

The application is for outline planning permission for development for (a) academic functions; (b) staff and student residences; (c) employment uses directly related to or complementary to the University's core activities including conference, training, retail and leisure – for use of students, staff, conference delegates and their visitors and in the case of leisure facilities for the wider community; (d) Class B1 uses directly related to the University's functional activities but excluding manufacturing or storage of large tonnages or mass production of goods. All matters are reserved for subsequent approval except for details of access to the site (which has already been provided the estate road layout having been formed).

The site is part of that allocated on the Proposals Map of the Local Plan for employment/higher education – led development (Proposal E8) and it also lies within an Area of Landscape Maintenance.

Part of the site lies within the Grade II Registered Parkland and Garden of Special Historic Interest at Keele Hall.

**The 13 week period for the determination of this application expires on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018 but the applicant has agreed to an extension of the statutory period to the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018.**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Permit subject to conditions relating to the following matters:**

- 1. Time periods for the submission of applications for approval of reserved matters and commencement of development, to recognise the need for greater periods of time than would normally apply**
- 2. Approval of details of layout, scale, external appearance of buildings and the landscaping of the site**
- 3. Development mix and amount**
- 4. Details of site-wide security measures**
- 5. Restriction on uses**
- 6. Detailed surface water drainage scheme**
- 7. Submission of an updated structural landscape plan**
- 8. For each individual plot, details of means of enclosure, areas for parking, turning and servicing of vehicles, internal road layout and construction, surfacing materials and arrangements for disposal of foul drainage**
- 9. Construction management plan**
- 10. Details of air cooling/air extraction equipment**
- 11. External lighting scheme**
- 12. Surface water drainage scheme for each plot**
- 13. Details of design measures in residential units relating to internal noise levels**
- 14. Details of parking, turning and servicing within the site curtilage of each plot**
- 15. Details of means of connecting development sites to network of footpaths/cycleways**
- 16. Design of buildings in accordance with the submitted Design Guidance**
- 17. Further surveys for bats, reptiles and great crested newts prior to the development of any plots unless otherwise agreed,**

### **Reason for Recommendation**

The principle of the proposed uses is considered acceptable and there would be no adverse impact upon the Registered Historic Parkland and Garden, and the Keele Hall Conservation Area. The updated Transport Statement concludes that the proposed development would not have any unacceptable impacts on traffic and transport conditions and it is not considered that an objection could be raised on highway safety grounds. The proposed design approach is considered appropriate and there would be no unacceptably adverse visual impacts.

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

This is considered to be a sustainable form of development and complies with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Key Issues**

The application is for outline planning permission for development for (a) academic functions; (b) staff and student residences; (c) employment uses directly related to or complementary to the University's core activities including conference, training, retail and leisure – for use of students, staff, conference delegates and their visitors and in the case of leisure facilities for the wider community; (d) Class B1 uses directly related to the University's functional activities but excluding manufacturing or storage of large tonnages or mass production of goods. All matters are reserved for subsequent approval except for details of access to the site (which has already been provided the estate road layout having been formed).

The site is part of that allocated on the Proposals Map of the Local Plan for employment/higher education-led development (Proposal E8). Part of the application site lies within the Grade 2 Registered Parkland and Garden of Special Historic Interest at Keele Hall. The site also lies within an Area of Landscape Maintenance as indicated on the Local Plan Proposals Map.

A hybrid planning permission was granted for this site in 2006 (Ref. 05/01146/OUT). Outline permission was established for the principle of the proposed uses and full permission was granted for various engineering works that included the creation by cut and fill of levelled plots, some hard and soft landscaping and the creation of the road network serving these plots. Those works were all undertaken but the outline planning permission is no longer capable of being enjoyed, the period of time within which applications for the approval of the reserved matters of the outline planning permission having now expired. This application therefore in effect seeks to reinstate the outline planning permission.

