



J. Murphy & Sons Limited

PLANNING STATEMENT

Full Planning Application for the redevelopment and extension of the existing depot at Ollerton





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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by WSP on behalf of J. Murphy & Sons Limited (Murphy's) to support a full planning application for the redevelopment and extension of their existing Ollerton depot, at Newark Road, New Ollerton, Newark, NG22 9QG. The site comprises the existing Murphys depot off Newark Road on the edge of Ollerton and the adjacent agricultural fields.
- 1.1.2 Murphy's are a leading global, specialist engineering and construction company, founded in 1951. Having initially started as a small engineering firm, the company has experienced sustainable growth over the last 70 years and has cemented itself as one of the predominant engineering firms within the UK. This growth has been underpinned by its reputation for delivering world class infrastructure safely and efficiently.
- 1.1.3 The company employs approximately 3,500 engineers, professional managers and skilled operatives around the world, and is looking to continue to evolve and diversify to meet the changing needs of its clients. Central to this are Murphy's operations at their depots throughout the UK.
- 1.1.4 Murphy's have operated out of the site since 1998 and have made significant investment in the local area, supporting local employment and the wider local economy. The proposed plans would enable Murphy's to remain in Ollerton for the next 50 years bringing a key strategic function of national interest to the depot.
- 1.1.5 The works to the existing depot land include the construction of a new staff office and national training centre building and car-park to the front of the site as well as the reconfiguration of various other buildings. The depot is then proposed to be extended into the fields to the east of the existing site with the construction of a new warehouse building with surrounding hardstanding, along with an area to be used for specialist pylon construction, operation and maintenance training.
- 1.1.6 This Planning Statement is set out as follows:
- Section 2 provides the factual background to the site and proposed scheme;
 - Section 3 comprises an overview of the relevant local and national planning policy;
 - Section 4 assesses the proposal against planning policy; and
 - Section 5 comprises a conclusion.

2 SITE CONTEXT

2.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1.1 The application site extends to circa 25ha and comprises a depot operated by J. Murphy and Sons Ltd (extending to circa 6.8ha) within the western part of the site, and agricultural fields within the eastern part of the site, separated by a curved former railway line embankment.
- 2.1.2 The site is located partially within and partially outside of the urban boundary of Ollerton as defined by the Proposals Map. The depot is on the south-eastern edge of Ollerton, within the settlement boundary. It wraps around Kelsey Avenue, a cul-de-sac development of 38 dwellings which was constructed on a former textile factory site, pursuant to planning permission ref: 03/00020/OUT & 04/01337/RMAM. The depot borders the cul-de-sac on three sides.
- 2.1.3 The existing depot extends to c. 6.8ha and includes a number of workshops, storage buildings, an office, covered and external storage areas. In total, the existing site has approximately 4,931 sqm of covered accommodation across 11 buildings. These include a new grit blasting facility that was recently constructed, pursuant to planning permission ref: 21/00134/FUL. Several of the existing buildings are in a mixture of conditions and some are in need of replacement. It is currently accessed from Newark Road on the north-western corner of the depot.



Figure 2-1 - Application Site

- 2.1.4 The eastern part of the site comprises two adjacent agricultural fields which are separated from the depot by a belt of trees. There is an existing agricultural access that cuts through this treeline with access taken through the depot site.
- 2.1.5 The site is bordered on the west by existing housing, Newark Road and a trade park. Ollerton Pit Woods is to the north beyond the railway line, with Wellow Park to the east, and a thick tree belt and a crematorium with agricultural fields beyond to the south.
- 2.1.6 The site is not specifically allocated in the adopted Local Plan, although the existing depot lies within the settlement boundary of Ollerton and Boughton as defined on the Proposals Map. The adjacent fields are located outside the settlement and within the countryside. The landscaped former railway

line embankment which dissects the site is a Site of Interest in Nature Conservation (SINC) under Core Policy 12 of the Core Strategy (2019) and Policy DM7 from the Allocations & Development Management DPD (2013). Ollerton Pit Woods to the north is designated as a SINC. Wellow Park is also designated as a SINC, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Ancient Woodland.

- 2.1.7 A watercourse bisects the site broadly south-west to north-east. In terms of flood risk, the existing depot and parts of the agricultural fields which are subject to proposed development lie in Flood Zone 1. The eastern part of the agricultural fields lies in Flood Zone 2 and 3, which means that there is a high risk of flooding from fluvial sources. However, these areas are not subject to proposed development, and would be retained as green space, in addition to comprising a fluvial control feature.
- 2.1.8 The site is located in the Sherwood Regional Landscape Character Area, which is characterised by gently rounded topography, medium to large semi-irregular field patterns, occasional hedgerow trees, and small, nucleated, red brick villages.
- 2.1.9 Wellow Conservation Area is to the south of the site, separated by a dense landscaping buffer which is not being affected by the proposed development. Wellow was designated as a conservation area in 1978 with amendments made in 1993. It was designated due to its rich history as a medieval village. Given the buffer and nature of the proposed development, there is no anticipated impact of the proposed development upon this designated heritage asset.

