

Planning Statement

Warwickshire Police Headquarters
Woodcote Lane
Leek Wootton
Warwickshire
CV35 7QA

Prepared on Behalf of: Warwickshire Police

Project: 17891

Date: 9 January 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of Warwickshire Police in support of a full planning application for *'External works to improve the safety and security of Police Headquarters' staff, visitors and policing operations. Improvements to include; resurfacing of existing roads, paths and car parks, additional car parking, temporary overflow car parking, pedestrian footpaths, external lighting, CCTV, security barriers, security huts, sunshade canopies, security gates, disabled ramp, garden of reflection, structural landscaping and biodiversity net gain'* at the Warwickshire Police Headquarters, Woodcote Lane, Leek Wootton, Warwickshire, CV35 7QA.
- 1.2 The application site comprises 8.8 hectares of land that falls within the administrative boundaries of Warwickshire County Council (WCC), Warwick District Council (WDC) and Leek Wootton and Guy's Cliffe Parish Council (LWGCPC); WDC is the determining authority for the planning application.
- 1.3 The planning application is submitted following receipt of Pre-application Advice from WDC; a draft response was issued on 10 October 2024 and finalised on 6 December 2024. The Pre-application Advice provided commentary on the design options as presented and sets out the Council's opinion as to the main planning matters and the validation requirements. Changes have been made to the design to reflect the comments made by the Council's Planning Officer and Open Spaces Officer, and this Planning Statement addresses the relevant planning matters raised in the Pre-application Advice.

Planning Application Content

- 1.4 The application submitted comprises the following drawings and reports:
- Planning application forms and certificates
 - CIL Additional Information Form
 - Planning Statement, Evans Jones (this document)
 - Design & Access Statement (including Low Emissions Strategy), MHP, January 2025
 - Heritage and Archaeology Statement, Pegasus Group, January 2025

- Transport Statement, Apex Transport Planning, Issue 2, dated 7 January 2025
- Noise Impact Assessment Report, NoiseAir, Version 3, dated 9 January 2025
- Air Quality Assessment, NoiseAir, Version 1, dated December 2024
- Ecological Impact Assessment, Ecology Solutions, dated 19 December 2024
- Biodiversity Net Gain Spreadsheet, Ecology Solutions, dated December 2024
- Arboricultural Survey, Impact Assessment and Protection Plan, MHP
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, K-Ten Consulting, Revision 2 dated 8 January 2025
- Lighting Design (letter report), DSA Consultants, dated 4 December 2024
- Planning Application Drawings:

Table 1.1 – Planning Application Drawings

Drawing No	Revision	Title	Originator
24113.901	A	Site Location Plan	MHP Design
24113.1610		Existing Site Plan	MHP Design
24113.111	L	Landscape Masterplan	MHP Design
24113.121	G	Hard Landscape Proposals	MHP Design
24113.122	E	Parking Schedule	MHP Design
24113.201	B	Proposed Sunshade Canopies	MHP Design
24113.202	B	Proposed Gates and Wall	HP Design
24113.203	A	Proposed Security Huts	MHP Design
24113.204	B	Proposed Security Barriers	MHP Design
24113.205		Disabled Access Ramp	MHP Design
24113.301	G	Soft Landscape Proposals	MHP Design
C24/218/ATP/DR/TP/003	S2	Proposed Signage and Road Markings for One-Way System	Apex Transport Planning
E1001	A	External Lighting Planning Application	DSA Consultant

Purpose and Structure of Planning Statement

- 1.5 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to set out the relevant planning considerations to support the determination of the planning application. The Statement is not intended to duplicate details addressed in accompanying drawings and reports, rather it draws together their conclusions and provides commentary within the

planning context. Accordingly, this Statement should be read in conjunction with the application drawings and reports.

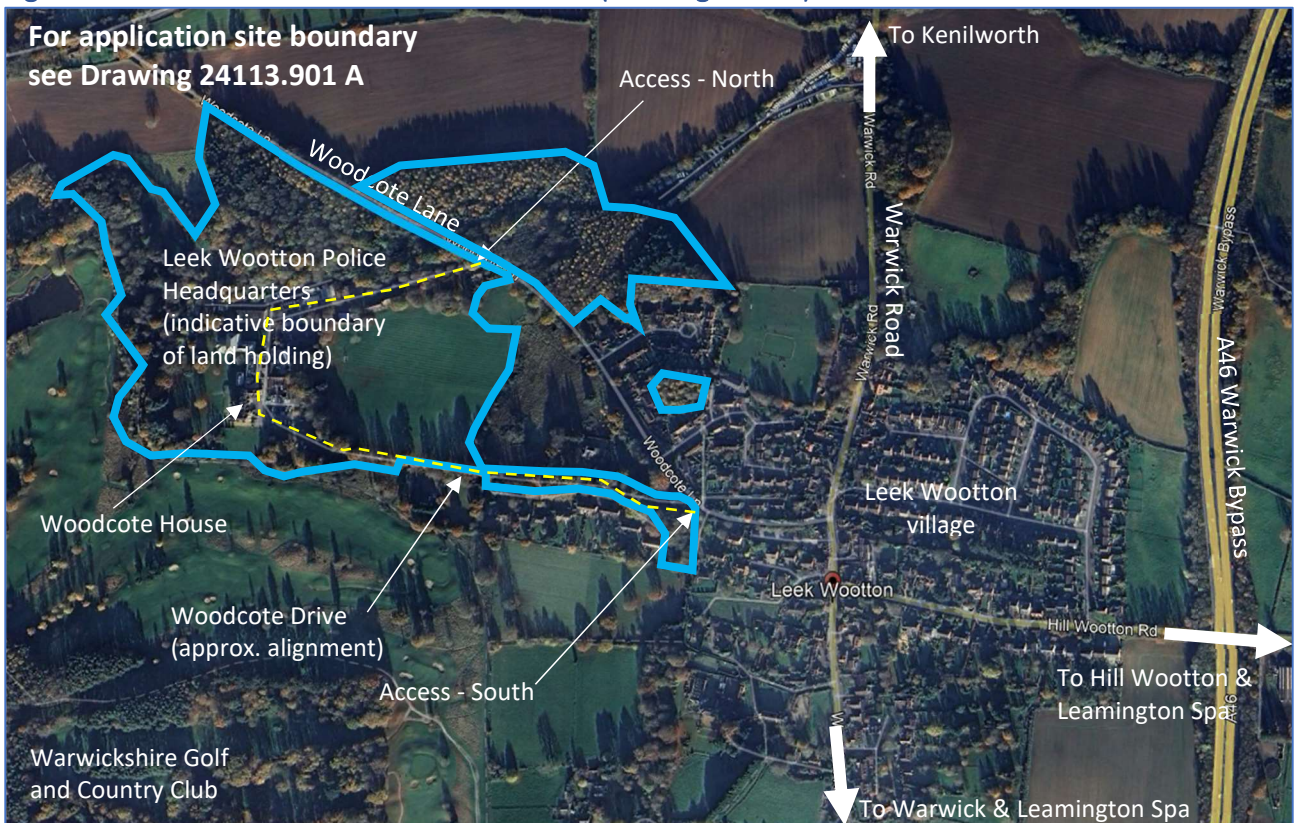
1.6 The Planning Statement is structured as follows:

Chapter	Chapter Heading
1	Introduction (this Chapter) – introduces the description of development, application site and applicant, sets out those drawings and reports that form the planning application package and the purpose and structure of the Planning Statement
2	Site and Surroundings – provides a summary of the application site and surrounding area, including relevant planning history
3	The Context and Need for the Proposed Development – sets out the background to the proposed development and sets out the issues requiring to be addressed
4	The Proposed Development – provides a summary of the key features of proposed development as supported by the planning application drawings
5	Planning Policy Context – sets out the relevant planning policy context against which the planning application is to be determined
6	Planning Considerations – provides supporting commentary on the proposed development in the context of the planning policy context as supported by the various drawings, surveys and assessments submitted as part of the planning application package.
7	Summary and Conclusions

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site comprises 8.8 hectares of land wholly within the boundary of the Warwickshire Police Headquarters (Police Headquarters) property, which is located to the north-west of Leek Wootton village; access to the Police Headquarters is obtained from two junctions to Woodcote Lane (see **Figure 2.1**). The application site boundary is shown on **drawing 24113.901 A**.

Figure 2.1 – Warwickshire Police Site Location (© GoogleEarth)



2.2 The Police Headquarters site is predominantly occupied by a cluster of buildings, including the historic (circa 1860s) Woodcote House and the converted stables, and several more modern buildings constructed specifically to support Warwickshire Police operations including a training facility, communications building, garages, workshops, accommodation block, all located to the west, with an area of open land used for training and sports to the east and woodland to the north (the operational / playing field).

2.3 The southern access from Woodcote Lane is shared with privately owned residential properties along Woodcote Drive. Woodcote Drive is a private access owned by

Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner, which leads past these residential properties and up to and past Woodcote House and the cluster of buildings to the west and then returns east to Woodcote Lane. The northern access passes the North Lodge, a disused residential property which is within the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner's ownership. The access drive is narrow with passing places as operates two-way access with unrestricted access, i.e. there are no barriers preventing unauthorised entry.

