

<b><u>Application Number:</u></b>	WNS/2021/1594/MAF
<b>Location:</b>	Racing Point UK Ltd Buckingham Road Silverstone NN12 8TJ
<b>Proposal:</b>	Wind Tunnel Facility consisting of a wind tunnel with associated machinery and test sections, ancillary office with associated access, reconfiguration of parking, landscaping and associated works
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<b>Applicant:</b>	Aston Martin Cognizant F1
<b>Agent:</b>	Ridge
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Tracey Hill
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<b>Ward:</b>	Silverstone
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<b>Reason for Referral:</b>	Major application
<b>Committee Date:</b>	13/12/2021
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PERMISSION SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS**

#### **Proposal**

The development proposed is the construction of an aerodynamic test facility consisting of a wind tunnel with associated machinery, test sections, ancillary offices and workshops. The reconfiguration of the carparking is also proposed along with extensive landscaping to complement the wider site's ambitious parkland setting for the new HQ building to the east.

#### **Consultations**

The following consultees have raised **no objections** to the application:

- Northants Highways, National Highways, Natural England, Environmental Protection, Anglian Water, Planning Policy, Planning Archaeology, Tree Officer, Ecologist, Syresham Parish Council.

1 letter of objection has been received.

#### **Conclusion**

The application has been assessed against the relevant policies in the NPPF, the adopted Local Plan and other relevant guidance as listed in detail at Section 8 of the report.

The key issues arising from the application details are:

- Principle and need for the Development
- Design, layout and impact on landscape and character of the area
- Environmental Impact, Noise, Air Quality and Lighting
- Highways impact
- Residential amenity

- Drainage
- Archaeology
- Ecology impact
- Minerals Safeguarding Area

The report looks into the key planning issues in detail, and Officers conclude that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions.

**Members are advised that the above is a summary of the proposals and key issues contained in the main report below which provides full details of all consultation responses, planning policies, the Officer's assessment and recommendations, and Members are advised that this summary should be read in conjunction with the detailed report.**

## **MAIN REPORT**

### **1. APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY**

- 1.1 The application site is to the west of the existing Aston Martin Formula 1 Team building, which is at the centre of a 13.1ha site, the construction of a new HQ building (aka Project Evolution) to the east is underway. The entire Aston Martin site is located to the west of Silverstone Circuit and is separated by the dual carriageway of Dadford Road. To the north the site is open apart from a small collection of farm buildings and residential dwellings. Silverstone Rally School lies to the northwest.
- 1.2 Beyond this, the site gives way to open countryside and the land slopes away gradually and this is then punctuated by the Silverstone Bypass (A43). To the east is Dadford Road and the Race Circuit, to the West substantial woodland and to the South lies Buckingham Road Industrial Estate. The site has a broadly northerly aspect, falling south from approximately 150m AOD to 141m AOD at its lowest point, allowing open views to the north.
- 1.3 The site itself forms part of an existing car parking area and field that is within 19m of an area of Ancient Woodland (Lodge Copse/The Straights) and is currently accessed from the Dadford Road via an existing single-track road that also provides access to Silverstone Park to the south. A Public Bridleway (ref no: LID/13/1) runs along this single-track road and then onto the countryside to the west beyond the site. As part of the new HQ consent a new access road is being formed directly off the Dadford Road, which will provide access to the proposed wind tunnel site.

### **2. CONSTRAINTS**

- 2.1. The application site has the following constraints:
  - is within 2km buffer of five Local Wildlife Sites.
  - Areas of archaeological interest.
  - Within a Special Landscape Area.
  - Within aerodrome consultation area.
  - Mineral Safeguarding Area.

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. The development proposed is the construction of an aerodynamic test facility consisting of a wind tunnel with associated machinery, test sections, ancillary offices and workshops (aka Project Chinook). The wind tunnel's primary function is to test aerodynamic design principles of the cars to ensure they are as aerodynamic as possible. The proposal also seeks to reconfigure the carparking at the Aston Martin site and the provision of SuDs that will be part of the significant landscaping that complements the wider site's ambitious parkland setting for the HQ building.
- 3.2. The proposed building at a height of 19.3m will lie to the west of the existing factory and the new HQ building. The north elevation faces the parkland setting associated with the wider site and is where the majority of the workforce associated with this facility will be located. The east elevation provides the main entrance which will be accessed from the adjacent factory and HQ and parking areas from the south. The south and the west provide areas for servicing, waste storage, deliveries, and parking.
- 3.3. Aston Martin currently use their wind tunnel facility at Top Station Road, Brackley, which is within an area of industrial uses and adjacent the proposed 350 dwellings, housing development of LPP1 Policy B2 Brackley East SUE (AKA Turweston Road South). Should planning permission be granted at Silverstone for the new wind tunnel, this Brackley site is to be decommissioned by the end of 2022.
- 3.4. *Timescales for Delivery.* The agent has advised that, in the event that planning permission is granted, they anticipate development completed by August 2023 the same time as the HQ building.

### 4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1. The following planning history is considered relevant to the current proposal:

Application Ref.	Proposal	Decision
WNS/2021/1393/SCR	EIA Screening Opinion for wind tunnel building	EA not required
WNS/2021/1271/FUL	Retrospective consent for retention of 10 portacabins and placement of a further 28 portacabins	Approved
WNS/2021/0833/NMA	Non-Material Amendment - S/2021/0435/MAF	Approved
S/2021/0435/MAF	Variation of condition 2 of S/2019/1490/MAF to increase the footprint of the consented building, including a reduction in height and changes to fenestration. Plant compound footprint increased, and reconfiguration of the site layout to include changes to the internal roads and parking.	Approved
S/2021/0166/FUL	Retention of additional car parking for the headquarters Aston Martin Formula One Team (Part Retrospective).	Approved

S/2020/0444/NMA	Non material amendment to S/2019/1490/MAF	Approved
S/2019/1490/MAF	New building to house headquarters with workshops and design office with associated access, parking and landscaping.	Approved
S/2019/0349/FUL	New canteen facility (Retrospective)	Approved
S/2018/2829/SCR	EIA Screening opinion for proposed construction of new operational headquarters	EA not required
S/2014/2314/FUL	Additional car parking for headquarters of Force India Formula One Team (temporary consent for a term of five years)	Approved

4.2 Planning permission was originally granted for a new HQ building (Project Evolution) in December 2019 and amended by a S73 application earlier this year. The building is currently under construction and envisaged operational by August 2023. There have been several NMA applications that have changed the overall dimensions of the building with some changes to size and positions of fenestrations and openings. The site is to be landscaped, details of which are still to be submitted for approval.

