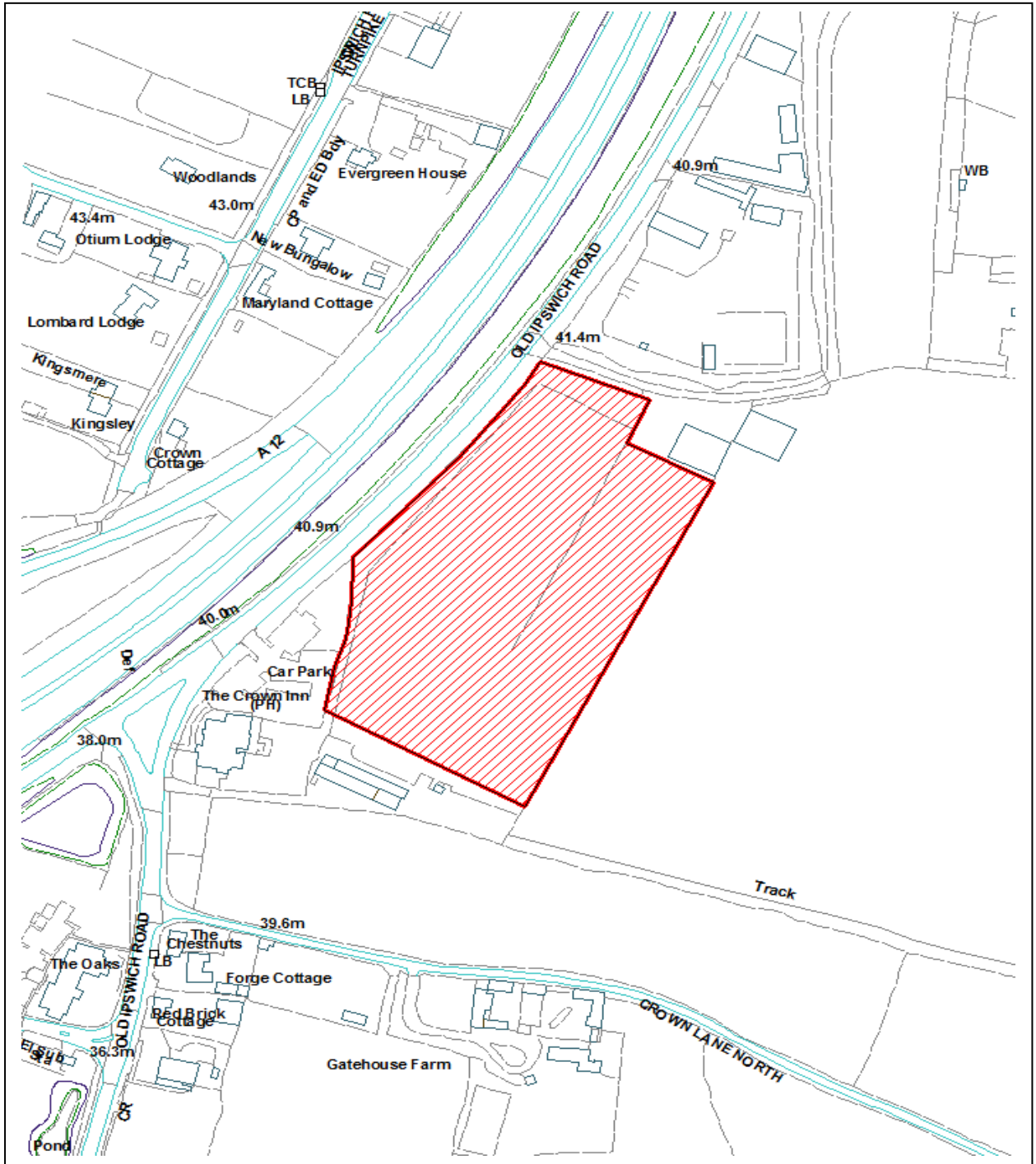


PLANNING COMMITTEE

24 JULY 2018

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING

A.3 PLANNING APPLICATION - 17/02204/FUL - CROWN BUSINESS CENTRE, OLD IPSWICH ROAD, ARDLEIGH, CO7 7QR



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Application:	17/02204/FUL	Town / Parish: Ardleigh Parish Council
Applicant:	Mr Jon Cooper - Evolve Business Centre (Colchester) Ltd	
Address:	Crown Business Centre Old Ipswich Road Ardleigh CO7 7QR	
Development:	The construction of 77 small B1 & B8 use commercial units with ancillary facilities, associated car parking and landscaping; and the construction of 5 commercial office blocks with B1 use with associated car parking and landscaping (Amended description).	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The application was initially presented to Planning Committee on 6th June 2018. The committee expressed concern regarding the proposed removal of a mature protected Oak Tree from the southernmost part of the site. The application was deferred to allow the applicant time to re-consider retention of the tree and amendment to the scheme. No other issues were raised and it was agreed by Committee that if this matter could be satisfactorily addressed the proposal could progress to determination with a resolution to grant full planning permission.
- 1.2 **Amended plans have been submitted showing the Oak Tree retained and the resulting loss of 14 of the originally proposed 91 commercial starter units that were intended for construction in this part of the site.** An amended Arboricultural Report, Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement have also been submitted. The amended scheme would safeguard the integrity and long term protection of the tree including its ¹canopy and rooting systems. The Tree Officer has confirmed that the amended scheme would be acceptable. As there would be a reduction in the scale of development and the amendment would not materially impact on third party interests, further consultation is not a pre-requisite in this instance.
- 1.3 All other aspects of the Report to Planning Committee remain unchanged as set out below.
- 1.4 The site benefits from an extant consent for mixed use development for a hotel and 4000sqm of B1 development. The current application seeks to retain the B1 use, add B8 (storage) use and substitute the hotel element with B1(a) office development. There would be no significant increase in the scale or intrinsic character of development on the site and there is significant levels of existing commercial development in the immediate area. The principle of commercial development in this out-of-settlement location is consequently considered to have been established.
