

Item No: 5.2
Application No: 15/01352/FUL
Date valid: 18 August 2015
Target decision date: 13 October 2015
Author: Maxine Ingram
☎: 0191 643 6322
Ward: Weetslade

Application type: full planning application

Location: Access Road, Sandy Lane, Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, North Gosforth, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Proposal: Construction (change of use from agricultural land) of single carriageway access road to facilitate improved access to Sandy Lane industrial estate and safeguard the enablement of future local development (Amended landscape plan and ecology report 2.10.15)

Applicant: North Tyneside Council, FAO Mr Andy Flynn Quadrant East The Silverlink North Cobalt Business Park North Tyneside NE270BY

Agent: Capita, FAO Mrs Rachel Taylor The Capita Building Kingmoor Business Park Carlisle Cumbria CA6 4SJ

RECOMMENDATION: Application Permitted

INFORMATION

1.0 Summary Of Key Issues & Conclusions

1.0 Main Planning Issues

- Principle of the development, including impact on the highway network;
- Impact on the wildlife corridor (ecology and trees);
- Impact on surrounding area;
- Other issues.

2.0 Description of the Site

2.1 The site, subject of this application, forms part of a wider employment allocation (approximately 30+ hectares). The wider employment allocation lies within undulating countryside adjacent to the Green Belt. This wider employment allocation is bound to the north by the Weetslade Country Park, reclaimed from a large waste heap associated with a former colliery. To the south is the A1056 Sandy Lane and beyond this is the Gosforth Park, containing woodlands, a nature reserve, a race course and golf courses. Within the wider employment allocation are existing businesses including those sited on the Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Auto Parc and other small businesses. The undeveloped land has been branded as Indigo Park and the Council has entered into a partnership with a developer to bring forward investment on this site as per its allocation.

2.2 The A1056 Sandy Lane connects to the main north-south routes of the A1 to the west and the A189 and A19 to the east. Some bus services run along Sandy

Lane and regionally significant east-west recreational footpath/cycle routes lie to the north of the wider employment allocation.

2.3 The site itself is a narrow parcel of land situated between an agricultural field to the west and a cluster of small businesses to the east, including Lola's Place (dog day care) and a builder's merchant. Located further to the east of the site is short row of residential properties, Nos. 1-8 Sandy Lane. Located further to the west of the site is Sandy Lane Industrial Estate.

2.4 The site is sited in close proximity to Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), Gosforth Park a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and local wildlife sites (LWS) including the Sacred Heart Fen, Gosforth Wood Nature Reserve and the Weetslade Country Park.

3.0 Description of the Proposed Development

3.1 The development proposed is to construct a new access road. The new access road will be approximately 12m wide accommodating two lanes southbound and one lane northbound. A 4m wide shared pedestrian cycle path will be sited on both sides of the access road. Verges will be provided to both sides of the new access road to provide landscaping.

3.2 The existing access to the business units located to the east of the site will be closed and relocated onto the east side of the new access road. An indicative access is shown on the submitted plans to show that an access into the agricultural field can be provided if necessary. After this point the access road will end, providing an adoptable access route into the undeveloped land in readiness for future development of the employment land located to the north of the site.

4.0 Background Information

4.1 The applicant has provided the following background information:

4.2 The former Northern Gateway major scheme was to involve constructing a new 1.8km dual carriageway link between the B1318 and the A189, running to the north of the existing A1056 Sandy Lane and to the south of the former Weetslade colliery site. It would also have involved the construction of two new roundabouts and 300m of side roads, to provide access both to existing residential and industrial areas along Sandy Lane and to a proposed new business park on the former colliery site, and improvements to the A189/A1056 Weetslade roundabout.

4.3 While this scheme was an agreed regional priority, it was not successful in securing final approval for government funding. The scheme was withdrawn in 2010 following an increase in the estimated costs and changes to the government guidance on major schemes funding. It was agreed that the Authority would pursue the option of improvements within the existing highway boundary, which could be delivered more quickly and would address traffic flow concerns including those associated with the future build-out of the wider allocated employment site.

4.4 A new scheme for the A1056 Weetslade corridor was identified in the Strategic Economic Plan for the North East and is now being brought forward with funding from the North East Growth Deal. The scheme involves improvements to A1056 Sandy Lane within the existing highway boundary, to improve traffic flows at junctions and support accessibility to employment sites. The existing access to the Sandy Lane Industrial Estate will be upgraded as part of the scheme. A new access point from A1056 Sandy Lane to the wider allocation employment site is also to be provided: this will also incorporate a new access to the adjacent businesses to the east of the application site.

4.5 Improvements to the A189/A1056 Weetslade roundabout are to be delivered in conjunction with developer funding from the Whitehouse Farm residential development. These include: signalisation, improvements to pedestrian/cycle movements and closure of the existing Peter Barratt's/Gosforth Park egress.

5.0 Relevant Planning History

5.1 None

6.0 Development Plan

6.1 North Tyneside Unitary Development Plan (adopted March 2002)
Direction from Secretary of State under Paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 of Town and Country Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 in respect of policies in the North Tyneside UDP (August 2007)

6.2 Weetslade Development Brief SPD (March 2007)

7.0 Government Policy

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of all applications. It requires LPAs to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development in determining development proposals. Due weight should still be attached to Development Plan policies according to the degree to which any policy is consistent with the NPPF.

PLANNING OFFICERS REPORT

8.0 Main Issues

The main issues in this case are:

- Principle of the development, including impact on the highway network;
- Impact on the wildlife corridor (ecology and trees);
- Impact on surrounding area;
- Other issues.

8.1 Consultations responses and representations received as a result of the publicity given to this application are set out in the appendix to this report.

8.2 Principle of the development, including the impact on the highway network
NPPF sets out three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These issues require the planning system to perform a number of roles. In terms of an economic role the planning system is required to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure. In this instance the aims of the economic role must be balanced against the environmental which seeks to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment including improving biodiversity.

8.3 NPPF makes clear that these roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

8.4 NPPF (paragraph 18) clearly states “The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country’s inherent strengths....” It goes on to state (paragraph 19) that “The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system”.

8.5 The site, subject of this application, forms part of a wider employment allocation within the Councils Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2002). This area identified for new employment development is informed by Policy LE1/1. The wider employment allocation extends to some 30+ hectares, including some existing businesses and agricultural land. UDP supporting text elaborates on the policy base and explains that in designating the site for employment land (and more specifically B1, B2 and B8 uses), the Local Planning Authority intends to maximise the benefits of the location, which is ideally suited to those uses considered unsuitable in both residential areas and town centre locations, requiring easy access to the principal highway network.