## 5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

### Statutory Duty

5.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### Development Plan

5.2. The Development Plan comprises the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) which was formally adopted by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and which provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2029, the adopted South Northants Local Plan (Part 2) and adopted Neighbourhood Plans. The relevant planning policies of the statutory Development Plan are set out below:

#### West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (LPP1)

5.3. The relevant policies of the LPP1 are:

- SA – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- S1 – Distribution of Development
- S7 – Provision of Jobs
- S8 – Distribution of Jobs
- S10 – Sustainable Development Principles
- S11 – Low Carbon and Renewable Energy
- E1 – Existing Employment Areas
- R2 – Rural Economy

#### South Northants Local Plan (Part 2) (LPP2)

5.4. The relevant policies of the LPP2 are:

- SS2 – General Development and Design Principles

- EMP1 – Supporting Skills
- EMP2 – Existing Commercial Sites
- EMP3 – New Employment Development
- INF4 – Electric Vehicle Charging Points
- NE4 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
- NE5 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

## Material Considerations

5.5. Below is a list of the relevant Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Silverstone Circuit Development Brief
- South Northamptonshire Design Guide
- South Northamptonshire Council & East Midlands Air Quality Network - Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document for Developers
- EU Habitats Directive
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Circular 06/2005 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation)

## 6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report. Responses are available to view in full on the Council's website, via the online Planning Register.

Consultee Name	Comment
Syresham Parish Council	<b>No objection</b> Concerned about the visual intrusion because of the height of the building and there does not appear to be as much planting of vegetation screening as shown on the original masterplan. Also where is the heliport to be moved to?  <i>(Officer comment: see para 8.50 of the report)</i>
Northants Highways	<b>No objection</b> Parking layout from Project Evolution has been reconfigured with no loss to total parking allocation of 603 spaces that will be adequate to incorporate the 8 additional staff required for this wind tunnel facility; 8 additional cycle spaces have been included. This is to be incorporated into the existing Travel Plan for the overall combined site. Accident data has now been updated and is acceptable.
National Highways	<b>No objection</b> The proposed development is not expected to have a significant impact on the SRN.
Natural England	<b>No objection</b> The proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes.
Environmental Protection	<b>No objection</b> <b>Lighting</b> – acceptable levels provided.

	<p><b>Noise</b> – requirement to comply with Condition 30 of previous consent and unknowns identified in respect of design detail and mitigation may need revisiting.</p> <p><b>Contaminated land</b> – accepted detail.</p> <p><b>Air Quality</b> – Additional development traffic generation is less than thresholds but requirements of active travel (cycle stores), electric vehicle charging points and air &amp; water heating/cooling systems to be installed.</p>
Anglian Water	<b>No objection</b>
Planning Policy	<b>No objection</b> Complies with development plan policies subject to other material considerations being accepted
Planning Archaeology	<b>No objection</b> The area has been evaluated and some wider investigations have taken place in limited areas. Whilst the report for the western field has not yet been issued, there is no need for any further archaeological work in connection with this application.
Tree Officer	<b>No objection</b> Overall a significant number of the existing trees are proposed to be felled, however there appears to be sufficient scope for net gain mitigation, which will meet the current Policy requirements.

## 7. RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

Below is a summary of the third party and neighbour responses received at the time of writing this report.

7.1. There has been 1 letter of **objection** raising the following comments:

- Increase in noise more than the original scheme (which was objected to)
- Development has been disruptive with work starting earlier hour than agreed (which has now been resolved) but this shows lack of consideration for the presence of a residential property right next to their location.
- The western field was designated as a natural area/park for the employees, which has now been reduced in size to make way for this extra building. Originally told that this natural area was a planning requirement in order for them to be granted permission to develop the rest of the land. Concerned that this will set a precedent, allowing them to continue to expand the development until it envelops the entire site, making the development much larger than original expected.

## 8. APPRAISAL

The key issues arising from the application details are:

- Principle and need for the Development
- Design, layout and impact on landscape and character of the area
- Environmental Impact, Noise, Air Quality and Lighting
- Highway's impact
- Residential amenity
- Drainage
- Archaeology
- Ecology impact

- Minerals Safeguarding Area

## Principle and need for the Development

### *Policy Context*

- 8.1. The Development Plan comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (LPP1) and the adopted South Northamptonshire LPP2(LPP2). Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.2. Policy E1 of the LPP1 seeks to protect against the loss of existing employment sites, and Policy E5 recognises Silverstone Circuit as a ‘high performance technology motorsport cluster’ and an appropriate location to accommodate further employment, tourism, education and leisure development, in accordance with the adopted Development Brief. Policy R2 of the LPP1 further reinforces this by seeking to sustain and enhance the rural economy by creating or safeguarding jobs and businesses, providing they are of an appropriate scale for their location and respectful of the environment.
- 8.3. Policy EMP2 of the LPP2 permits the intensification of commercial/employment generating development within the existing curtilage or through appropriate exceptions subject to compliance with other policies in the plan and other material considerations.
- 8.4. Chapter 6 of the NPPF seeks to provide for the building of a strong and competitive economy and at Para 81 states:

*‘Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation<sup>1</sup>, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential’.*

### *Assessment*

- 8.5. The proposal seeks consent for the construction of a wind tunnel facility to compliment the range of operations at the approved new operational headquarters site for Aston Martin Formula 1 Team, that is under construction (approved under S/2021/0435/MAF which superseded S/2019/1490/MAF).
- 8.6. It was established under the original and amended consents that the proposed HQ building will be an expansion of an existing well established business use at Silverstone. The application site is not located within town or village confines as set out in the LPP2, it is considered to be in “open countryside” in policy terms, where development is more restricted. Policy S1 of the LPP1 considers the distribution of development and in rural areas the focus is on enhancing and maintaining the vitality of rural communities and strengthening rural enterprise. The site is also outside the area covered by the SPG -

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-building-a-britain-fit-for-the-future>

Silverstone Circuit Development Brief and the Silverstone allocation under Policy E5 of the LPP1 It is considered that irrespective of the lack of allocation, there is support in local and national policy for the expansion and intensification of the existing Aston Martin employment site.