- 1.5 Although Ardleigh Parish Council has raised objection in respect of the perceived impact development would have on the local highway network and have queried the level of parking, ECC Highways Department has not raised objection subject to conditions that would secure highway improvements and while parking is compliant with or in excess of standards. The Parish has also objected to the scale of development and to the viability of office development in this location. In respect of scale it is considered that the development would not be overbearing, nor appear out of keeping, and although viability
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is in itself not a pre-requisite for commercial development, the indicators are that sufficient demand would exist.

- 1.6 The proposal would satisfy Development Plan requirements in respect of design and layout, impact on local character having regard to landscape and surrounding built form and impact on amenity.
- 1.7 Consultees have not raised objection subject to imposition of conditions, and as such there are no outstanding issues in respect of the highway network, site drainage, potential flooding, archaeology, ecology and protected trees.
- 1.8 The proposal represents sustainable development, compliant in all respects with the NPPF and with Development Plan for Tendring, the issue of location having been addressed and mitigated separately. As such planning permission should be granted.

Recommendation: Approve

Conditions:

- 1 Time limit for commencement
- 2 Compliance with plans
- 3 Site Levels
- 4 Landscape details
- 5 Planting and Replacement
- 6 Tree protection – Compliance with Report
- 7 Landscape Management Plan
- 8 Boundary treatment
- 9 Highway Improvements Schedule
- 10 Construction Method statement
- 11 Archaeology Evaluation/Fieldwork/Post excavation Assessment
- 12 Suds 1 Surface Water Drainage Scheme
- 13 Suds 2 Offsite flooding
- 14 Suds 3/4 Maintenance Plan and Monitoring
- 15 Artificial Lighting
- 16 Materials
- 17 Scheme for control of noise emanating from the site
- 18 Scheme for access for the disabled
- 19 Scheme for Renewable Energy/Energy Conservation
- 20 Removal of PD Rights (Industrial buildings)
- 21 Removal of PD Rights (Offices)
- 22 No external Storage
- 23 Foul Drainage Strategy

2 Planning Policy

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

NPPG National Planning Policy Guidance

Tendring District Local Plan 2007

QL1 Spatial Strategy

QL2 Promoting Transport Choice

QL4 Supply of Land for Employment Development
QL9 Design of New Development
QL9 Design of New Development
QL10 Designing New Development to Meet Functional Needs
ER7 Business, Industrial and Warehouse Proposals
COM29 Utilities
COM31A Sewerage and Sewage Disposal
EN1 Landscape Character
EN13 Sustainable Drainage Systems
EN13A Renewable Energy
TR1A Development Affecting Highways
TR1 Transport Assessment
TR2 Travel Plans
TR5 Provision for Cycling
TR7 Vehicle Parking at New Development