2.2 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.2.1 The planning history for the depot relates to its well-established commercial operations.
- 2.2.2 The most recent planning permission was for the “Erection of new industrial building” approved in July 2021 (ref: 21/00134/FUL). The approved building comprises a new location for the grit blasting operations that already took place on the site, moving it further away from the residential properties and containing it within a purpose-built facility.
- 2.2.3 There is no recent relevant planning history relating to the agricultural fields.
- 2.2.4 As noted above, the residential cul-de-sac Kelsey Avenue was constructed pursuant to planning permission ref: 03/00020/OUT & 04/01337/RMAM. It should be noted that the approved development was subject to noise attenuation condition (no.7 of 04/1337/RMAM) which was not discharged.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1.1 This full application seeks planning permission for the redevelopment and reconfiguration of the existing depot as well as a proposed extension into the adjoining agricultural fields.
- 3.1.2 It is proposed to demolish the existing office and workshop area in the north-western corner of the site and the heavy plant machinery workshop located at the boundary of the adjoining residential properties. Several other buildings on the site are proposed to be relocated. Only five of the existing buildings are proposed to be retained in their current position, including the new grit-blasting facility.



Figure 3-1 - Existing site demolition plan

- 3.1.3 Within the existing depot site area, a new office and training academy building is proposed in the north-west corner of the site to replace the existing offices and this will be fronted by a surface car park for the site. The new building will be 1,500sqm in size.



Figure 3-2 - Proposed Office Building

- 3.1.4 The workshop currently in this location will be relocated to a new workshop building on the adjoining agricultural land to the east of the site. This will comprise two combined workshop buildings, both 2,500sqm in size to be used for plant machinery and construction vehicle maintenance, and specialist welding and pipe testing services. New hardstanding is proposed around this new workshop. The existing access will be retained.



Figure 3-3 - Proposed Workshop

- 3.1.5 In addition to the new buildings, the overall scheme / site proposes a new training area for the construction, operation and maintenance of pylons and sub-stations. Part of this area is proposed to be located to the southern site boundary, within the existing agricultural land.
- 3.1.6 The submitted Design and Access Statement identifies how the scheme is envisaged to be constructed in four phases with the new workshop coming forward in Phase 1, then the reconfiguration of the existing depot site in Phase 2, the new training facility areas in Phase 3, and finally the construction of the new office building as Phase 4.



Figure 3-4 - Proposed layout

3.1.7 The proposed works will facilitate the creation of a new specialist training centre of national interest in Ollerton and move existing operations at Murphy’s Leeds site, to Ollerton. There is currently only one other training centre providing specialised overhead line and substation training in the UK, resulting in an almost 2-year waiting list and a delay in up-skilling the national workforce to provide this important infrastructure service.

3.2 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

3.2.1 WSP have held pre-application discussions with Newark & Sherwood District Council since September 2023, and secured formal written pre-application advice from the local planning authority in November 2023 [REDACTED] which included feedback from the Coal Authority, LLFA, local highways authority and other specialist officers at the county and district councils.

3.2.2 The pre-application advice outlines that the LPA consider the proposal would present a departure from the development plan and requests the strong justification must be provided to justify the proposal. The applicant has sought to take on board the feedback and address the concerns raised in the pre-application advice, which are set out in section 5 of this Planning Statement.

3.2.3 In advance of the application submission, the applicant has undertaken consultation and engagement with the local community and elected representatives at Newark and Sherwood District Council including a public exhibition event, online consultation and meetings. 95.2% of respondents stated they agreed or strongly agreed with the vision and investment in a new One Murphy Ollerton Hub. Details are provided in the Statement of Community Involvement, prepared by Political Developments Limited.



Figure 3-5 - Public Exhibition 13 November 2023

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1.1 The development plan of relevance to this application currently consists of the Newark and Sherwood Amended Core Strategy DPD (adopted March 2019), and the Allocations & Development Management DPD (adopted July 2013).

4.2 AMENDED CORE STRATEGY DPD

4.2.1 The Amended Core Strategy sets out the District Council's spatial policy framework for delivering the development and change needed to realise the District Council's vision for the District up to 2033. Part of the Council's vision is *"The District will have a successful, diverse economy by providing employment opportunities to a local workforce, equipped with a wide range of skills arising from improved education, learning and training and encouraging tourism potential"*.

4.2.2 Linked to this, one of the identified key issues and challenges is *"Providing additional employment opportunities that meet local needs, concerns and aspirations, and a diverse local economy which should include growth in particular priority sectors"*. It therefore adopts an objective to *"provide a diverse range of employment opportunities for local people by... supporting the retention of existing jobs and the development of local businesses; promoting additional growth... developing an improved education base with enhanced learning and training opportunities for local people"*.

4.2.3 The policies of relevance to this application are:

- Y Spatial Policy 1 Settlement Hierarchy, which identifies Ollerton as a Service Centre which should provide local employment;
- Y Spatial Policy 2 Spatial Distribution of Growth, which supports regeneration in Ollerton, which includes seeking to secure new employment opportunities
- Y Spatial Policy 3 Rural Areas, which seeks to protect the countryside, in which development will be strictly controlled and restricted to uses which require a rural setting;
- Y Spatial Policy 6 Infrastructure for Growth, which establishes the LPA's position in seeking to secure developer contributions where necessary through CIL and/or obligations;
- Y Spatial Policy 7 Sustainable Transport, which supports the use of sustainable means of transport, in addition to ensuring development is safe, appropriate for the highways network, and supported by sufficient parking;
- Y Core Policy 6 Shaping our Employment Profile, which supports economic growth in Service Centres such as Ollerton, enabling employment levels to be maintained and increased, by meeting the needs of both traditional and emerging business sectors and types;
- Y Core Policy 9 Sustainable Design, which sets out the expectations for new development to meet a high standard of sustainable design, including demonstrating an effective and efficient use of land;
- Y Core Policy 10 Climate Change, which seeks to ensure the design and construction of new development responds to the issues of climate change, including steering development away from areas at the highest risk of flooding through the application of the sequential test;
- Y Core Policy 12 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure, which expects proposals to take into account the need for continued protection of the District's ecological, biological and geological assets, with particular regard to sites of international, national and local significance, Ancient Woodlands and species and habitats of principal importance;

- Y Core Policy 13 Landscape Character, which seeks to ensure that landscapes, including valued landscapes, have been protected and enhanced;
- Y Core Policy 14 Historic Environment, which requires the continued preservation and enhancement of the District's heritage assets including archaeological sites; and
- Y ShAP2 – Role of Ollerton & Boughton, which supports new employment opportunities within the town.