- 8.7. Whilst not within the existing curtilage as required by Policy EMP2, the development of the Aston Martin site is considered an exception and acceptable extension of an existing commercial site that is part of the Policy E5 cluster, subject to compliance with other policies within the Development Plan as required Policies S1, S8, R2 and E1 of the LPP1 and EMP1 and EMP3 of the LPP2 and the Government guidance contained in the NPPF.
- 8.8. In addressing need for development, it is important to understand how important Formula 1 is to the area as a whole and that further development and the evolution of industry is essential to the economy of the area and its skilled workforce.
- 8.9. In this regard, a large majority of the F1 teams currently have their operating bases within the UK and most within Motorsport Valley across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. The teams in this area employ more than 5,000 people and deliver £2billion in revenue annually. In addition to this, almost 3,500 companies associated with motorsport are based within the valley, employing around 40,000 people. That represents a high proportion of the world's high-performance engineers. These companies also export their products and services abroad. As a result, F1 has a wide impact on the economy, in terms of jobs, skills and innovation.
- 8.10. Overall, motorsport-based businesses spend 30% of their turnover on research and development. That compares to 4% in engineering, 6% in automotive and 15% in pharmaceuticals. Put into context, the investment made by F1 industry has transferred to the racetrack, with a large proportion of the races in F1 being won by a British-built cars year on year.
- 8.11. Given the above and that the principle of development is supported by the Development Plan which allows the expansion of existing employment sites within the District, it is also important to understand the need for the development. This is reinforced within the NPPF which states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. Moreover, one of the Council's objectives seeks to support economic growth through the strengthen of the local economy and its long-term vitality with Silverstone and associated businesses/companies associated with motorsport form a central focus for that growth.
- 8.12. In this regard, F1 in supporting existing businesses and allow them to grow, is an overriding factor to supporting development in this case so it continues to anchor a wide range of engineering and design companies in the area.
- 8.13. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal to provide a wind tunnel facility at Aston Martin's site at Silverstone and decommission the existing wind tunnel at its Brackley site, in order to meet Aston Martin's ongoing requirements for additional space and to have all the facilities needed to assist in the development of their car, at one location is a key factor contributing to the continuation of this important F1 team and the motorsport economy.
- 8.14. Of further consideration, due to the age of the existing facility at Brackley, it has been found to require significant upgrade to the fabric of the building to mitigate noise emissions. Without this mitigation the proposed housing scheme at the adjacent Turweston Road South housing development cannot be occupied. A condition requiring a scheme for protecting the proposed housing development from noise generated by operation of fixed

plant and equipment associated with use of the wind tunnel was imposed on the planning permission for the 350 dwellings. Details of this scheme are yet to be agreed, but the decommissioning of the wind tunnel would essentially result in this mitigation scheme not being necessary.

### *Conclusion*

- 8.15. Given the importance of F1 to the district, the consequential established need for the new Aston Martin HQ building and to provide all their operational requirements at one site, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle subject to the acceptability of all other matters that will be outlined in this report. As an economic development material consideration, it will safeguard a key business and jobs within the district which in turn will contribute to supporting a vibrant and successful rural economy and the high-performance technology motorsport cluster at Silverstone Circuit. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the Development plan.

### Design, layout and impact on landscape and character of area

#### *Policy Context*

- 8.16. Chapter 12 of the NPPF reflects Government's requirements for achieving well-designed places with significant emphasis on good quality design. Paragraph 126 relates to the importance of good design and the fact that *'the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'*.
- 8.17. Chapter 15 of the NPPF concerns the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, paragraph 174 concerns all developments and explains that decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and seeks the protection and enhancement of landscapes/countryside whether designated, valued or otherwise.
- 8.18. Policy SS2 of LPP2 requires development to:
- a) *maintain the individual identity of towns and villages and their distinct parts, does not result in physical coalescence that would harm this identity and does not result in the unacceptable loss of undeveloped land, open spaces and locally important views of particular significance to the form and character of a settlement; and*
  - b) *use a design-led approach to demonstrate compatibility and integration with its surroundings and the distinctive local character of the area in terms of type, scale, massing, siting, form, design, materials and details; and*
  - c) *be designed to provide an accessible, safe and inclusive environment which maximises opportunities to increase personal safety and security through preventative or mitigation measures; and*
  - d) *incorporate suitable landscape treatment as an integral part of the planning of the development; and*
  - e) *incorporates sensitive lighting schemes that respects the surrounding area and reduce harmful impacts on wildlife and neighbours.*

8.19. Furthermore, Policy S10 of the LPP1 states that (amongst others) *'development will achieve the highest standards of sustainable design incorporating safety and security considerations and a strong sense of place'*.

8.20. Policy NE2 of the LPP2 relates to Special Landscape Areas and highlights that in these areas, planning permission will only be granted for development which will not have a harmful impact on their character and appearance of the area. Particular attention must be paid to design, materials, siting of buildings and the use of land. Also developments of a scale would require a full landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) and that the *'LVIA should inform the design of the proposal to minimise negative landscape impacts including the incorporation of mitigation and compensatory measures'*.

#### *Assessment*

8.21. **Design and layout** The design of the proposed wind tunnel building whilst influenced by the recently consented bespoke HQ building, has also been led by the function and end use of the building that has dictated the height and form of the structure. The facility is to the west of, but sits in line with, the existing and proposed new HQ buildings retaining the open space to the frontage of both buildings to the north and screening the plant, parking and daily activities to the rear, to the south, to minimise impact of the site, surroundings and wider landscape setting.

8.22. The footprint of the building measuring 70m (l) x 35m (w) has a height that ranges from 12m -19.3m and provides a floor area of 10,599 sqm over two floors, with the air hall being the taller element and its associated equipment. Overall, it comprises:

- Testing of model components.
- Storage, finishing and testing with the eastern part of the building following delivery of components from the south.
- Internal spaces comprise long corridors for ease of movement.
- The airline hall is a large volume space to contain the airline and associated specialist equipment that can be easily accessed.
- The first-floor area provides a control room from which the air hall is controlled from and data analysed.
- The western delivery yard, provides operational support for the functioning of the wind tunnel.
- The proposed cladding system will also link the building to the adjacent new HQ building with matching materials and colour which will visually unify the new buildings; and
- The southern and eastern facade of the airline hall, which forms the central area of the structure will include a continuous horizontal band of louvre panels which breaks up the vertical cladding material helping to reduce its visual impact.