8.6 Part of the site also lies within a wider area which is identified as derelict land to be reclaimed for open space, woodland and employment uses in accordance with policy E7/1(2).

8.7 In addition to the UDP policies referred to above, the adopted ‘Weetslade Development Brief – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2007) is relevant. This document is linked directly to the adopted UDP but provides a more detailed policy context to guide the comprehensive development of this employment land. It was prepared to fulfil the requirements of UDP policies LE1/1 and LE1/2 and, as required, it takes into account a wide range of issues including environmental mitigation and improvements, economic benefits, highway improvements and access. This adopted brief provides the key land use and design principles which future developers should follow in bringing the site

forward. Its role is to assist promotion, funding and implementation of the elements necessary to facilitate comprehensive development of this site.

8.8 The brief contains a concept masterplan which gives an indication as to how the site could come forward and address the requirements for environmental mitigation, access and economic benefits. It is clear however in the brief itself that the detailed form of plot layout and building design is not prescribed to allow a degree of flexibility to support innovation, high quality design and meeting perspective end users requirements. A key secondary objective of the brief was to facilitate the earliest construction of the A1056 link road to facilitate development of this site. This proposal would provide a link into the designated employment land whilst further works would be carried out to create another access further to the west.

8.9 The brief deals with the development of the employment site only, the sites relationship with the Weetslade Country Park, existing ecology features and habitats will be factors in the determination of future planning applications.

8.10 Members are advised that the wider employment land allocation was intended to be bisected by the proposed route of the Northern Gateway highway improvements – essentially a new stretch of dual carriageway, linking the A1 and A189, by-passing Sandy Lane. As advised in Section 3 of this report this highway improvement is no longer being pursued and alternative highway improvements are to be implemented.

8.11 The Council's Employment Land Review Draft (2015) recommends the retention of this site. This review advises that this site offers opportunities for bespoke manufacturing and distribution buildings and the site is one of the largest in the north able to accommodate a range of unit sizes.

8.12 The Council has twice consulted on the Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft. At this stage, and in accordance with the criteria identified at paragraph 216 of the NPPF, it is considered the draft policies of the emerging plan can be afforded no more than limited weight. On this basis, the draft local plan policies are not referred to in this assessment of this planning application. Members are advised that having assessed employment needs until 2032, it is considered that the remaining employment land at Weetslade, extending to some 30+ ha remains a key location for employment land in the emerging plan.

8.13 With the exception of Sandy Lane Industrial Estate there is currently no vehicular access to the wider employment allocation. The adopted brief was prepared on the assumption that there would be a by-pass and it proposes access arrangements where two access roads would be linked to the by-pass: one extending from the existing Sandy Lane Industrial Estate road and a second new access road, in the same location as the road subject of this planning application.

8.14 Members, in making their decision, need to be considered whether the proposed access road would assist in bringing forward the development of the wider employment allocation providing future developers with a choice of land.

This catalyst would assist in bringing further economic growth into the Borough and region.

8.15 NPPF states “All developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. Plans and decisions should take into account whether:....safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe”.

8.16 NPPF (paragraph 35) states “Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to: give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements”.

8.17 LDD12 ‘Transport and Highways’ SPD provides guidance on the Council’s planning policies relating to transport and highways considerations. The SPD sets out the procedures that North Tyneside Council follows in order to ensure that the transport implications of new developments are consistently assessed and appropriate measures secured.

8.18 UDP Policy T8 sets out guidance on cycling infrastructure within the borough.

8.19 UDP Policy T9 sets out guidance for the needs of pedestrians.

8.20 The proposed development introduces a new access road and signalised junction to the north of the A1056 (Sandy Lane). The site is located approximately 450m to the west of the A189/A1056 Sandy Lane roundabout.

8.21 There is an existing junction into the business units to the east of the site. The Highways Network Manager has advised that this junction can be difficult to enter/exit due to no right turn packet and the volume of traffic on the A1056. Furthermore, there are no pedestrian/cycling crossing facilities within the vicinity of the junction. The nearest pedestrian refuge crossing is located approximately 220m to the east of the existing business units entrance. Members are advised that should planning permission be granted for this development a Section 106 Agreement has previously been secured to close this existing junction and for provision of an alternative access to be provided for the existing and future businesses to the east of the site from this development. This new junction will be sited 60m north of the A1056 Sandy Lane.

8.22 The proposed access road will be approximately 12m wide accommodating two lanes southbound and one lane northbound. A 4m wide shared pedestrian/cycle path will be provided on both sides of the access road. Toucan crossings will be provided improving both cycle and pedestrian movements.

8.23 The applicant has provided a plan indicating a compound location for site materials and operative parking along with measures that will be taken to prevent mud becoming deposited on the highway.

8.24 The applicant has also included details of the highway improvements proposed to the A1056 Sandy Lane to facilitate the development subject of this application and future development. Members are advised that these works do not form part of this application and are for information purposes only. These works include: road widening for the creation of the signalised junction with the A1056 eastbound to have two lanes which will be a dedicated ahead and an extensive dedicated right turn lane. From the new access road there will be two lanes a dedicated left turn and dedicated right turn lane. The signalised junction will vastly improve the situation for vehicles entering/exiting the business units to the east of the site.

8.25 The accessibility of the site will be improved for walking/cycling. The footpath will link to improvements, which do not form part of this application, and these include a new shared pedestrian/cycle path provided on the northern side of the A1056 Sandy Lane. The existing pedestrian footpath on the southern side of the A1056 Sandy Lane will remain.

8.26 The Highways Network Manager has been consulted. He has raised no objections.

8.27 Members need to consider whether the proposed access road is acceptable in terms of its impact on the adjacent highway network. On balance, it is officer's advice that it is. The proposed access road would provide an appropriate access road leading to the wider employment designation located to the north of the site and existing businesses located to the east of the site. A suitable access point leading to the wider employment designation would be supported by NPPF which encourages economic growth.

8.28 Furthermore, at this time, there would be no increase in traffic as a result of the proposed development. Any impact on the highway network as result of future development would be assessed on its own merits.

8.29 Pedestrian and cycle movements along this highway corridor would also be improved.

8.30 To conclude, it is officer advice that the proposed development would not result in a severe impact on the adjacent highway network, provide access to the wider employment designation and improve pedestrian and cycle links in this location.

9.0 Impact on ecology

9.1 An environmental role is one of the three dimensions of sustainable development according to NPPF, which seek s to protect and enhance our natural, built, and historic environment and as part of this helping to improve biodiversity amongst other matters.