4.3 ALLOCATIONS & DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DPD

4.3.1 The policies of relevance to this application are:

- Y Policy DM1 Development within Settlements Central to Delivering the Spatial Strategy, which supports employment development within the urban boundaries which is appropriate to the size and location of the settlement;
- Y DM4 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation, which supports renewable and low carbon energy generation development;
- Y DM5 Design, which sets design criteria for new proposals, and requires the local distinctiveness of the District's landscape and character of built form to be reflected in the scale, form, mass, layout, design, materials and detailing of proposals for new development;
- Y DM7 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure, which states that development proposals affecting sites of ecological importance should be supported by an up-to-date ecological assessment;
- Y DM8 Development in the Open Countryside, which states *“Small scale employment development will only be supported where it can demonstrate the need for a particular rural location and a contribution to providing or sustaining rural employment to meet local needs in accordance with the aims of Core Policy 6. Proposals for the proportionate expansion of existing businesses will be supported where they can demonstrate an ongoing contribution to local employment. Such proposals will not require justification through a sequential test”*. It adds that proposals resulting in the loss of the most versatile areas of agricultural land, will be required to demonstrate a sequential approach to site selection and demonstrate environmental or community benefits that outweigh the land loss;
- Y DM9 Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment, which states that where proposals are likely to affect sites of significant archaeological potential, the applicant is required to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment;
- Y DM10 Pollution and Hazardous Substances, which requires investigation of potential contamination and consideration of pollution on health, the natural environment and amenity; and
- Y DM12 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, which adopts this presumption in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

4.4 NOTTINGHAMSHIRE MINERALS LOCAL PLAN

4.4.1 The Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan was adopted in 2021. Policy SP7 seeks to safeguard locally and nationally important mineral resources, permitted reserves, allocated sites and associated minerals infrastructure from needless sterilisation by non-minerals development. Prior extraction is not required where applications demonstrate that mineral resources will not be needlessly sterilised as a result of the development, and that the development would not pose a serious hindrance to future extraction in the vicinity.

4.5 EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

- 4.5.1 The Council is undertaking a Local Plan review and consulted on the Second Publication Amended Allocations & Development Management DPD in late 2023. The document is subject to change and can therefore only be afforded limited weight at this time.
- 4.5.2 Notably, Draft Policy DM8 states the following (changes to the existing policy are underlined and deleted material crossed through):

“Small scale Employment development should be small in scale unless a larger scale can be justified and will only be supported where it can demonstrate the need for a particular rural location and a contribution to providing or sustaining rural employment to meet local needs in accordance with the aims of Core Policy 6 of the Amended Core Strategy.

Proposals for the proportionate expansion of existing businesses will be supported where they can demonstrate an ongoing contribution to local employment. Such proposals will not require justification through a sequential test.

Proposals to expand existing businesses or construct buildings for new businesses in the open countryside are more likely to be appropriate in areas such as industrial estates where the principle of such development is established. Where it is demonstrated that it is necessary, expansion into adjacent areas could be considered appropriate if the impacts are judged to be acceptable. The proportionality of such developments should be assessed individually and cumulatively and impacts on both the immediate vicinity and the wider setting should be considered. It should be demonstrated that location on existing employment allocations or on employment land within urban boundaries or village envelopes is not more appropriate.”

4.6 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and recognises the importance of providing sufficient land of the right type in the right places. For decision making this means approving applications that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
- 4.6.2 The NPPF supports sustainable economic growth and places significant weight on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. Of particular relevance to this proposal, paragraph 89 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist”.

5 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1.1 The proposed development comprises the partial redevelopment of the existing established industrial site for a more efficient use of the land, with modern premises, alongside the development of greenfield land within the countryside. The proposed employment development within the urban boundaries is entirely appropriate and supported by Policy DM1, on the basis that the proposal is of an appropriate scale to the size and location of Ollerton. Whilst Spatial Policy 3 Rural Areas seeks to protect the countryside, development is nonetheless permissible, and this is considered below.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