- 8.23. The proposed HQ building provides 15,000sqm of floor area over two floors with a height of 11m. The wind tunnel building will therefore be approx. 8.3m higher at its tallest point than the new HQ building, and it accepted that this proposed building will be conspicuous in the immediate landscape when viewed from the adjacent Public Bridleway (ref no: LID/13/1), certain points from the Dadford Road and the residential properties at Litchlake Farm and Litchlake Barns. However, the site is to be landscaped with a significant planting scheme that is still to be agreed, so as this matures overtime, the impact will be less. It is worth pointing out that the proposed commercial buildings on Silverstone Park granted consent under S/2019/0443/EIA and S/2019/1793/MAO, range from 12m-18m and the buildings proposed on Silverstone Park directly opposite the application site off the Dadford Road, are to be max height 18m.
- 8.24. The proposal also incorporates a range of sustainability principles, including passive, active and renewable design measures and meets BREEAM level 'very good'. As such the proposals meet the requirements of Policy S10 and S11 of the LPP1 in this regard.
- 8.25. In respect to the proximity to the Ancient woodland to the west of the site, a fence has been erected denoting the boundary of the site. The edge of the woodland to this fence measures approx. 19m; the edge of the woodland to the proposed service yard is 25m and the edge of the woodland to the proposed building is 41m. There is likely to be some degree of shadow onto the woodland due to the 19m height of the building, but this has not been considered unacceptable by the Council's Tree Officer or Ecologist.
- 8.26. **Impact on the landscape and character of the area** The site is within the SLA area of Whittlewood Forest and Hazelborough Forests relatively open and consists of two open fields containing an existing commercial building and associated parking. Hedgerows form the site's boundaries to the north and east and are interspersed with veteran hedgerow trees (predominantly oak). The southern boundary is formed by the Public Bridleway (ref no: LID/13/1) and is particularly weak, generally inconsistent and open in parts, providing limited enclosure and a weak interface with the industrial development to the south.
- 8.27. A seasonally wet drainage ditch intersects the site from the north-west corner of the existing building to the edge of Litchlake Farm. To the west, the site is enclosed by a large area of Ancient woodland, which is typical of the character area.
- 8.28. The application has been submitted with a full LVIA complete with agreed 7 viewpoints and the associated impact levels identified. Dense woodland cover and large built form within the Silverstone Circuit screen long distance views of the site from the east, west and south. Views are limited to the area immediately surrounding the site, with the only exception to this rule being one medium distance view, which is possible from elevated land adjacent to Windmill Farm. Stowe registered park and garden to the south, does not share inter-visibility with the application site and the site is not considered to contribute to the wider setting of this heritage asset.
- 8.29. Although the landscape to the north of the site is visually more open, the interplay of woodland, tree belts, hedgerows and undulating landform limit views to locations within 0.5km of the application site. As such, there are no views of the site from Silverstone village or Silverstone conservation area. The building will be seen from the Public Bridleway (ref no: LID/13/1) to the south of the site and the nearby residential properties of Litchlake Farm and Barns. These are viewpoints 5 and 6 which are significant at Year 1 as a result of the sensitivity of the receptors and their proximity to the development.
- 8.30. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) report submitted with the application has been reviewed by the Council's Tree Officer and the value and quality of the trees existing on and

directly adjacent to the site appears to be a true reflection. Of the 60no. trees/hedges/woodlands/groups surveyed the proposed layout will require the removal of 27no. (mix of individual trees/groups/hedges of which 13no. are either good or moderate quality). The removal of the majority of the better-quality trees will be required to facilitate the new access. It is worth noting that none of the trees to be removed form part of an ancient woodland are aged/veteran trees and/or protected by an existing Tree Preservation Order.

- 8.31. The AIA has identified five trees where the layout/development will encroach into their root protection area, (RPA). Any impact can be limited by the use of alternative/no dig construction methods. As stated in the report '*the successful retention of those trees that will remain on the site will be dependent upon the quality and maintenance of any protection system that is put in place*'. This will also include the need for an arboricultural method statement, in accordance with the principles of BS5837, for the areas where encroachment occurs.
- 8.32. The number of good/moderate quality trees shown to be removed should normally be resisted; however, the proposals do not appear to conflict with current policies as long as there is sufficient replacement planting proposed. Given the overall proposed landscaping intention/masterplan for the site there does appear to be scope for net gain mitigation. Appropriate conditions requiring tree replacement shall reflect the various size/age and species in keeping with the surrounding landscape.

#### *Conclusion*

- 8.33. It has been established that the principle and need of the development that extends the built form to the west of the site accords with the development plan, the proposed scale and design of the building has been led by the function and end use of the building that has dictated the height and form of the structure. It is therefore considered that this has to be seen as part of the wider context of site and acceptance that it will be seen as a very large building along with the other significant changes to the immediate locality of Silverstone, at Aston Martin, Silverstone Park and Silverstone Circuit. The materials to be used in the appearance of the building will be similar to that of the new HQ building and consequently it is considered that the design, layout and appearance is acceptable and complies with Policies S10 of the LPP1, SS2 of the LPP2, the Council's Design Guide and the NPPF.
- 8.34. In terms of trees a significant number of the existing trees are proposed to be felled, however there appears to be sufficient scope for net gain mitigation, which will meet the current Policy requirements. There will be no significant impact on the Ancient Woodland to the west of the site.
- 8.35. In respect of the two viewpoints 5 & 6 it is accepted that there will be some significant impact but in terms of Litchlake Farm and Barns, the proposed significant landscaping will ensure that over time this impact will be reduced. Overall the LVIA has established that of all the 7 identified viewpoints and associated impacts, these impacts will experience a temporary Moderate magnitude of change, leading to a Major/Moderate effect that will subsequently be mitigated through an extensive landscape strategy which will integrate the development into the existing landscape fabric. This will mitigate this temporary impact leading to a Slight magnitude of change, resulting in a Moderate effect which would result in a Not Significant impact.
- 8.36. Whilst development on an open field site of this scale will have a moderate impact on its physical nature, the careful siting and design of the building, infrastructure and overall landscape within the existing setting will ensure that all potential impacts have been

considered and mitigated as far as possible. Whilst there will be some long term adverse residual effects, these are minor, and as a whole, it is considered that the proposal is not significant and should be acceptable in terms of its impact on the surrounding landscape. Adverse impacts to the landscape must be weighed against the other positive aspects of the proposed development in the planning balance. The proposal is however considered in accordance with Policies S10 of the LPP1, NE2 of LPP2 and the NPPF.