Since the original planning permission for this site, full planning permission has been granted for the development of Plot 2 (The MCIL Centre Ref. 17/00193/FUL), Plot 5 (IC5 Ref. 11/00058/FUL) and Plots 9 and part of 10 (Cauldwells Ref. 15/00542/FUL). Development of Plot 5 has been completed and the development on Plot 9 and part of 10 is currently under construction. Those plots are not included in the application site.

An Ecological Appraisal has been submitted in support of the application which concludes that subject to further surveys for bats, reptiles and great crested newts prior to the development of any plots, there are no significant ecological constraints to the development. The drainage infrastructure for the site was put in place following the grant of the previous planning permission. A Flood Risk Assessment that accompanies this application proposes additional attenuation and flow control within individual plots and the Lead Local Flood Authority raises no objections to the proposal subject to a condition requiring submission of a detailed surface water drainage scheme.

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

- The principle of the proposed development
- Impact on the Registered Historic Park and Keele Hall Conservation Area
- Highways impact
- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development
- Landscape Impact
- Time limit for implementation of the permission

### **Principle of the development**

The principle of development of the kind and scale currently proposed was established under the previous consent (Ref. 05/01146/OUT). Since that time, the main change in planning policy is the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published in 2012. The NPPF advocates the building of a strong competitive economy and states that the Government is

committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. The NPPF indicates that due weight should be given to relevant policies in pre-existing development plans (such as the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) and the Newcastle Local Plan (NLP)) according to their degree of consistency with the Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

The application site lies within the University campus which is excluded from the Green Belt within the rural area. Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) Policy ASP6 states that investment in Keele University and Science Park will be fostered to help strengthen the local knowledge and skills base and facilitate the growth and competitiveness of high value business development, thereby increasing local job opportunities in these sectors. CSS Policy SP1 indicates that one of the spatial principles of targeted regeneration is that Keele University and Science Park will continue to be the focus for high value business growth in a range of knowledge based industries. Policy SP2 indicates that one of the spatial principles of economic development is harnessing the creative and knowledge assets of North Staffordshire to develop high value business growth, in particular investment in Keele University and Keele Science Park. Saved Policy E8 of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan (NLP) states that development will be permitted on this site and land adjoining so long as it is limited to one or more of the following uses:

- i) Academic functions
- ii) Staff and student residences
- iii) Employment uses directly related to or complementary to the University's core activities including conference, training, retail and leisure for use of students, staff, conference delegates and their visitors and in the case of leisure facilities the wider community.
- iv) Class B1 uses directly related to the university's functional activities but excluding manufacturing or storage of large tonnages or mass production of goods.

These policies are considered to be consistent with the NPPF and therefore should be afforded considerable weight.

The description of the proposed development being applied for in terms of uses is exactly as referred to in Policy E8. The site is allocated in the Local Plan for the uses proposed.

The proposal has long been recognised as providing significant economic development benefits of enabling expansion of high technological jobs and growth of the University Campus from the viewpoint of its high standing as an academic institution and economic driver in the West Midlands Region. It is critically important that appropriate expansion of the University be permitted unless the application raises evidence of demonstrable harm to issues of acknowledgement importance which outweigh the significant employment benefits of the proposals and which cannot be addressed by the use of planning conditions and obligations.

The proposal includes a conference/training hotel. Whilst the Local Plan allocation for this site does not specifically refer to a hotel, it includes employment uses directly related to or complementary to the University's core activities including conference, training, retail and leisure – for use of students, staff, conference delegates and their visitors and in the case of leisure facilities, for the wider community. It is considered that the provision of a conference/training hotel does fall within the terms of Policy E8.

The NPPF defines a hotel as a 'main town centre use' and states that a sequential test should be applied to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. It states that 'main town centre uses' should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre site be considered. This is an out of centre site and no sequential test assessment has been submitted.