2.4 More widely, to the south/west of the Police Headquarters is the Warwickshire Golf and Country Club, to the north beyond the private woodland is predominantly agricultural fields with the exception of the Broadlane caravan sales site, and to the east is residential development within Leek Wootton village, soon to include the recently consented Cala Homes development on former Police Headquarters' land immediately adjoining the village.

2.5 The relevant statutory and local designations affecting the Police Headquarters and immediate surroundings are:

Application Site:

- Woodcote, Grade II Listed Building (List Entry 1364959)
- Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding)
- Tree Preservation Order affecting the entire site (TPO 440 & 448 and TPO 171 to the north)

Nearby:

- Public right of way (footpath) along the southern and western boundary (208/W179a/1)
- The Leek Wootton Conservation Area is to the west
- The majority of the Police Headquarters site (excluding the woodland areas to the north and west) are excluded from the Green Belt

2.6 Leek Wootton is identified as a 'Growth Village' in the adopted Local Plan which extends to include the Police Headquarters; Leek Wootton benefits from a village hall, recreation ground with football and cricket pitches, church, public house. There is a limited bus service to the village, the nearest stops being on Warwick Road opposite Hill Wootton Road and at the Village Hall with a limited service (X16) which provides access

to Kenilworth, Leamington Spa, Warwick and Stratford upon Avon, however, only Monday to Friday during term time with single pick up in the morning and drop off in the afternoon.

Planning History

- 2.7 Warwickshire Police has occupied the site at Leek Wootton as their headquarters since 1949.
- 2.8 A review of the Council's planning application search portal reveals several planning and listed building permissions having been granted in support of the site's use by Warwickshire Police under several addresses, including the Warwickshire Police Headquarters, Woodcote, Communications Building, UPS Building, Radio Antenna and Cycle Shelter.
- 2.9 The approved applications variously include internal amendments and refurbishments of Woodcote House, the construction of an office extension, the wholesale redevelopment of the site including phase 1 alterations to the access and the demolition of all buildings (with the exception of Woodcote House), the sports pavilion and radio mast with the erection of a large new main building to the north of the communications and phase 2 building of an extension and new gatehouse (approved in 2010), a change of use to residential (care home), the replacement windows and doors to 1960s buildings, and tree works. Most recently, in November 2024, Warwickshire Police secured planning permission for a replacement roof with installation of solar panels and minor works to their Training Block (W/24/1256, approved 17/11/2024) and as alluded to in the Pre-application Advice, they withdrew an application for the creation of a temporary car park for 18 months (W/24/1107, withdrawn 19/11/2024). None of these applications are of direct relevance to this planning application.
- 2.10 To the east and south, on land previously forming part of the Police Headquarters site, Cala Homes have secured planning permission for residential development for up to 83 dwellings; the application was allowed at appeal (W/22/1877, allowed 24/05/2024) and the associated reserved matters application is waiting determination (W/24/1006, validated), albeit referring to 70 dwellings.

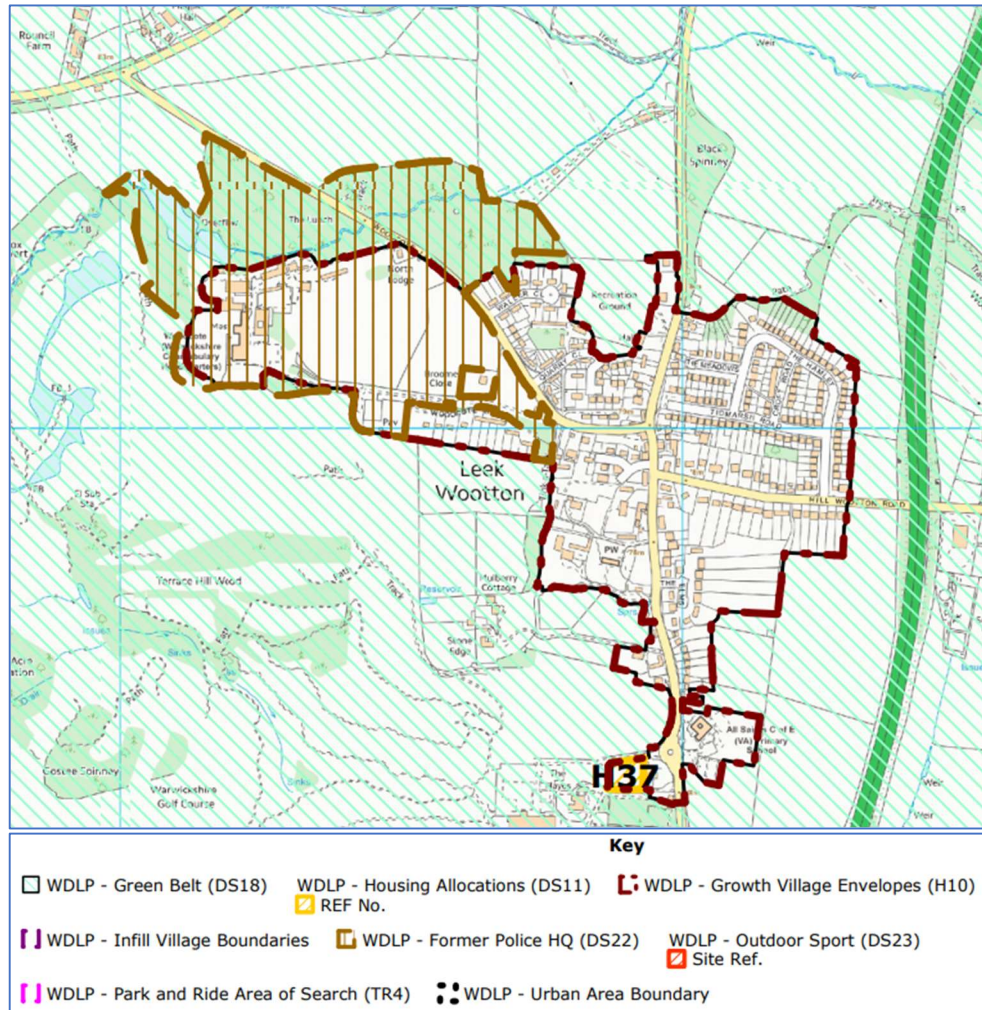
3. CONTEXT AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The planning application is submitted on behalf of Warwickshire Police, who are responsible for the operational delivery of policing across the County.
- 3.2 Warwickshire Police is one of 43 police forces across England and Wales. Funded through Government, they are responsible for maintaining public safety, enforcing laws, preventing and investigating crime, providing traffic controls and community support, and responding to emergencies, their role being crucial in upholding the law and ensuring justice across the County.
- 3.3 The statutory role of the police in the UK is defined by several key pieces of legislation, including the Police Act 1996, Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, Public Order Act 1986, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, and Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.
- 3.4 Warwickshire Police are a key public service, covering an area of circa 764 square miles, with a population of circa 0.6 million people in circa 253,300 households, with a disproportionate number of motorways and major roads as compared with other similar sized forces.
- 3.5 As at 31 March 2024 Warwickshire Police had 1,126 police officers, supplemented by 58 community support officers, 64 special polices officers and 28 police support volunteers in addition to the necessary administrative and support services (source: Government statistics, published July 24).
- 3.6 The Police Headquarters is the central hub for the force's operations and administration and includes command and control (including strategic decision making on frontline and community policing), criminal investigations, specialist units (e.g. firearms, counterterrorism, cyber-crime), traffic policing, intelligence and analysis, training and development, emergency response coordination and administration.

The Leek Wootton Site as Police Headquarters

- 3.7 Warwickshire Police have been using the site at Leek Wootton as their headquarters since 1949.
- 3.8 In 2012, Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police formed a 'strategic alliance' for the delivery of police functions, with many services delivered jointly across each policing area. One of the catalysts for the strategic alliance was the necessity for the two forces to reduce their costs by £35 million as part of the then government's comprehensive spending review.
- 3.9 As a consequence, and with the expectation of a long-lasting strategic alliance, it was proposed that the Leek Wootton estate be sold and accordingly, the estate was marketed for sale and promoted for residential development within the then emerging Warwick Local Plan.
- 3.10 The now extant Warwick Local Plan was adopted September 2017 and includes the allocation of the 'Former Policy HQ, Leek Wootton' (WLP Policy DS22) for the development of 115 dwellings to be delivered on land that also falls within the Growth Village Envelope Boundary (WLP Policy H10), with a requirement for a site-wide masterplan to achieve the stated objectives, including in the protection of historic assets, positive contribution to landscape character and ensuring reasonable infrastructure including open space.
- 3.11 The explanatory commentary to WLP Policy DS22 confirms that at this time, Warwickshire Police had declared the estate as surplus to operational requirements.
- 3.12 An extract of the adopted WLP Policies Plan for Leek Wootton, Hill Wootton, Old Milverton and Blackdown (Plan 12) is provided (see **Figure 3.1**).