- 5.1.2 Spatial Policy 3 confirms that development in the open countryside should be restricted to uses which require a rural setting.
- 5.1.3 Policy DM8 supports small scale employment development in the countryside where it can demonstrate the need for a particular rural location and a contribution to providing or sustaining rural employment to meet local needs. Proposals for the proportionate expansion of existing businesses will be supported where they can demonstrate an ongoing contribution to local employment. Such proposals will not require justification through a sequential test. This approach is supported by Core Policy 6 which seeks to retain and safeguard existing employment areas.
- 5.1.4 It is not defined what constitutes “small scale” and “proportionate” development within the policy. There are several ways of considering proportionality in this context and what is tested, the overall site area, floorspace, employee numbers, built volume etc... In considering this point, we have reviewed comparable applications where this point has been assessed to establish how it has been interpreted by the Council previously. The only direct comparison that we have been able to find is the application considering the development at Belle Eau Park (LPA Ref. 20/00636/FULM), for the extension of an existing warehouse building into the countryside, officers concluded that a 94% increase in floorspace from the original business park is probably the *“very upper cusp of what could reasonably be considered a proportionate expansion”*,
- 5.1.5 Taking this approach of assessing floorspace as a metric in assessing the proportionality of the expansion. The existing site has a total of 5,109 sqm of built floorspace within it, of which 1,929 sqm will be retained and 6,500 sqm of additional floorspace provided within the new workshop and office buildings. In total, therefore, the overall proposed floorspace will become 8,429 sqm, an increase of 3,320 sqm, 65% of the existing. Well below the figure indicated as “proportionate” at the Belle Eau Park example.
- 5.1.6 The Ollerton site is, however, different from Belle Eau Park, particularly given it has large area of open storage so an alternative way of assessing / scrutinising the proportionality of the expansion could be looking at the overall site area. The proposed new workshop and associated hardstanding would total around 2.6ha of additional land in the open countryside adjoining the settlement limits and existing depot. This would be an increase to the existing depot facility (7.3ha) of less than 50%. The southern training area would add a further 0.8ha of extended area to the overall site though not all of this would be hardstanding. In combination, the increase to the operational area of the site will be approximately 3.4ha, an increase of approximately 46%, well below the 94% metric identified previously.

- 5.1.7 It is also important to note that this expansion would be for the ongoing operation of the exiting industrial occupier, rather than any expansion to introduce new operators or uses. Therefore, this should be deemed proportionate in the context of the existing site and settlement of Ollerton. In the context of Policy DM8, the development does have a clear need for this particular rural location and would provide an ongoing contribution to local employment as set out below.
- 5.1.8 The adopted policy doesn't explicitly address the suitability of larger scale employment development, albeit draft Policy DM8 of the Second Publication Amended Allocations & Development Management DPD seeks to permit larger scale development where it can be justified.
- 5.1.9 Both existing and emerging local planning policy support proposals for the proportionate expansion of existing businesses, where they can demonstrate an ongoing contribution to local employment. In the absence of any specific definition, the applicant considers the proposal a proportionate expansion. The nature of operations on site will remain as is but with an expansion into associated training. Whilst physically the expansion into the countryside amounts to circa 4ha, this is a result of the increased landscape buffers proposed on the existing depot in order to improve the relationship with neighbours i.e. a smaller scale expansion could be sought but would not generate the same degree of benefits in terms of improvements to the amenity of neighbouring homes.
- 5.1.10 Operationally, the proposed works expand the existing facility by consolidating the existing Ollerton depot operations with the specialist welding and pipe testing business currently operating out of Leeds, along with a new focus on Ollerton as a national training centre for the Murphy business. Overall, it is anticipated that the proposed works will result in an increase of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees on the site of about 86 jobs, an increase of c.85%. Whilst significant, this again falls below the 94% increase identified as a barometer for proportionality at Belle Eau Park. The socio-economic benefits and considerations for the development are considered below and should be factored as a key material consideration if officers determine the proposals to be in conflict with Policy DM8.

Need for expansion into the countryside

- 5.1.11 Murphys have been operating out of the existing Ollerton depot since 1998 and the business is seeking to retain and consolidate its presence at Ollerton through these works. The proposed plans solely relate to their operations and present an expansion for specialist training and the ongoing operation on the site for the long term.
- 5.1.12 Whilst the proposals make more efficient use of the existing depot within the settlement limits, there is not sufficient land to accommodate the whole of the expansion needed i.e. the workshop, training centre and pylon training area. As noted above, the use of land outside of the settlement limits also allows for more generous landscaping buffers from the depot to the neighbours on Kelsey Avenue, presenting an improvement to the existing relationship. These spatial considerations are set out in more detail in the accompanying Design and Access Statement but, in short, the expansion of the depot into the countryside is a physical requirement to achieve Murphy's objectives for the site whilst also considerably improving the depot's relationship with the adjoining residential properties.
- 5.1.13 Policy DM8 does not require justification through a sequential test for such proposals, albeit it is a material consideration that there are no alternative sites which Murphys would consider suitable for the proposal. To identify a comparable area of land with sufficient space for the open storage requirements in the area would be very challenging and it is questionable whether Murphy would look to stay in the District (let alone Ollerton) if it were required to find a new site. The vacant land

within the open countryside is proposed for development on the basis it adjoins the existing depot representing operational efficiency for the business, an alternative location would not, therefore, be a feasible option.

- 5.1.14 Murphys are aware that other sites in the locality may be available, such as the Former Thoresby Colliery, Ollerton Road, Edwinstowe, subject to outline planning permission for various uses including a Strategic Employment Site (comprising up to 4,855 sqm Class B1a, up to 13,760 sqm Class B1c, and up to 13,760 sqm Class B2) (LPA Ref: 16/02173/OUTM). The site is considered unsuitable by Murphys to accommodate the development proposed in the countryside, given the distance from the existing depot. Murphys would not split their operations across the existing depot and an unrelated plot of land to house any of the proposed buildings; they would operate together with staff working across the whole site. Similarly, Murphys would not relocate the whole of this existing depot in which they have recently invested, such as the new building for grit blasting, consented in July 2021 (ref: 21/00134/FUL). Murphys would not invest in a new depot relocating all existing buildings and operations given the financial cost and disruption to their operations.

