride Facility and an Etruria Valley to City Centre Burslem Link. It identifies Etruria Valley as a major mixed use area for employment in the south and housing in the north. Improved sustainable transport facilities will be used as a catalyst for a major inward investment offer. A new link from the A500 to the City Centre and Burslem plus park and ride facilities will be a critical element.
- CSS policy ASP5 relating to the Newcastle and Kidsgrove Urban Neighbourhoods Area which indicates, amongst other things, that actions will be taken to improve accessibility, road safety, and to promote sustainable modes of travel in accordance with the North Staffordshire Local Transport Plan.
- CSS Policy SP1, targeted regeneration, which states that new development will be prioritised in favour of previously developed land where it can support sustainable patterns of development and provides access to services and service centres by foot, public transport and cycling.
- CSS Policy SP2, spatial principles of economic development, amongst other things, seeks to support strategically planned land use on major brownfield sites for high value business growth to complement small scale, localised employment development elsewhere in the plan area.
- CSS Policy SP3, spatial principles of movement and access, amongst other things, seeks to where necessary allocate land for the provision of essential infrastructure.

2.2 In addition, the construction of the proposed link road is referred to within the City Council's adopted Etruria Valley Enterprise Area Supplementary Planning Document. The key points within that document are as follows;

- The Enterprise Area is constrained in terms of access with the surrounding highway network suffering from traffic congestion and queuing at peak times and many key junctions have little or no spare vehicular capacity.
- Access by other more sustainable means such as walking, cycling and public transport is limited.
- Etruria Road/Forge Lane which connects to the A500 at the A500/A53 roundabout can be extremely congested. Whilst the roundabout has been upgraded and there is some remaining capacity this is not sufficient for all of the remaining Etruria Valley
- The preferred option is a direct connection to the A500 at Wolstanton as well as the City Centre via Festival Way and the objective of providing such a new highway access is identified

2.3 Such policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states;

- At paragraph 80, that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which business can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development
- At paragraph 81, planning policies should, amongst other things, seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment.

2.4 In light of the above, local and national policy context it can be concluded that the development, in principle, is acceptable.

3.0 Is the loss of employment land arising from the development acceptable?

3.1 The proposal involves the loss, or sterilisation, of the site of the former coalyard which is between the A500 and Fowlea Brook. About half of the currently undeveloped land at the end of Lowfield Drive (the Centre 500 industrial estate) will also be lost to accommodate the realigned exits from the enlarged and repositioned eastern roundabout and embankments, and that remaining may be uneconomic to develop due its limited size, shape and levels difference with the highway.

3.2 Saved Local Plan (LP) Policy E11, indicates that development that would lead to the loss of good quality business and general industrial land and buildings will be resisted where this would limit the range and quality of sites and premises available. The criteria for what constitutes 'good quality' include the following:

- i) Accessibility to and from the primary network
- ii) Size
- iii) Topography and configuration
- iv) Ground conditions
- v) Its location and relationship to adjoining uses.

3.3 Paragraph 121 of the NPPF indicates that local planning authorities should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.

3.4 The submission indicates that there is no viable way of securing a safe access point into the site of the coalyard without otherwise constraining or curtailing other employment sites within the wider Etruria Valley (because of the design of the sliproad off the A500). The site currently has excellent accessibility to and from the primary network, is of a reasonable size and is relatively flat. Its configuration is not ideal, however, for other employment uses being long and narrow and is likely to be contaminated given its former use. It is therefore concluded that, when considered against the criteria set out in LP policy E11 the site is average to good.

3.5 The coalyard site and the plot at the end of Lowfield Drive are identified within the Employment Land Review. Neither site is allocated as an employment site in the adopted Development Plan, however, the Lowfield Drive site and the coalyard forms part of the Wolstanton Colliery (Centre 500) site referred to in policy E9 of the LP. Policy E9 indicates that planning permission for employment development would be renewed during the plan period on this and the other sites identified. Notwithstanding this the loss of employment land that would arise from the Scheme would be more than offset by the significant employment development potential in Etruria Valley that would be facilitated by the access improvements achieved.

3.6 The coalyard site is to be used for drainage and to create ecological habitat to mitigate any losses arising from the Scheme within the City's administrative area.

3.7 Overall it is considered that the Scheme would not result in an unacceptable loss of employment land that would justify refusal.