Figure 3.1 – Extract from WDLP Map 12



3.13 However, not long after the adoption of the WDLP, in October 2018, the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) of West Mercia announced the termination of the strategic alliance agreement. Whilst initially proposed to terminate with effect from October 2019, the Home Secretary directed that the alliance should continue for a further six months to provide additional time for the two forces to transition their service provision to their future independence. Accordingly, the strategic alliance formerly came to end in April 2020.

3.14 Further to the announcement to terminate the strategic alliance, Warwickshire Police undertook an evaluation of the impacts of reverting to an independent police force, including on their estate needs. The evaluation concluded it was necessary to retain the Leek Wootton site, although noting that some works would be required to ensure the property (land and buildings) are brought up to a standard that is fit and suitable to support modern-day policing needs. Accordingly, in April 2019, it was announced that

Warwickshire Police were no longer marketing the Leek Wootton estate for sale and that the site would be re-designated as the police force's headquarters for the future.

The Need for the Proposed Development

3.15 The Police Headquarters is occupied by a combination of central administrative, intelligence and front-line operational teams, including:

- Analysis and Service Improvement Team
- Audit and Assurance Team
- Armed Response Team
- Change Management Team
- Information Assurance Team
- Digital Services Team
- Service Management Team
- Business Operations Team (BOS)
- Estates and Facilities Team
- Fleet Team
- Uniform and Equipment Team
- Corporate Communications Team
- Diversity Equality Inclusion Team
- Human Resources Team
- Learning and Development Team
- Finance Team
- Legal Services Team
- Firearms Licensing Team
- Firearms Training Team
- Patrol OPU Team
- Roads Policing and Dogs Team
- Police Crime Commissioner Team
- Serious Collision Investigation Team
- Fraud Team

3.16 The Police Headquarters is occupied 24-hours a day / 365-days per year, with approximately 17% of the daily employed staff working to a shift pattern, dependant on their duties. Blue light response units and associated management and support units operate both shift and unscheduled hours, dependant on the nature, scale and duration of an emergency. Operational vehicles are required to be securely parked, maintained and available at all times and, as appropriate loaded/unloaded in safe and secure locations, specifically in respect of the armed response team, firearms licencing and training teams and dog handling teams.

- 3.17 In response to several complaints from staff members and visitors, Warwickshire Police undertook a car parking survey. The survey captured responses from 200 employees who are based at the Leek Wootton site, from which 98% reported they were unhappy with the parking arrangements at the Police Headquarters. The key complaints were:
- Not enough parking on site – not enough spaces for staff to park after 8:00, often resulting in staff having to park in the village or returning home to work.
 - Impact to the working day due to the length of time it takes to find a car parking space, resulting in undue stress and inefficient work practices.
 - Health and wellbeing concerns – stress, longer working hours (arriving earlier to get a space) and injuries (parking on grass verges has resulted in slips/falls).
 - Unauthorised parking – parking in the village and on surrounding roads.
 - Damage to vehicles – as cars are often abandoned and parked in tight spaces.
 - Reputational impact – the carparking challenges are a cause of concern for visitors and deliveries
- 3.18 Accordingly, an assessment of the existing parking arrangements and need has been carried out.
- 3.19 The **current number of parking spaces is 238**. These are located primarily to the east of the private access road adjacent to the cluster of buildings (one to the front of Woodcote House and the other within the former walled garden) and in linear parking areas (some of which are demarcated), with the remainder of parking dispersed across the site in unmarked areas. Until recently, there were an additional 68 overflow parking spaces available on the former tennis court; however, this land is no longer in Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner's ownership following the sale of land for residential development.
- 3.20 The assessment of need is summarised as being generated by the following:
- Employed staff = average 556 persons / day (544 Full Time Equivalents) – taking agile working, shift working and annual leave into account, an average of 400 vehicles / day
 - Visitors from other sites / training, contractors and/or general public visitors = average 20 vehicles / day
 - Operational and fleet vehicles = 80 vehicles (to be parked securely)

- Staff Training = average 90 candidates / trainers

3.21 Accordingly, there is a **daily need for circa 500 parking spaces**, plus a **further circa 100 parking spaces** to accommodate the training facilities.

3.22 Whilst opportunities for public transport and for means of travel other than by car exist (see **Transport Statement**), public transport services are limited and inflexible when considering the nature of services provided, staff working to shift patterns and/or on emergency response, the catchment from which staff travel; in addition there are increased security and welfare risks associated with some staff using public transport where their role involves handling sensitive materials/documents, investigations and use of equipment, further to which uniformed staff are not permitted to use public transport.

3.23 Accordingly, the overriding objective of the proposed development is to deliver adequate capacity of vehicle parking to meet Warwickshire Police's operational needs to address this demonstrated shortfall, and to improve pedestrian safety and legibility for staff and visitors and improve site security given the nature of operations.

3.24 The issues regarding vehicle parking requiring to be addressed include:

- Parking / double-parking around operational areas including around the garages, workshops, in turning heads, on internal access roads, storage areas etc, in and around the buildings – causing obstructions to vehicle flow and unsightly
- Parking within passing bays along the narrow private access drive – causing obstructions to traffic flow, including to operational vehicles on blue light response resulting in delays when responding to public emergencies
- Parking on grass verges and under trees - causing damage and unsightly
- Parking on roads within the local area – causing frustration to local residents
- Insufficient secure parking for operational vehicles
- Damage to vehicles from opening/closing doors, clipping of wing-mirrors and scrapes where vehicles turning in tight/non-designated spaces.
- Indirect impacts on operational response times/efficiency and on the health and wellbeing of staff, from time being spent seeking to find spaces, address issues of parking and vehicle obstructions, and adding time-pressure on work/life balance.

Figure 5.2 – Examples of Parking in Non-Designated Areas (© GoogleEarth)



3.25 The issues regarding pedestrian safety and legibility include:

- There are no clear pedestrian routes from parking areas and/or between buildings – the impact is pedestrians use the narrow access road which brings them into conflict with vehicles, including blue light response vehicles, affecting their safety and resulting in delays to blue light response, or generally take route-one across the operational / playing field, between vehicles etc.
- There is no signage directing staff / visitors – this not only causes frustration to visitors/newcomers but also security issues as there is a general acceptance of persons ‘wandering’ without purpose.
- There is insufficient lighting when away from the main cluster of buildings – leading to crime and fear of crime safety concerns

3.26 The issues regarding site security include:

- Unfettered access by non-operational persons, including members of the public and disruptive/protest groups – leading to security and safety concerns
- No surveillance – no opportunity to monitor for potential threats and/or discourage unauthorised persons
- Risk assessments following recent incidents concluded that under employers’ liability, Warwickshire Police are required to address site access and the control and management of all persons on site.
- There is no designated and secure area for the parking of operational vehicles or specialists units, e.g., the Armed Response and Dog Handling Units – this creates operational response issues as vehicles are parked sporadically (where they can find space) and given the nature of the unit, it is necessary to maintain surveillance when preparing/off-loading from a response to prevent access from unauthorised persons, resulting in additional staff deployed to wait with vehicles.

3.27 In addition, Warwickshire Police has identified other matters in need of addressing, including:

- To provide shade for police dogs in cars during collection / drop-off which can involve waiting in vehicles at the entrances to the former Stables building, sun canopies are required.

- To provide disabled access to the training block in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, an access ramp is required.
- To address the increasing deployment of electric operational vehicles, electric vehicle charging is required.

3.28 It is therefore demonstrated that the proposed development is necessary in respect of:

- Vehicle parking to facilitate staff and visitor attendance, remove obstructions and delays to vehicle flow (including blue-light emergency response), reducing damage to cars, trees and verges and the frustration to neighbouring residents. It is also necessary to address the need for secure parking of operational vehicles and the secure loading/unloading from armed vehicles and dog handling units.
- Pedestrian safety and legibility to improve safety of staff and visitors, reducing pedestrian conflicts with vehicles, reducing the risk and fear of crime (through poor lighting) and to ensure efficient passage of pedestrians to their intended locations, reducing frustration and adding security as pedestrians adopt a normal pattern of movement.
- Site Security, not least due to the sensitive nature of operations undertaken within the Police Headquarters and the associated heightened risk of personal attacks and theft of specialist police equipment and public and staff data.
- In other respects, it is necessary, as demonstrated, for the welfare of police dogs (sunshades), compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (the disabled access ramp) and in addressing climate change (electric vehicle charging).

3.29 In summary, the proposed development seeks to address a range of identified operational efficiency, health, safety and welfare and security issues associated with the inadequate parking, lack of pedestrian facilities and the unfettered site access by unauthorised persons, as well as welfare matters for police dogs, persons with mobility issues and the need to facilitate the transition to a low carbon future through electric vehicle charging.

3.30 It is therefore demonstrated that the proposed development is necessary, to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of this key public service, to provide for the safety of staff and visitors, and the security and delivery of police service operations.