Economic Benefits and contribution to local employment

- 5.1.15 Should the LPA consider the proposal does not constitute a proportionate expansion, there is still a compelling case for the proposal. The application is accompanied by an Economic Assessment that considers the socio-economic impacts of the development in detail.
- 5.1.16 Core Policy 6 of the 2019 Core Strategy identifies an objective to strengthen and broaden the Newark and Sherwood economy by providing a range of employment opportunities by, among other things, the retention and safeguarding of existing employment land and sites. This aligns with the general thrust of national planning policy which encourages policies and decisions to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It states, at paragraph 81, that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 5.1.17 The proposed development would bring significant economic benefits to the area. It would create a number of highly skilled jobs in the area and would increase spending in the local economy.
- 5.1.18 This includes the creation of additional employment opportunities with a net additional employment of +86 FTE jobs expected on the site. The site is then expected to contribute to supporting a further 21 FTE roles within the area. Of the on-site employment generation it is anticipated that the development will generate around 35 net additional jobs in the locale of Ollerton and a further 90 within the wider impact area.
- 5.1.19 After accounting for additionality factors, the Proposed Development could generate £13.8 million in GVA per annum to the local economy wider impact area of the East Midlands, of which £12.4 million could support the local Newark and Sherwood economy.
- 5.1.20 The expenditure effect generated by the gross-on-site FTE jobs and induced jobs in Newark and Sherwood could be in the region of £159,000.
- 5.1.21 Temporary employment opportunities would also arise through the construction period, with an estimated 145 FTE gross on-site jobs, alongside £14.7 million gross direct temporary construction GVA.
- 5.1.22 Notably, the Economic Assessment also sets out some of the qualitative considerations of the socio-economic impacts the development could bring to the area. The employment supported by the site

would be able to respond to local needs around skills development, wages and unemployment. Working across the UK, Murphy's pride themselves on their inclusive employment programmes and opportunities. This includes programmes such as Sector Based Work Academy (SWAP), Ex-Offenders Programme, the Emerging Talent positions and the Kickstart programme which came to an end in 2022.

- 5.1.23 These initiatives provide genuine social value to the community to upskill the local workforce and help provide sustainable solutions to tackle local economic challenges such as relatively high levels of deprivation (when compared regionally and nationally).

Emerging and national planning policy

- 5.1.24 Whilst significant weight cannot be afforded to the emerging Local Plan, given it is subject to change, it is nonetheless a material consideration that Draft Policy DM8 explicitly supports "larger scale" employment development where justified, stating this is more likely to be appropriate at industrial estates where the principle is established and the impacts are judged acceptable. The emerging policy states that it should be demonstrated that location on existing employment land within urban boundaries is not more appropriate. This is demonstrated above.
- 5.1.25 The emerging policy also more closely aligns with paragraph 85 of the NPPF which requires planning decisions to recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements. This should encourage the use of sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements.

Training centre of national interest

- 5.1.26 The proposed training activities that this development will facilitate are of genuine national interest. The shortage in training opportunities in the UK means that there is an existing gap in the country's skilled workforce for appropriate sub-station and overhead power line training. This slows down development and the economy across the country. Murphy's have chosen Ollerton as the location for this service ahead of its other potential sites in the country to help support its presence and function within the local economy.
- 5.1.27 Currently there is only 1 other overhead line and substation specialist training centre providing these specialist courses nationally, and it is in such demand that there is almost a 2-year waiting list. A lot of companies are having to send employees to Europe to get training sooner. The proposed development provides an opportunity to capture that demand and bring them to Ollerton.
- 5.1.28 It is anticipated that the works will generate significant long-term investment in the area, creating a range of highly skilled job types as well as providing opportunities for apprenticeships in specialist fields.
- 5.1.29 Murphy's already have a strong track record in training for staff, evident in its extensive training programme and high apprenticeship take up. Murphy's existing work in promoting placements and apprenticeship programmes is vital. The new training centre to be incorporated at Ollerton will build on this and ensure that Murphy's evolves with the times, providing a resilient employment base for years to come and promoting skills that can assist in the UK's shift to a net-zero economy.
- 5.1.30 All of the above indicates the potential significant social and economic benefits that the development can create. In short, these proposals will generate job and training opportunities that will provide a

facility of national interest and support the local workforce. These material considerations should be factored into any assessment of the development but particularly if officers are to conclude that the proposals would be in conflict with adopted policies. The benefits of the development would significantly outweigh any conflict when taken into the balancing exercise of any assessment in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning Act.

LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

- 5.1.31 Policy DM8 notes that proposals resulting in the loss of the most versatile areas of agricultural land, will be required to demonstrate a sequential approach to site selection and demonstrate environmental or community benefits that outweigh the land loss.
- 5.1.32 The land in question is identified on the Natural England Agricultural Land Classification maps as being Grade 3 which has the potential to be Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land (BMV), subject to soil testing. The proposed extension into the countryside would result in some development of the adjoining land which has principally been used for grazing rather than arable crop growth. The majority of this land, however, would be retained as green space with an intention to enhance the biodiversity potential of the land to provide significant biodiversity net gain (see section below). This would outweigh the loss of agricultural land in this location.

SUMMARY

- 5.1.33 The above analysis has demonstrated how this proposal complies with both Policy DM8 and the development plan.
- 5.1.34 Should the LPA consider the proposal constitutes a departure from the development plan, this does not in itself warrant the refusal of the planning application. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 requires the determination to be made in accordance with the development plan and any national development management policies, unless material considerations strongly indicate otherwise. The legislation adds that *“If to any extent the development plan conflicts with a national development management policy, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the national development management policy”*.
- 5.1.35 It is a material consideration that the NPPF (paragraph 85) recognises that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements. Indeed, this approach is taken in Draft Policy DM8 of the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.1.36 Overall, therefore, notwithstanding the conclusions around Policy DM8 and its interpretation, the principle of the development should be supported by the Council in bringing jobs and economic opportunities to the area.