Tendring District Local Plan 213-2033 and Beyond

SP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SP4 Providing for Employment and Retail
SP7 Development and Delivery of New Garden Communities in North Essex
SPL2 Settlement Development Boundaries
SPL3 Sustainable Design
PP7 Employment Allocations
PPL1 Development and Flood Risk
PPL3 The Rural Landscape
PPL4 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
PPL5 Water Conservation, Drainage and Sewerage
PPL7 Archaeology
PPL10 Renewable Energy Generation
CP1 Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

Status of the Local Plan

The 'development plan' for Tendring is the 2007 'adopted' Local Plan, despite some of its policies being out of date. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF allows local planning authorities to give due weight to adopted albeit outdated policies according to their degree of consistency with the policies in the NPPF. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF also allows weight to be given to policies in emerging plans according to their stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies and the degree of consistency with national policy. As of 16th June 2017, the emerging Local Plan for Tendring is the Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond Publication Draft. Part 1 was examined in January 2018 with the Inspector's report awaited and whilst its policies cannot yet carry the full weight of adopted policy, they can carry some weight in the determination of planning applications. Where emerging policies are particularly relevant to a planning application and can be given some weight in line with the principles set out in paragraph 216 of the NPPF, they will be considered and, where appropriate, referred to in decision notices. In general terms however, more weight will be given to policies in the NPPF and the adopted Local Plan.

3 Relevant Planning History

15/00669/OUT	Outline planning application with all matters reserved for the residential development of 0.2 ha of land to create 4 detached dwellings with associated garaging and parking (following demolition of existing Crown Business Centre B1a offices and driving range shelter).	Approved	18.12.2015
15/00985/OUT	Mixed Use development incorporating a hotel and approximately 4,000sqm B1 floor space with associated access arrangements	Approved	
17/02204/FUL	The construction of 91 small B1, B2 & B8 use commercial units with ancillary facilities, associated car parking and landscaping; and the construction of 5 commercial office blocks with B1 use with associated car parking and landscaping.	Current	

4. Consultations

Anglian Water Services Ltd	Wastewater Treatment – Due to lack of information, Anglian Water were initially unable to assess the impact of development on the water recycling centre; Foul Sewerage Network – Condition to be imposed requiring
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drainage strategy to be agreed;
Surface Water Disposal – Remit of Lead Local Flood Authority/Internal Drainage Board/Environment Agency. Not AWS;
Trade Effluent – Not applicable;

Highways England

Following the submission of additional information, offer no objection.

ECC Highways Dept

Having regard to the fact that the proposed increase in traffic over and above that already permitted by application 15/00985/OUT is minimal, this Authority would not wish to raise any objections to the proposal as submitted provided the items already secured by Condition 4 in the previous permission decision notice are carried forward.

Officer Note: Condition 4 of 15/00985/OUT required:

- a) Provision of a priority junction off Old Ipswich Road;
- b) Upgrading of two bus stops to ECC specification;
- c) A minimum 2m wide footway from the application site along the eastern side of Old Ipswich Road to the pedestrian access to The Crown Public House, then crossing to the western side of Old Ipswich Road utilising the central island;
- d) A Travel Plan.

Regeneration

No comment received

Environmental Protection

Environmental Protection have no comments to make on this application

Natural England

Natural England considers that the proposed development is unlikely to damage or destroy the interest features for which Bullock Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) has been notified. We therefore have no objections and do not request any conditions. Standing Advice to be attached by way of Informative to any grant of permission.

Essex Wildlife Trust

We can confirm that we have no comments to make in respect of this application.

Tree & Landscape Officer

In order to show the extent of the constraint that the trees on the land are on the development potential of the application site the applicant has provided a detailed tree survey and report. The report has been carried out in accordance with BS5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction: Recommendations.

It is important to note that Section 5 of the tree report makes reference to an enquiry made by Hallwood Associates to Colchester Borough Council to establish whether or not the application site is within a conservation area or if it is affected by a Tree Preservation Order ' the conclusion being that the site was not in a conservation area and the trees were not protected ' this is partially incorrect.