4.0 Would the proposed development have any adverse impact upon highway safety?

4.1 Paragraph 108 of the NPPF states that safe and suitable access to a site shall be achieved for all users and paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts of development would be severe.

4.2 The submitted Transport Assessment (TA) identifies the existing conditions at key junctions by testing the performance of each junction against the 2015 Base Year scenario flows for the AM and PM peak hours. The TA goes on to forecast the impact of the Scheme on such junctions on the opening year and then at 15 years after opening compared to the forecasted flows if the Scheme wasn't implemented.

4.3 The key junctions that are of most relevance to the Borough, (which will be indicated on a plan that will be published) and the assessment of them, are as follows:-

A53/A500 Basford Bank (Junction A on the plan)

4.4 The junction is predicted/modelled to operate within capacity at both peak hours, but observations show that the junction experiences significant queuing and delays on a number of approaches and on the A500 northbound off slip road. As such the model underestimated queuing in comparison with what was observed.

4.5 The TA predicts that there will be a reduction in flows in the AM/PM peak at year of opening of minus 21.2% / minus 24.6% and a reduction at 15 years of minus 20.2% / minus 28% compared to the forecast flows if the Scheme was not implemented.

A500/Wolstanton (dumbbell roundabouts) (Junction B on the plan)

4.6 The junction currently operates with no capacity constraints in either peak and with minimal queueing.

4.7 The TA predicts that there will be an increase in flows in the AM/PM peak at the year of opening of 196.4% / 196.6% on the eastern side, and of 46.1% / 50.2% on the western side. At 15 years there will be an increase in flows in the AM/PM peak of 197.9% / 216.7% on the eastern side, and 47.7% / 50.1% on the western side, compared to the forecast flows if the scheme was not implemented.

4.8 The prediction is that the majority of vehicles travelling from Festival Park will use the A500 rather than Grange Lane to continue their journeys.

A527 Grange Lane/Church Lane (Junction C on the plan)

4.9 The junction is predicted/modelled to operate well within capacity during the AM peak but beyond its theoretical capacity during the PM peak.

4.10 The TA predicts that there will be an increase in flows in the AM/PM peak at year of opening of 10.8% / 12.4% and an increase at 15 years of 5.6% / 9.2% compared to the forecast flows if the scheme was not implemented.

4.11 The TA has also assessed the impact of the Scheme on other junctions relevant to the Borough on the opening year and then 15 years after opening compared to the forecasted flows if the Scheme wasn't implemented. These junctions are:

B5368 High Street Wolstanton/B5369 Porthill Bank (Junction D on the plan)

4.12 The TA predicts that there will be a reduction in flows in the AM/PM peak at year of opening of minus 9.3 / minus 0.8% and a reduction at 15 years of minus 7.5% / minus 1.7% compared to the forecast flows if the scheme was not implemented.

A527 Church Lane/B5369 Basford Park Road (Junction E on the plan)

4.13 The TA predicts that there will be an increase in flows in the AM peak at year of opening of 1.1/% and a decrease in the PM peak of minus 1.4%. At 15 years there will be an increase in flows in the AM peak at year of opening of 2.1% and a decrease in the PM peak of minus 1.6%.

A527 Brampton Road/Sandy Lane (Junction F on the plan)

4.14 The TA predicts that there will be an increase in flows in the AM peak at year of opening of 2.4% and slight decrease in the PM peak of minus 4.1%. At 15 years there will be a reduction in flows in the AM/PM peak at year of opening of minus 2.5% / minus 2.9%.

A52 Ryecroft/A527 Queen Street (Junction G on the plan)

4.15 The TA predicts that there will be a reduction in flows in the AM/PM peak at year of opening of minus 4.2% / minus 2.8% and a reduction at 15 years of minus 4.4% / minus 2.6%.

A53 Etruria Road/B5369 Basford Park Road (Junction H on the plan)

The TA predicts that there will be an increase in flows in the AM peak at year of opening of 3.3% and slight decrease in the PM peak of minus 3.8%. At 15 years there will be increase in flows in the AM peak at year of opening of 6.2% and a decrease in the PM peak of minus 5.2%.

A527 Grange Lane/Great Row View (the access into the residential development off Grange Lane) (Junction J on the plan)

4.16 The TA predicts that there will be increase in flows in the AM/PM peak at year of opening of 28% / 30% and an increase at 15 years of 27.3% / 28.4%.