9.2 Paragraph 109 of NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by amongst other matters minimising the impacts of biodiversity and providing net gains to biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity.

9.3 Paragraph 118 of NPPF states that when determining planning applications LPA's should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by avoiding significant harm from development. If significant harm cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated from the planning permission should be refused.

9.4 UDP Policy E12/3 states that development which would adversely affect a site of nature conservation importance (SNCI and now known as Local Wildlife Site) will not be permitted unless: no alternative site is reasonably available and the benefits of the development would outweigh the importance of the site; or appropriate measures of mitigation of, or compensation for, all the adverse effects are secured, where appropriate through planning conditions or planning obligations. In all cases any adverse effects of development shall be minimised.

9.5 UDP Policy E12/6 states that development which would adversely affect the contribution to biodiversity of a wildlife corridor identified on the proposals map will not be permitted unless: no alternative site is reasonably available; or appropriate measures of mitigation of, or compensation for, all the adverse effects are secured, where appropriate through planning conditions or obligations. In all cases any adverse effects of development shall be minimised. In additions the positive effect of a proposed development on the contribution to biodiversity of a wildlife corridor will be taken into account in determining planning applications.

9.6 UDP Policy E14 states that the Local Planning Authority will seek to protect and conserve existing trees and landscape features within the urban environment and will encourage new planting in association with development and whenever possible in other suitable locations.

9.7 The objections received from residents, the Northumberland Wildlife Trust, the Natural History Society and Campaign for Rural England are noted. These objections are set out in the accompanying Appendix to this report. The main objections raised include, amongst other matters, the impact on this strategic wildlife corridor, the impact on wildlife and the lack of a master plan to show how the proposed development links to the wider employment allocation and how environmental mitigation will be provided in relation to the development of the employment land allocation.

9.8 The applicant has submitted an Ecology Appraisal. The appraisal acknowledges that mitigation measures are required to ensure the continued function of the wildlife corridor and to ensure the scheme meets the above national and local planning policies. This appraisal has been considered by the Council's Ecologist.

9.9 The site is set in close proximity to the SNCI's, the Gosforth Park SSSI, and LWS's, including the Sacred Heart Fen, Gosforth Wood Nature Reserve and Weetslade Country Park.

9.10 The site falls within a strategic wildlife corridor which links Weetslade Country Park to the north and Gosforth Park to the south as well as linking two potential further wildlife corridors which run north-south along the A1056 Sandy Lane. It is noted that in the brief an access road has always been shown in this location with structural planting/wildlife links being provided on the adjacent land. However, the adjacent land (agricultural field) does not form part of this application and any future development of this land would be assessed on its merits including the impact on the function of this strategic wildlife corridor.

9.11 The supporting information advised that the proposed access road would require land take of approximately 4,940 square metres (sqm) from a 150m length of this wildlife corridor. Officers do not dispute that the loss of this land in this location would narrow the wildlife corridor as a result of the proposed development. The submitted Ecology Appraisal considers this loss to result in a moderate impact on the wildlife corridor in the short term due to the narrowing. The appraisal acknowledges that there is potential for major impacts if future developments, particularly the adjacent agricultural field, further reduces the availability of structural planting/wildlife links in this key area to the extent that the wildlife corridor can no longer function. However, Members can only assess the development before them. Any future development of surrounding allocated employment land will be assessed on its own merits, including the function of the key wildlife corridor.

9.12 The location of the road accords with the concept design set out in the adopted brief. It is not considered that this proposal on its own has such a significant impact to justify refusal of permission. The proposed road will serve to facilitate future development but it will not itself prejudice the wider development of the employment site coming forward in a comprehensive manner which will take account of the wider objectives of the brief and UDP policy to ensure that appropriate environmental mitigation is provided. The objectives of the brief and UDP policy remain applicable to future development proposals. Having regard to the objections received, it is recognised that when future proposals are developed it would be beneficial for these to be developed in the context of a masterplan which takes forward the principles of the brief. Approval of this proposal now would not preclude this.

9.13 The submitted appraisal advised that the arable habitat within the site boundary and the wildlife corridor is of generally of low ecological importance but is considered important in facilitating dispersal of plants and animals in the wider area through its corridor function. A verge is to be provided to both sides of the proposed access road. The applicant has advised that this area of land amounts to approximately 1,665 sqm to provide mitigation. The inclusion of the verge immediately adjacent to the agricultural field assists in maintaining a functional wildlife corridor in this location. There are currently no plans to develop this adjoining field (although it does form part of the wider employment land allocation) and as such there will remain a functional corridor for wildlife

movement in the short term. An access into this field is indicated to demonstrate that access to continue current agricultural activities can be maintained in the future. Furthermore, the proposed mitigation (wildflower meadow, native hedgerow and trees) along the edge of the proposed access road is considered to be of higher biodiversity value for both foraging and commuting species than that which currently exists. The Council's Biodiversity Officer has requested minor changes to the suggested mitigation. She has requested that the standard trees are incorporated as hedgerow trees, instead of within the grassland mix. This would increase the number of standards within the scheme to 36. A condition is recommended to secure this. She has also requested a management plan.

9.14 The submitted appraisal advises that there was no evidence of protected species using the site during the survey visit. It was noted that there is potential for the site to be used by species such as birds, badger, otter, bats and deer as commuting routes.

9.15 The appraisal also concluded that great crested newt (GCN) would not be harmed or disturbed by the developments as the nearest GCN pond is 375m away from the proposed works and is severed from the development by the A1056 and a boundary wall to Gosforth Park.

9.16 The Council's Landscape Architect has assessed the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS). These documents included a tree survey and protection methods.

9.17 The Landscape Architect has advised that the reports cover the full extent of Sandy Lane and has surveyed the trees as follows: 1no tree as a Category A; 12no trees as Category B; 14no. trees as Category C with 1no category U tree with a number of tree groups and hedgerows.

9.18 In relation to the application site, a single sycamore tree T11 (Category C) will need to be removed to facilitate the proposal. The removal of T11, sycamore is an acceptable loss. There are no other trees on the application site. An amended landscape plan has been submitted which include species rich grassland mix on both verges; the planting of 12 standard oak trees (*Quercus robur*) with smaller tree species on the eastern verge, a native, species-rich hedge row along both boundaries and continuing along the A1056; and species rich grassland mix on the associated verges of the A1056. The increased new tree planting numbers is welcome, however the Landscape Architect would like to see the eastern boundary strengthened further with additional trees planted (within the hedge) at reasonable spacings. Trees spaced further apart can establish without conflict and help screen the neighbouring units. A condition is recommended to secure this.