The application site is situated within the administrative boundaries of Tendring District Council. It is not in a

conservation area but is affected by Tendring District Council Tree Preservation Order 98/13/TPO Colchester Driving Range.

It is therefore important for the applicant to note that none of the works identified in the tree report, insofar as they relate to protected trees, should be carried out: unless planning permission has been granted or consent has been granted under the terms and conditions of the TPO.

In terms of the findings of the tree report it is accepted that the contents provide an accurate description of the health and condition of the trees on the land. The report identifies those trees that will be retained and those that would need to be removed in order to facilitate the development proposal. It also identifies where specialist construction techniques would need to be used to avoid causing harm to trees by way of disturbance of the ground within their Root Protection Areas.

Although the development of the land would necessitate the removal of two trees covered by the TPO it is considered that the replacement planting, in prominent locations, will adequately compensate for the loss of the existing trees. The removal of the third small Oak and a section of hedgerow to allow access would not be significantly harmful to the appearance of the area.

In terms of the future screening of the development the site layout plan shows the cutting back and retention of the tall conifer hedge on the boundary with the Old Ipswich Road. It is my view that the hedge is not in good condition and that it will not be improved by the proposed cutting back, on the application side of the hedge, to facilitate the development of the land.

Although not beneficial in the short term the screening and enhancement of the site would be best served by the removal of the conifer hedge and its replacement with a new hedge comprising indigenous species. A greater than usual proportion of evergreen species could be included in the planting scheme to provide a degree of screening during the autumn and winter months.

Should planning permission be likely to be granted then a soft landscaping condition should be attached to secure detail of new planting, including trees to soften, screen and enhance the appearance of the development.

If the requirements of the tree report are adhered to then it is considered that the development of the land could take place without causing harm to the retained trees or without having a negative impact on the local tree population.

ECC SuDS Consultee

The County Council does not object to the granting of planning permission subject to imposition of conditions in respect of: Condition 1

No works shall take place until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context of the development, has been submitted to

and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme should include but not be limited to:

- Following further infiltration testing if this is found to be viable, limiting discharge via infiltration for all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year rate plus 40% allowance for climate change. If following further testing it is found infiltration is unviable, run off should be limited to the 1 in 1 year greenfield rate for all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year rate plus 40% climate change.
- Provide sufficient storage to ensure no off site flooding as a result of the development during all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event.
- Final modelling and calculations for all areas of the drainage system.
- The appropriate level of treatment for all runoff leaving the site, in line with the CIRIA SuDS Manual C753.
- Detailed engineering drawings of each component of the drainage scheme.
- A final drainage plan which details exceedance and conveyance routes, FFL and ground levels, and location and sizing of any drainage features.
- A written report summarising the final strategy and highlighting any minor changes to the approved strategy.

The scheme shall subsequently be implemented prior to occupation.

Condition 2

No works shall take place until a scheme to minimise the risk of offsite flooding caused by surface water run-off and groundwater during construction works and prevent pollution has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented as approved.

Condition 3

No work shall take place until a Maintenance Plan detailing the maintenance arrangements including who is responsible for different elements of surface water drainage system and the maintenance activities/frequencies, has been submitted to and agreed in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

Condition 4

The applicant or any successor in title must maintain yearly logs of maintenance which should be carried out in accordance with any approved Maintenance Plan. These must be available for inspection upon a request by the Local Planning Authority.

Essex County Council
Archaeology

The planning application has been identified as having the potential to harm non-designated heritage assets with archaeological interest.

The site lies immediately adjacent to Wick Quarry where archaeological investigations are ongoing and over the last 10 years have revealed multi-period archaeological evidence. Of

significance are the remains of an extensive Late Iron Age (mid-1st century BC to mid-1st century AD) settlement spanning the head of an east-west valley which includes a large D shaped enclosure and annexe which was likely used for industrial activity.

The medieval and later remains relate to a field system and enclosures predating the existing field pattern. Many of the features predate the present-day Wick Farm, whose farmhouse is a Grade II listed building dating to the mid-18th century, and a moated enclosure to the south of the farm is thought to have been the site of the original medieval farmstead. A brickworks, dating from 1750 is recorded adjacent to the western boundary of the site, which closed in 1860.