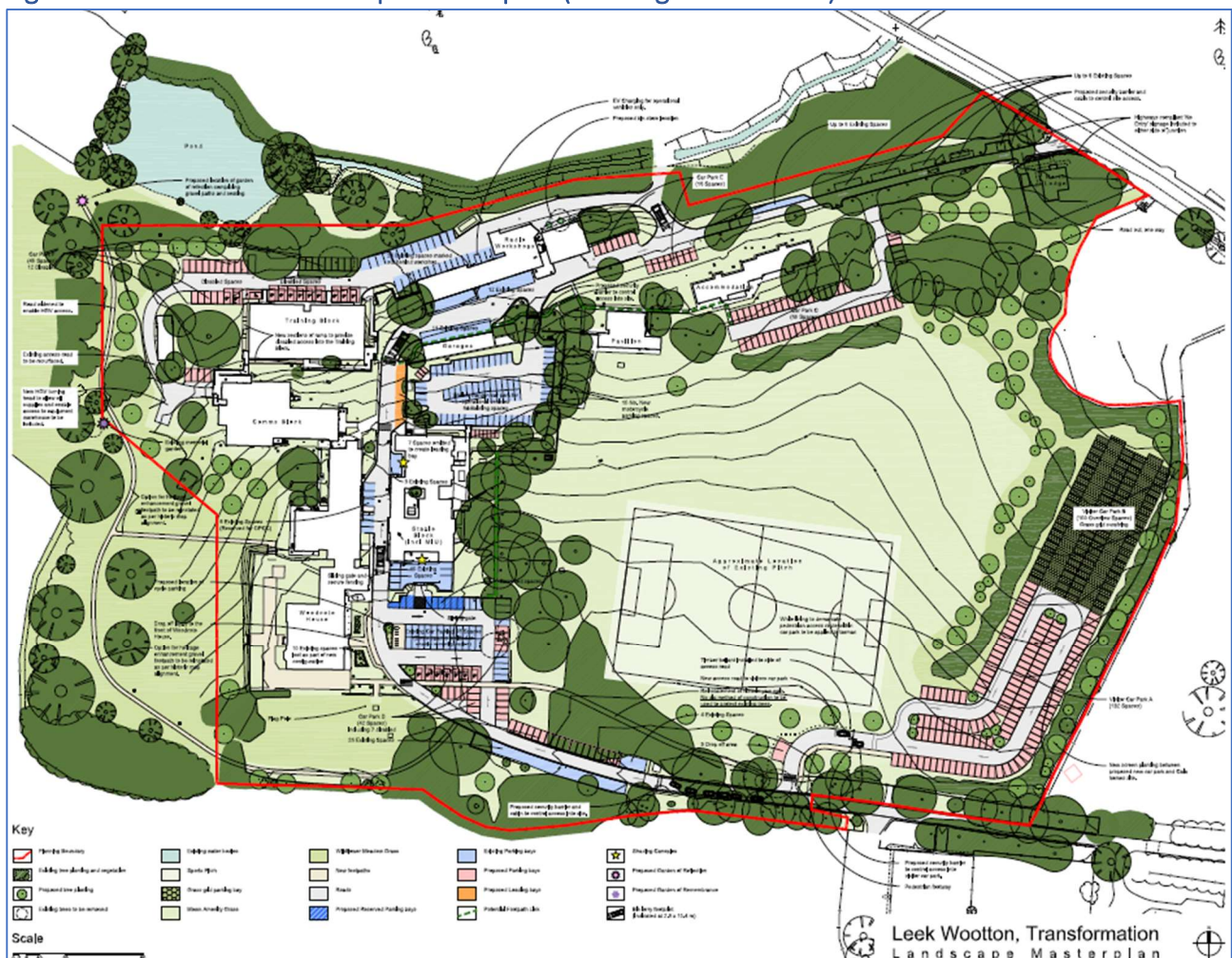
4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for ‘External works to improve the safety and security of Police Headquarters’ staff, visitors and policing operations.

Improvements to include; resurfacing of existing roads, paths and car parks, additional car parking, temporary overflow car parking, pedestrian footpaths, external lighting, CCTV, security barriers, security huts, sunshade canopies, security gates, disabled ramp, garden of reflection, structural landscaping and biodiversity net gain’.

4.2 The proposed site layout is shown on the Landscape Masterplan (see drawing 24113.111 L), as extracted in Figure 4.1. The planning application package of drawings are listed in Table 1.1.

Figure 4.1 – Extract of Landscape Masterplan (drawing 24113.111 L)



4.3 In summary, the proposed development comprises the following components:

- Establishing a one-way system through the Police Headquarters, with entry from the southern access, through the site and exit via the northern access; this would avoid conflicts with on-coming traffic, particularly blue light response vehicles which would now all exit via the northern access and reduce the volume of traffic passing residential properties on Woodcote Drive and adjacent new development; it also releases the passing bays for parking.
- Creating designated parking areas with sufficient capacity to meet the needs of staff, visitors and operational vehicles.

The number of parking bays required has been assessed on the average daily staff attendance, the existing use of the training facility, the need for secure parking for operational vehicles and an allowance for visitors, set in the context of the staff working shift patterns / change-over periods, emergency response (which can generate additional need for parking when multi-disciplinary response) and the lack of opportunity for staff to use public transport.

The assessed total parking need is circa 500 daily spaces and a further 100 overflow spaces to accommodate the training facilities (including existing parking provision).

The proposed new / amended parking comprises:

- A. **132 spaces** (West of Cala Homes) with plus vehicle barrier in/out)
- B. **100 overflow spaces** (West of Cala Homes)
- C. **50 spaces** (South of Accommodation Block)
- D. **42 spaces** (South of Stable Block and along access road: 7 of which are Equality Act compliant; the new parking is created in/around revised existing car park)
- E. **15 spaces** (Opposite the Pavilion)
- F. **40 spaces** (Training Block: 12 of which are Equality Act compliant)
 - Additionally: **drop-off spaces** (not for parking) created at the entrance to Car Park A
 - Additionally: **drop-off spaces** (not for parking) created opposite the Woodcote House entrance, near Car Park D
 - **Loss: 10 spaces** would be removed adjacent to Woodcote House, near Car Park D to improve the setting of Woodcote House
 - **Loss: 7 spaces** would be removed to the north of the Stable Block to create loading bay
 - Additionally: **20 spaces for cycles** will to be provided near Car Park D and further **10 motorcycle spaces** in two areas to the north of the Stable Block.

Accordingly,

- **Total New Spaces – 379** (excludes drop-off spaces)
- **Total Loss Spaces – 17**
- **The net gain in parking spaces is: 362** plus drop-off spaces
- **The total parking spaces (including 238 existing) would be: 600 spaces**
- Realignment / resurfacing of the existing grass-grid private access to the west of the Comms Block to create a new turning head to facilitate deliveries
- Creation of new footpaths, including new footway from car park A/B to main buildings
- Construction of 2x security huts to be located: 1) at the entrance; and 2) at the exit; for details see **drawing 24113.203 A**
- Installing 4x vehicle control barriers: 1) at the entry to Car Parks A & B; 2) at the entrance west of the residential drive (allowing two-way access up to this point); 3) between the Pavillion and Garages; and 4) at the North Lodge ; for details see **drawing 24113.204 B** and **Access Control Layout**
- Installing security lighting ; for details see **drawing 24113.121 G**
- Installing CCTV coverage to key areas; for details see **drawing 24113.121 G**
- Installing signage for the one-way system ; for details see **drawing C24/218/ATP/DR/TP/003 A**
- Installation of 2x free-standing canopies to the Stable Block (one each on the south and west elevations) ; for details see **drawing 24113.201 B**
- Installation of fencing and a free-standing gate to the walled garden to south of former Stable Block, securing the existing 10 spaces in car park D (serving the armed response and dog handling units) providing a secure loading area; for details see **drawing 24113.202 B**
- Construction of a disabled access ramp to the west of the Training Block; for details see **drawing 24113.205**
- Installation of electric vehicle charging to north of Radio Workshop (19 EVC spaces are proposed)
- Installation of power feeder pillars as necessary; see **drawing 24113.111 L**
- Designation of area bin store to north of Radio Workshop, as shown on the Landscape Masterplan; see **drawing 24113.111 L**
- Relocation of the existing flagpole south of Woodcote House
- Additional Landscaping and Biodiversity Net Gain; for details see **drawings 24113.121 G** (hard landscaping) and **24113.301 G** (soft landscaping)

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) by Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, states that *'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'*

5.2 As confirmed in case law (Corbett v Cornwall Council v Stephen Tavener, 9 April 2020), compliance or otherwise with the Development Plan should be considered 'as a whole', that is, a proposal does not have to accord with each and every policy, or part therein, to be in compliance with the Development Plan.

The Development Plan

5.3 The relevant adopted Development Plan comprises:

- Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2019, adopted September 2017 (WDLP)
- Leek Wootton and Guy's Cliffe Neighbourhood Plan (2018-2029), made 4 May 2018 (LWGCNP)

Other Material Considerations

5.4 Outside of the Development Plan are other material policy considerations which may or may not be afforded weight in the determination of the planning application; these can include national planning policy and guidance, emerging national and local planning policy, adopted local supplementary planning documents/guidance and other national and local strategies.