### Environmental Impact, Noise, Air Quality and Lighting

#### *Policy Context*

- 8.37. Policy S10 of the LPP1 sets out a number of sustainable development principles and that development will [inter alia] minimise pollution from noise, air and run off. And Policy BN9 dealing with Planning for Pollution Control:

*“Proposals for new development which are likely to cause pollution, or likely to result in exposure to sources of pollution or risks to safety will need to demonstrate that they provide opportunities to minimise, and where possible reduce, pollution issues that are a barrier to achieving sustainable development and healthy communities, including:*

- a) maintaining and improving air quality, particularly in poor air quality areas, in accordance with national air quality standards and best practice;*
- b) protecting and improving surface and groundwater water quality;*
- c) minimising light pollution;*
- d) ensuring remediation of contaminated land so as not to pose a risk to health and the environment; and*
- e) reducing the adverse impacts of noise.*

*Development that is likely to cause pollution, either Individually or cumulatively, will only be permitted if measures can be implemented to minimise pollution to a level which provides a high standard of protection for health and environmental quality”.*

- 8.38. Policy S11 of the LPP1 states that proposals should be sensitively located and designed to minimise potential adverse impacts on people, the natural environment, biodiversity, historic assets and should mitigate pollution. All new non-residential developments over 500sqm gross internal floorspace are required to achieve a minimum rating of at least BREEAM Very Good standard (or equivalent) or any future national equivalent zero carbon standard from 2019.
- 8.39. Policy SS2 of the LPP2 requires development to (e) *incorporate sensitive lighting schemes that respects the surrounding area and reduce harmful impacts on wildlife and neighbours;* (f) *not unacceptably harm the amenity of occupiers and users of neighbouring properties and the area through noise, odour, vibration, overshadowing or result in loss of privacy, sunlight daylight or outlook, unless adequate mitigation measures are proposed and secured;* and (g) *has appropriate regard to its effect on air quality and the effects of air quality on its future occupiers.*
- 8.40. Paragraph 185 of the NPPF states that ‘*planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:*

- (a) *mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impact resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life<sup>2</sup>;*
- (b) *identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and*
- (c) *limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.*

8.41. NPPF at Paragraph 188 continues *‘the focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively. Equally, where a planning decision has been made on a particular development, the planning issues should not be revisited through the permitting regimes operated by pollution control authorities’*

8.42. The Government’s Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that LPA’s plan making and decision taking should take account of the acoustic environment and in doing so consider:

- whether or not a significant adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur;
- whether or not an adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur; and
- whether or not a good standard of amenity can be achieved.

8.43. In line with the Explanatory Note of the Noise Policy Statement for England, this would include identifying whether the overall effect of the noise exposure (including the impact during the construction phase wherever applicable) is, or would be, above or below the significant observed adverse effect level and the lowest observed adverse effect level for the given situation.

#### *Assessment*

8.44. **Lighting** – the issue of lighting was considered as part of the HQ proposal and the Lighting Impact Assessment (LIA) has been updated to reflect the requirements of the wind tunnel building. This identifies the current effects from obtrusive light associated with existing uses, and the potential effects of obtrusive light that could arise from the artificial lighting associated with the proposed development. The principal objective was to identify the effects associated with obtrusive light on various sensitive receptors, propose suitable mitigation and assess the significance of any residual effects from artificial lighting.

8.45. The LIA considers the cumulative effect of additional lighting associated with the proposed development, which is based on the maximum adverse scenario in relation to the proposed development’s artificial lighting, to adequately assess the significance of the potential effects on the identified sensitive receptors.

8.46. Following the implementation of mitigation measures, the residual effects are assessed to be of Negligible significance for the potential ecological receptors located on the western boundary of the application site. The Council’s Ecologist has considered the proposal and has accepted that it is acceptable in terms of ecological receptors.

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<sup>2</sup> See Explanatory Note to the Noise Policy Statement for England (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2010)

8.47. The main change will be an increased visibility of lighting in general within the landscape from Litchlake Farm and Litchlake Barns, however this does not constitute obtrusive light. When combined with the background lighting from the Aston Martin HQ building, Silverstone Park and Circuit it is considered that the level of light impact on these properties will be acceptable and compliant with the relevant local and national residential amenity policies.

8.48. **Noise** – The application has been submitted with a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) with a further addendum to reflect information that was considered to be important to the acceptability of the scheme. The NIA states:

- The specific sound levels generated by the Wind Tunnel Development Centre are mainly from fan noise, which is typically broad band in nature. The main fan selection for motor cooling inlet and outlet is still under development, but from a similar Wind Tunnel Facility developed by Jacobs, the typical sound pressure level was measured to be 65 dB(A) at 8 metres from the unit.
- The wind tunnel itself is to be enveloped in an insulated clad building. The cladding has thermal and acoustic properties with the proposed cladding panel having a Rw30dB sound insulation performance. From experience of previous wind tunnel facilities of a similar nature (one constructed to the south of Brackley in 2005) the internal noise levels at the interior perimeter range from 75dBA to 81dBA.
- It should also be noted that the previous wind tunnel referenced ran at higher wind velocity with significantly higher Main Fan power. As such, we can predict that noise generated by the wind tunnel in the clad building will be less than for the previous wind tunnel referenced. Any noise generated internally is attenuated by the envelope of the building and benefit from distance attenuation to the receiver position. Given that the internal noise generators are not as significant, the noise impact assessment has therefore focussed on external plant which pose the most significant risk to exceeding planning levels though the NIA demonstrates that these levels are satisfied by the current design.
- The Wind Tunnel currently in operation by Aston Martin to the north of Brackley which was constructed over 30 years ago cannot be compared to the proposed wind tunnel as the fundamental principles of operation are different and the technology of the equipment has progressed significantly with improved acoustic performance. In addition, modifications were made to this tunnel approximately 25 years ago to extend the tunnel length, to achieve this the tunnel structure was extended outside of the building. This breaches the building envelope and therefore the acoustic integrity of the building is compromised. This alone means the proposed wind tunnel cannot be compared to the existing wind tunnel operated to the north of Brackley.

8.49. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer and the Council's noise consultant have reviewed the Noise Impact Assessment. The Environmental Protection Officer is satisfied that it has been undertaken in accordance with the relevant procedures, impact assessment criteria and subject to the same relevant condition imposed on the HQ building there is no significant noise impact predicted. Officers are therefore content that the building will be constructed to absorb the noise proposed and also subject to the same noise condition as the HQ building.