The following recommendations are made in line with the Department for Communities and Local Government National Planning Policy Framework:

RECOMMENDATION: A Programme of Archaeological evaluation subject to the following condition:

Condition 1. No development or preliminary ground-works can commence until a programme of archaeological evaluation has been secured and undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority. Following the completion of this initial phase of archaeological work, a summary report will be prepared and a mitigation strategy detailing the approach to further archaeological excavation and/or preservation in situ, shall be submitted to the local planning authority.

Condition 2. No development or preliminary groundwork can commence on those areas of the development site containing archaeological deposits, until the satisfactory completion of archaeological fieldwork, as detailed in the mitigation strategy, which has been signed off by the local planning authority.

Condition 3. Following completion of the archaeological fieldwork, the applicant will submit to the local planning authority a post-excavation assessment (within six months of the completion date, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the planning authority), which will result in the completion of post-excavation analysis, preparation of a full site archive and report ready for deposition at the local museum, and submission of a publication report.

Further Recommendations:

A professional team of archaeologists should undertake the archaeological work. In the first instance a programme of trial trenching investigation will be required. A brief outlining the level of archaeological investigation will be issued from this office on request. Tendring District Council should inform the applicant of the recommendation and its financial implications.

Essex Police –
Designing Out Crime
Unit.

In respect of the potential for Designing Out Crime in pursuance of the guidance offered within Sections 58 & 69 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - the published documents do not provide sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made at this stage. The applicant is advised to contact Essex Police direct for advice in achieving Secured by Design certification.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Ardleigh Parish Council object to the planning application on the basis that:
- The density proposed is unacceptable. The design and layout of the applications is on a massive scale. The blocks nearest the road allows for 3 storeys of office accommodation and the associated lighting with these blocks would be too much.
 - Parking allocations do not appear to be adequate for such an extensive build and Old Ipswich Road is already used as a parking area. Vehicles are parked along the road and under the A12 bridge, often in breach of double yellow lines.
 - The traffic associated with this site would place an undue strain on the Ardleigh Crown interchange AND you would expect to see a significant increase in traffic using Wick Lane and Crown Lane North. Both of these lanes cannot take increased traffic and Wick Lane has been recently visited by the TDC planning committee and deemed to be inappropriate for additional traffic. Wick Lane is also an ancient and protected lane. Vehicle movements from the A12 onto the slip road would require the traffic to pass close to a listed building.
 - It should be noted that there is no evidence that further office accommodation is needed as the office development on the other side of the road, Apex 12, is not fully let or occupied. The availability of more office units does not create jobs.

6. Assessment

Site and Surroundings

- 6.1 The site extends to 2.3ha in area, and lies on the eastern side of Old Ipswich Road, in the north-west corner of the borough. It is broadly rectangular in shape and measures approximately 260m on a north south axis and 120m on an east west axis. The land is level and comprises mown grassland that has in the past been used as a 'low-key' golf driving range. The only buildings associated with this use comprise some shipping containers used for storage purposes that are located within the adjoining Crown Business Park site.
- 6.2 A row of mature deciduous trees, subject to a TPO, lie on a south-north axis through the middle of the site, possibly on the line of a former boundary. Tall, mesh 'catch' fencing associated with the golf range lines the western and northern site boundaries.
- 6.3 To the north - The site abuts a narrow belt of native species trees beyond which is an access road leading to two large industrial sheds (Crow Farm), located towards the north east corner of the site.
- 6.4 Further north, a number of commercial buildings and compounds including a Council depot, line the eastern side of Old Ipswich Road. The predominant use comprises commercial activity associated with nearby gravel extraction.
- 6.5 To the west - A row of dense mature conifers lie just within and define the western boundary of the site. Old Ipswich Road, a 'B' category road with grass verges runs parallel to the western boundary. Further to the west of and parallel with Old Ipswich Road, is an elevated section of the A12, Colchester to Ipswich Trunk Road.