5.2 DESIGN AND LANDSCAPING

- 5.2.1 Core Policy 9 requires a high standard of sustainable design that protects and enhances the natural environment and contributes to the distinctiveness of the locality and requires development that is appropriate in form and scale to the context. Policy DM5 requires the local distinctiveness of the District’s landscape and character of built form to be reflected in the scale, form, mass, layout, design, materials and detailing of proposals for new development
- 5.2.2 The supporting Design and Access Statement sets out the design evolution and rationale for the proposed development. From the public realm, the site is most visible from Newark Road and here, the larger workshop building in the north-west corner of the site is proposed to be removed and

replaced with a more modest office / training building. The existing building is orientated away from the roadside and contributes very little to the public realm. The new development will, therefore, provide an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the site from this main vantage point.

5.2.3 The revised layout introduces a landscape strategy across the site but importantly, to this frontage with the new office building set well back from the public realm. As a result, the scheme will provide a significantly enhanced relationship to the Newark Road street-scene.



Figure 5-1 - Illustration of the proposed Newark Road frontage

5.2.4 In order to understand the site’s contribution to the wider visual landscape, Fabrik have been appointed to prepare an LVIA to support the planning application. The layout of the scheme has incorporated their findings in terms of sensitive visual receptors which are identified in the accompanying design document.

5.2.5 The main visual sensitivity for the development are views from the adjoining Ollerton Pit Woods area which is a SINC and part UK BAP Priority habitat but is also an area of publicly accessible open space. Whilst the development site sits the other side of the railway line, it is proposed that a landscape buffer along the northern boundary of the site will be incorporated to soften views of the new workshop from this area.

5.2.6 The other key visual receptor are the existing houses on Kelsey Avenue. These properties already overlook the depot with only a timber fence separating the rear elevations and gardens buffering the site from the depot. To enhance this relationship for these existing residents, it is proposed that a new landscape buffer with gentle earth mounding will be provided creating a visual buffer between these properties and the wider depot, filtering any views from the upper floors of these houses which will significantly enhance their outlook compared with the current relationship. This buffer will also have additional environmental benefits for the occupiers of these houses.

5.2.7 Overall, whilst it is inevitable that development into the countryside will have some visual impacts, the site’s position and existing screening mean that these are likely to be limited. The additional planting proposed as mitigation will further help limit these impacts and, it is anticipated, create benefits particularly to the west of the site at Newark Road and Kelsey Avenue.

5.2.8 Further detail is provided in the Design and Access Statement, LVIA and the Proposed Site Plan which includes details of the areas where open storage is proposed.

5.3 AMENITY

5.3.1 Policy DM5 requires development to be acceptable in terms of not having a detrimental impact on residential amenity both in terms of existing and future occupiers.

5.3.2 The application site is in close proximity to existing homes on Kelsey Avenue. The applicant has sought to improve this relationship by constructing the workshop further away from the shared boundary, thereby relocating this noise intensive activity.

5.3.3 This application provides an opportunity to further improve this relationship and has driven the proposed design with the creation of a new landscape buffer proposed around the houses and the siting of the new developments further away from the boundary than the existing buildings which are being demolished. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the workshop closest to Kelsey Avenue, as well as another nearby workshop and other buildings. This has the potential to lead to a considerable reduction in the negative impacts on residential amenity.



Figure 5-2 - Proposed landscape buffer to Kelsey Avenue

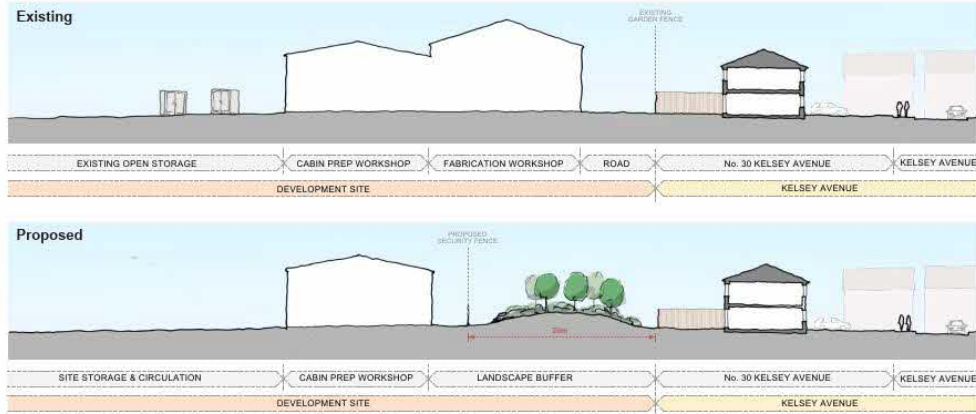


Figure 5-3 - Existing and proposed section

- 5.3.4 The scheme also takes the opportunity to reconfigure the parking layout on the site to move existing HGV and regular parking bays away from the rear boundaries of the residential houses.
- 5.3.5 The application is accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment which demonstrates how the proposals will provide significant betterment compared to the existing situation as a result of moving buildings and activities away from the shared boundaries of the Kelsey Avenue properties. The significant landscape buffer will help contribute to this mitigation as well as the location of the new warehouse building, the other side of the embankment.
- 5.3.6 An Air Quality Assessment has been undertaken by Hoare Lea and is submitted in support of the application. This concludes that the impacts of demolition and construction work on dust soiling and ambient fine particulate matter concentrations are considered to be not significant, subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures. The applicant would accept a condition to this effect.
- 5.3.7 The assessment also concludes that the potential impact of additional road traffic on local air quality is considered insignificant and a detailed assessment is not required.
- 5.3.8 The proposed energy strategy uses Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) and electric hot water generation for heating/cooling purposes within the office, warehouse and ancillary areas. As no on-site combustion sources are proposed for the primary energy supply, no local air quality impacts are anticipated. In respect of pollutant concentrations of NO₂, the site is considered suitable for the proposed mixed use without mitigation.
- 5.3.9 On this basis, the proposed development is deemed acceptable in terms of air quality in accordance with Policies DM5 and DM10.
- 5.3.10 A Lighting Strategy is submitted in support of the application, which includes a high-level lighting impact assessment of the sensitive human and ecological receptors that have the potential to be affected by the introduction of artificial light. Lighting will only be required during hours of darkness