The Local Plan, dating from 2003, refers to the acceptability of the provision on this site of leisure facilities for the wider community. The provision of such development on this site would help develop further the role being played by the developments at Keele and their crucial significance as a driver for change in the North Staffordshire economy. The NPPF advocates the building of a strong competitive economy and therefore, Policy E8 is considered to be consistent with the Framework in

this regard. In relation to the previous application it was accepted that there is a need for a hotel as part of the proposed development of the University and its training/conference business, and a strong case can be made as to the employment benefits of this element of the proposal. If such development was achieved on this site it would develop further the role being played by the developments at Keele and their crucial significance as a driver for change in the North Staffordshire economy. On this basis your Officer does not consider objection should be raised to this aspect of the scheme.

The proposed uses include staff and student residences. CSS Policy SP1 states that new housing will be primarily directed towards sites within Newcastle Town Centre, neighbourhoods with General Renewal Areas and Areas of Major Intervention, and within the identified significant urban centres. It goes on to say 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 ASP6 on the Rural Area states that there will be a maximum of 900 net additional dwellings of high design quality primarily located on sustainable brownfield land within the village envelopes of the key Rural Service Centres, namely Loggerheads, Madeley and the villages of Audley Parish, to meet identified local requirements, in particular, the need for affordable housing.

Saved Policy NLP H1 indicates that planning permission will only be given where one of a number of circumstances are satisfied including if the site is within the urban area of Newcastle or Kidsgrove or within one of the 'village envelopes'. This site does not satisfy any of the requirements listed.

As indicated above this site is not within the urban area or a village envelope nor would the proposed dwellings serve an identified local need as defined in the CSS. As such its development for residential purposes is not supported by housing policies in the Development Plan. However the CSS Policy SP1 goes on to say that investment in Keele University and Science Park will be fostered to help strengthen the local knowledge and skills base and facilitate the growth and competitiveness of high value business development, thereby increasing local job opportunities in these sectors.

The site is covered by NLP Policy E8 and that policy indicates that development will be permitted so long as it is limited to one or more of the uses specified within it. Such uses include staff and student residences and therefore the proposal accords with the requirements of this policy. Since 2006 the decision has been made to close Hawthorns and partially replace that accommodation at Barnes, and that development is underconstruction, and Three planning consents were granted last year for significant numbers of student bed-spaces at various locations across the Campus - involving the redevelopment at a higher density of three of the Halls – Barnes, Lindsay, Horwood (Refs. 16/01014/FUL, 16/01015/FUL and 16/01016/FUL). Given the aspirations of the University to grow, these developments and the granting of those consents does not undermine the case for further additional student accommodation in this location.

CSS Policy SP2 lists Spatial Principles of Economic Development and includes investment in Keele University and Keele Science Park.

This site is in a relatively sustainable location. Newcastle Town Centre is approximately 3km from the site and although the route back from the Town Centre to the site is up hill, it is considered that at least some students would be able to walk to the shops and services of Newcastle Town Centre with regular bus services to destinations around the borough, and beyond. There is, at least during term time, a very high frequency bus service connecting Keele with Newcastle bus station, the hospital, the railway station and the City Centre. Importantly the dwellings are to be developed within the University Campus providing the students with accommodation very close to their place of study and the associated shops and services that the Campus offers. It is considered therefore that the site provides a particularly sustainable location for student and staff accommodation.

Overall it is considered that the proposal accords with the aims and objectives of the NPPF and should be supported in principle.

Members may wish to note that in addition to the limits of any condition that may be granted in response to this application, there are Section 106 agreements dating from 1997 and 2002 which may

provide additional controls on the use. Further information is being obtained on these and will be reported to the Committee

#### Impact on the Registered Historic Park and Keele Hall Conservation Area

The land is on the western edge of the Park and is not within an area that has been formally planted or designed. The development will not physically impact on the historical elements of the Park.

