



21/00700/FUL Field OS 7858 Melton Road Long Clawson-New office building with ancillary bike / bin shed and parking.

Corporate Priority:	Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton
Relevant Ward Member(s):	Cllr Evans
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	15 July 2021
Exempt Information:	No

1 Summary



1.1 The site is a large Greenfield open space situated next to existing dwellings, along both Melton Road and Coronation Avenue. Access to the site is via a newly constructed road off Melton Road which serves a new residential development of 10 dwellings.

- 1.2 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a detached office building. Following discussions with the case officer, the design of the proposed building has changed from a two storey building, to single storey. The proposed building would have a dual pitched roof with an overhang feature. The external finish would be reclaimed red facing brickwork on the elevations and zinc roof.
- 1.3 The submitted Design and Access statement sets out that the proposed office building would fall into a Class E (g) (i) which is clarified in the Use Class Order as offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions. The applicant has also confirmed that the end user is also known to be Walters Homes who currently employ 6 employees.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. It is recommended that the planning application be approved subject to conditions in appendix C

2 Reason for Recommendations

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a single storey detached office building within the limits of development of Long Clawson.
- 2.2 Long Clawson is defined as a service centre under the Melton Local Plan. Service Centres are villages that act as a local focus for services and facilities in the rural area.
- 2.3 Policy H3 of the Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of development within the defined Limits to Development and Policy EC2 of the Melton Local Plan is supportive of development that provides employment in rural locations.
- 2.4 Policy E2 of the Neighbourhood Plan recognises that new employment initiatives in the right location can help boost and diversify the local economy and provide more local employment opportunities.
- 2.5 In light of the above policy guidance support, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable.
- 2.6 The revised design of the proposed office building has overcome initial concerns regarding the impact on the character and appearance of the site and wider locality. The revised single storey design is considered to not be unduly prominent within the existing street scene and to pay due respect to the rural character of the local vernacular.
- 2.7 Furthermore, there have been no adverse impacts identified in terms of ecology, flood risk, residential amenity of Highway safety.

3 Key Factors

3.1 Reason for Committee Determination

- 3.1.1 This application is required to be presented to the Committee due to receiving more than 10 letters of representation from separate households contrary to the recommendation
- 3.1.2 A call in request has been received by the Local Ward member citing agreement with the concerns raised by the Parish Council.

3.2 Relevant Policies

3.2.1 Melton Local Plan

Policy SS1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development.

Policy C9: Healthy Communities

Policy D1: Raising the Standard of Design

Policy EC2: Employment Growth in the Rural Area (Outside Melton Mowbray)

Policy EN1: Landscape

Policy EN2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy EN6: Settlement Character

Policy EN8: Climate Change

Policy IN4: Broadband

3.2.2 **Clawson Hose and Harby Neighbourhood Plan Policies**

Policy H7: Housing Design

Policy T4: Parking

Policy ENV 2: Other Sites of Environmental (Natural and historical) Significance

Policy ENV 4: Biodiversity

Policy ENV 5: Ridge and Furrow

Policy ENV 7: Protection of Great Crested Newts and their Habitats

Policy E2: Attracting New Businesses

Policy E5: Broadband

3.3 **Main Issues**

Principle of Development

Impact on the character of the area and visual impact

Ecology

Highways

Neighbouring Land Uses

4 **Report Detail**

4.1 **Position under the Development Plan Policies**

4.1.1 Policy SS1 states that ‘the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

4.1.2 Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 **Principle of Development**

4.2.1 The proposed site is located in Long Clawson off Melton Road. Long Clawson is a village with essential services and facilities (primary school, access to employment, community building) and regular public transport, as well as a number of other important and desirable services such that they are capable of serving basic day to day needs of the residents living in the village and those living in nearby settlements. The proposal is for the erection of an office building with associated parking (6 spaces including accessible space), cycle provision and bin storage.