where needed for safety and security with levels of illumination in keeping with the wider landscape. The strategy sets out an outline performance specification of luminaires to be used as part of the lighting scheme, as well as specification points such as mounting heights, control systems and correlated colour temperature that are relevant to the levels of light pollution generated by the scheme. An appropriate lighting scheme can be delivered to ensure that limitations are not exceeded and the environmental principles are implemented, in order to minimise any long term environmental lighting impacts.

- 5.3.11 Overall, this application offers a unique opportunity to significantly improve the residential amenities of existing residents on Kelsey Avenue. Significant levels of engagement have been undertaken with these residents in preparing the planning application to help establish how this betterment can be achieved and this should be given significant positive weight in considering this application in the planning balance.

5.4 ECOLOGY AND ARBORICULTURE

- 5.4.1 Core Policy 12 of the Core Strategy seeks to secure development that maximises the opportunities to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity. Policy DM5 of the DPD states that natural features of importance within or adjacent to development sites should, wherever possible, be protected and enhanced. Policy DM7 states that new development should protect, promote and enhance green infrastructure to deliver multi-functional benefits and contribute to the ecological network.
- 5.4.2 Comprehensive surveys were undertaken throughout the summer to help inform the masterplan development, to ensure that the proposed new buildings are located in the least sensitive locations. The main ecological impact associated with the development is the requirement to create a new access point through the central embankment area currently allocated as a SINC. Whilst the majority of this existing feature is to be maintained, it is acknowledged that a small amount will need to be lost to facilitate the development. The aim for the development is to enhance the remaining feature and ensure the ecological connectivity is maintained despite the new access. Delta-Simons Limited have undertaken a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), which is submitted in support of the application. Further surveys will be required prior to the commencement of development.
- 5.4.3 The development will, as a whole, provide an opportunity for biodiversity enhancement on the site. Whilst there will be the inevitable loss of green spaces, the retained areas can be converted from arable fields to diverse habitats including the creation of new water features (as part of a SUDS strategy), enhanced woodland, and new species-rich grassland.
- 5.4.4 The accompanying Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment prepared by Delta Simons identifies that for habitat, hedgerow and watercourse metrics, the development will achieve an excess of 10% net-gain with a total of 31 units gained from the existing position. As the application is submitted before the 12th February 2024 implementation of the mandatory 10% BNG requirement, the application significantly exceeds the base-requirement of simple “net-gain” for biodiversity for the site. This should be considered as a significant benefit of the proposals.
- 5.4.5 Delta-Simons Limited have undertaken an Arboricultural Survey, which is submitted in support of the application. The majority of trees are to be retained, with some removed in the current landscaped edge to the existing compound, in order to facilitate access onto the adjacent land for the workshop and training pylon area. Importantly, the scheme has been designed to avoid the more significant / valuable trees identified on the site. Furthermore, the proposed landscape strategy includes

significant levels of additional tree planting that will more than mitigate the loss of these existing trees.

5.5 TRANSPORT AND PARKING

- 5.5.1 Spatial Policy 7 indicates that development proposals should be appropriate for the highway network in terms of the volume and nature of traffic generated and ensure the safety, convenience and free flow of traffic using the highway are not adversely affected; and that appropriate parking provision is provided. Policy DM5 of the DPD requires the provision of safe access to new development and appropriate parking provision.
- 5.5.2 An assessment of transport impacts on the highway network has been undertaken, which concludes that there would be no noticeable impacts on highway safety or on the road network. Indeed, the development provides a range of benefits with new pedestrian access into the site and improved vehicle access and facilities for cyclists on site.
- 5.5.3 A Framework Travel Plan is also submitted in support of the planning application. This includes an Action Plan which sets out tasks, intended implementation dates and funding sources. The Travel Plan will be secured through a Section 106 agreement for the development.
- 5.5.4 The site is in a sustainable location, accessible to a high number of potential employees and employment centres by walking and cycling. Such sustainable modes of travel will be promoted through the framework Travel Plan for the site, alongside the provision of secure covered cycle parking, lockers, showers and changing facilities.
- 5.5.5 The proposed development therefore accords with Spatial Policy 7 and Policy DM5.

5.6 ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 5.6.1 An energy strategy for the development that demonstrates high levels of sustainability has been set out in support of this application. Murphy's is committed to moving to 100% renewable electricity across its business by 2025. The use of solar, ASHPs and GSHPs and similar technologies will be incorporated into the development at Ollerton to help achieve this goal. Already we have identified the intention to provide approximately 2,000 sqm of solar PV canopies above the new proposed car park.
- 5.6.2 The application is accompanied by a Sustainability Assessment, prepared by Hoare Lea which demonstrates how the proposed buildings on the site will comply with Approved Document Part L, Volume 2 achieving substantial betterment over the Target Emission requirements. The energy strategy ensures betterment against building regulations in the Be Lean and Be Clean scenarios but with significant carbon gains through the Be Green approach of using ASHPs and PV arrays.
- 5.6.3 Overall, the development provides an opportunity to significantly improve the energy performance of the depot, enhancing the existing accommodation whilst ensuring the new building performs to a very high standard.