5.5 The other material consideration that may be of relevance to the proposed development include:

- National Planning Policy Framework, published 12 December 2024 (NPPF 2024)
- Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document, published June 2018 (Parking SPD)
- Air Quality and Planning Supplementary Planning Document, published January 2019 (Air Quality SPD)

5.6 The Council has commenced work on the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP), a joint

local plan with Stratford-on-Avon District Council. The joint SWLP authorities have agreed to publish the Preferred Options Plan for consultation between 10 January 2025 and 7 March 2025.

Appropriate Weight

- 5.7 The weight afforded to the Development Plan and other material considerations varies according to their status and relevance, as well as the nature of the proposed development; under certain circumstances the policies of an adopted Development Plan can be considered out of date and superseded by a more recently published NPPF.
- 5.8 The NPPF is a material planning consideration in planning decisions (NPPF 2024, paragraph 2). The NPPF 2024 came into effect from the date of publication on 12 December 2024; the NPPF 2024 directs that existing policies of the Development Plan should not be considered out of date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the NPPF but due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (NPPF 2024, paragraph 232).
- 5.9 Emerging plans may be given weight according to their stage of preparation (the more advanced its preparation the greater weight can be afforded), the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater weight may be afforded) and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF, the greater weight may be afforded) (NPPF, paragraph 49).
- 5.10 In accordance with the statutory provision, the Development Plan would carry full weight except where material considerations, such as the recently published NPPF and the change in circumstances following the redesignation of the Leek Wootton site as the Police Headquarters, indicate otherwise. All other material considerations, as guidance, should be afforded due consideration but limited weight.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 This Chapter addresses the planning matters relevant to the determination of the planning application, set in the context of the statutory Development Plan and other material planning considerations as outlined in Chapter 5.

6.2 The applicant considers the relevant planning matters to be:

- Principle of Development
- Operational / Sports Field
- Design and Layout (including Landscaping)
- Neighbouring Amenity / Noise
- Heritage Considerations
- Highways and Parking
- Nature Conservation
- Arboricultural
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Air Quality
- S106 / Community Infrastructure Levy

Principle of Development

Spatial Policy in the Adopted Plan

6.3 Both the WDLP and LWGCNP contain spatial and strategic policies specifically relating to the redevelopment of the 'Leek Wootton – Former HQ' site: WDLP Policy DS11 (Allocated Housing Sites) identifies the allocated housing sites within the District, listing WDLP Policy DS22 (Leek Wootton – Former Police HQ) which allocates the site for 115 dwellings; WDLP Policy H10 (Bringing Forward Allocated Sites in the Growth Villages) specifically addresses housing allocations in the identified 'growth villages' as identified in the proposals map, which includes the developed areas and operational / playing field between the private access drive within the application site, with reference to the evidenced housing mix; LWGCNP Policy LW5 (Former Police Headquarters Woodcote (115)) supports the residential redevelopment of the allocated site, subject to meeting the design requirements set out in LWGCNP Policy LW4 (Design Guidelines for Historic

Site of Woodcote).

- 6.4 As previously outlined in more detail (see **Chapter 3**), following the formation of the strategic alliance with West Mercia Police in 2012, the Leek Wootton site had been considered as surplus to their joint requirements and thereby marketed for sale and promoted for redevelopment with the then emerging WDLP and subsequently allocated for residential development in the now adopted WDLP, as outlined in the policies above.
- 6.5 However, following the termination of the strategic alliance, announced in October 2018 and with effect from April 2020, Warwickshire Police reverted to an independent police authority in need of headquarters. Following evaluation of their options, Warwickshire Police redesignated the Leek Wootton site as their Police Headquarters, albeit identifying the need for works to bring the site up to a standard that is fit and suitable to support modern-day policing needs.
- 6.6 Accordingly, the site at Leek Wootton remains in the landownership of Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner, is redesignated as their Police Headquarters and is fully operational supporting the delivery key services, including public safety, enforcing laws, preventing and investigating crime, providing traffic controls and community support, and responding to emergencies and providing the base for several departments as listed in **paragraph 3.1**.
- 6.7 The above circumstances are a significant material consideration and preclude the delivery and relevance of those policies supporting the site's redevelopment.
- 6.8 WDLP Policies DS1 (Supporting Prosperity), DS4 (Spatial Strategy) and PC0 (Prosperous Communities) whilst identified in the Pre-application Advice are not considered relevant as the proposed development is neither a change in land use, nor an allocated employment or housing development.

Supporting Public Service Infrastructure Delivery

- 6.9 There are no specific policies within either the WDLP or LWGCNP that address the use of the Leek Wootton site for continued police operations.

- 6.10 Notwithstanding, the NPPF 2024 (paragraph 101) sets a requirement for planning policies and decisions to ‘... *ensure faster delivery of other public service infrastructure such as health, blue light, library, adult education, university and criminal justice facilities, local planning authorities should also work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted. Significant weight should be placed on the importance of new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering proposals for development*’ (emphasis added).
- 6.11 Furthermore, the NPPF 2024 (paragraph 102) seeks for policies and decisions to promote public safety and take into account wider security and defence requirements, including by ‘*recognising and supporting development required for operational defence and security purposes, and ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area*’ (emphasis added).
- 6.12 As has been demonstrated (see **Chapter 3**), the purpose of the proposed development is to address a range of identified operational efficiency, health, safety and welfare and security issues associated with the inadequate parking, lack of pedestrian facilities and the unfettered site access by unauthorised persons, as well as welfare matters for police dogs, persons with mobility issues and the need to facilitate the transition to a low carbon future through electric vehicle charging.
- 6.13 The proposed development is therefore necessary to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of this key public service, to provide for the safety of staff and visitors, and the security and delivery of police service operations, and in accord with the NPPF 2024, should be afforded significant weight.
- 6.14 In addition to the above, it should be noted that the delivery of the key components of the proposed development are directly and indirectly supported by several policies of the Development Plan, notably:
- **Addressing the existing inadequate parking and facilitating unobstructed and safe vehicle access is supported** by: WDLP Policy TR1 (Access and Choice) which seeks (inter-alia) the delivery of safe, suitable and attractive access for emergency, delivery and refuse vehicles and other motor vehicles as appropriate, creating safe and secure layouts; WDLP Policy TR3 (Parking) which seeks (inter-alia) to

ensure developments make provision for adequate parking with regard to the location and accessibility by means other than private car and that development does not result in on-street parking detrimental to highway safety and takes account of the needs for disabled car users, motorcyclists and cycling as well as commercial vehicles; and the [NPPF 2024 Chapter 9 \(Promoting Sustainable Transport\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) places that are safe, secure and attractive, and allow for efficient delivery of goods.

- **Addressing the lack of safe and accessible pedestrian footways, reducing conflicts with vehicles is supported by:** [WDLP Policy TR1 \(Access and Choice\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) the delivery of safe, suitable and attractive access for pedestrians, creating safe and secure layouts; [WDLP Policy BE1 \(Layout and Design\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) design and layouts consider measures to provide convenient and safe walking routes, and meeting modern standards of accessibility and inclusion; [WDLP Policy HS1 \(Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) a design and layout that minimises the potential for crime and to deliver a high-quality safe and convenient walking network; [WDLP Policy HS7 \(Crime Prevention\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) a layout and design that minimises the potential for crime including making provision for appropriate security measures, including lighting, landscaping and fencing as integral to the development; the [NPPF 2024 Chapter 12 \(Achieving Well-designed Places\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) for sites to function well, create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life; and [NPPF 2024 Chapter 9 \(Promoting Sustainable Transport\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) priority first for pedestrian movements, creating places that are safe, secure and attractive.
- **Addressing the unfettered access by unauthorised persons to operational buildings, parking and delivery areas is supported by:** [WDLP Policy BE1 \(Layout and Design\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) design and layouts to consider measures to reduce crime and fear of crime, providing a safe environment; [WDLP Policy HS1 \(Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) design and layouts that minimise the potential for crime; [WDLP Policy HS7 \(Crime Prevention\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) a layout and design that minimises the potential for crime including making provision for appropriate security measures, including lighting, landscaping and fencing as integral to the development; and the [NPPF 2024 Chapter 12 \(Achieving Well-designed Places\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) sites to function well, create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life.
- **The construction of the disabled access ramp is supported by:** [WDLP Policy TR1 \(Access and Choice\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) development to take into account the need for people with disabilities; [WDLP Policy BE1 \(Layout and Design\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) design and layouts to meet modern standards of accessibility and inclusion; and the [NPPF 2024 Chapter 9 \(Promoting Sustainable Transport\)](#) which seeks (inter-alia) priority first for pedestrian movements, addressing the needs of disabled persons.

- **The installation of electric charging points is supported by:** WDLP Policy TR1 (Access and Choice) which seeks (inter-alia) the incorporation of charging for plug-in and ultra-low emission vehicles; WDLP Policy BE1 (Layout and Design) which seeks (inter-alia) design to be resilient to climate change; WDLP Policy CC1 (Planning for Climate Change) which seeks (inter-alia) for development to be resilient to and adapt to future impacts on climate change; the NPPF 2024 Chapter 9 (Promoting Sustainable Transport) which seeks (inter-alia) development allow for charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and NPPF 2024 Chapter 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change Flooding and Coastal Change) which seeks (inter-alia) to support the transition to net zero by 2050 and to take full account of climate change impacts.