4.18 The TA states that at the A527 Grange Lane / Great Row View junction peak queues of up to 2-3 vehicles emerging from Great Row View have been observed during the peak hours. It is noted that the traffic flows on Grange Lane will increase although demand on the minor arm will be unaffected and remain low. Therefore no operational issues are envisaged at this junction.

4.19 The TA asserts that the predicted changes in traffic flow across the junctions identified within the Borough are either negligible or reduced and even the largest increase predicted is unlikely to be detectable within the day to day variation in the traffic flow.. It is stated that overall the Scheme will reduce journey times and significantly improve connectivity between Festival Park, Etruria Valley, the City Centre and the wider North Staffordshire conurbations. It will help to reduce the demand on the A53/A500 Basford Bank junction, an identified pinch point. The Scheme will reduce congestion and improve the resilience of the road network within the administrative areas of both Newcastle and Stoke.

4.20 Staffordshire County Council as the Highway Authority for the Borough have not raised any concerns about the TA in respect of its assessment of these key junctions. Similarly Highways

England has raised no objection to the principle of the Scheme or to the consequent increase in vehicles accessing onto and off the A500 at the Wolstanton junction.

4.21 The Scheme includes puffin crossings at the Grange Lane / Church Lane junction, except for the northern arm where the existing zebra crossing will be retained on the Church Lane (north approach). Puffin crossings are crossings with traffic lights which go green again only when no more pedestrians are detected on the crossing by infrared detectors and mats. The scheme did originally include signalised controlled crossings around the dumbbell roundabouts but these are no longer included in the scheme. The reason for such amendments is that the signalisation of the entry and exit arms to the roundabouts would be likely to result in backing up of traffic waiting to manoeuvre around such roundabouts and would require an increase in the size of the roundabouts to ensure that there is 'storage' capacity for vehicles who are stopped from completing their circuit due to the signalised controls. The Highway Authority has not raised objections to the proposals although it does seek certain conditions which have been taken forward into the recommendation above.

4.22 Highways England has provided comments and whilst their latest response of late June indicates they still had a number of issues with the Scheme, they do not object to the principle of such informal crossings. Since then revised proposals have been received, and it is expected that they will make further comments that will be able to be considered by the Planning Committee.

4.23 Currently non-motorised user route provision between the east and west dumbbell roundabouts at the existing A500 junction is poor with very limited provision for cyclists and pedestrians and pedestrian and cycle use on the existing route is low. The new link provides an opportunity to provide a better east west pedestrian and cycle route, and a shared footway/cycleway route is proposed which links to existing and proposed facilities. Nevertheless objections have been made that the proposed improvements to the routes are not adequate primarily because of the nature of the crossings. Whilst initially, toucan crossings (traffic light controlled crossings expressly designed for use by both cyclists and pedestrians together) were proposed these have been omitted from the Scheme as, in as far as it relates to the Scheme within the Borough, safety concerns were raised by Highways England about the position and number of signalised controlled crossings at the dumbbell roundabouts. The concern was that the signals could cause confusion to drivers approaching the roundabouts from the slip roads. There is also a concern, as indicated above, that queueing traffic could cause a hazard on the roundabouts for traffic stopped on the exits of the roundabouts. The submission indicates that the crossings could safely be installed as uncontrolled and this has been accepted by Highways England.

4.24 In acknowledgement of the known issues of congestion, particularly around the A53/A500 Basford Bank junction, and in light of the comments already received from the relevant technical consultees it can be concluded that the overall benefits of the Scheme far outweigh the limited increases in traffic flows in Wolstanton and May Bank and at key junctions on the local road network, other than at the A500 dumbbell roundabouts. In addition whilst it has not been possible to safely provide controlled crossings around the dumbbell roundabouts, the Scheme still provides improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

4.25 Subject to the conditions recommended by the Highway Authority and confirmation from Highways England that they no longer have any objections to the scheme it could not be concluded that the impact on highway safety would be severe and that the Scheme should be refused on highway grounds.

5.0 Would there be any adverse impact on public amenity?

5.1 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF lists a set of core land-use planning principles that should underpin decision-taking, one of which states that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

5.2 At paragraph 170 the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should,

wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality and water quality, taking into account relevant information.

5.3 One of the aims of the Scheme is to reduce traffic congestion and improve traffic flow. Air pollution in part arises from traffic idling in queues and this issue has led, in certain parts of the Borough and the whole of the City, to the designation of Air Quality Management Areas.

