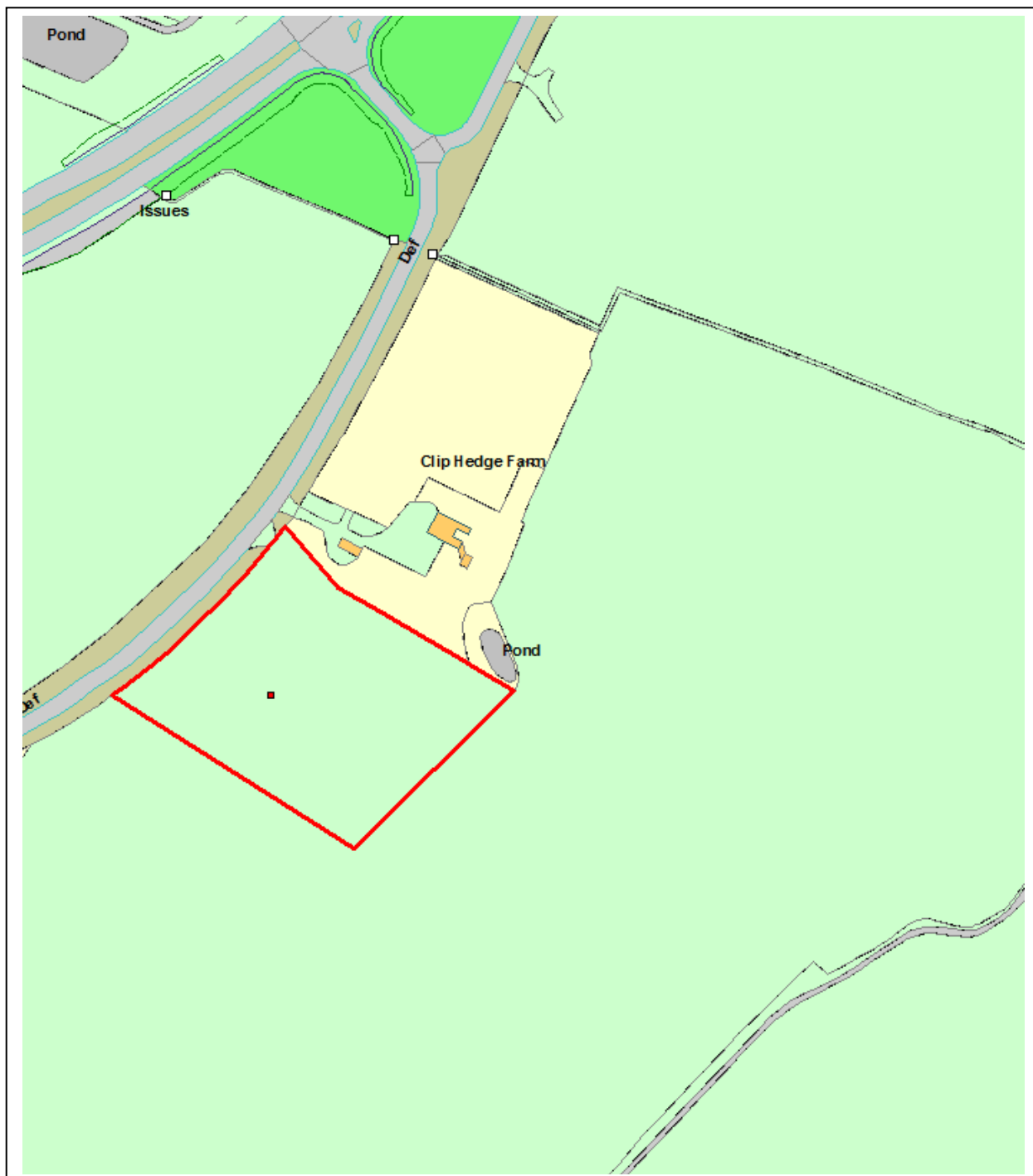


PLANNING COMMITTEE

18th September 2018

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING

**A.4 PLANNING APPLICATION - 17/02014/FUL - LAND ADJACENT
CLIPHEDGE FARM, HARWICH ROAD, LITTLE BENTLEY**



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Application:	17/02014/FUL	Town / Parish: Little Bentley Parish Council
Applicant:	Mr Neil Naphthine, BrandArt Ltd	
Address:	Land adjacent to Cliphedge Farm, Harwich Road, Little Bentley, Essex	
Development:	The construction of two office buildings, including ancillary site works (car parking, landscaping, surface water management pond, new vehicular access points off Harwich Road and stopping up of existing access).	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The site comprises a field enclosure in the open countryside midway between Hare Green and the A133 to the west and Little Bentley to the east. The land has frontage access onto Harwich Road to the north, close to a recently improved junction onto the A120. The boundaries to the south, east and west comprise dense conifer screening. Although there is evidence of former barn development with associated hardstanding on the land, this has since been demolished and the site is essentially undeveloped. Cliphedge Farm lies directly to the east and is in residential occupation.
- 1.2 Full planning permission is sought for the erection of an office headquarters building in order to facilitate relocation and expansion of an existing company currently based in Colchester that are involved in the export market and conduct growing business with overseas companies. The applicant is anxious to provide a prestigious office and design studio environment for their customers and has submitted a supporting statement including a sequential test to demonstrate that no suitable alternative commercial sites are available in the district.
- 1.3 As the site is in a countryside location rather than within a settlement, the proposal is contrary to the provisions of the development plan which seeks to concentrate office development within settlements. As such the principle of commercial development in this out-of-settlement location needs to be assessed having regard to the weight that can be reasonably attached to the personal circumstances of the applicant company's need for re-location having regard to the benefits of economic development as would arise from inward investment into the borough and the creation of employment opportunities. This is not a speculative scheme but one designed to accommodate the very specific requirements of a successful and expanding business enterprise. Members may recall that a scheme for out of settlement office development was recently approved for a wholly speculative out of settlement office and light industrial development at a site on the Old Ipswich Road. Although this application must be determined on its individual merits, the two schemes have material similarities particularly having regard to the economic benefits as may arise from economic development initiatives.