6.15 Overall, the purpose of the proposed development is to deliver on the key principles of high-quality design, including providing adequate parking, a safe and suitable vehicle layout, safe and accessible pedestrian routes, designing out the opportunity for crime and fear of crime, an inclusive design and making provision for electric vehicle charging as well as addressing the unique needs of delivering police services.

Operational / Playing Field

- 6.16 The finalised Pre-application Advice reports on a Sport England objection to a proposal for a temporary car park to the south-east of Police Headquarters (application W/24/1107) which was subsequently withdrawn. It is emphasised that the Sport England response relates neither to the Pre-application Advice scheme as presented at the time nor to the proposed development to which this application refers and was not appraised in respect of its relevance or the wider context of the scheme, within the Pre-application Advice.
- 6.17 Notwithstanding, it is noted within the Sport England response to the temporary car park application (dated 12 November 2024) that it is Sport England’s internal policy to oppose any application where, as summarised, it would lead to a loss of or prejudice the use of a playing field, where affects land that has been used as a playing field but remains undeveloped, or land allocated as a playing field, except where meets one or more of their exceptions.
- 6.18 Whilst the Sport England’s internal policy is understandable given their role to promote and develop sport and physical activity, it does not form part of, or outweigh, the statutory Development Plan against which planning applications are determined (see

Chapter 4).

6.19 The relevant policies of the Development Plan in respect of the use of operational / playing field are summarised as (emphasis added):

- WDLP Policy HS1 (Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities) – which provides support to various proposals where meet the stated criteria, including proposals that *‘(j) do not involve the loss of essential community buildings and social infrastructure’*.
- WDLP Policy HS2 (Protecting Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities’ – which seeks to prevent development resulting the loss of open space, sport or recreational facilities, unless: ‘a) an alternative can be provided that is at least equivalent in terms of size, quality, accessibility, usefulness and attractiveness, and a management plan is submitted to ensure the future viability of the provision, or b) there is a robust assessment demonstrating a lack of need for the asset currently or in the future’ and further that *‘Development on open spaces for sport and recreation purposes will be permitted subject to the proposal being of sufficient benefit to clearly outweigh the loss’*.
- LWGCNP Policy LW9 (Supporting a Local Community ‘Hub’ Facility in Leek Wootton) - seeks to protect the identified ‘community hub’ located off Warwick Road and comprising the Village Hall and recreation ground, including the improvement of the Sports Club.
- NPPF 2024 Chapter 8 (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities) – sets out the Government’s policies on open space and sports and in general principle seeks to support opportunities for social interaction, safe and accessible spaces, and to enable and support healthy lives, with a focus on providing *‘... the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs ...’* and *‘c) guarding against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs; ...’* (paragraph 98).

The NPPF defines ‘Open Space’ as *‘All open space of public value, including not just land but also areas of water ... which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity’* (NPPF, Annex 2).

In seeking to prevent loss, the NPPF states *‘Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities ...’*, (paragraph 103).

Further, it follows that *‘Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless: a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or c) the development is for*

alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use’ (paragraph 104).

- 6.20 In summary, whilst both national and local planning policy seek to resist the loss of open space and sports facilities, this is predicated on the loss of ‘public value’ to the ‘community’ and the ability of a community to meet its needs. Furthermore, both national and local policy provide for the loss of open space and sports facilities where certain criteria are met, these being summarised (as relevant) to where it is demonstrated that the facility is surplus to requirements and where the benefit of a proposal outweighs the loss.
- 6.21 It is relevant that the operational / playing field subject of this planning application is an ancillary use to the Police Headquarters, and forms part of a wider (single) planning unit that falls under the Use Class *sui generis*. It is emphasised, that this land not a separate planning unit or community sports or recreation facility which would fall under Use Class F2(c) areas or places for outdoor sport or recreation (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms).
- 6.22 Furthermore, it is material that the NPPF 2024 (Glossary) defines ‘open space’ as ‘*All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as ...) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity*’; as set out below, the area of land to which the proposed development relates is entirely private with no public access or rights of way across, and no opportunity for views from existing properties in the locality and only limited potential for fleeting and filtered views by users of the public right of way due to existing and proposed intervening landscaping; accordingly the operational / playing field provides no public value and important opportunities for sport or recreation to the public.
- 6.23 Notwithstanding, the planning policy matters are addressed below:
- 6.24 Loss of Community Facility – There would be no loss of a community facility nor would the use of the operational / playing field prejudice the local community in meeting their needs.
- 6.25 The Police Headquarters is in private ownership, and the operational / playing field is maintained and used solely by Warwickshire Police. There has never been public use of

the operational / playing field, nor are there any public rights of way that pass over this area.

- 6.26 The operational / playing field is used operationally for incident training/mock ups, firearms training, dog training, for a weekly cadet fitness classes as well as for police open days/events, and for this reason it would not be appropriate for reasons of health and safety to widen access to the operational / playing field. Furthermore, given the identified wider security risks of unauthorised access across the Police Headquarters (see **Chapter 3**), Warwickshire Police would not promote public access or use of its land, and conversely are actively seeking to deter unauthorised access through measures in this planning application.
- 6.27 In terms of community provision, the LWGCNP notes that *'The Leek Wootton War Memorial Recreation Ground is held in trust for the residents of the parish. It provides pitches and a club house for the thriving Sports Club, particularly well known for cricket, but also supporting football and other sports. This includes sports for younger age groups. The Parish Plan 2009 indicated that there was support for expansion of sports activities at the Recreation Ground including provision of tennis and bowling facilities and of allotments ...'* (LWGCNP, paragraph 6.4.4).
- 6.28 Historic aerial photography gives a clear indication as to the range of outdoor sports pitches capable of being accommodated at the Memorial Recreation Ground (see **Figure 6.1**). The sporting facilities are supported by a Sports Club for which the LWGCNP notes is open 6 nights a week and all-day Saturday and Sunday providing social events including pool, darts, dominoes and cribbage, with bar and function room (LWGCNP, paragraph 6.4.7).

Figure 6.1 – Leek Wootton War Memorial Recreation Ground (© GoogleEarth)



NB: August 2016 image selected as shows summer and winter sports pitch markings

- 6.29 The ambition of the LWGCNP to enhance the sports and social facilities, as supported by LWGCNP Policy LW9 would not be impacted or prejudiced in any way by the proposed development.
- 6.30 Accordingly, the residents of Leek Wootton and surrounding catchment are well catered for with sports and recreation provision and there would be no impact on the future enhanced provision at the village ‘hub’ or elsewhere on other publicly accessible land.
- 6.31 Surplus to requirement – The use of the land for sports pitches has declined over the years. Whilst Warwickshire Police has an active Sports and Social Club which is open to all members of staff, participation in sports and recreation comprises running and cycling carried out on local roads and trails, netball, badminton and squash which all require specific marked-out hard-court facilities (and generally played indoor) and therefore use and support other local facilities, with sailing and fishing undertaken at appropriate water-based facilities. There are 6 fitness gyms across the Force; however, staff have been deterred from using the gym in the Police Headquarters Pavilion due to the lack of available parking. None of these sports and recreational activities generate a need for the operational / playing field.

6.32 There has been no appetite for a police rugby team for the past circa 20 years, hence the pitch is no longer marked out, which is evidenced by aerial photographs dating back to circa 2006 (see **Figure 6.2**). Notwithstanding, a football pitch has been used for up to 12 matches a year for inter-force men’s, women’s and masters (over 35s) competitions; however there have been difficulties in arranging home matches due to the lack of parking.

6.33 Historic aerial photographs provide evidence that there has been a decline in use of the land for sports and recreation (see **Figure 6.2**). Whilst aerial images from January 1999 show a single football and rugby pitch marked out, both with posts, by May 2006, there is only a single football pitch, noting that the typical season for rugby union is September to May (source: www.englandrugby.com) such that you would anticipate evidence of markings at this time. Notwithstanding the aerial image for May 2019, when no pitches were marked out or visible, aerial images show only a single football pitch from May 2006 through to June 2021, albeit in images from 2020 and 2021 there are no goal posts visible. Images in January 2022 and November 2023 (the most recent images and both post-Covid and when sporting activity was back to ‘normal’ and at a time of year when you would expect a football pitch to be used) show no sports pitches. Accordingly, the land has only been marked out for a single football pitch since 2006 and has not been marked out for any sports pitches since 2022, such is the lack of demand.