9.19 Members need to consider whether the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its impact on the wildlife corridor and whether the mitigation proposed meets the requirements of both NPPF and UDP policies. On balance, it is officer advice that it is acceptable and would not affect the nearby SSSI or LWS. It is noted that the land take would be approximately 4, 940 sqm.

However, the land is currently of low ecological value and surveys have shown that there was no evidence of protected species using the site during the survey visits. Furthermore, the mitigation that is being provided would improve the ecological value of this site. It is not considered that the impact of this scheme alone would justify refusal of permission and the benefits of securing access to facilitate the future development of the remaining land need to be considered.

10.0 Impact on local amenities

10.1 NPPF paragraph 123 states 'Planning policies should aim to: avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development; mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise new development, including through conditions; recognise that development will often create some noise and existing business wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established; and identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason'.

10.2 UDP Policy E3 states that the local planning authority will seek to minimise the impact of pollution on the environment, including existing land uses, and on proposed development and will support and encourage measures, including monitoring of pollution, to reduce existing pollution to the lowest practicable levels.

10.3 UDP Policy H13 states that in assessing proposals for non residential uses within or adjacent to residential areas or for changes of use from residential to other uses, or for the intensifications of an existing residential use will be approved only where the LPA consider that they would not adversely affect residential amenity. Uses that generate excessive noise, smell fumes, traffic, or on street parking problems will not be allowed. Applications for the expansion or intensification of existing non-residential uses within residential areas will be judged against the same criteria.

10.4 The Manager for Environmental Health has been consulted. She has concerns regarding the proximity of the new access road to facilitate the wider employment land allocation in relation to the residential housing on Sandy Lane. These existing residential properties are sited approximately 90m to the east of the application site.

10.5 These concerns are noted as it is anticipated that the proposed access road will lead to the expansion of the employment land resulting in an increase in noise impact to the existing residential properties.

10.6 The request for acoustic screening on the side of the access road closest to the residential properties is noted. There are concerns regarding this request in terms of both providing the level of mitigation required to assist in mitigating the impact on the wildlife corridor and highway safety in terms of visibility. Furthermore, these existing residential properties are separated from the application site by a variety of existing commercial businesses. Therefore, it is

not considered that the proposed access road would result in such a significant impact on the residential amenity of these properties to such an extent that would sustain a recommendation of refusal. Impact on noise from potential future development would be considered at the time proposals were received.

10.7 Members are advised that no objections have been received from these residential properties as a result of the consultation process. Subject to conditions controlling the hours of construction it is officer advice that the impact on residential amenity is acceptable.

11.0 Other Issues

11.1 Newcastle International Airport (NIA) has been consulted. They have advised that the physical development would not result in any obstacle to overflying aircraft, or interference with navigational aids. They have also commented on landscaping advising that certain species should not be used in quantities greater than 10%, in order to prevent the creation of bird attracting features on site. A further condition is recommended to ensure that the floodlighting be fully cut off, in order to prevent any light spill into the atmosphere, to the detriment of the safety of aircraft within the vicinity of the site.

11.2 Members need to determine whether the proposed development, including the SUDs, is acceptable in terms of aviation safety. Subject to conditions it is officer advice that it is.

11.3 Contaminated Land

11.4 The Contaminated Land Officer has been consulted. She has raised no objections.

11.5 Newcastle City Council has been consulted. No objections have been raised on any grounds including the impact on wildlife corridor links, proximity to the SSSI or highway issues.

11.6 Highways England has been consulted. No objections have been raised.

12.0 Conclusion

12.1 Members should consider carefully the balance of issues before them and the need to take in account national policy within NPPF and the weight to be accorded to this as well as current local planning policy.

12.2 Specifically NPPF states that LPA's should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. A core planning principle within NPPF requires that every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.

12.3 It is recognised that the proposed scheme will result in the loss of part of the strategic wildlife corridor to provide access to a wider employment land allocation. Members need to balance this against the benefits of the proposed scheme in terms of providing employment opportunities and consider whether the

5. Prior to the commencement of development checking surveys shall be carried out for any badger and new badger setts.

Reason: The site lies within a wildlife corridor and in close proximity to SSSI. In the interests of wildlife protection having regard to NPPF.

6. Vegetation clearance/tree felling shall be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive), unless a checking survey by a suitably qualified ornithologist confirms the absence of active nests.

Reason: In the interests of wildlife protection having regard to NPPF.

7. Notwithstanding the approved plans, any proposed floodlighting should be fully cut off, preventing any light spill in to the atmosphere.

Reason: In the interest of aerodrome safeguarding.

8. Notwithstanding condition 1, Dust and mud mitigation measures shall be carried out in full accordance with the mitigation measures set out on the submitted "Site compound location plan - Dwg No WTSLD-CAP-00-PLA-DR-L-1006 Rev P01. These mitigation measures shall remain in place until construction works are complete.