- 1.4 Although there has been resistance to the proposal from the occupants of neighbouring property and from the Parish Council, it can be established that the impact of development on residential amenity and upon the highway network would be acceptable.
- 1.5 The proposal would satisfy Development Plan requirements in respect of design and layout, while impact on local character having regard to landscape and surrounding built form and impact on amenity would be mitigated.
- 1.6 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, or ecology.

- 1.7 It is considered that the applicant has justified through the sequential approach that special circumstances exist that warrant support of the proposal. The primary issue relating to development without the settlement boundary can consequently be justified. The proposal represents sustainable development, in accordance with the NPPF and as such planning permission should be granted.

Recommendation: Approve

Conditions:

- 1 Time limit for commencement
- 2 Compliance with plans
- 3 Landscape details submission and approval (Hard and Soft)
- 4 Landscape implementation (Hard and Soft)
- 5 Landscape Management Plan
- 6 Boundary treatment – submission of details and implementation
- 7 Highway Improvements Schedule
- 8 Construction Method statement
- 9 Highways – Visibility splays
- 10 Highways – Provision of turning areas
- 11 Highways – Vehicular access
- 12 Highways – Closure of existing access
- 13 Highways – Vehicular parking provision/specification/cycle parking/provision
- 14 Suds 1 Surface Water Drainage Scheme
- 15 Suds 2 Offsite flooding
- 16 Suds 3/4 Maintenance Plan and Monitoring
- 17 Foul water Drainage Strategy
- 18 Artificial Lighting restrictions
- 19 Materials to be submitted and approved
- 20 Scheme for control of operational noise emanating from the site
- 21 Scheme for access for the disabled
- 22 Scheme for Renewable Energy/Energy Conservation
- 23 Restriction on Hours of Operation
- 24 No external Storage

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
PPL10	Renewable Energy Generation
CP1	Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
CP2	Improving the Transport Network

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 48 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. Section 1 of the Local Plan (which sets out the strategy for growth across North Essex including Tendring, Colchester and Braintree) was examined in January and May 2018 and the Inspector's initial findings were published in June 2018. They raise concerns, very specifically, about the three 'Garden Communities' proposed in north

Essex along the A120 designed to deliver longer-term sustainable growth in the latter half of the plan period and beyond 2033. Further work is required to address the Inspector's concerns and the North Essex Authorities are considering how best to proceed.