Figure 6.2 – Historic Aerial Photographs of operational / playing field (© GoogleEarth)



2010



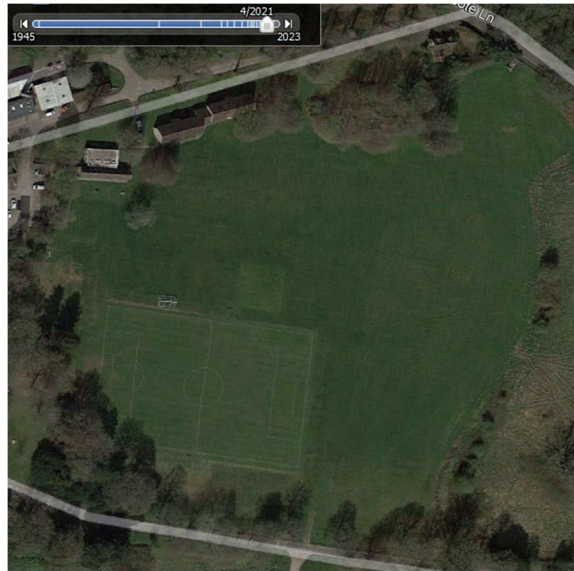
2015



2019



2021



2022



2023



- 6.34 It is emphasised that the land is maintained and used solely by Warwickshire Police and for the reasons set out above, they would not promote its use by members of the public. Accordingly, the 'demand' and whether the sports facility is thereby surplus, relates solely to the private use by Warwickshire Police.
- 6.35 Notwithstanding, it is noted that the provision of additional parking would facilitate greater use of the Police Headquarters' gym and facilitate the use of the football pitch for home games, whilst all other sports that require specific provision would continue to support local facilities.
- 6.36 Accordingly, there is no demonstrable need for Warwickshire Police to maintain their land for the provision of sports pitches and recreation and the areas of the proposed development are surplus to their requirements.
- 6.37 Benefit of the Proposal Outweighs the Loss – The need for the proposed development is set out in **Chapter 3**. The proposed development seeks to address a range of identified operational efficiency, health, safety and welfare and security issues associated with the inadequate parking, lack of pedestrian facilities and the unfettered site access by unauthorised persons, as well as welfare matters for police dogs, persons with mobility issues and the need to facilitate the transition to a low carbon future through electric vehicle charging. It is demonstrated that the proposed development is not just beneficial, but is necessary, to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of this key public service, to provide for the safety of staff and visitors, and the security and delivery of police service operations.
- 6.38 The area to which the operational / playing field relates is predominantly bounded by trees, to the west and north of which are the cluster of operational buildings, to the east the consented new development and the south the private access drive. The area of land associated with the proposed development in this area comprises a narrow band of approximately 35m width along the eastern boundary and a short length of approximately 12m width to the south of the accommodation building. Both these areas are proposed to be used for car parking, with development at ground level, thereby not affecting the general appearance or experience of openness of the area; the only above ground level infrastructure would be a single vehicle access barrier and bollards adjacent to the private access drive at the south, and a single storey security

hut set along the private access drive to the south. Further, it is proposed to enhance the recreational, visual amenity and biodiversity value with tree-planting, boosting the existing tree-lined perimeter, including filtering views between the operational / playing field and the proposed car park and adjacent Cala Homes development.

6.39 There would be no loss of sports pitches, the area having been used to provide no more than a single football pitch since 2006 (18 years) which, as shown on the Proposed Site Layout, could continue to be provided if Warwickshire Police have a requirement.

6.40 Accordingly, it is clearly demonstrated that the evidenced safety and security needs for the proposed development, noting the significant weight to be afforded to public service infrastructure, outweigh the limited harm associated with the minor loss of operational / playing field, there being no loss in potential to mark out a sports pitch if required in the future.

6.41 With regards to other matters raised by Sport England internal policies and exceptions, as referenced in the Council's Pre-application Advice where not addressed above, we note the following.

- Firstly, that the commentary stated in the Pre-application Advice referencing the Sport England response, neither relates to the pre-application advice scheme nor the proposed development to which this application refers.

In this respect, and in comments regarding the Neighbourhood Plan setting out the policy against which the planning application should be determined, it is noted that every planning application should be considered on its own merits and in accordance with the statutory provisions as outlined in **Chapter 4**; it is incumbent upon the determining authority to afford due weight to the policies of the Development Plan, taken as a whole, and to balance the relative planning merits of an application, in this context.

- It should not be necessary to provide a detailed assessment as to whether there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment or to demonstrate whether the site has any special significance to the interests of sport.

As demonstrated above, the Police Headquarters are not open to the public with the operational / playing field solely in use by Warwickshire Police, with no prospect of use by the local community in the future. For similar reasons and noting there has been no marking of sports pitches since 2022 due to insufficient demand, there is no special significance attached to this private sports pitch.

Accordingly, such an assessment would be irrelevant and thereby unnecessary; the result of an assessment would conclude that there would be no more or less sports provision to the public / local community.

- Reference to the Council updating their Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) is not material.

It is noted that the PPS dated 2019 notes the provision of a single football pitch at the Police Headquarters, stating that there is *'no capacity to sustain further play due to the nature of the site'* and that the *'pitch continues to be used by police team but doesn't represent spare capacity for any other teams in the areas as it is a police venue only'*.

Accordingly, the Council has acknowledged that the sports pitch provides no contribution to the playing pitch capacity in the District, now or in the future. There would be no change to this position.

- The existing operational / playing field is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a Police Headquarters; it is not in its own right a sporting facility nor does it serve the local community or members of the public.

Furthermore, there would be no loss of a sports pitch, the site being capable of accommodating a single football pitch, being the only sports use in the past 18 years, albeit not for the past 2 due to a lack of demand; added to which, as demonstrated above, there is no public access or use of this facility.

Accordingly, there is no loss of a sporting facility and no requirement to provide a replacement.

- With reference to the commentary that the wording of WDLP Policy HS2 does not restrict the application of the policy to sites identified on the proposal map nor to public sites only, it is material that the WDLP definition of 'open space' is aligned with that of the NPPF 2024, which references open space of 'public value' and 'that offers important opportunities for sport and recreation', as outlined above.

Given there is no public access or use, or visual amenity to the benefit of the public or nearby properties, there is no public value; further given there is no public access or use of the sports pitches, the land cannot be considered to offer 'important' opportunities for either.

- With reference to the Sport England commentary that there would be an impact on the marking out of a football pitch, it has been demonstrated on the site layout plan that a football pitch with appropriate run-off could be marked out if required. Commentary with regards to the existing car parking spaces serving the playing pitch during the weekend are unclear.

6.42 In summary, as demonstrated, there would be no loss of community open space or sports pitch, nor would the proposed development prejudice the delivery of new or expanded open space / sports facility at the community's village hub, such that there is no conflict with either WDLP Policy HS1 (Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities),

LWGCNP Policy LW9 (Supporting a Local Community ‘Hub’ Facility in Leek Wootton) or the NPPF 2024 (paragraphs 98 and 103). Further, notwithstanding that the area of operational / playing field is solely in private use, it has been demonstrated that Warwickshire Police has had a declining interest in formal outdoor sports activity and the land is surplus to their requirements, as sole users of the facility, it thereby follows the proposals accord with the NPPF 2024 (paragraph 104). Finally, when considering the operational needs of Warwickshire Police and the significant weight to be afforded to the importance of public service infrastructure (NPPF 2024, paragraph 101) set against the minor reduction in operational / playing field (noting there would be no loss of a sports pitch), the benefits of the proposed development clearly outweigh this limited loss, in compliance with WDLP Policy HS2 (Protecting Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities).

Design and Layout (including Landscaping)

- 6.43 The planning application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by MHP, dated January 2025 and a Lighting Design (letter report) prepared by DSA Consultants, dated 4 December 2024.
- 6.44 The design has been led by the functional needs to address the identified operational efficiency, health, safety and welfare, and security issues (see **Chapter 3**). In summary, the design objectives were to provide:
- Sufficient parking to meet the needs of staff and visitors, at appropriate locations, i.e., that reflect the operational needs and users, and seek to reduce incursion into the undeveloped land and/or operational / playing field, e.g., through maximising opportunities in/amongst the building complex and within existing hard-surfaced areas and car parks where feasible and where would not lead to added operational difficulties, such as obstructions or delays to blue-light services and where least impact on neighbouring properties.
 - Reduced obstructions to vehicle movements, specifically blue-light response vehicles exiting the site.
 - Sufficient secure parking and loading for the armed response and dog handling units and address the welfare needs of the police dogs whilst loading/waiting; given the sensitive use and the associated heightened risks, and the animal welfare needs, these would need to be close to the operational building (i.e. the former stable block).

- Safe and convenient footpaths for the passage of staff and visitors from parking areas to the main complex of building.
- Security and surveillance measures without causing harm to the setting of the listed building or its setting or the wider landscaped setting of the site, specifically by avoiding the use of full height boundary security fencing.
- Appropriate levels of accessible parking in suitable locations and address access needs and accord with the Council's Parking SPD.
- Appropriate levels of bicycle and motorcycle parking and accord with the Council's Parking SPD.
- Appropriate levels of electric vehicle charging in suitable locations, specifically adjacent to vehicle workshops/garages and where secure parking for operational vehicles and accord with the Council's Parking SPD.
- Reduce impacts on local neighbours, including reducing conflicts with vehicles and the need for blue-light vehicles passing along the private access drive adjacent to residential properties.
- Reduce / enhance impacts on the historic Woodcote House and its setting where possible.
- Reduce impacts on the landscape and visual amenity of the wider Police Headquarters setting as far as is feasible, whilst also achieving the above objectives.