The very far south-western corner of the site is adjacent to the Keele Hall Conservation Area. Local and national planning policies seek to protect and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and development that is contrary to those aims will be resisted. There is a statutory duty upon the Local Planning Authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas in the exercise of planning functions.

No development is proposed within the boundary of the Conservation Area and the vast majority of the Conservation Area is not visible from the site.

Staffordshire Gardens and Parks Trust has referred to the importance of ensuring that the height of any new buildings submitted as future reserved matters is controlled to ensure they do not exceed the crest of the perimeter belt of trees on the ridge surrounding the Registered Park and Garden and thus do not intrude into views within the Historic Park. It is likely that some of the buildings will exceed the height of the trees on the ridge but the topography and tree cover would provide screening of much of the buildings and given the extensive development that has already taken place at the University, it is not considered that buildings of such a height would impact significantly upon the Historic Park. It is not considered therefore that it would be reasonable or necessary to impose a condition limiting the height of buildings to not exceed the height of the trees.

In relation to the previous application it was concluded that the impact upon the Historic Park and the Keele Hall Conservation Area would not be significant enough to justify a refusal and there has been no change in circumstances since that permission, to justify a different conclusion now.

#### Highways impact

The access to the site and the internal road layout has been completed. A condition of the original planning permission required various measures including traffic calming through the Westlands, an improved roundabout at Gallowstree Lane/A525/Cemetery Road, toucan crossings on the A525 and the implementation of bus stops and infrastructure within the Science Park. All those required works have been completed.

The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement (TS) which reviews and updates the Transport Assessment submitted with the original application. The review takes account of developments already undertaken at the site and compares current and previous levels of predicted traffic growth. New capacity assessments for the main junctions and those that were close to or at capacity in the forecast year (2023) of the original Assessment have been assessed. Public transport connectivity has been reviewed as has the impact of the traffic calming measures installed through the Westlands, along Gallowstree Lane and Sneyd Avenue. The updated Statement concludes that the proposed development will not have any unacceptable impacts on prevailing traffic and transport conditions.

The Highway Authority raises no objections to the proposal. They summarise the conclusions of the TS and refer to the fact that in the 2005 Transport Assessment (TA), Staffordshire County Council agreed to fund improvements to the A525/A531 junction which has existing issues. It is stated that a scheme is yet to be delivered and recommends that the County Council continue to monitor the junction.

The previous planning consent was subject to a condition that specified the level of the various uses on the site and this condition was considered necessary because of the different traffic generation implications of alternative development scenarios. The TA compared two scenarios, both with hotel/conference facilities but one with some B1 and some academic and other uses and the other

with all remaining land devoted to B1 use. The proposal was for the former but the TA indicated that the latter proposals were likely to generate some 25-30% more traffic at peak times than the proposal which the application was for. Given that the works to the A525/A531 junction have not yet been carried out, it is considered necessary to impose a condition limiting the development mix. Further advice from the Highway Authority is being sought on this matter and will be reported to Members once received.

#### The acceptability of the design of the proposed development

Although the application is an outline submission and all matters except for access are reserved for subsequent approval, a Design and Planning Framework has been submitted. It states that the original planning application for the site provided a development strategy which was defined by design criteria applied to specific zones and a set of design criteria were provided for each. The objective of the design guide was to facilitate high quality, attractive and sustainable development on the site. Rather than create a single, unified character to the entire development area, it was identified as a primary design objective that the character of the proposed development should vary across the site to reflect the spatial relationship that each part of the site has with its surroundings and to create a rich and diverse character. The overall site was divided into three distinct development zones. This new application seeks to utilise the same zonal design strategy but although upper and lower limits of height were given for each zone in the previous application, there is no similar information in this application. There is no longer a requirement to state upper and lower limits of height in submitting an outline application where scale is a reserved matter. The Planning Authority would have control over the height of buildings through the submission of reserved matters applications and therefore it is not considered necessary to attach a condition limiting height at this stage.