5.4 The Environmental Health Division advises that the operational scheme is predicted to have an overall beneficial impact on air quality in respect of the Newcastle Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) – which includes Newcastle Town Centre, London Road to the south, and the A53 to Basford Bank. In respect of AQMA at May Bank, Wolstanton and Porthill, along the A527, it is concluded that whilst the scheme will result in a number of increases at receptors in the AQMA the magnitude of the increase is minimal and pollution concentrations are predicted to remain significantly below the air quality Directive levels.

5.5 Overall it is considered that the minimal impact in this respect in the May Bank, Wolstanton and Porthill area is significantly outweighed by the improvements in air quality in Stoke and at Basford Bank where NO₂ is currently being exceeded. In addition the Scheme will improve connectivity to a major employment area for residents of both Newcastle and Stoke and could encourage employment and green transport opportunities between Hanley and Newcastle although it should be noted that the provision of green transport options could not be directly achieved through the granting of permission of the Scheme.

5.6 A further consequence of increased traffic flows arising from the Scheme is an increase in noise. The increases in flows are, however, considered to be at a level where they will be undetectable and the additional noise will not be noticeable above the existing background noise level.

5.7 As well as impacts arising from the Scheme when operational, there is the potential that its construction will result in environmental issues, such as dust. Such impacts can be minimised through appropriate mitigation measures during the construction phase, and such measures can be secured through condition.

6.0 Would the development be acceptable in terms of the impact on the form and character of the area?

6.1 The main changes in the form and character of the area are the introduction of a roundabout at the junction of Grange Lane/Church Lane, the loss of existing mature landscaping around the dumbbell roundabouts and the introduction of the ecological habitat on the former coal yard.

6.2 The Grange Lane/Church Lane roundabout is located within the Wolstanton Conservation Area and adjoins the Marsh which is part of the designated Green Heritage Network. In terms of the Conservation Area the Council is required by legislation to pay special attention to the preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There are also listed buildings, the church and the cottages on Church Lane the setting of which special attention should also be paid to. In this case their settings will be unaffected.

6.3 The following development plan policies are of relevance to the consideration of this issue.

6.4 CSS Policy CSP1, design quality, indicates that new development should be well designed to respect the character, identify and context of Newcastle and Stoke's unique townscape and landscape and in particular, the built heritage, its historic environment, its rural setting and the settlement pattern created by the hierarchy of centres. New development should, amongst other, things promote the image and distinctive identify of Newcastle and Stoke through the enhancement of strategic and local gateway locations and key transport corridors.

6.5 Policy CSP2 of the CSS, historic environment, sets out that both Councils will seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of their historic heritage including buildings, monuments, sites and areas of special archaeological, architectural and historic interest.

6.6 Saved LP policy N16 states that it is the policy of Council to seek opportunities to consolidate and enhance the green heritage network. Planning permission will not be granted in or adjacent to 'green heritage' areas which would harm their integrity or their ecological and landscape value as open spaces. Where development is permitted, the Council may require mitigation and/or compensation measures and will seek to ensure that appropriate landscaping proposals will be implemented and maintained to enhance the area's status and function as part of the Borough's wildlife network

6.7 Saved LP policy N17 says that development should be informed by and be sympathetic to landscape character and quality and should contribute, as appropriate, to the regeneration, restoration, enhancement, maintenance or active conservation of the landscaping likely to be affected.

6.8 Saved LP policy B9 indicates that the Council will resist development that would harm the special architectural or historic character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

6.9 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Furthermore, paragraph 127 of the Framework lists 6 criterion, a) – f) with which planning policies and decisions should accord and details, amongst other things, that developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

6.10 The Conservation Officer and Conservation Advisory Working Party have not raised any objection to the scheme. There is no encroachment into the walled area around Moreton House. The removal of the traffic signal controlled junction at the Grange Lane/Church Lane junction will remove some of the highway structures that result in visual clutter and whilst there will be railings and signs associated with the new roundabout junction and the lights associated with the puffin crossings, one will now be outside the Conservation Area, and overall it is considered that the Scheme will at least maintain the appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.

6.11 The construction of the roundabout and puffin crossing at the Grange Lane/Church Lane junction does not result in any loss of landscape features within the Marsh and as such should not have a significant visual impact on this part of the Green Heritage Network.