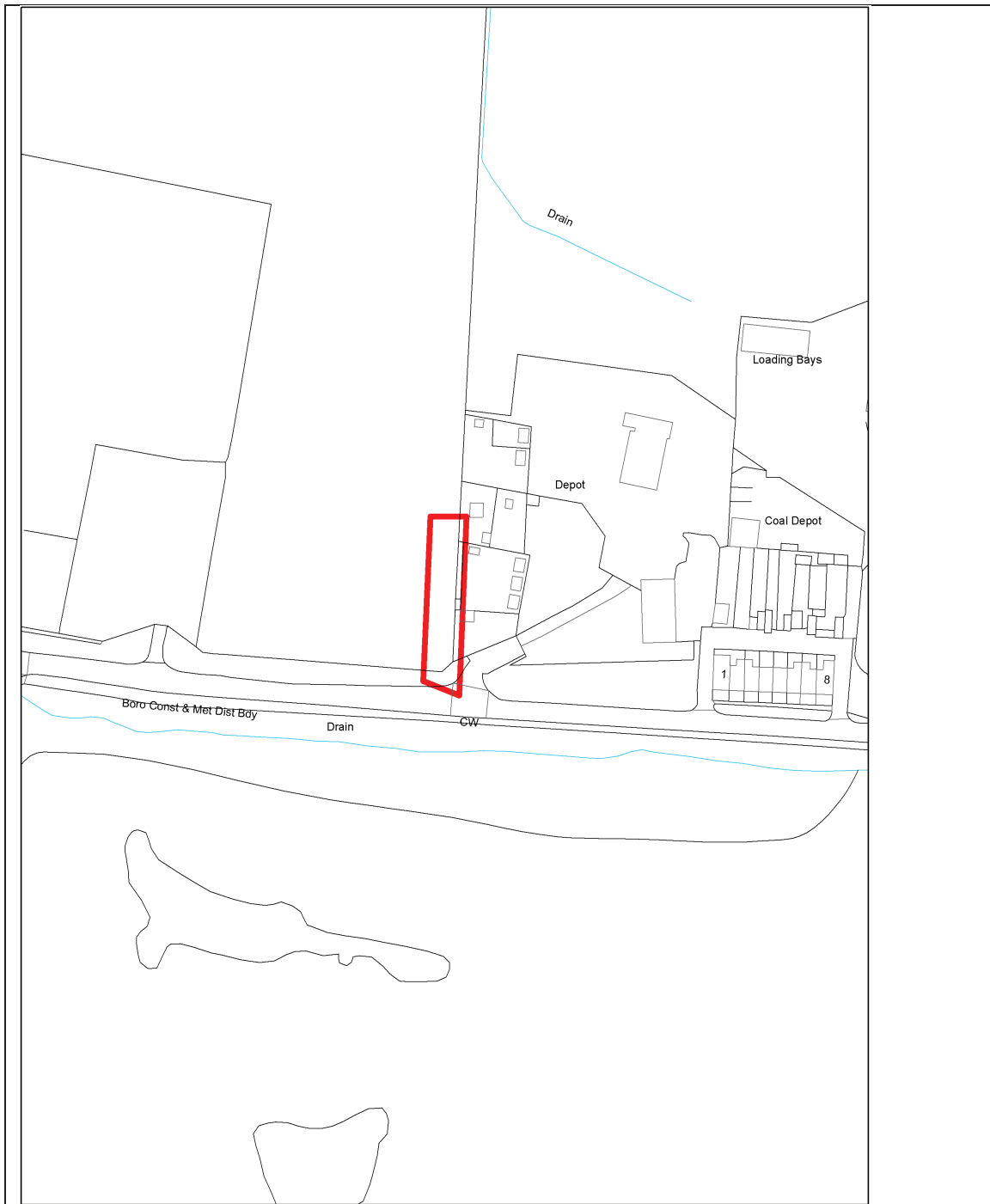
Reason: To safeguard the occupiers of surrounding properties and users of the public highway from any discomfort or loss of amenity arising from construction activities on the site having regard to Policy H13 of the North Tyneside Council Unitary Development Plan 2002.

Statement under Article 35 of the Town & Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015):

The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively and positively to issue the decision without delay. The Local Planning Authority has therefore implemented the requirements in Paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

A water main crosses the site access and may be affected by the proposed development. NWL do not permit a building over or close to our apparatus and therefore will be contacting the developer direct to establish the exact location of our assets and ensure any necessary diversion, relocation or protection measures required prior to the commencement of the development. For planning purposes you should note the presence of our assets may impact upon the layout of the scheme as it stands.



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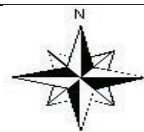
Location: Access Road, Sandy Lane, Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, North Gosforth

Proposal: Construction (change of use from agricultural land) of single carriageway access road to facilitate improved access to Sandy Lane industrial estate and safeguard the enablement of future local development (Amended landscape plan and ecology report 2.10.15)

Not to scale

Date: 16.10.2015

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Item 5.2

Appendix 1 – 15/01352/FUL

Consultations/representations

1.0 Internal Consultees

1.1 Highways Network Manager

1.2 This application is for the construction (change of use from agricultural land) of single carriageway access road to facilitate improved access to Sandy Lane industrial estate and safeguard the enablement of future local development at Sandy Lane, Gosforth. The proposed development site is located on the northern side of the A1056 Sandy Lane, on land owned by North Tyneside Council. The land is undeveloped and grassed, the field is fenced and accessed via a locked gate. The site is approximately 450m to the west of the A189/A1056 Sandy Lane Roundabout.

1.3 There is an existing junction into the business units to the east of the site, this junction can be difficult to enter/exit due to no right turn pocket and the high volume of traffic on the A1056. There are no pedestrian/cycling crossing facilities within the vicinity of the junction. The nearest is a pedestrian refuge crossing approximately 220m to the east of the existing business units entrance. It is proposed that if permission is granted for the new vehicular access the existing access will be closed once the new access has been brought into use.

1.4 The new road is approximately 30m to the west of the existing access to the business units to the east of the site which will be closed and relocated onto the new side road arm from the A1056 Sandy Lane. The entrance to the business units will be approximately 60m along the side road. The new carriageway will be approximately 12m wide accommodating two lanes southbound and one lane northbound with a 4m shared pedestrian/cycle path on both sides of the carriageway. The introduction of Toucan Crossings on all arms of the proposed junction will improve both cycle and pedestrian movements. The applicant has provided a plan indicating a compound location for site materials and operative parking along with measures that will be taken to prevent mud becoming deposited on the highway.

1.5 It is for the above reasons and on balance approval is recommended.

1.6 Recommendation – Approval

1.7 Ecology Officer

1.8 The above proposal seeks to build an access road off the A1056 Sandy lane to service a future employment site. The access road is proposed within a designated strategic wildlife corridor as shown on the Councils UDP map and therefore, has the potential to impact on this corridor without appropriate mitigation.

1.9 One of my concerns with the information submitted for this application, is the lack of an overall masterplan for this area showing how the proposed road links with a future business park and how wildlife corridors will be retained through the

site. Effectively, this proposal is a road to nowhere without any plans linking it to a future business park or any commitment to retain and enhance green corridors. An additional concern with the road is the inclusion of an access side road into the agricultural field to the west, suggesting that this area could potentially be developed in the future. This could result in the potential loss of this site, and the entire severance of this section of the corridor. An overall masterplan for this area/site would potentially address some of these issues and is the reason I would recommend that this is provided as supplementary information for the application.

1.10 Ecological Appraisal Report

1.11 Previous comments relating to the lack of a focused ecological appraisal for the access road and an assessment of the impacts of this scheme on the wildlife corridor have now been addressed with the submission of an updated ecological appraisal.

1.12 Habitat and Species Impacts

1.13 The updated appraisal focuses on habitats and species which could potentially be affected by this scheme and addresses any impacts on the wildlife corridor. The report concludes that the arable habitat within the site boundary and the corridor is generally of low ecological importance but is considered important in facilitating dispersal of plants and animals in the wider area through its corridor function. Whilst there was no evidence of protected species using the site during the survey visit, it was noted that there is potential for the site to be used by species such as birds, badger, otter, bats and deer as commuting routes.