A summary of the characteristics of each zone is as follows:

Zone A - an area of generally level land to the north of the site. To reflect Zone A's more direct relationship with the adjoining Medical Research Facility, Innovation Centres and the University Campus in general, should be developed in a more overtly urban manner with strong linear routes which set up views and vistas through and beyond the development.

Zone B – lies centrally to the overall site area and generally slopes in both an east/west and north/south direction. Due to its more direct connection to the surrounding natural landscape Zone B has been identified as having the potential to act as a transition zone between the formality of Zone A and the more naturalistic context of the remainder of the site.

Zone C – lies to the southern edge of the development area. This area is where the built environment interacts most obviously with the open landscape and therefore this area will be developed to ensure that buildings are more integrated spatially and aesthetically into this context and will be expressed in both layout and form in a relatively informal manner.

This design approach is considered acceptable.

#### Landscape Impact

The application is accompanied by a Visual Impact Appraisal which concludes that, upon completion, the site will generally be screened by the existing mature woodland which surrounds the site and that there will be no unacceptably adverse visual impacts. In relation to the previous application, it was concluded that there would be no demonstrable harm to the landscape arising from the development and it is not considered that there has been any material change in circumstances to justify a different conclusion now. As indicated above details of requirements of an earlier Section 106 which included some off site planting are being obtained and will be reported to the meeting.

#### Time limit for submission of reserved matters pursuant to the permission (and implementation)

The previous consent was subject to a condition requiring application for the approval of any of the reserved matters to be made within 10 years and the reason stated for the condition was to allow for the incremental development of this large mixed use site and to ensure that the permission reflects the expected time span of the proposed development. Although some of the plots have now been

developed, this remains a large site, divided into development plots, and therefore it is considered necessary to apply a longer time limit than that normally applied to planning permissions (i.e. 3 years). However, given that the engineering works including the creation of levelled plots and the creation of the road network serving these plots has been completed, it is considered that a shorter period of 7 years (for submission of any applications for approval of the reserved matters) would now be reasonable, enabling the outline planning permission to be reviewed at that time and the taking into account any change in circumstances – should such submissions not have been made by then.

## **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

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Policy SP1:   | Spatial Principles of Targeted Regeneration |
| Policy SP2:   | Spatial Principles of Economic Development  |
| Policy SP3:   | Spatial Principles of Movement and Access   |
| Policy ASP6:  | Rural Area Spatial Policy                   |
| Policy CSP1:  | Design Quality                              |
| Policy CSP2:  | Historic Environment                        |
| Policy CSP3:  | Sustainability and Climate Change           |
| Policy CSP4:  | Natural Assets                              |
| Policy CSP10: | Planning Obligations                        |

#### Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan (NLP) 2011

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Policy H1:  | Residential Development: Sustainable Location and Protection of the Countryside           |
| Policy E8:  | Keele University and Keele Science Park   |
| Policy T16: | Development – General Parking Requirements  |
| Policy N17: | Landscape Character – General Considerations  |
| Policy N19: | Landscape Maintenance Areas   |
| Policy B8:  | Other Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest                                     |
| Policy B9:  | Prevention of Harm to Conservation Areas  |
| Policy B10: | The Requirement to Preserve or Enhance the Character or Appearance of a Conservation Area |
| Policy B14: | Development in or Adjoining the Boundary of Conservation Areas                            |

### **Other Material Considerations include:**

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

#### Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2014)

#### Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

#### Developer contributions SPD (September 2007)

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

#### Planning for Landscape Change - SPG to the former Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan

### **Relevant Planning History of application site and adjoining land**

- 05/01146/OUT Outline planning permission for development for (a) academic functions; (b) staff and student residences; (c) employment uses directly related to or complementary to the University's core activities including conference, training, retail and leisure – for use of students, staff, conference delegates and their visitors and in the case of leisure facilities for the wider community; (d) Class B1 uses directly related to the University's functional activities but excluding manufacturing or storage of large tonnages or mass production of goods; and full planning permission for works including formation of development plateaux, roads, footpaths, cycleways and other infrastructure – Approved December 2006 following completion of Section 106 agreement.
- 10/00631/REM Approval of siting, design and external appearance of a conference, training and leisure hotel on plot 1a (outline permission for which was granted under reference