6.12 The construction of the larger dumbbell roundabouts at the A500 junction as proposed will result in the loss of trees and other mature planting. Such loss is regrettable but unavoidable. The creation of the ecological habitat on the former coal yard site will, to some extent, mitigate any loss of landscaping arising from the Scheme. Opportunities for replacement tree planting around the dumbbell roundabouts should also be taken, and a condition is required to ensure that a landscaping scheme which identifies the trees that are to be lost, those that are to be retained and replacement tree planting is secured as well as tree protection measures for the retained trees to avoid further loss.

APPENDIX

Policies and proposals in the approved development plan relevant to this decision:-

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

Strategic Aim 3 To reduce the need to travel, improve accessibility and increase the opportunities for development of sustainable and innovative modes of travel to support the regeneration of the plan area by securing improvements to public transport infrastructure; and the progressive provision of park and ride and facilities to promote walking and cycling

Strategic Aim 5 To foster and diversify the employment base of all parts of the plan area, both urban and rural, including development of new types of work and working lifestyles, and supporting the office development sector, new technologies and business capitalising on the inherent advantages of North Staffordshire

Policy SP1: Spatial Principles of Targeted Regeneration
Policy SP2: Spatial Principles of Economic Development
Policy SP3: Spatial Principles of Movement and Access
Policy ASP2: Stoke-on-Trent Inner Urban Core Area Spatial Policy
Policy ASP5: Newcastle and Kidsgrove Urban Neighbourhoods Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1: Design Quality
Policy CSP2: Historic Environment
Policy CSP3: Sustainability and Climate Change
Policy CSP4: Natural Assets

[Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan \(NLP\) 2011](#)

Policy E9: Renewal of Planning Permissions for Employment Development
Policy E11: Development of Employment Land for Land Other Uses
Policy N12: Development and the Protection of Trees
Policy N13: Felling and Pruning of Trees
Policy N16: Protection of a Green Heritage Network
Policy N17: Landscape Character – General Considerations
Policy B9: Prevention of Harm to Conservation Areas

Other Material Considerations include:

National Planning Policy

[National Planning Policy Framework \(2019\)](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\) \(2014\)](#)

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

[Etruria Valley Enterprise Area Supplementary Planning Document](#) (adopted by the City Council March 2013)

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document](#) (2010)

Other Relevant Documents

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Employment Land Review](#) December 2015

Relevant Planning History

None relevant

Views of Consultees

Please note that the consultation responses reported below are those relevant to the determination of the part of the proposed development that is located within the Borough. Such responses can be read in full, along with all other consultations responses received by the City Council via the following link:

<https://planning.stoke.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/61768/FUL>

The **Environmental Health Division** conditionally supports the proposal based on full understanding of the 2nd July 2018 SWECO Environmental Statement. Their full comments are summarised as follows:

- The concentration changes of NO² in Grange Lane and Orford Street (the road that runs parallel to the A500) are negligible, with predicted concentrations being well within the objective values.
- The operational scheme is predicted to have an overall beneficial impact on air quality in respect of Newcastle's Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) number 2 (Newcastle-under-Lyme). In respect of AQMA number 3 (May Bank, Wolstanton and Porthill) it is concluded that whilst the scheme will result in a number of increases at receptors in the AQMA the magnitude of the increase is minimal and pollution concentrations are predicted to remain significantly below the air quality directive levels.
- During the construction programme, which is anticipated to be about 18 months, there is the potential for changes in air quality due to dust emissions from construction activity, emissions from site plant equipment and HGVs and also from changes in traffic flows along the Scheme and in the wider road network with traffic management in place. A Construction Environmental Management Plan would be prepared and implemented to include a range of best practice construction phase dust mitigation measures required in all works undertaken where there is potential for adverse effects on sensitive receptors (e.g. residential properties and schools).
- No detailed assessment of construction phase traffic has been completed as the estimated number of HGVs per day is below the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) criteria. Some works to the existing road network are required and traffic management would be in place to minimise traffic re-routing. It is understood that construction work requiring possession of roads will take place at night time, on Sundays and/or during Bank holidays. Avoiding peak traffic periods in this way will help to avoid potentially significant temporary effects on air quality.
- The interplay between the Highways England A500 improvement works and the development if they take place around the same time doesn't appear to have been discussed. This detail would be crucial to understanding and managing the impacts of congestion on local air quality should the two schemes coincide.
- It would be beneficial to use smart traffic information boards to promote the new route and encourage drivers to take alternatives if congestion or Air Quality becomes an issue.
- The development provides a golden opportunity to improve connectivity to a major employment area for residents of both Newcastle and Stoke and to encourage employment and green transport opportunities between the City and Newcastle through the provision of zero emissions or as a minimum buses conforming to the latest EURO emission class together with appropriately timetable public transport.
- Opportunities should be taken to promote Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure at individual employment locations within the wider Enterprise Zone and on street charging if on street parking is allowed.