1.14 It was also concluded that great crested newt (GCN) would not be harmed or disturbed by the development, as the nearest GCN pond is 375m away from the proposed works and is severed from the development by the A1056 and a boundary wall to Gosforth Park. In addition, the agricultural land within the scheme footprint is sub-optimal terrestrial habitat for GCN. I would agree with this and feel that the proposed development would not cause harm or disturbance to GCN.

1.15 Wildlife Corridor Assessment

The proposed site falls within a designated Strategic Wildlife Corridor and requires land take of approximately 5000 sqm. The report notes that whilst the remainder of the land in the corridor is expected to remain undeveloped, the narrowing of the wildlife corridor at this point represents a moderate impact on the corridor in the short term due to a narrowing of the corridor, with potential for major impacts if future developments reduce this area further to the extent the corridor can no longer function. I would broadly agree with this statement and refer back to my previous comments above regarding the need for an overall masterplan of the area that would alleviate many of the concerns regarding severance of the wildlife corridor and demonstrate the Councils commitment to retaining and creating green links through this area.

1.16 With regard to the wildlife corridor issue, the following policies apply:-

1.17 North Tyneside UDP policy E12/6:

Development which would adversely affect the contribution to biodiversity of a wildlife corridor identified on the proposals map will not be permitted unless:

- no alternative site is reasonably available; or,
- appropriate measures of mitigation of, or compensation for, all the adverse effects are secured, where appropriate through planning conditions or obligations

1.18 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 109 of NPPF: The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

Paragraph 118 of NPPF: When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should

- aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

1.19 The ecological appraisal acknowledges that mitigation measures are required to ensure the continued function of the wildlife corridor and to ensure the scheme meets the above national and local planning policies. The scheme, therefore, proposes the following along the edge of the new access road, to mitigate for the road scheme within the wildlife corridor:-

- 1635 sqm wildflower meadow
- 355 linear metres of native hedgerow
- 21 standard native trees

1.20 The report concedes that due to the scope of the red line boundary and land ownership issues, it is not possible to provide further mitigation outside of this area. However, it does recommend that a new masterplan is drafted as soon as possible to clearly identify areas to be retained and enhanced within the wildlife corridor.

1.21 With regard to the landscaping, I would like to see some minor changes to the proposed landscape mitigation. The present plans show a total of 21 standard trees (oak, crab apple, rowan and field maple) within the wildflower grassland areas adjacent to the road. I would like to see these standard trees as hedgerow trees planted at spacings of 10 metre intervals, instead of within the grassland. This would increase the number of standards within the scheme to 36 with a mixture of 21 standard oak trees within the hedgerow to the west of the road and 15 standard trees (field maple, rowan and crab apple) within the hedgerow to the east of the scheme.

1.22 In addition, a management plan should be submitted detailing how these areas will be managed and maintained in the future, replacement planting commitments for any trees or hedging that fail and to ensure the wildflower meadow areas are created on appropriate low nutrient soils and managed appropriately. This should be made a condition of the application along with a landscape condition.

1.23 Conclusion

1.24 Previous concerns regarding the lack of an ecological impact assessment on the wildlife corridor have now been largely addressed within the updated 'Ecological Appraisal Report'. No protected species were found during site visits and the agricultural land within the site is of low ecological value to these species and unlikely to support them. However, the report acknowledges that the area itself is valuable as a wildlife corridor in allowing many of these species to disperse and commute through this area.

1.25 The landscape mitigation that has been recommended to address the adverse impacts of this road scheme on the wildlife corridor is generally acceptable (as long as the amendments proposed above are incorporated) given the low quality habitat that will be lost and the fact that it is unlikely to support protected species. The quality of new habitat being proposed along the road edges (wildflower meadow, native mixed hedgerow and standard native trees), is better for wildlife than what currently exists and will potentially provide habitat and green links through the site for species such as invertebrates, birds and bats.

1.26 However, the lack of an overall masterplan for this area remains an issue. Until this is produced, there is no plan showing how this road links with a future business park and how wildlife/green corridors will be retained and enhanced through this area.

1.27 If this application is recommended for approval, I would recommend the following conditions are attached to the application:-

1.28 Conditions

-A detailed landscape plan is submitted to the Local Authority for approval prior to development commencing, detailing the standard hedgerow tree amendments requested, wildflower meadow mix proposed with sowing rate, and species and sizes of standard trees and hedgerow.

-A 5 year 'Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan' is submitted to the Local Authority for approval prior to the development commencing.

-No vegetation removal will take place within the bird nesting season (March-August inclusive) unless a survey by a suitably qualified ecologist has checked for the presence of nesting birds immediately prior to works commencing.

-A checking survey for badger will be undertaken immediately prior to development commencing.

1.29 Landscape Architect

1.30 The proposed works involve the creation of a new entrance into the Sandy Lane industrial estate with a view to pre-empting access to a future development. The majority of the site comprises arable grassland with

associated highway verges of amenity grassland. To the wider area there are areas of woodland and amenity grassland to the south of the road and areas of semi-improved and unimproved grassland to the north. There are no hedgerows associated with the proposed development. The site also falls within a strategic wildlife corridor which links Weetslade Country Park to the north and Gosforth Park to the south as well as linking two potential further wildlife corridors which run north/south along the A1056. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Arboricultural Method statement (AMS) has been submitted which includes a tree survey and protection methods in accordance with BS 5837. The report covers the full extent of Sandy Lane and has surveyed the trees as follows: 1no tree as a Category A; 12no trees as Category B; 14no. trees as Category C with 1no category U tree with a number of tree groups and hedgerows.

1.31 In relation to the application site, a single sycamore tree T11 (Category C) will need to be removed to facilitate the proposal. The removal of T11, sycamore is an acceptable loss. There are no other trees on the application site. An amended landscape plan has been submitted which include species rich grassland mix on both verges; the planting of 12 standard oak trees (*Quercus robur*) with smaller tree species on the eastern verge, a native, species-rich hedge row along both boundaries and continuing along the A1056; and species rich grassland mix on the associated verges of the A1056. The increased new tree planting numbers is welcome although I would like to see the eastern boundary strengthened further with additional trees planted along the eastern boundary (within the hedge) at reasonable spacings. Trees spaced further apart will allow then to establish without conflict and help screen the neighbouring units.

1.32 Horticultural Parks Manager

1.33 The issue of maintenance of the biodiversity mitigation measures needs to be addressed. Any future development of the land must take account of the maintenance needs and maintenance costs for the point of entry. I would recommend:

- The overall development includes measures that will address the maintenance of the point of entry and its costs.
- There is no increased maintenance costs to the council unless a revenue uplift is provided.