05/01146/OUT), the means of access to its site from the road network and the internal landscaping of its site – Refused in 2011 and subsequent appeal allowed later that year (permission now lapsed)

- 11/00058/FUL Full planning permission on plot 5 for the construction of three-storey business accommodation to be known as Innovation Centre 5 (IC5) with the provision of workshops on the ground floor and offices on the first and second floors, with associated parking and landscaping – Approved April 2011
- 11/00655/FUL Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 11/00058/FUL for the construction of three-storey business accommodation to be known as Innovation Centre 5 (IC5) with the provision of workshops on the ground floor and offices on the first and second floors, with associated parking and landscaping so as to permit amendments to proposed elevations of Wing B and Wing C – Approved February 2012
- 15/00190/FUL Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 11/00058/FUL for the construction of a three storey business accommodation (IC5) involving amended elevations to those previously approved – Approved 2015
- 15/00542/FUL Construction of a building on plot 9 and part of plot 10 for use as a treatment, assessment and research facility for children with autism with associated car parking and landscaping – Approved 2015
- 17/00012/FUL Creation of temporary car park and associated works – Approved 2017
- 17/00193/FUL Erection of a building to be used as an Innovation and Leadership Facility (MCIL) on plot 2 – Approved 2017

### **Views of Consultees**

The **Highway Authority** has no objections although they do make various observations.

The **Environmental Health Division** has no objections subject to contaminated land conditions.

The **Landscape Development Section** has no objections in principle subject to the landscape structure of the original permission, including all green corridors, being retained. Permission should be subject to submission of an updated structural landscape plan.

The **Conservation Officer** has no observations to make.

**Historic England** makes no comment.

**Staffordshire Gardens and Parks Trust** notes that the application is a resubmission of a lapsed outline planning proposal for which much of the site infrastructure has already been installed, and therefore makes no comment on the principle of the proposed development. The importance of ensuring that the height of any new buildings submitted as future reserved matters is controlled to ensure they do not exceed the crest of the perimeter belt of trees on the ridge surrounding the Registered Park and Garden and thus do not intrude into views within the historic park.

The **Conservation Advisory Working Party** considers that the amendments are not particularly an improvement on the scheme but has no objections.

**Staffordshire County Council Rural County (Environmental Advice)** raises no historic environment concerns.

The **Lead Local Flood Authority** has no objections subject to a condition requiring the submission and approval of a detailed surface water drainage scheme.

The **Crime Prevention Design Advisor** states that there is little if any mention of matters of site security within the application documents. The site could be vulnerable outside of working hours and there should be some site-wide security provision in the form of a monitored CCTV system. Security should be fully embedded within subsequent reserved matters applications and layouts should facilitate natural surveillance, provide defensible space where possible, restrict access where appropriate and deny criminal opportunities where they can be foreseen. In addition, the external building materials will need to provide an appropriate level of intruder resistance.

**Staffordshire County Council as the Mineral and Waste Planning Authority** makes no comments on this application.

No comments have been received from **Keele Parish Council**.

### **Representations**

None received

### **Applicant's/Agent's submission**

The application forms and plans have been submitted. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk assessment, an Ecological Appraisal, a Phase 1 Desk Study, a Visual Impact Appraisal, a Transport Assessment and a Design and Planning Framework. These documents are available for inspection at the Guildhall and via the following link:

<http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/17/00934/OUT>

### **Background papers**

Planning files referred to  
Planning Documents referred to

### **Date report prepared**

9<sup>th</sup> February 2018