Highways England (HE) recommends that planning permission is not granted for a three month period (commencing 28th June 2019). They had previously set out a number of outstanding issues which led to the conclusion that the fundamental principles of safety and Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) compliant design had not be clearly demonstrated by the submission. They comment as follows on the further information then submitted by the applicant:

Drainage

- It appears that the existing A500 slip road drainage system has not been considered within the proposed slip road drainage design. As the slip road will continue to be managed by HE any associated highway drainage will also be managed by them and therefore should be located within the trunk road boundary.
- The proposed slip road surface water run-off intends to be conveyed to a proposed attenuation pond on the old coal yard outside of HE control. No detail has been provided as to who will manage this pond which raises concern.
- The Staffordshire County Council Highway Drainage system is also to discharge to the attenuation pond. The drainage design for the A500 should be kept separate from any other drainage system. Surface water run off should also ideally be discharged to ground if conditions permit.
- As the attenuation pond is located on land within the application boundary it is likely that a DMRB compliant highway surface water drainage system for the A500 trunk road can be achieved and therefore can be considered at detailed design stage by HE as a condition of consent.

General Arrangement Plan – Wolstanton

Amended general arrangements drawings have been requested in view of the outstanding matters below:

- There is an issue of continuity between the Highways England Major Projects scheme and the EVLR, particularly in the interim between the delivery of the Highways England scheme (currently on site) and Etruria Valley Link Road mitigation. Suitable temporary measures will need to be provided.
- There is a private means of access shown on the southbound off slip. They understand this will now not be provided, which raises an issue of access to the drainage assets which will require resolution.

Southbound A500 off slip road

- The submitted plan does not clearly indicate that approach visibility and mainline visibility can be accommodated within the design.
- The segregated left turn lane is still proposed although it was considered a safety concern by the Road Safety Audit Team and was designed out by introducing give way control within both slip roads onto the roundabout traffic in earlier iterations of the plan. This may require an Exemption Note and a Road Safety Audit is being undertaken again to address any changes to the scheme. It is noted that as the previous Road Safety Audit (RSA) problem is no longer being designed out it is likely that the same problem will be raised in a subsequent RSA.
- The realignment of the slip road will require alterations to the existing earthworks and ground alteration works. As this could be accommodated on land under the applicant's control (old coal yard) the details can be agreed by condition

Southbound A500 on slip road

- The general arrangement plan does not demonstrate that appropriate roundabout exit visibility can be accommodated. This will require the removal of trees and shrubs and the extent of such clearance should be detailed on the plan.

Northbound A500 off slip road

- Approach visibility to the improved junction and proposed pedestrian/cycle crossing has not been demonstrated in accordance with DMRB. No detail has been provided indicating that the existing vegetation/bund will be removed to permit adequate approach visibility.
- It has been stated that due to the vertical alignment of the slip road the full stopping sight distance cannot be achieved. This needs to either be designed out of the scheme or a departure from the standard applied for. Substandard visibility would be considered a fundamental consideration to the safety of the Highway Improvement scheme.
- The new footway proposed by the applicant along the slip road from the existing A500 Footway is acceptable in principle. It is noted that whilst shown on the general arrangement plan the 'Pedestrian Desire Line and Crossing Provision' report states the footway is potentially going to be provided by the A500 Etruria widening scheme promoted by Highways England. It should be noted that the footway in question is not proposed to be implemented by them.

Pedestrian Desire Line and Crossing Provision

- The proposed potential cycle/footway connection along the southbound off slip would not be desirable as the A500 footways along the mainline will be removed as part of the Highways

England Major Projects scheme. They also note that the Scheme does not propose to implement footway connections along the southern slip roads from Wolstanton Junction to the existing A500 Slip Road.

Walking, Cycling, Horse Riding Assessment Review

- Such a review is still outstanding and the HE holding recommendation will not be lifted without it.

Stage 1 Road Safety Audit

- Such an Audit of the proposed alterations to the scheme is required and should be completed before planning consent is granted in accordance with DMRB.