- 4.2.2 Long Clawson is defined as a service centre under the Melton Local Plan. Policy SS1 states that when considering development proposals, the council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. To secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area the Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions therefore proposals can be approved wherever possible that accord with the policies in the Local Plan and neighbourhood plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2.3 Policy EC2 of the Melton Local Plan allows for rural employment proposals which create or safeguard jobs. The type of rural employment development that would be acceptable and relate to the above proposal are well-designed new buildings for employment, small scale employment development that meets local needs, being of an appropriate scale for its location and having sufficient accessible off road car parking provided on site or in the nearby vicinity to cater for the use proposed. Policy C9 (healthy Communities) of the Melton Local Plan supports a range of employment opportunities in accessible locations. Policy E2 of the Clawson Hose and Harby Neighbourhood Plan (CHHNDP) attracting new business development proposals will be supported if the proposal would not involve the loss of dwellings.
- 4.2.4 The proposed site is an allocated housing settlement site (LONG1), the site has approved planning permission for 10 dwellings (19/01072/FUL) which is the capacity for that site, and therefore the proposed development is considered to not result in a loss of dwellings, however the conditions relating to the permission will need to be taken into account, and any submission should consider what impact the business use would have on these approved dwellings.
- 4.2.5 Policy E5 of the Clawson Hose, and Harby Neighbourhood Plan (CHHNDP) and policy IN4 of the Melton Local Plan (MLP) are supporting the use of information communication networks, such as superfast broadband to reduce the need to travel and are a requirement for new developments. Commercial development will be required to provide fixed fibre broadband where it is technically feasible, subject to viability. Proposals that provide improved access to superfast broadband and improved mobile telecommunications networks that will serve businesses and other properties within the Parish will be supported, provided that any new structures are sympathetic to the local environment.
- 4.2.6 In light of the above, the site is considered to be located within a sustainable location and would comply with the above policies for a new business building.
- 4.3 **Impact upon the character of the area**
- 4.3.1 Policy D1 states all new developments should be of high quality design, siting and layout must be sympathetic to the character of the area, buildings and development should be designed to reflect the wider context of the local area and respect the local vernacular without stifling innovative design. Policy EN1 of MLP and Policy ENV 2 CHHNDP seeks to ensure development is sensitive to its landscape setting and seeks where possible to enhance the distinctive qualities of the landscape. Policy EN6 states development will be supported where it does not harm open areas which form a key entrance and/or gateway to a settlement. Policy EN8 of the MLP promotes climate change, all new development proposals will be required to demonstrate how the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change has been considered, subject to considerations of viability, for example, ensuring energy efficient and low carbon development.

- 4.3.2 The proposed site is on an area of ridge and furrow earthworks and as such Policy ENV5 of the CHHNP is relevant. Policy ENV5 requires development proposals to demonstrate the benefits that would outweigh the harm and loss of the earth work concerned. It is borne in mind that the wider site has an approved and implemented planning permission for residential development (Application Ref. 19/01072/FUL), however Policy ENV5 requires any proposals that affect or remove identified ridge and furrow earthworks to identify the ways in which they intend to include water management systems and controls to replace those which naturally existed in the locality of the application site concerned and its network of ridge and furrow earthworks, as stated in Policy ENV 5 of the CHHNP.
- 4.3.3 The application is supported by a Technical note which outlines the drainage strategy for the site and includes a discharge at 5 l/s via pervious paving and an off-site existing attenuation basin with an existing connection to a watercourse.
- 4.3.4 A consultation response from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has been received which notes that the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is at a low risk of fluvial flooding. No objection is raised by the LLFA to the scheme and reference is made to their adopted standing advice.
- 4.3.5 In light of the above, it is considered that the applicant has successfully demonstrated that an appropriate water management system would be incorporated into the scheme.
- 4.3.6 In terms of the benefits of the scheme, it is considered that the application site is a sustainable location for the provision of a commercial office building being within the identified settlement limits of Long Clawson which is identified as a service centre. Furthermore, the provision of the commercial building would provide employment opportunities within a rural area and in this regard represents wider public benefit.
- 4.3.7 The NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and new development should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life. The emphasis on the provision of high quality design is also echoed within Policy D1 of the Melton Local Plan and Policy ENV 2 CHHNDP.
- 4.3.8 Following discussions with the case officer revised plans have been received with a revised design. The revisions have included a significantly reduced scale single storey design over the original two storey L-shape design.

Front Elevation as originally submitted



01/ Front Elevation (Northwest)

Current Proposed



- 4.3.9 Having taken into account of the low overall height (4.95m) of the revised design and position set back from Melton Road, it is considered that the proposed building would not be unduly prominent within the street scene.
- 4.3.10 Furthermore, the proposed external finish of reclaimed brickwork and timber cladding on the elevations which are traditional materials found within the village, as well as the standing seam zinc which is stated to be a nod toward the agricultural buildings within the wider area that have metal panels as the primary external cladding. The submitted design and access statement sets out that the justification for the proposed palette of materials in order portray a rural aesthetic and to pay due respect to the local vernacular and traditional agricultural buildings within the wider area.
- 4.3.11 The use of traditional materials and more contemporary zinc roof is considered to be successful in terms of displaying an appropriate respect towards the traditional residential properties and agricultural buildings in the wider locality. Moreover, the mix and range of materials are considered to provide interest and result in a high quality and well thought out design, in accordance with the aims of the NPPF.
- 4.3.12 Indicative landscape proposals have been shown to include additional planting along the boundaries in order to act as a green buffer to Melton Road. A landscape condition attached to any grant of planning permission is considered appropriate to ensure suitable details in this respect.
- 4.3.13 Overall the revised proposal is considered to assimilate well into the general area and to not result in any material impact on the character and appearance of the site and wider locality.