1.34 Manager for Environmental Health

1.35 I would have concerns with regard to the proximity of the new access road to facilitate the development of the Sandy Lane Industrial Estate from the residential housing on Sandy Lane which will be approximately 90 metres away.

1.36 The improved access road will lead to an expansion of the industrial estate and subsequent increase in noise impact to the houses on Sandy Lane. The assessment appears to relate to the proposed limited number of commercial and industrial units currently accessing from the A1056.

1.37 There will be increased concentration of HGV vehicles utilising this entrance with future expansion of industrial estate and would suggest that acoustic

screening is considered at the entrance on the side adjacent to the residential houses without restricting visibility to road.

1.38 It would be useful if this application showed if this was the only access road to the proposed industrial park and whether the Indigo Park is accessed via alternative entrance.

1.39 I would recommend the following conditions:

Construction times shall be restricted to 08:00 to 18:00 hours Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 14:00 hours on a Saturday for access road.

Construction works outside these times will be considered for junction of A1056 on submission of a noise mitigation scheme in accordance with BS5228 which must be agreed in writing by the planning authority and thereafter implemented. An extension of Extension of construction times about the junction on A1056 will only be considered for evening period only 18:00 to 23:00 hours rather than night time working due to proximity of housing and be in accordance with BS5228.

Reason: To protect the residential houses on Sandy lane.

Provide a noise scheme involving an acoustic screen for the entrance to the development to provide protection to the residential bedrooms and rear gardens on Sandy Lane.

1.40 Contaminated Land Officer

1.41 No objections.

2.0 Representations

2.1 39 letters of objection have been received. The objections are summarised below:

- No consideration has been given to the impact on the wildlife corridor.
- This is pre-emptive development with no evidence of its necessity and no masterplan to show how it would meet development needs.
- There is no evidence that this proposed new road is needed as the business park already has one access route from Sandy Lane.
- Poses a threat to our wildlife corridor as you are knowingly wanting to destroy it.
- With the uproar of the proposed Woolsington Woods destruction I really do not think you should be further threatening the North East wildlife for your own profit.
- As a council, you should get your priorities right and realise that wildlife and nature should come first.
- I will end this email with a quote -
When the Last Tree Is Cut Down, the Last Fish Eaten, and the Last Stream Poisoned, You Will Realize That You Cannot Eat Money
- Poachers killing Gosforth wildlife.
- How many more attacks on this green oasis are there going to be?
- Wildlife does not just live inside of the nature reserve. It needs access to other areas too. This is one of the few green spaces left in North Tyneside which it seems is gradually being turned into a concrete jungle.
- No doubt there are plans to build yet more and more houses but it has got to stop somewhere.

- Inappropriate design.
- Poor traffic/pedestrian safety.
- Does not sit within city council policies on sustainable development.
- Wider look at transport issues is much needed and warranted.
- Wider assessment required.
- Destruction of fragile habitats (Gosforth Park and Woolsington Woods).
- Loss of green belt and habitat to buildings.
- A road to nowhere.
- Inadequate consultation.
- Money up front for road improvements.
- We benefit from green space not a road.
- Habitat lost for ever and cannot be fully compensated for.
- Planners designated this as a wildlife corridor for over 20 years.
- Already granted consent for development on the other side of Gosforth Park.
- Note: duplications of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Natural History Society of Northumbria have been received as individual objections.
- Recent highway improvements at Four Lane Ends have worsened the situation.
- Luxury housing at Gosforth Park will increase road congestion.
- Adverse effect on wildlife.
- Non compliance with policy.
- No need for anymore business parks.
- Adverse effect on SSSI.
- Affect character of the conservation area.
- Impact on landscape.
- Money should be spent on biodiversity.
- Noise and disruption to wildlife.
- Ignoring local residents.
- Lighting will interfere with bat populations.
- Protected species will be affected.

3.0 External Consultees

3.1 Newcastle International Airport

3.2 The proposal has been assessed by the Aerodrome Safeguarding Team and I have the following comment to make.

3.3 Physical development

3.4 The proposed physical development to the site would not result in any obstacle to overflying aircraft, or interference with navigational aids.

3.5 Landscaping

3.6 Certain types of landscaping can be bird attracting, providing a habitat/feeding source for birds with the potential to result in an increase in bird strike incidences. The following species should not be used on site in quantities greater than 10%, in order to prevent the creation of bird attracting features on site. This should be conditioned as part of the planning permission.

Berberis spp Barberry

Cotoneaster

Crataegus monogyna Hawthorn

Aucuba

Ilex aquifolium Holly

Sorbus aucuparia Rowan

Viburnum

Pernettya Prickly Heath

*Buddleia*¹

Prunus avium Wild Cherry

Callicarpa Beauty Berry

Chaenomeles Japonica

Clerodendrum

Danae Butcher's Broom

Daphne

Euonymus Spindle

Hypericum St John's Wort

Lonicera Honeysuckle

Mahonia

Malus Crab Apple

Pyracantha Firethorn

Rhus Sumac

Ribes Ornamental Currant

Rosa canina Dog Rose

Sambucus nigra Elder

Skimmia

Stransvaesia

Symphoricarpus Snowberry

Taxus Yew

3.7 Lighting

3.8 All street lighting associated with the development should be fully cut off so as not to direct lighting up into the atmosphere with the potential to distract pilots flying aircraft overhead. This should be conditioned as part of the planning permission.

3.9 Natural History Society of Northumbria

3.10 Additional comments:

3.11 This site has been designated as a strategic wildlife corridor for over 20 years and was incorporated into the UDP and subsequent plans. This is confirmed in the revised ecology report. Quote UDP Policy E12/6.

3.12 The land take (i.e. loss of wildlife corridor) is 4,940m² but the proposed mitigation is only 1,665m². As the report highlights there is an overall loss of corridor of 42%. The proposed mitigation to resolve this is the same as that proposed in the masterplan for the site – namely that the remainder of the corridor should remain undeveloped and be planted for biodiversity. If this was to be the case then we would not object to the proposed road. As the ecology report highlights there needs to be a new masterplan for this site which designates the wildlife corridor free from development with biodiversity planting. However there is no masterplan and the land is in private ownership and therefore there is no adequate mitigation. This brings us to our other reason for objecting.

3.13 Proposal is premature

3.14 There is a master plan for this area which incorporates wildlife corridors, which is now out-of-date, and it was agreed that a new master plan is needed which will allow development and safeguard the wildlife corridor.