- 6.6 To the south - A range of small single storey business units (Crown Business Park) with an area of surface car parking shared between the business units and the golf driving range lies adjacent to the southern boundary. The Business Centre is accessed to the west off Old Ipswich Road and immediately to the south of The Crown Hotel, a public house and restaurant, close to a slip road onto the A12. Further to the south, sporadic mixed uses, including a small number of houses and garaging within Tendring District and a contemporary Business Park (Apex 12) and hotel within Colchester Borough, line Old Ipswich Road. The road then crosses a projecting finger of Ardleigh Reservoir before joining the A12 interchange with the A120, immediately to the north of Colchester Town.
- 6.7 To the east - The site boundary is defined by a post and wire fence. An earth bund just outside of this boundary delineates the limit of land further to the east designated for an extension to Ardleigh Reservoir and currently subject to aggregate extraction. Although the site is exposed to long range views from the east, in landscape terms, public views of the site are limited to partially glimpsed views through hedgerows skirting Crown Lane to the south west and a public footpath which has been temporarily diverted during mineral extraction operations.
- 6.8 The site is undesignated in respect of adopted and emerging Local Plans.
- 6.9 Access - The existing site access is via Crown Business Park to the south. A redundant access lies midway along the western boundary with the Old Ipswich Road. Access onto the A12 and A120 trunk roads lies nearby.

Proposal

- 6.10 Permission is sought for the construction of 91 small B1 & B8 use commercial units with ancillary facilities, associated car parking and landscaping; and the construction of 5 commercial office blocks with B1 use with associated car parking and landscaping .
- 6.11 The development has been modelled on the Evolve Business Concept, which seeks to respond to a gap in the market for new/start-up and small businesses, that require flexible, affordable sub 1000sqft self contained workspace, particularly those requiring B1a office and B1 light industrial uses. The model is intended to counter the loss of office space to residential partly as a result of relaxation of permitted development legislation.
- 6.12 Five, detached, two-storey office blocks, would be located within the western part of the site. Each building would house eight 95sqm office units arranged over 2 floors. Toilet facilities would be provided on each floor adjacent to a central stairwell. Surface parking for approximately 200 cars and 14 disabled car parking spaces, together with motorcycle and cycle parking areas would be provided throughout this part of the development. Free standing refuse and recycling enclosures would also be provided.
- 6.13 The buildings would be constructed using dark grey coloured 'Dura' clad elevations to first floor elevations above white rendered ground floor elevations, all below a shallow pitch grey aluminium roof. Full height timber cladding would be used for feature walling. Windows and doors would be dark grey or black coloured aluminium, with two storey high curtain glazing in certain locations.
- 6.14 A central landscape area would separate the 5 detached buildings from the smaller mews style units to the east. This landscaped area would support the more robust examples of retained TPO trees.

- 6.15 The 91 small units would be arranged in tight 'Mews' formation to the rear (east) of the site, behind the central landscaped area and backing on to a gravel extraction site that is designated for future expansion of Ardleigh Reservoir. The flank of this part of the site would lie just to the north of the Crown Business Park which benefits from an extant consent for residential development of 4 detached houses.
- 6.16 The business units would be two-storey to eaves and arranged in two rows facing the other with vehicular access central between the rows and single bay surface parking in front of each unit. The units would range in size from approximately 37 sqm floor area to 103m sqm floor area. They would be constructed using full height, light grey coloured 'Dura' clad elevations below dark grey coloured shallow pitch corrugated roofing incorporating roof-lights. Windows would be timber, while there would be double width entrance doors, also in timber. Openings would be to the frontages of the units only. Communal toilets, refuse storage facilities, and ancillary space would be provided within this part of the development, rather than within individual units. The units would provide flexible accommodation as occupants would choose whether to exchange upper floors for mezzanines or have them removed altogether should headroom be paramount.
- 6.17 It was initially proposed to incorporate B2 heavy industrial use into the description of development. Subsequent to advice from officers this element has been deleted and the application amended accordingly.
- 6.18 The application is supported by the following documents;
- Planning Statement
 - Concept, Sales and Marketing – Evolve Business Centres
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment
 - Extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment
 - Traffic Statement
 - Drainage Report
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - SuDS Checklist Rev A

Analysis

- 6.19 The main planning considerations are:
- Sustainability and the principle of commercial development in this (countryside) location outside a settlement boundary
 - Design and Layout
 - The impact of development on local character
 - Landscape considerations (including retention of protected trees)
 - The impact of development on (residential) amenity
 - The impact of development on the highway network

The Principle of Development

- 6.20 The development would be located in the countryside where, such development would not normally be permitted. In order to make provision for new employment, the Council has allocated land for Class B1 light industrial uses (but not Class B1a office use) in accordance with Policy ER1 of the adopted Local Plan, at a number of strategic locations throughout the district, there being a presumption that office use should be directed towards town centres. This is reinforced by Policy ER2 which states that 'within these (employment) areas, Class B1a uses will not be permitted'.