- 8.50. In respect to the helipad, this is to be positioned between the wind tunnel and the existing Aston Martin building, this position was previously agreed under S/2021/0435/MAF.
- 8.51. **Air Quality** - An Air Quality Assessment was undertaken by Air Quality Consultants and has been prepared taking into account all relevant local and national guidance and regulations and follows a methodology which aligns with the requirements of the Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance for Developers (East Midlands Air Quality Network, 2018) provided by South Northamptonshire Council.
- 8.52. The proposed development combined with the proposed HQ building will generate additional traffic, as well as lead to a localised change in vehicle movements on the local road network. However, the increases will be below the EPUK/IAQM screening criteria, and the effect on local air quality will not be significant.
- 8.53. During the construction works, a range of best practice mitigation measures will be implemented to reduce dust emissions and the overall effect will be "not significant"; appropriate measures have been set out in this report, to be included in the Dust Management Plan for the works.
- 8.54. A range of sustainable travel measures have also been incorporated in order to facilitate further improvements in air quality within the vicinity of the proposed development.
- 8.55. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has assessed the information submitted with the application and raises no objections.

#### *Conclusion*

- 8.56. It is considered that the proposed lighting scheme and Noise Impact Assessment is responsive to the sensitivity of receptors. Air Quality has been adequately addressed and combined the levels of all three impacts and considered to be acceptable and compliant with the Policies S10 and S11 of the LPP1, Policy SS2 of the LPP2 and the NPPF.

#### Highways impact

##### *Policy Context*

- 8.57. Policy SS2 of the LPP2 requires development to have a satisfactory means of access and provide adequate parking, servicing and turning facilities including for the disabled.
- 8.58. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF explains that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 8.59. A new vehicle access point off the Dadford Road at the North-East corner of the site is to be created, this arrangement remains unchanged. This will operate on the basis of a left-in, left-out arrangement, so that vehicles arriving from the A43 will continue to drive past the new building South on the Dadford road, turning on the roundabout before entering the site.
- 8.60. There will be an additional 8 employees at the wind tunnel and these can be adequately accommodated for in the proposed 603 car parking spaces for employees and visitors, including 16 spaces for VIP guests has been reconfigured but with no change to the vehicle parking spaces. The parking spaces have been illustrated in accordance with the dimensions of the Council's parking standards. Of these 603 spaces there will be 22

disabled bays (4% of the total), 65 electric vehicle charging bays – which represents 11% of the total provision in accordance with South Northamptonshire Council's policy guidance and compliance with Policy INF4 of LPP2. These will include a proportion of disabled spaces and also visitor spaces.

- 8.61. There is also secure and covered cycle parking for 46 bicycles (additional 8 have been included) close to the pedestrian and cycle access from Dadford Road. An area for parking for around 20 motorcycles – which represents an additional 3% of the total number of car parking bays. The provision of a service yard capable of accommodating six large vehicles at any one time.
- 8.62. The proposed Travel Plan for the entire site has been approved but will require updating to reflect the additional 8 employees, so this will be conditioned.

#### *Conclusion*

- 8.63. An updated Transport Assessment (TA) has been undertaken which identifies no additional potential traffic generation by the proposed wind tunnel scheme. On that basis Highways England and Northants Highways raise no concerns from the proposal, however the previous conditions will be applied. It is therefore considered that the proposal is compliant with Policy SS2 of the LPP2 and the NPPF.

#### Residential amenity

##### *Policy context*

- 8.64. Policy S10 of the LPP1 sets out a number of sustainable development principles and that development will [inter alia] minimise pollution from noise, air and run off. Policy BN9 deals with Planning for Pollution Control. Policy SS2 LPP2 requires development (f) to incorporate sensitive lighting schemes that respects the surrounding area and reduce harmful impacts on wildlife and neighbours; (g) result in adequate standards of living for future occupiers and will not unacceptably harm the amenity of occupiers and users of neighbouring properties and the area through noise, vibration, overshadowing or result in loss of privacy or loss of sunlight and daylight;

##### *Assessment*

- 8.65. The nearest properties are Litchlake Barn and Litchlake Farm. Concern regarding the proximity of the development and these properties has been previously considered at the time of the HQ application and clearly this new wind tunnel is a further building that will have an impact.
- 8.66. The proposed wind tunnel is approx. 122m from that property, however the landform is changing in terms of landscaping due to the proposed bunds that are currently being formed around the site and this northern boundary will see a noise attenuation bund adjacent to those neighbours with some significant new landscaping including semi-mature trees offering a strong landscaping screen to mitigate the overall proposed development at the Aston Martin site.

#### *Conclusion*

- 8.67. It was acknowledged during the consideration of the HQ application that there will be a change to the amenities of the occupiers of Litchlake Farm and Litchlake Barn, from the proposed development, but it was considered that the measure of mitigation to be provided

will limit the impact in terms of visual amenity, noise and light. The new wind tunnel scheme now for consideration proposes the same level of mitigation from landscaping and with condition about noise levels their amenity will be maintained and therefore the proposal accords with the relevant development plan policies that seek to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties.

## Drainage

### *Policy Context*

- 8.68. Paragraph 167 of the NPPF states that in determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Applications of over 1Ha in Flood Zone 1 (i.e. major development) should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment.
- 8.69. Policy BN7 of the LPP1 and Policy SS2(1) of the LPP2 requires development to provide satisfactory surface water drainage and incorporate mitigation identified through an assessment of flood risk.