With more work required to demonstrate the soundness of the Local Plan, its policies cannot yet carry the full weight of adopted policy, however they can carry some weight in the determination of planning applications. The examination of Section 2 of the Local Plan will progress once matters in relation to Section 1 have been resolved. 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 48 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**

17/00920/FUL	Office building and warehouse, including ancillary site works (car parking, landscaping, surface water management pond, new vehicular access points off Harwich Road and stopping up of existing access Note: This was an application by the same applicant as per the current proposal for a similar form of development with the principal exception of proposed mixed B1(a) office use and B8 storage use and associated commercial vehicle movements	Withdrawn	29.08.2017
11/00014/FUL	Alteration and change of use of redundant agricultural building to storage and distribution (B8) and alteration of existing access to highway	Withdrawn	13.04.2011
10/00799/FUL	Alteration and change of use of redundant agricultural building to storage and distribution (B8) and alteration of existing access onto highway'	Withdrawn	12.10.2010

4. Consultations

ECC Highways Dept

The Authority has assessed the highway and transportation impact of the proposal and does not wish to raise an objection subject to the following conditions:

- Prior to occupation of the development, the access at its centre line shall be provided with a clear to ground visibility splay with dimensions of 2.4 metres by 215 metres in both directions, as measured from and along the nearside edge of the carriageway. Such vehicular visibility splays shall be provided before the access is first used by vehicular traffic and retained free of any obstruction at all times.

Reason: To provide adequate inter-visibility between vehicles using the access and those in the existing public highway in the interest of highway safety in accordance with policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

- Prior to occupation of the development the vehicular turning facilities, as shown on the submitted plan shall be constructed, surfaced and maintained free from obstruction within the site at all times for that sole purpose.

Reason: To ensure that vehicles can enter and leave the highway in a forward gear in the interest of highway safety in accordance with policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

- No unbound material shall be used in the surface treatment of the vehicular access within 6 metres of the highway boundary.

Reason: To avoid displacement of loose material onto the highway in the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

- Prior to occupation of the development the vehicular access shall be constructed at right angles to the highway boundary and to the existing carriageway. The width of the access at its junction with the highway shall not be less than 5.5 metres, shall be retained at that width for 6 metres within the site and shall be provided with an appropriate bell mouth including 6m radii kerbs.

Reason: to ensure that vehicles can enter and leave the highway in a controlled manner in the interest of highway safety in accordance with policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

- Any existing access shall be suitably and permanently closed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, incorporating the reinstatement to full height of the highway verge and kerbing, to the satisfaction the Highway Authority immediately the proposed new access is brought into use.

Reason: To ensure the removal of and to preclude the creation of unnecessary points of traffic conflict in the highway in the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

- There shall be no discharge of surface water onto the highway.
Reason: To prevent hazards caused by water flowing onto the highway and to avoid the formation of ice on the highway in the interest of highway safety to ensure accordance with policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

- The proposed development shall not be occupied until such time as the vehicle parking area indicated on the approved plans, including any parking spaces for the mobility impaired, has been hard surfaced, sealed and marked out in parking bays. The vehicle parking area shall be retained in this form at all times. The vehicle parking shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles that are related to the use of the development unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure that on street parking of vehicles in the adjoining streets does not occur in the interests of highway safety and that appropriate parking is provided in accordance with Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

- Each vehicular parking space shall have minimum dimensions of 2.9 metres x 5.5 metres.
Reason: To ensure adequate space for parking off the highway is provided in the interest of highway safety in accordance with Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

- The cycle parking facilities as shown on the approved plan are to be provided prior to the first occupation of the development and retained at all times.
Reason: To ensure appropriate bicycle parking is provided in accordance with Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

- Prior to occupation the following infrastructural improvements shall be provided entirely at the Developer's expense;
 - o The 2m wide footways including dropped kerb crossing points
 - o 2 No. bus stops
 Reason: To make adequate provision within the highway for the additional pedestrian traffic generated within the highway as a result of the proposed development.
Note: This condition requires a Legal Agreement between the Applicant/Developer and the Highway Authority using the powers in Section 278 of the Highways Act, 1980.