Highways England have been consulted by the Local Planning Authorities on new proposals received on the 5th July and their comments if available will be reported.

The **Highway Authority** (Staffordshire County Council) has indicated with respect to the most recently received plans that it has no objections subject to conditions relating to the following:

- Prior to first use of the Etruria Valley Link Road (EVLN) the proposed junction improvement at the junction of A527 Grange Lane and the A500 shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans including any amendments required by the Road Safety Stage 2 and 3 Audit.
- Prior to first use of the EVLN the proposed junction improvement at the junction of A527 Grange Lane and Church shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans including any amendments required by the Road Safety Stage 2 and 3 Audit.
- Prior to the commencement of the development details of the proposed viaduct carrying the EVLN shall be submitted and approved by the LPA and shall thereafter be provided in accordance with the approved details.
- Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, prior to the commencement of the development full details of the pedestrian/cycle crossing facilities to the cycle route provided through the junction between Grange Lane and the EVLN shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA. The facilities shall thereafter be provided and retained in accordance with the approved details prior to first use of the EVLN.
- Prior to first use of the proposed development, details shall be submitted and approved in writing indicating an adequate Traffic Management Arrangement for the future maintenance of the road lighting columns within the underpass beneath the A500 at the A500/Grange Lane junction.

Staffordshire County Council as the **Lead Local Flood Authority** (LLFA) indicate that the main impacts regarding new surface water drainage and flood risk lie within the Stoke LLFA area and therefore they have no comments.

The **Landscape Development Section** advise that the landscaping proposals should be revised to accord with the latest scheme amendments and that it is likely that the addition of the maintenance access to the coal yard site will mean the loss of addition trees within a particular tree group. Tree planting should be increased to mitigate this. They go on to advise that their comments remain as their previous comments which were that there are no objections in principle but that before they can comment in full a plan showing the information as to which trees are to be removed is provided accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment to BS5837:2012. There are concerns that a significant number of trees within the identified groups will be removed, particularly from Group 10 and Group 12 to accommodate the reshaped embankment and that mitigation for this loss will not be sufficient, leaving large grass areas. There is scope for further tree planting and/or native shrub planting. It is requested that the high quality pine trees that are scheduled to be removed are incorporated into the design and appropriately protected.

The following conditions are also recommended:

- Tree protection
- Details of the proposed waymarking features

The **Conservation Officer** has no objections to the new roundabout & hopes that it might reduce the amount of clutter and poles for signage and lights. The context of the Conservation Area will remain

the same and the Listed Buildings, namely the church and the cottages on Church Lane, will remain the same and their settings unaffected.

The **Conservation Advisory Working Party** has no objections to the scheme subject to rationalisation of signage and railings in the area, which is an historic Conservation Area.

The **Coal Authority** does not wish to raise any specific observations and recommends an informative note is included within the decision notice indicating that any coal mining feature that is encountered during development should be immediately reported to them.

Staffordshire County Council as the **Minerals Planning Authority** has no objection to the application.

The **East Newcastle Locality Action Partnership** has no objections

Representations

23 representations (from 14 third parties) have been received in total, including representations from **Paul Farrelly MP** and **Cycling UK, North Staffordshire**. The comments, in as far as they are relevant to the determination of this application (i.e. they relate to the part of the development that is within the Borough) are summarised below. Following the receipt of revised proposals and additional information members of the public have been invited to make further comment, and they have until the 2nd August to do so. Objections previously raised have included the following points