### *Assessment*

- 8.70. Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted with the application which highlights that the site is located at the head of the catchment for Silverstone Brook. The topography varies from 15m A.O.D to 145m A.O.D typically from south to north with existing gradients, which enable exceedance overland flows to fall to field drainage discharge locations.
- 8.71. Flood mapping shows the site to be located with Flood Zone 1 with 1% surface water flooding contained at the lowest areas of the site. The majority of the site which will be developed has ground conditions which will not permit infiltration techniques to discharge surface water. The developed site will be designed using SuDS techniques to manage surface water generated. This will be achieved by the introduction of attenuated permeable paving, swales ponds and wetland areas. These techniques should look to mimic the existing overland routes to ensure drainage continuity further in the catchment.
- 8.72. Storage ponds will be utilised at existing low points within the site with conveyance swales providing deceleration, storage and flood routing through the site.
- 8.73. The FRA concludes that the site is at low risk of flooding caused by all assessed causes. The lack of available ground infiltration in the majority of the site would lead to the management of surface water onsite to discharge to tributaries of Silverstone brook.
- 8.74. The development includes a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), to ensure that the existing runoff rate is achieved. These measures will result in a proposal that can be developed safely, without exposing the new development or elsewhere in the locality to an unacceptable degree of flood risk or increasing risk of flooding elsewhere, in accordance with the NPPF and development plan policies. It is considered that the environmental impacts of this development can be suitably mitigated through appropriate conditions.
- 8.75. No comments have been received from the LLFA at the time of writing. Members will be updated at Committee in respect to any drainage issues raised, however, the applicant has been working with the LLFA over the last year in order to discharge the drainage conditions on the HQ building and as this is an additional building it is anticipated that this will also adequately addressed.

### *Conclusion*

8.76. Subject to there being no objection by the LLFA or issues that cannot be resolved by conditioned, it is considered that the site is not at risk of flooding and will not increase flood risk elsewhere, in accordance with Policy BN7 of the LPP1 and the NPPF and that the measures proposed will result in a scheme that can be developed safely, without exposing the new development or elsewhere in the locality to an unacceptable degree of flood risk or increasing risk of flooding elsewhere.

### Archaeology

#### *Policy context*

8.77. Policy HE2 of the LPP2 explains that when considering proposals that may affect sites that potentially have remains of archaeological importance, they will not be assessed until an appropriate desk-based *assessment* and where necessary a field assessment has been undertaken. Where remains are found there is a presumption that these should be preserved in situ.

#### *Assessment*

8.78. The site is within the Archaeological Assets Sites of Silverstone Airfield (WWII), and Syresham/Brackley Hatch. The application is accompanied by an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment taking into account the surrounding area, the potential for the presence of archaeological remains of all periods within the study site is considered to be low. However, it is known that the wider area was extensively exploited during the Iron Age and Roman periods and the potential for small scale farm steads and/or associated field systems of these periods was not entirely ruled out within the Desk Based Assessment. A geo-physical survey has since been undertaken which did not identified any anomalies of archaeological interest. Possible evidence for ridge and furrow or more recent ploughing has been identified, along with modern tracks and an underground service.

8.79. The archaeological findings to date have been discussed directly with the Council's Archaeologist who agrees the area has been evaluated and some wider investigations have taken place in limited areas. Whilst the report for the western field has not yet been issued, there is no need for any further archaeological work in connection with this application.

#### *Conclusion*

8.80. The development of the site, on an area of land of low archaeological interest will lead to less than substantial harm. The proposal will not have a harmful impact on any archaeological remain and is in accordance with NPPF and HE2 of the LPP2.

### Ecology Impact

#### *Policy Context*

8.81. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites' and 'European protected species' (EPS). Under the Regulations, competent authorities such as the Council have a general duty to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive and Wild Birds Directive.

8.82. In terms of EPS, the Regulations make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in the Regulations, or pick, collect, cut, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed therein. However, these actions can be made

lawful through the granting of licenses by the appropriate authorities by meeting the requirements of 3 strict legal derogation tests:

- a. Is the development needed to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment?
- b. That there is no satisfactory alternative.
- c. That the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

8.83. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (amongst others): a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils; and d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

8.84. Paragraph 179 of the NPPF seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity through 'the promotion of the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

8.85. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF seeks to resist the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons<sup>3</sup> and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

8.86. Paragraph 185 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should (amongst others) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on nature conservation.

8.87. National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that Local Planning Authorities should only require ecological surveys where clearly justified, for example if there is a reasonable likelihood of a protected species being present and affected by development. Assessments should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed and the likely impact on biodiversity.

8.88. Policy NE3 of the Part 2 LP seeks to conserve and wherever possible enhance green infrastructure. Policy NE4 seeks to protect and integrate existing trees and hedgerows wherever possible and requires new planting schemes to use native or similar species and varieties to maximise benefits to the local landscape and wildlife. Policy NE5 requires that proposals aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity in order to provide measurable net gains. Development proposals will not be permitted where they would result in significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity, including protected species and sites of international, national and local significance, ancient woodland, and species and habitats of principal importance identified in the United Kingdom Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

8.89. Policy BN2 of the LPP1 states that development that will maintain and enhance existing designations and assets or deliver a net gain in biodiversity will be supported. Development that has the potential to harm sites of ecological importance will be subject to an ecological assessment and required to demonstrate: 1) the methods used to conserve biodiversity in

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<sup>3</sup> For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.

its design and construction and operation 2) how habitat conservation, enhancement and creation can be achieved through linking habitats 3) how designated sites, protected species and priority habitats will be safeguarded. In cases where it can be shown that there is no reasonable alternative to development that is likely to prejudice the integrity of an existing wildlife site or protected habitat appropriate mitigation measures including compensation will be expected in proportion to the asset that will be lost. Where mitigation or compensation cannot be agreed with the relevant authority development will not be permitted.

- 8.90. In order to discharge its legal duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 the LPA must firstly assess whether an offence under the Regulations is likely to be committed. If so, the LPA should then consider whether Natural England would be likely to grant a licence for the development. In so doing the authority has to consider itself whether the development meets the 3 derogation tests listed above.
- 8.91. In respect of planning applications and the Council discharging of its legal duties, case law has shown that if it is clear/ very likely that Natural England will not grant a licence then the Council should refuse planning permission; if it is likely or unclear whether Natural England will grant the licence then the Council may grant planning permission.