Regeneration

No formal comment received

Natural England

Natural England has no comments to make on this application. Natural England has not assessed this application for impacts on protected species, but has published standing advice which can be used to assess impacts on protected species. The lack of comment from Natural England does not imply that there are no impacts on the natural environment, but only that the application is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes.

Essex Wildlife Trust

Confirm that they have no comments to make in respect of this application.

Tree & Landscape
Officer

There are no trees or other significant vegetation on the, main body of the application site. The front boundary adjacent to Harwich Road is planted with a dense Hawthorn hedgerow that currently acts as a good screen. The boundary adjacent to Clip Hedge Farm is planted with an established block of vegetation comprising primarily of indigenous species but with a few coarse hedging conifers. In terms of the screening function this vegetation provides; it will be important to retain and strengthen existing planting or to secure new soft landscaping were the vegetation on the boundary with Harwich Road or Clip Hedge farm to be removed. Both the other two boundaries are planted with hedging conifers that provide functional screening purposes but are an inappropriate species for their location and are incongruous in the landscape. It would be desirable for all of the hedging conifers to be removed and replaced with a new buffer zone planting to be carried out utilising indigenous species.

In terms of the impact of the development on the countryside the application site is situated in the Bromley Heaths Landscape Character Area (LCA) as defined and described In the Tendring District Landscape Character Assessment. This document identifies one of the pressures on the LCA being the Urbanising impact of facilities, including buildings and lighting, associated with the A120. Whilst the development is clearly not associated with the A120, other than geographically, the recognised pressure reflects the potential impact of development associated with, and close to, this road.

The development of the land would, by its very scale and nature, have a detrimental impact on both the character and appearance of the local landscape character. However, it is accepted that a good quality landscaping scheme that, addressed both boundary treatment and the internal layout, would help to soften and screen the development to mitigate the harm caused by the change of use and development of the land. If planning permission is likely to be granted then it will be essential to secure details of comprehensive new planting as shown on the site layout plan. Soft landscaping should aim to both soften and screen the development to mitigate any potential harm to the character and appearance of the area.

A soft landscaping condition should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted to secure details of plant species and specification.

ECC SuDS

Note: Although no comments have been received at the time of writing from ECC SuDs, having regard to comments received in respect of 17/00920/FUL for a more intensive form of development on the site it is considered expedient to attach similar conditions, particularly as the applicant has revisited the drainage scheme and addressed those issues previously raised by ECC SuDs in respect of run-off rates, the provision of sufficient attenuation storage and identification of outfall location.

The following conditions are therefore recommended:

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.

Environment Agency	Note: Although no comments have been received from the EA, having regard to comments received in respect of 17/00920/FUL for a more intensive form of development on the site it is considered expedient to attach condition previously recommended. Accordingly, a condition requiring a foul water drainage scheme to be submitted and approved in writing prior to the commencement of any development at the site will be appended. The reason for this condition would be for the protection of the water environment in accordance with paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies COM31a – ‘Sewerage and Sewage Disposal’ and COM23 – ‘General Pollution’ in the Tendring Local Plan Adopted Version 2007. Informative will also be added in respect of the need to acquire environmental permits.
Environmental Protection	No comments
Building Control and Access	No Comments