5.7 FLOOD RISK

- 5.7.1 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy (DS) is submitted in support of the planning application. The proposed development is considered to be at Negligible to Low risk from all sources of flooding. Whilst additional impermeable drainage areas will be introduced, in the form of buildings and access, thereby increasing surface water runoff, flow control will be used, and attenuation

provided in order to ensure the increase in surface water runoff will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

- 5.7.2 The site includes a watercourse which runs east-to-west through both the existing depot yard and the undeveloped field. This includes several culverts throughout the site. To support the FR and DS this watercourse has been modelled and the application includes a Fluvial Modelling Technical Note to consider this impact. The modelling shows that in the worse-case scenario the development areas themselves would remain outside of the flood extents and any flooding would occur on the greenfield parts of the site. Furthermore, the modelling also demonstrates that the proposed works would not result in any off-site detrimental impacts.
- 5.7.3 As the proposed built development is to be located in Flood Zone 1, and constitutes 'less vulnerable' development, a sequential test is not required.
- 5.7.4 As there are no readily accessible public sewers within the vicinity of the site, a private sewage treatment plant is likely to provide the best alternative.
- 5.7.5 In terms of the sustainable drainage strategy, the accompanying report demonstrates how through attenuation storage, the development can achieve a surface water run-off rate of just 3.9 l/s.

5.8 GROUND CONDITIONS AND COAL MINING

- 5.8.1 A Preliminary Geo-Environmental and Coal Mining Risk Assessment has been prepared by Delta Simons. Limited potential sources of contamination have been identified and, based on the current information available, it is also not thought to be likely that a risk from historical mine infrastructure is posed. Widespread contamination is considered unlikely, and the preliminary risk assessment has identified a low to moderate risk of soil/groundwater contamination and hazardous ground gas at the site. Further detail is provided in the submitted report, alongside the recommendations including an intrusive site investigation. The proposal complies with Policy DM10.

5.9 ARCHAEOLOGY

- 5.9.1 WSP has undertaken an archaeological desk-based assessment (ADBA) of the site and identified buried heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals. In light of the uncertain archaeological potential of the areas of proposed impact, preliminary evaluation would be required. Any archaeological work would need to be undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) setting out the scope and methodology for the work and approved by the local planning authority archaeological advisor in advance of the work. Please refer to the ADBA for further information.

5.10 MINERALS AND WASTE

- 5.10.1 A Preliminary Mineral Resource Assessment has been undertaken by WSP and is submitted in support of the application. This concludes that the majority of the site is not viable for extraction and that the development overrides the presumption for mineral safeguarding such that sterilisation of the mineral can be permitted, primarily due to:

The likely requirement of development buffer zones due to adjacent infrastructure, a water course and the sites location on the urban fringe.

Any sterilization buffer would likely comprise a 50m standoff due to stability issues and air quality and noise restrictions from any proposed quarrying activities; and



The mineral concerned is no longer of any potential value due to alternative allocated sites in the nearby proximity.

- 5.10.2 As such, there is sufficient material available in the locality, so the development on the site wouldn't harm the supply in accordance with Policy SP7 of the Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan (2021).

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 This planning application seeks permission for works that would represent a significant investment by Murphy in Ollerton, bringing additional jobs and economic activity to the area. The proposals present an opportunity to substantially improve the layout of the site both in operational terms but also its contribution to nature objectives and its relationships with the adjoining residents.
- 6.1.2 This Planning Statement has tested the proposed development against relevant policies and material considerations. The principle of development accords with relevant Policy DM8 as a proportionate expansion of the existing business into the countryside. Notwithstanding this, the socio-economic benefits outlined above and within the accompanying Economic Impact Assessment should be regarded as strong material considerations in favour of supporting the proposed developments.
- 6.1.3 The scheme comprises the removal of the large office and workshop building which front Newark Road and their replacement with a new high-quality office building, set well back from the roadside. This, along with the detailed landscape strategy for the site will significantly improve the appearance of the site within the surrounding areas. The impact of the new buildings on longer views has been tested through the accompanying LVIA which identifies very minimal impacts from the development.
- 6.1.4 The development will also greatly improve the site's relationship with the neighbouring residential properties, most notably those on Kelsey Avenue which back onto the existing depot. The proposals have been shaped by these considerations and include a new large landscape buffer to the north, eastern and southern boundaries to these properties and the removal of buildings and HGV parking spaces in these areas.
- 6.1.5 In terms of biodiversity and ecological impacts, the development provides an opportunity for significant betterment and the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain assessment identifies a 10.6% improvement on the site as a result of initiatives to improve the ecological value of the retained greenspace. Furthermore, the development retains the majority of existing trees within the site and will include replacement planting to far exceed and off-set any loss of existing vegetation on the site.
- 6.1.6 The energy credentials for the development are also exemplary. The sustainability strategy demonstrates how the new buildings will be constructed to exceed baseline requirements.
- 6.1.7 Overall, the development will generate significant benefits for the local area both in terms of economic impacts but also physical improvements to the appearance of the site and its impacts on adjoining residential properties. The scheme has been developed as an exemplar in terms of technical and environmental considerations providing benefits that far exceed the base-requirements of planning policy. Accordingly, this planning application should be supported and approved without delay, in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF.



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