#### *Assessment*

- 8.92. The application is supported by a detailed Ecology Statement that has been duly considered by the Council's Ecologist who is content that little has changed since the original 2019 survey and therefore no further surveys are required at this time, as the state of protected species and habitats on site are unlikely to have changed. The Ecology Statement confirms following an assessment of this new proposal that the mitigation measures detailed within the Ecological Assessment and the condition CEMP & LEMP will ensure if followed that the impact on protected species and habitats is unlikely to be significant.
- 8.93. The area for the proposals was originally to be part of the landscaping for the wider site, these proposals will however result in the loss of an area of landscaping this will affect the net biodiversity gain calculation, but it is detailed in the Ecology Statement that a net gain will still be achieved, this may however be lower than was originally envisaged for the wider site.
- 8.94. Appropriate mitigation is presented within the submitted Ecological Assessment for Reptiles, Badgers, Bats, Great Crested Newts and Nesting Birds. The habitat enhancements detailed in the Ecological Assessment will ensure that a net gain in biodiversity is achieved in line with NPPF. All planting within the ecological enhancement/non-formal landscaped areas should be of UK native local provenance species of a mix that is reflective of that found locally in similar habitats.
- 8.95. The submitted Lighting Impact Assessment and associated plans by Jacobs dated 27th September 2021, has been reviewed by the Ecologist who considers that the lighting scheme proposed is in line with the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK, it will ensure the impact on light sensitive species, e.g. bats, and habitats, e.g. Ancient Woodland to the West, is minimised and that it is sympathetic to wildlife if the recommendations for mitigation in sections 6&8 are implemented and adhered to these include, automatic absence detection automatically switching to a reduced lighting level when loading/unloading is not in progress.
- 8.96. In respect to the Noise Impact Assessment although the assessment does not reference the woodland to the west as a sensitive receptor the mitigated noise levels described are within the conditioned levels.

## *Conclusion*

8.97. Officers are satisfied, on the basis of the advice from the Council's Ecologist and the absence of any objection from Natural England, and subject to conditions, that the welfare of any EPS found to be present at the site and surrounding land will continue and be safeguarded notwithstanding the proposed development and that the Council's statutory obligations in relation to protected species and habitats under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017, have been met and discharged.

## Minerals Safeguarding Area

8.98. Policy 28 of the MWLP states the following: "Minerals Safeguarding Areas Mineral resources of economic importance will be safeguarded from sterilisation by incompatible non-mineral development through the designation of Minerals Safeguarding Areas. Development of a significant nature within Minerals Safeguarding Areas will have to demonstrate that the sterilisation of proven mineral resources of economic importance will not occur as a result of the development, and that the development would not pose a serious hindrance to future extraction in the vicinity. If this cannot be demonstrated, prior extraction will be sought where practicable.

8.99. Development of a non-mineral related nature within the Mineral Safeguarding Areas which is incompatible with the safeguarding of minerals should not proceed unless:

- it can be clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority that the mineral concerned is no longer of any value, or potential Value, or that substantial (economically viable) deposits of a similar quality exist elsewhere in the county, or the mineral can be extracted, where practicable, prior to the development taking place, or
- the incompatible development is of a temporary nature and can be completed with the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit extraction within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed, or
- the development is of a minor nature which would not inhibit extraction of the mineral resource, or
- there is an overriding need for the development".

8.100. It has been established that there has been no interest in the site for mineral extraction and its value for such purposes is considered very limited. In conjunction with this, the site needs to be considered in context of what is in situ in that around a third of the site has already been developed with the existing factory and associated parking already in place and due to their degree of permanency, the potential for the site to be utilised for mineral extraction is not possible in anyway.

8.101. The way the policy is worded is in a manner that means only one of the criteria needs to be met in order to conform to the objectives of the policy and enable development to proceed within the MSA. In this case, the key criterion is whether there is an 'overriding need for the development'.

8.102. Paragraphs 8.8 - 8.15 above demonstrates the need for the development and the fact that the principle of the development is acceptable and compliant with the Development Plan, finds that Policy 28 of the MWLP is also complied with.

## **9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

9.1. CIL is not chargeable on this development.

## 10. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 10.1. *Economic objective* – The proposed extension to Aston Martin’s existing facility allows the growth and consolidation of the existing business. The proposal will contribute towards sustainable economic growth of the District as a whole, as well as the continued development of the Silverstone area more specifically.
- 10.2. *Social objective* – The proposal will allow the continued growth of the business in situ, which means that the existing employees will continue to be located close to their place of work. Furthermore, it is anticipated that 58 additional jobs will be generated by the development, which will contribute towards the local economy and support local facilities and services.
- 10.3. *Environmental objective* – Whilst the site is situated within the Special Landscape Area, it has been demonstrated that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. As set out above, the proposed development also provides a range of landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures. In term of residential amenity mitigation measures will be put in place to protect the amenities of the occupiers of Litchlake Farm and Litchlake Barns.
- 10.4. The development includes a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), to ensure that the existing runoff rate is achieved. These measures will result in a proposal that can be developed safely, without exposing the new development or elsewhere in the locality to an unacceptable degree of flood risk or increasing risk of flooding elsewhere, in accordance with the NPPF and development plan policies. It is considered that the environmental impacts of this development can be suitably mitigated through appropriate conditions.
- 10.5. The proposal also incorporates a range of sustainability principles, including passive, active and renewable design measures it also meets BREEAM level ‘very good’ and therefore accords with the sustainability policies both locally and nationally.
- 10.6. The proposed development therefore represents high quality design which responds to the surroundings and complements the approved flagship HQ building. As such, the proposal is consistent the relevant policies of the Development Plan as well as the NPPF.
- 10.7. There is support in local and national policy for the expansion and intensification of existing employment sites. This is particularly emphasised to support and grow the Formula 1 industry and associated businesses in the district and NPPF that emphasises the support that should be given to businesses that drive innovation, which should be encouraged to capitalise on performance and potential. As Formula 1 is so important to the local and national economy, it is considered that the development accords with the development plan policy outlined, the economic strategy for the area and NPPF and represent sustainable development.
- 10.8. The proposal therefore accords with Policies SS2, EMP1, EMP2, EMP3, NE4, NE5 and INF4 of the adopted Local Plan, policies SA, S1, S7, S8, S10, S11, E1 and R2 of the LPP1 and/or the following material considerations: NPPF; sections on Climate Change, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, Design, Environmental Impact, Flood Risk and Coastal Change, Health and Wellbeing, Natural Environment, Noise, Planning Obligations and Travel Plans and Transport Statements of the PPG; the Council’s SPG on Development Brief Silverstone Circuit Masterplan (2009), South Northamptonshire Council & East Midlands Air Quality Network – Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document for Developers Northamptonshire Parking Standards (2016).

**11. RECOMMENDATION / CONDITIONS AND REASONS**

**DELEGATE TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR GROWTH, CLIMATE AND REGENERATION TO GRANT PERMISSION, SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS TO BE PROVIDED IN THE WRITTEN UPDATES (AND ANY AMENDMENTS TO THOSE CONDITIONS AS DEEMED NECESSARY) AND NO OBJECTION RECEIVED FROM THE LLFA.**