5. **Representations**

5.1 Fifty nine letters of objection have been received which can be summarised as follows:

- Outside settlement boundary;
- Not within a priority area for regeneration;
- Would create significant levels of traffic on rural roads;
- Not sustainable in terms of transport and accessibility;
- Will be highly visible in the landscape and out of character;
- Site will be difficult to screen discreetly;
- There are other, more sustainable sites available at Horsely Cross and Harwich; Tendring Council’s 2016 Employment Land Study did not support allocation of Horsely Cross North on the basis that progress on the southern site was slow and demonstrated limited demand for such development;
- The Local Plan should be the appropriate mechanism for considering the principle of development of this site;
- Would set a precedent for development and expansion in the immediate area;
- Inadequate infrastructure (broadband/mains sewerage);
- Loss of agricultural land;
- Contrary to ‘Town Centres First’ approach for office locations;
- Contrary to Policy in respect of the location of employment land;
- Harmful impact on residential amenity as a result of noise, disturbance and light pollution;
- No shortage of more suitable sites in Tendring with allocations at Lanswood Park, Elmstead Market, Land south of Long Road Mistley and in the future at the Garden Community.

6. **Assessment**

Site and Surroundings

- 6.1 The site extends to 1.3ha in area, and lies on the south-eastern side of Harwich Road, midway between the villages of Hare Green to 0.5km the west and Little Bentley 1.0km to the east. Colchester lies 7km to the west.
- 6.2 The site is rectangular in shape and measures approximately 110m on its Harwich Road frontage with a depth of 125m. The land is moderately level with cross falls of

1m and comprises uncultivated agricultural land. There is evidence, supported by planning history, of a former building and hardstanding occupying part of the site.

- 6.3 The frontage boundary onto Harwich Road comprises a thorn hedge. Vehicular access comprises a field gate in the north-east frontage corner of the site. Agricultural land lies opposite the site between Harwich Road and the A120. The site boundaries to the south east and south west are lined with densely planted semi-mature conifers rising to 5m in height, with agricultural land beyond.
- 6.4 The curtilage of 'Clip Hedge Farm', a residential property, adjoins to the north east. The dwellinghouse lies 30m from the common boundary with the application site and is screened from the application site by a mix of indigenous species hedge and conifers. A pair of cottages ('Thicks Cottages') lie 85m to the west along Harwich Road.
- 6.5 The site is undesignated in respect of adopted and emerging Local Plans, and although lying within a landscape area described as Bromley Heaths Landscape Character Area (LCA) the site does not carry policy protection. The neighbouring villages of Frating, Great Bromley and Little Bentley are all classed as Smaller Rural Settlements where there is limited shopping and service opportunities. Elmstead Market (5km) and Great Bentley (3km), which also benefits from a rail station with links to Colchester and Clacton on Sea, are classed as Rural Service Centres and offer a higher standard of provision. Local bus services are limited to an hourly frequency during normal working hours. The site does however lie within 200m of a recently upgraded access onto the A120 to the north.

Proposal

- 6.6 Permission is sought for 1,687sqm of office development comprising a single storey building with central two storey mezzanine core and pitch roof located to the front of the site and a single storey building also with pitch roof located to the rear of the site.
- 6.7 The buildings would be of contemporary design featuring a powder coated standing seam metal sheet roof above brickwork elevations. Windows and doors would be light grey aluminium and external ground cover would be permeable block paving and tar macadam.
- 6.8 Car parking would be provided for 60 cars including 6 disabled parking spaces. There would be cycle and motorcycle parking facilities in accordance with parking standard requirements.
- 6.9 The buildings would be set back from the road frontage by 40m and be surrounded by generous landscaped areas to the site boundaries including in particular a 30m deep landscape buffer containing mounds and a pond between the proposed site buildings and the north-eastern edge of the site where it abuts the curtilage of Cliphedge Farm.
- 6.10 The proposal was preceded by an application that included a B8 storage element. Following expression of concern in respect of the visual impact of this element and associated movements of heavy goods vehicles, the applicant company has relocated this operation to a site in the west of England and in accordance with the current application seeks permission for the office element only.
- 6.11 The application is supported by the following documents;
- Planning Statement

- Design and Access Statement
- Ecological Impact Assessment (and Update)
- Topographical Survey
- Ground Investigation (Infiltration Testing for soakaway provision)
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy

Analysis

- 6.12 The main planning considerations are:
- Sustainability and the principle of office development in an out of settlement (countryside) location
 - Design and Layout
 - The impact of development on landscape character
 - Ecology and Biodiversity
 - The impact of development on (residential) amenity
 - The impact of development on the highway network
 - Ecology
 - Flood risk and drainage

The Principle of Development

- 6.13 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'.
- 6.14 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.
- 6.15 The applicant has submitted a supporting statement including a sequential test in order to demonstrate that this is the only available site that is suitable for relocation of the business that would provide scope for future expansion while affording a prestigious headquarters building that would attract overseas customers. Such considerations give further weight to the proposal.