- 6.21 The emerging Local Plan however adopts a more flexible approach by not segregating B1(a) Office use from the wider 'B' use classes. Policy PP7 of the emerging Local Plan seeks to establish allocations of employment land that incorporate both B1(a) and B1 uses. The policy states that additional sites suitable for small and medium sized businesses will be considered on a site by site basis. However the policy stipulates that such sites should be within the settlement boundaries and in close proximity to public transport nodes.
- 6.22 Although development in this location would normally be deemed contrary to policy, the site benefits from an extant consent for commercial development comprising a hotel and office complex. The current proposal relates to exactly the same site and proposes a similar extent of built development. As such the principle has been established that commercial development is acceptable in this location.
- 6.23 Old Ipswich Road is characterised by other forms of commercial development particularly heavy industrial and quarrying development to the north and recent hotel and business centre development to the south, and is well connected to the highway network. There would be no loss of agricultural land and the existing golf course facility is very low key and not an employment generating use or valuable leisure resource. Such considerations give further weight to the proposal.

Design and Layout

- 6.24 Policy SPL3 'Sustainable Design' of the Emerging Local Plan requires that in order to make a positive contribution to the local environment and protect or enhance local character, all new development should be well designed, relate well to the site particularly in relation to siting, height, scale, massing, form, design and materials, should respect skylines and maintain or enhance important site features of landscape ecological or amenity value integrate soft landscaping.
- 6.25 In respect of practical requirements, emerging Policy SPL3 expands upon the core principles of Adopted Local Plan Policy QL9. The proposal would provide a good standard of access, including access for people with mobility impairments. Consideration has been given to minimising impact on climate change, reducing flood risk while taking the opportunity to create amenity and enhance biodiversity as a result and in mitigating the likely-hood of adverse impact on the environment.
- 6.26 The scale, massing and height of the development would not be so intrusive as to impact detrimentally upon skyline vistas, long range views or upon the surrounding landscape. The standard of design would be high, utilising aesthetically simple architectural forms, textures and colours to provide an identity that would not be significantly at odds with its surroundings, while juxtaposing built form with new landscape provision and existing protected site trees.

The impact of Development on Local Character

- 6.27 The character of this countryside location is influenced by the variety of development in relatively close proximity to the site. This includes some residential development, but predominantly commercial ribbon development, straddling Old Ipswich Road and by the proximity of the site to the A12 Ipswich Road.
- 6.28 The site is relatively well screened. There is a dense, mature conifer screen to the western boundary, mature native tree planting to the north and built development comprising the Crown Hotel and Crown Business Centre to the south. Local character will be enhanced when the planned reservoir extension directly to the east of the site is completed, as this will provide opportunity for landscape reinforcement

and further screening. Ultimately the development should integrate well with its surroundings and not appear anomalous or out of place. A similar high quality bespoke, contemporary office development to the south, on the opposite side of Old Ipswich Road has responded positively to its semi woodland setting and is considered to have provided an acceptable bench mark for this particular form of commercial enterprise in the area.

Landscape Considerations, Biodiversity and Ecology

- 6.29 Although the Tree and Landscape Officer has indicated a preference for substitution of the conifer screen that dominates the western site boundary with native species planting, it is understood that the preferred option of the applicant is to retain this form of screen planting. The existing site is dominated by a row of mature deciduous trees running centrally through it. The trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order and the tree officer has commented that the loss of poorer examples of the protected trees would be acceptable. The planning layout drawings, show the proposed provision of a reasonably substantial landscape belt within the site. This would contribute positively to the character of the site and its surroundings and provide opportunity to screen the long linear rows of starter units towards the rear of the site.
- 6.30 Landscape details have not been submitted with the application and consequently this together with boundary treatment will need to be addressed by means of condition. It is considered that subject to a sympathetic scheme, landscape content would enhance the setting of development and given the sterile nature of the existing land use, contribute positively to future biodiversity. Consultees have not requested conditions in respect of site ecology.