3.15 There is currently no planning permission for the proposed Sandy Lane Industrial Estate (Indigo Park) and the Core Strategy is still at a consultation stage.

3.16 The access road is a “road to nowhere” without a plan for the business park; and without a master plan it is impossible to know whether a road in that location is needed and how it might impact on plans to retain wildlife corridors through the site. The Capita consultants we spoke to in relation to this scheme agreed that it was putting the cart before the horse.

3.17 For example the revised landscape proposal shows a break in the verge planting along the western side of the access road which is clearly for vehicle access – however it is totally unclear why this is needed. Is it required to facilitate development at some future point? Or is it access to allow maintenance of a future biodiversity landscaping scheme? Would access to this site not be from the north?

3.18 Without a proper plan in place for this site we do not believe there can be any justification for a new access road.

3.19 Conclusion

3.20 Our view (which seems to be shared by a number of people) is that there is a requirement for a new masterplan for the Indigo Business Park which, alongside new development and roads, will safeguard the wildlife corridors and set aside land required for ecological mitigation. Without such a plan this scheme is both premature and fails to adequately provide mitigation for harm to the wildlife corridor.

3.21 Initial comments

3.22 The same as those set out in full under the Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

3.23 Northumberland Wildlife Trust

3.24 Northumberland Wildlife Trust wishes to register our objection to the construction of the proposed new access road and other road improvements on the following grounds:

3.25 Negative impact on wildlife corridor and failure of ecological appraisal of impacts

This site has been designated as a strategic wildlife corridor for over 20 years and was incorporated into the UDP and subsequent plans. This is well known to North Tyneside Council Planners as they designated it.

3.26 Despite this the ecological appraisal for this development (carried out on behalf of the Council and having consulted with the councils Ecologist) has failed to identify that the site is part of a strategic wildlife corridor. Therefore there has not been any assessment of the potential impact of the development on the wildlife corridor and thus whether the development meets NTDC planning policy E12/6.

3.27 We would argue that as this development will build on one of the few remaining strips of undeveloped land that connect the biodiversity hot spots of Gosforth Park and Weetslade Country Park, managed by Northumberland Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Land Trust and for the benefits of local biodiversity and residents and it will have a detrimental impact on the wildlife corridor.

3.28 This should result in the application being refused unless the impact can be mitigated or compensated for.

3.29 The ecological assessment also failed to identify that there is a Local Wildlife Site (Gosforth Woods) within 50m of the road improvements (the LWS is

across the adjacent boundary in Newcastle) and is in close proximity to great crested newts ponds and water courses utilised by otter. In regard GCN, a similar road scheme in Seaton Delaval resulted in regular removal of newts trapped in road drains over a number of years, whereas appropriate mitigation could have prevented this.

3.30 Proposal is premature

3.31 There is a master plan for this area which incorporates wildlife corridors, which is now out-of-date, and it was agreed that a new master plan is needed which will allow development and safeguard the wildlife corridor. The current extant master plan does not include the Sandy Lane Access Road.

3.32 There is currently no planning permission for the proposed Sandy Lane Industrial Estate (Indigo Park) and the Core Strategy is still at a consultation stage.

3.33 The access road is a “road to nowhere” without a plan for the business park; and without a master plan it is impossible to know whether a road in that location is needed and how it might impact on plans to retain wildlife corridors through the site. The Capita consultants spoken to in relation to this scheme agreed that it was “putting the cart before the horse”.

3.34 Without a proper plan in place for this site we do not believe there can be any justification for a new access road.

3.35 Failure to adequately cater for non-motorised users

3.36 NPPF para 35:

Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements

3.37 The Sandy Lane road improvements will involve closing the Great Lime Road exit to traffic. This road is already used by cyclists heading north from Newcastle to Dudley, etc and forms part of a cycle route.

3.38 The road closure will result in increased cycle use and therefore crossing of the A1056. The proposal is that cyclists should use signalised crossings to firstly cross the A189 into a central reservation, then wait for another signal to cross the roundabout and then wait for another signal to cross from the roundabout to the northern side of the A1056. What should be a simple road crossing could take over 10 minutes and be three times the distance. Such a proposal is clearly contrary to current guidance that planning for non-motorised users should take priority in highways planning.

3.39 It could also be considered dangerous because cyclists/walkers will not wait that long to cross roads and will almost certainly take a risk by attempting to cross the A1056 directly, as they currently do. Given that road improvements are taking place due to anticipated increased traffic this will be increasingly difficult and hazardous. One of the justifications for this scheme is make improvements

for cyclists yet our view is that the scheme will fail to achieve this.

3.40 The solution that is required for cyclists is to enable them to cross the A1056 directly from the junction with the Great Lime Road. There is already an island at this point. A signal controlled crossing would allow cyclists (and walkers) to quickly cross at this point. As cycle/walking traffic will be light, for most of the time traffic can flow freely. This would be cheaper and more effective and is a “no-brainer”. This will also allow greater use of the Weetslade site.

3.41 Along with the NHSN, we have already written to you to complain about the stakeholder consultation process for this application, namely the absence of any prior to submission. This is generally considered poor planning practice.

3.42 Northumbrian Water

3.43 No objection.

3.44 Information: A water main crosses the site access and may be affected by the proposed development. NWL do not permit a building over or close to our apparatus and therefore will be contacting the developer direct to establish the exact location of our assets and ensure any necessary diversion, relocation or protection measures required prior to the commencement of the development. For planning purposes you should note the presence of our assets may impact upon the layout of the scheme as it stands.

3.45 Highways England

3.46 No objection. No traffic will be generated and the improvements to the local road are a significant distance from the strategic road network it is envisaged there will be not a detrimental impact.

3.47 Newcastle City Council

3.48 No objection.

3.49 Campaign to Protect Rural England

3.50 Proposed access road will be constructed on undeveloped land, considered to form an important wildlife corridor in relation to a number of nearby wildlife habitats. The concern is that the application as it stands does not address the possible negative impacts of the proposed construction and does not include the necessary mitigation measures to protect wildlife.

3.51 There seems to be no convincing argument for constructing the road at this time. There are no settled plans for the employment allocation to which the road will facilitate access, so the argument that a road is needed in that location and at this time is tenuous at best. No economic justification for constructing the road, and there is a danger that the road will not be utilised and capital investment wasted

3.52 The environmental damage which would accrue during construction of the road and the adverse impact the road would have on an established wildlife corridor does not seem to be outweighed by any firm economic benefit. Respectfully request that the planning application be refused.