- The existing pelican crossings are not shown on the proposed plans. They are important to the movement of children between the three schools in the vicinity of the proposed Grange Lane roundabout. The inclusions of these crossings are vital and will contribute to considerable traffic delays in the area during those times despite the installation of the roundabout.
- The link road should be delayed for the consideration of an alternative strategic east west road and public transport links as part of the preparation of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke Local Plan; for the preparation of the May Bank, Wolstanton and Porthill Air Quality Management Plan; and for the consultation with Staffordshire County Council as Highway Authority for Newcastle, on school traffic plans and traffic management options with public business in Wolstanton and Porthill.
- The existing and predicted traffic flows in the evidence submitted with this application presuppose that the road will reduce the flows on Porthill / Burslem and Etruria routes. However there is already queuing by traffic exiting and entering the A500 via these junctions and accidents are occurring regularly due to the proximity of such junctions. Furthermore the Grange Lane/Church Lane junction is already congested at peak periods and the air quality levels are unacceptable for pedestrians and cars bringing pupils to the two primary schools.
- The Shelton Bar Employment site, between Festival Park and Burslem is one of the options being considered in the Joint Local Plan. An alternative cheaper road proposal, connecting the existing northern access on the A500 to the A34 at Parkhouse, bypassing the Wolstanton and Bradwell residential areas should be considered and funded through Section 106.
- The application proposals cannot be considered separately from the Highway England proposals for the widening of the A500.
- The Environmental Health Division of Newcastle refers to lack of information about the health consequences of pollution in the application. It is Government Policy to require local authorities to introduce and promote measures to reduce pollution caused by motor vehicles. The application does not address how vehicles diverted from the A500 by construction works or accidents won't use High Street/Church Lane or other rat runs and it should not be determined at this time.
- The widths of the proposed shared cycle paths should be in accordance with current national guidance.
- A financial contribution towards the provision of the cycle path along the south side of the whole of Grange Lane is needed to provide a continuous safe cycle route between Wolstanton and Festival Park.
- The removal of the traffic lights and pedestrian crossing lights at the Grange Lane/Church Lane junction may speed up the use of the junction at the expense of the safety of children and other pedestrians whilst improving the appearance of this tree lined area. Lights must be retained opposite the Archer Pub and a safe crossing, preferably a pedestrian bridge, must be provided

across Grange Lane from the Wulstan Grange Housing Estate, Wolstanton community Hall and Wolstanton Retail Park.

- Adequate public transport between the City and Newcastle must be provided.
- A speed limit of 30mph on the how of the new link road would improve safety for on road cyclist and traffic generally.
- A zebra or signalised pedestrian crossing over the new link road at is junction with Festival Way should be provided instead of the refuge currently proposed
- The development will result in the loss of valuable land as it won't be possible to access it.
- The development does not accord with the Etruria Valley SPD which recommends improvement of existing and creation of new pedestrian and cycle links.
- The key business case for the link road appears to be the creation of new jobs and opportunities for future development. However only a brief description of the traffic forecasting is provided within the report. It is unclear if all proposed development that is suggested to be facilitated by the new road is included in the operational assessment.
- It is unclear from the latest information as to whether the signal controlled pedestrian crossings will be removed from the proposed roundabout at Grange Lane/Church Lane.
- The latest plan shows a pedestrian footpath but does not show the existing island on Grange Lane which is the only crossing point and is regularly hit by speeding vehicles.
- There is no reference to public transport routes and bus stops near to employment areas, or about park and ride sites to reduce the number of car movements.
- Without minor amendments the opportunity to remake the city's cycling infrastructure will be lost
- Removal of the traffic lights and replacement roundabout has failed to take account of the garage site which is linked in to the traffic lights and if implemented that site can't be accessed.
- The amount of valuable development land that is taken within Etruria Valley for this project is excessive.

One third party has responded to date to the most recent set of plans/information. In addition to comments previously made he notes that light controlled crossings have been reinstated in the scheme but at a greater distance from the roundabout. This will however not reduce traffic congestion at peak period or the levels of vehicle generated pollution around this junction the EVLR is open. A pedestrian bridge over Grange Lane and travel plans for St Wulstans and St Margarets Primary Schools are needed for the health and safety of the children.

Comments in support (4 representations in total) are as follows:

- The development proposals are fully supported but in order to protect the vitality and accessibility of Wolstanton Retail Park, particularly during busy shopping periods, they owners should be given the opportunity to consider and comment on the construction schedule and traffic management plans

The representations can be reviewed in full in the Planning Section of Stoke City Council's website via the following link <https://planning.stoke.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/61768/FUL>. If any further representations are received prior to the guillotine they will be reported.

Applicant's/Agent's submission

The application is accompanied by the following documents:

- Planning Supporting Statement
- Statement of Community Engagement
- Environmental Statement
- Environmental Statement Non-Technical Summary
- Environmental Statement Addendum
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- Flood Risk Report
- Health Impact Assessment Report
- Water Framework Directive Assessment Report
- Arboricultural Survey
- Transport Assessment.

- Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (Strategic road Network)
- Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit (Local Highway Network)
- Pedestrian Desire Lines and Crossing Provision
- Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment Report

All of these documents are available for inspection at the Guildhall and as associated documents to the application in the Planning Section of Stoke City Council's website via the following link <https://planning.stoke.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/61768/FUL>

Background papers

Planning files referred to
Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

1st August 2019