Design and Layout

- 6.16 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.
- 6.17 In respect of practical requirements, emerging Policy SPL3 expands upon the core principles of Adopted Local Plan Policy QL9. Consideration has been given to minimising impact on climate change and to reduce 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.

- 6.18 Given the opportunity for landscape screening, 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 identity, while juxtaposing built form with new landscape provision.

The impact of Development on Local Landscape Character

- 6.19 The site is located in the open countryside, which in this location is reasonably flat and open. Other than existing boundary trees and vegetation and proposed landscaping there is little in the way of topography that would screen the development from view. However, being restricted to single storey height, albeit with a two-storey element and steep pitched roofing, the buildings would not be perceived as anomalous. With the exception of the frontage onto Harwich Road, when viewed from afar, only the roofscape would be visible above the boundary hedging and would appear not dissimilar in character to contemporary high quality agricultural barns. While the frontage of the site is more visibly exposed to views from Harwich Road, landscaping, secured by condition, will, with time, soften the impact of development from this viewpoint and assist in integrating the proposed development successfully with its surroundings.

Landscape Considerations, Biodiversity and Ecology

- 6.20 Landscaping has been shown on the layout drawings, to include mounded areas and a pond to assist with site drainage. Subject to approval of an acceptable landscape scheme and specification, landscaping will not only assist in site enhancement and screening, but provide the opportunity to contribute positively towards site biodiversity. Although Natural England has not requested conditions in respect of site ecology, the Local Planning Authority is keen to promote biodiverse environments where the opportunity exists and will consequently seek to impose appropriate conditions to secure biodiversity provision.

Amenity

- 6.21 In respect of residential amenity, a single property at ClipHedge Farm, adjoins the site. The applicant has designed the site layout so that vehicular movements will be as far as possible from the residential property and will comprise motor car rather than commercial vehicle traffic. The upper storey of the office building, does not contain any fenestration and is located 35m from the common boundary and 65m from the dwellinghouse itself. Existing boundary screen vegetation would be reinforced further by additional screen planting and 2m high close boarded fencing. The separation distances are sufficient to ensure that the occupier of ClipHedge Farm would not be unacceptably disadvantaged as a result of overshadowing or loss of privacy. Office development is accepted as being a low impact form of development particularly with regard to potential noise and disturbance that might arise. This would be reinforced by the imposition of planning conditions requiring adherence to times of operation in accordance with normal office opening hours.
- 6.22 A pair of cottages to the west are located further away and for similar reasons would not experience serious loss of amenity as a result of their proximity to the site
- 6.23 A condition would also be imposed to ensure that artificial lighting would not be intrusive.

Highway and Parking Considerations

- 6.24 The highway authority has requested a range of conditions in order to secure safe access and satisfactory standard of parking. In addition, the applicant has offered to provide offsite provision comprising a bus stop and associated footway and road crossing. This would be secured by condition and be subject to a S278 Highways Agreement.
- 6.25 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 in respect of the impact of development on the surrounding highway network from the perspective of road safety or congestion.
- 6.26 Parking would be provided on-site for 60 cars including 6 disabled car parking bays in accordance with Parking Standards. Motorcycle parking and cycle facilities are also to be provided.
- 6.27 Site access, parking provision and the impact of development on the surrounding highway network are all considered acceptable.

Flood Risk and Drainage Issues

- 6.28 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.
- 6.29 Conditions are to be imposed requiring submission of a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological 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

- 6.30 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 District that would provide substantial employment opportunities.

Conclusion

- 6.31 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, and having particular regard to the economic benefits of development weighed against the impact of development on countryside character, the indication is that Planning Permission should be granted subject to the conditions set out in this report.

Background Papers

Sequential Viability Statement