4.4 Impact upon residential amenities

- 4.4.1 Policy D1 of the MLP and Policy H7 of the CHHNP requires the amenity of neighbours and neighbouring properties to not be compromised as a result of any development
- 4.4.2 The proposed office building would be located to the rear of the properties along Melton Road, with the closest neighbouring property being 26 Melton Road.
- 4.4.3 It is acknowledged that there is a potential impact on neighbouring amenity from a noise perspective due to the commercial nature of the proposed development. However, it is also acknowledged that the commercial use is an office and would fall into Use Class E (g) which is described as an office to carry out any operational or administrative function. This type of use is also described within the use class order, as a use which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity.
- 4.4.4 Furthermore, the submitted layout plans shows a separation distance of 26m between the proposed building and the closest neighbouring property as well as additional planting along the shared boundary with the neighbouring property. Given this level of separation,

boundary treatment and the single storey design of the building, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in any material impact on neighbouring amenity by virtue of any material noise and disruption.

- 4.4.5 It also considered, due to level of separation and low ridge height of the proposed building, that the proposal would not give rise to any concerns from an overbearing or overshadowing impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 4.4.6 The proposed building would be orientated with the south-east gable facing 26 Melton Road. This gable elevation is left blank and as such it is considered that the proposal would not result in any material overlooking concerns.
- 4.4.7 Overall, there has been no identified material impact on neighbouring residential amenity, in accordance with the aims of Policy D1 of the MLP and Policy H7 of the CHHNP

4.5 **Highway Safety**

- 4.5.1 Policy D1 of the Melton Local Plan and Policy T4 and H7 of the CHHNP require development proposals to include appropriate, safe connection to the existing highway network and adequate provision for car parking.
- 4.5.2 The submitted layout plan shows 6 parking spaces, with 3 of these having electric charging points, as well as one disabled parking space. A bike store would be located close to the main entrance.
- 4.5.3 The applicant has confirmed that the known end user currently employs 6 employees and having also considering the relatively modest scale of the proposed building, the 6 off street parking spaces together with a bike storage shed is considered to be an adequate provision of off street parking amenity. In light of the above, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to any highway safety concerns and is considered in accordance with Policy D1 of the Melton Local Plan and Policy T4 and H7 of the Clawson Hose and Harby Neighbourhood Plan.

4.6 **Ecology**

- 4.6.1 Policy EN2 of the Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity, ecological networks and geological conservation interests throughout the Borough.
- 4.6.2 It is acknowledged from the submitted Ecology surveys that this site has been classified as poor semi-improved grassland. It is also noted that LCC Ecology have raised no objection to the scheme due to the small footprint of the building.
- 4.6.3 However the application site is located close to an area with known Great Crested Newt records and the comments from LCC Ecology on this point are noted. The recommended condition for the same precautionary measures included within the residential development for the wider site would be appropriate to attach to any grant of planning permission.
- 4.6.4 For clarity, the precautionary measures put forward consist of the following;

“If, at commencement of construction, vegetation within the working area has grown up above 100mm, such vegetation should be removed during the GCN active season (March – October), in suitable weather conditions, avoiding the hibernation period. In this instance vegetation removal should take a three-step process of a) reducing vegetation to a height of 100mm (using trimmers or other suitable equipment) under the supervision of the ECoW.; followed by b) the ECoW will undertake a hand search, after which; c) the vegetation height will be reduced to ground level, rendering it unsuitable for amphibians including GCN for the duration of the construction phase.

A pre-commencement check by an ecologist and completion of a toolbox talk by an ECoW. Building materials will be kept on pallets during construction so that no additional refuges or hibernacula, suitable for amphibians, are inadvertently created within the site during construction.

In the unlikely event a GCN is found all operations will be stopped immediately and the animal allowed to disperse naturally. Completion of the works will be delayed until the site has been reassessed for the need of a Natural England European Protected Species License (EPSL).”

- 4.6.5 With a condition in place which secures these precautionary measures, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in any adverse harm to local wildlife in accordance with Policy EN2 of the Melton Local Plan.

5 Consultation & Feedback

- 5.1 A site notice and press notice was posted and neighbouring properties consulted
- 5.2 28 letters have been received which raise objections to the scheme. These are summarised within Appendix B

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 None

Financial Implications reviewed by: N/A

7 Legal and Governance Implications

- 7.1 No specific issues are identified.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Tom Pickwell (Solicitor)

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 19/01072/FUL - Construction of 10 dwellings – Approved 19.03.2020

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix A – Consultation Responses
- 9.2 Appendix B – Local Residents Summarised representations
- 9.3 Appendix C – Recommended Planning Conditions

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