Amenity

- 6.31 Although there are a small number of residential curtilages in the vicinity, none are so close as to be affected by the development. Although the development would be traffic generating, and this is an obvious concern that has been raised by the Parish Council on behalf of local residents, the Highway Authority has not objected and given the proximity of the site to major road intersections, this would not be a turning issue.
- 6.32 Planning permission was granted Ref: 15/00985/OUT for redevelopment of the Crown Business Centre and the erection of 4 detached dwellinghouses. That permission is still extant although it is tied by condition No 4, which required that a quantum of commercial floor space be provided prior to occupation. Obviously, if this proposal currently under consideration were to be approved and be preferred in lieu of the mixed use (hotel and office) development, the residential consent in its present form could not be implemented . This however does not sterilise future redevelopment of the Crown Business Centre site for such purposes as the principal of small-scale residential development has been established. Nevertheless, regard should be given to the relationship between the two sites
- 6.33 Light industrial and office uses are rarely perceived as being noise or fume polluters and consequently this is considered not to be an issue. The commercial buildings would lie to the north and consequently would not overshadow the approved residential site. The nearest commercial buildings would comprise of the flank of the mews style units which would not have fenestration and would be conditioned to remain as such. The nearest of the larger office buildings would have fenestration but would lie some 16m from the common boundary which is considered acceptable in respect of potential for overlooking and resulting loss of privacy. In any event there would be scope for landscape screening to both sides of the common boundary to further reinforce screening. This would in addition help to reduce disturbance arising

from movements of vehicles within the site. A condition would also be imposed to ensure that artificial lighting would not be intrusive.

- 6.34 Although the Crown Hotel also adjoins the site, this comprises commercial premises and residential amenity is not paramount.

Highway and Parking Considerations

- 6.35 The highway officer has asked for imposition of a condition identical to that proposed in the context of the original consent Ref: 15/00985/OUT for 'Mixed Use Development incorporating a hotel and approximately 4000sqm B1 floor space with associated access arrangements'.
- 6.36 The condition relates to access and the provision of a range of highway improvements that would improve pedestrian accessibility. Such matters would be secured by a separate S278 Highways Agreement.
- 6.37 In respect of on-site parking provision for the 5 frontage units, and in accordance with ECC Parking Standards 4,000sqm of B1 (light industrial) floor spaces would require a maximum of 130 car parking spaces and 6 disabled car parking spaces. 202 car parking spaces and 14 disabled car parking spaces in addition to motorcycle and cycle parking have been proposed. Given that this is a semi-rural location and that B1(a) offices, would reasonably require a higher parking quota than light industrial use, the higher standard herein proposed is considered acceptable.
- 6.38 In respect of on-site parking provision for the mews style units, 1 vehicle parking space is proposed for each of the 96 units with a further 18 undedicated (visitor) spaces. This lower ratio of parking accords with the maximum parking standard and is considered acceptable.

Flood Risk and Drainage Issues

- 6.39 A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Report have been submitted. It has been confirmed that the site is located in Flood Zone 1 and there are no records of on-site flooding or off-site impact relating to the site.
- 6.40 Essex County Council SuDS in their role as Local Lead Flood Authority team has assessed the supporting documents and have not raised objection subject to conditions requiring submission of a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context of the development. Safeguards against off site flooding during the construction phase and requirements for future maintenance are also to be conditioned.

Other matters

- 6.41 In respect of Archaeology, Essex County Council has been consulted. Although the site has been identified as having archaeological interest, subject to conditions that would ensure site investigation prior to commencement of works, no objection is raised.
- 6.42 It is noted that the site is in close proximity to the boundary with Colchester. The Borough Council did not raise objection in respect of the previous mixed use development subsequently approved for this site, although at the time the viability of the scale of the B1 use was queried. In this instance although the quantum of B1 floor space would be greater, the applicant has made the case that this is a niche form of development for which there is growing demand. Officers are of the view that

the site is well located to service future demand as may arise from the Development and Delivery of New Garden Communities in North Essex as set out in Strategic Policy SP7 of the emerging Local Plan, and that the proposal represents a significant level of inward investment into the Borough that would provide substantial employment opportunities.

Conclusion

- 6.43 The development would satisfy the criteria and policies set out within the National Planning Policy Framework for sustainable development. Although the development would lie outside of a settlement boundary, taking all material circumstances and mitigation into account, supported by the existence of an extant consent for commercial development, the indication is that planning permission should be granted.

Background Papers

None