6.45 The overarching site layout is provided within the Landscape Masterplan (see Drawing **24112.111 L**). In terms of design rationale for key features:

- The one-way system has been introduced through the main operational area with vehicles entering from the existing southern access and exiting from the modified existing northern access; access at both entry and exit points would be controlled by a vehicle control barrier. The one-way system would support the implementation of security control measures through the operational area and remove obstructions to flow caused by vehicles parking in passing bays (which would no longer be required and thereby formerly counted as existing parking spaces) and where the access road narrows.

The one-way system would start part-way along the southern access drive, to the west of the existing residential properties on Woodcote Drive and proposed dwellings on the former tennis court, thus the existing two-way flow serving residential properties would be retained unchanged. This location would also enable access/egress of visitors using the visitor and overflow car park (Car Parks A and B), without need to go through the security barriers / controls. The one-way system would utilise the existing private access drive and be accompanied by site signage.

- The visitor and overflow car parks (Car Parks A and B) have been located to the east of the vehicle control/one-way system to enable visitors to arrive/exit without vehicles passing through the main operational areas, thus providing clear separation of the car parks' function. This area of parking was agreed with the Council during Pre-application discussions (see below). A two-way vehicle barrier is proposed to ensure vehicle use and passage is monitored and controlled, with lighting and CCTV is provided for added security and safety of users. To meet the functional needs of the more trafficked Car Park A, it would be surfaced in a combination of tarmac (roadway) and permeable gravel surfacing in grid, with the less trafficked overflow car park surfaced with a grass grid surface. A pedestrian footpath would be provided, which provides a pleasant walk through existing/proposed planting, reinstating a former historic yew walk and providing convenient and safe passage of pedestrians, separated from vehicle movements; the pedestrian footpath would vary in width from 1.2m to 2.0 wide depending on location and restrictions, and thereby appropriate to its setting and surfaced in tarmac to support accessibility.
- The 2x security huts are appropriately located at the start and end of the one-way system and are necessary for the shelter and welfare of security staff controlling the barriers and providing surveillance of areas otherwise less observed, e.g., the visitor/overflow car park, operational / playing field, the public right of way, golf course and the site's exit, which is remote from the main operational area and where filtered views only along the private access drive. They are of limited footprint and height, measuring 2m wide x 2.6m long and to maximum ridge height of 3.14m, designed to provide the amenity needs of security staff, with glazing to all sides to provide surveillance, but otherwise finished in materials (timber cladding and black bitumen shingles) sympathetic to its setting.
- The majority of additional operational parking elsewhere has been created using verges immediately adjacent to the existing private access drive and/or in and amongst operational buildings where less incursion onto undeveloped land/the operational / playing field and thereby less impact on visual amenity and landscape setting: Car Park C adjacent to the Accommodation Block, the extent of which was agreed with the Council during Pre-application discussions (see below); Car Park D infilling between existing parking bays along the verges up to Woodcote House and in/amongst the existing parking to the South of the former Stable Block; Car Park E using verges along the existing private drive between the Radio Workshops, Pavilion and Accommodation Block; and Car Park F providing new spaces along the verges to the existing private access drive near the Training Block and Comms Block. The additional car parking is also well dispersed amongst the operational buildings providing for the convenience of users. The proposed new parking would be surfaced in a combination of tarmac or permeable gravel, as appropriate to its anticipated use and location, and formally marked out to maintain parking capacity. Additional footpath links would also be surfaced in a combination of tarmac to support accessibility.
- The removal of 10 existing parking spaces with introduction of landscape planting is proposed immediately to the east of Woodcote House, at its entrance, to improve the setting of the Listed Building. Similarly, the existing flagpole is to be

moved from its existing location to a position further distant from Woodcote House and visible on arrival along the southern access drive.

- Accessible parking is provided in both Car Park D in proximity to Woodcote House and Stable Block and Car Park F in proximity to the Training Block and Comms Block. It is therefore integrated with existing/new parking areas and well-dispersed amongst the operational buildings for the convenience of access.
- Bicycle parking is provided immediately to the east of Woodcote House, adjacent to existing car parking with no incursion onto undeveloped land/the operational / playing field and thereby less impact on visual amenity and landscape setting, and where passive surveillance exists and provides for the convenience access for users.
- Motorcycle parking is provided adjacent within the existing car park to the north of the Stable Block, less incursion onto undeveloped land/the operational / playing field and thereby less impact on visual amenity and landscape setting.
- Electric vehicle charging is to be provided adjacent to vehicle workshops/garages and where secure parking for operational vehicles.
- A vehicle barrier is proposed to the Walled Garden to the north of the former Stable Block, which is used for parking of operational vehicles to provide added security of police vehicles.
- Gaps in the existing wall to the south of the former Stable Block, used for vehicle parking, would be infilled by gates and fences; these are necessary to provide a secure area for loading by the armed response unit. The gates and fences would be free standing so as not to impact on the curtilage listed wall. Their scale and design are led by the need to provide a robust security boundary for safe loading/unloading of vehicles.
- The 2x sunshades are located immediately adjacent the entrances to the former Stable Block where the dog handling unit are based; these are necessary for the welfare of police dogs, whilst loading/waiting. The structures would be free-standing so as not to impact on the curtilage listed building and of modest scale , sufficient to cover the waiting vehicles and of a simple steel frame structure with opaque roof covering to provide shade.
- Minor works include the creation of loading bays, turning heads and bin storage areas, also adjacent to the existing access drive and amongst operational buildings with limited incursion onto undeveloped land/the operational / playing field and thereby less impact on visual amenity and landscape setting, These features would be surfaced on either existing or new tarmac, noting the existing concrete grass grid to the west of the Training Block is to be broken up and replaced with tarmac to match existing.
- The new access ramp would be provided adjacent to the Training Block to facilitate access for the mobility impaired to meet Equality Act legislation; this would be constructed to Building Regulations standards and located immediately adjacent to the building.

- The CCTV camera and lighting locations have been located according to their functional need to provide for security and safety, with the associated feeder pillars (for electrical supply) required to support their implementation. The CCTV cameras are proposed at key locations and generally mounted on 4m high galvanised poles and facing away from adjacent residential properties, to overlook car parking, key entry/exit points along the private access drive and car parking, and target areas within the operational complex. Lighting would comprise a combination of existing retained column and wall mounted lighting, new 4m high lighting columns and low-level bollard lighting as appropriate for the functional need and location as set out in the accompanying Lighting Design (letter report). Feeder pillars would be industry standard approximately 1.2m wide x 0.35m deep x 1.2m high,.
- The proposed development seeks, as far as possible, to reduce the impact on existing trees and planting through retention and protection measures. New tree and landscape planting has been designed to reduce the impacts on neighbouring properties (existing and proposed) where new car parks have been introduced, specifically along the eastern boundary either side of Car Parks A and B, and to the south of the Car Park C. Additional tree planting is proposed amongst the new car parks to break up the mass of parking and along the southern access drive. The proposed planting is set out in the accompanying Planting Schedule and comprises a combination of mixed tree species, single species hedge planting, shrub, hedge, climbers and topiary and native scrub mix with trees and amenity and flowering grass mixes, as appropriate for their location including formalised planting to the east of Woodcote House and informal parkland planting within the areas in/around the new car parking (Car Parks A, B and C). The proposed landscaping would provide a net gain in tree planting and supports the >10% net gain in biodiversity.

6.46 Two options for the additional car parking were presented at the Pre-application Advice stage: Option 1 – proposed additional parking in two main locations, the first being near the accommodation block/pavilion/walled garden area and the second opposite the former tennis courts; Option 2 – proposed additional parking in one main location, opposite the former tennis courts in a combination of hardstanding and reinforced grass. Both options would address the need for additional parking spaces, pedestrian safety and site required.

6.47 The Council's Pre-Application Advice stated a preference for a combination of the two options; in summary, to retain an element of the parking proposed south of the Accommodation block (from Option 1) with associated reduction to the parking to the west of Cala Homes (from Option 2), albeit stating this was not critical to the scheme. In addition, the Council's Open Space Officer also responded to the Pre-application Advice, making various suggestions in respect of providing pedestrian footpaths from

parking areas including extending the footpath from Car Park A to the private road access, extending the footpath between rows in Parking D, providing additional landscaping to break up some longer rows of parking where feasible, and the provision of outdoor seating. The Open Spaces Officer also suggested the seeding of the flood attenuation basin, however the final drainage design has removed the need for a flood attenuation basin and therefore no longer relevant and questioned the rationale to the location of the security huts, as outlined above. In addition, the Council's Open Spaces Officer stated that it would not be reasonable to require additional public open space given the application is not resulting any additional floorspace and concluded that *'The GST do not have any objections in principle to this application'*.

6.48 The proposed development has taken on board the Council's Planning and Open Spaces Officer's suggestions.

6.49 In conclusion on design matters, the Pre-application Advice states that:

'The revised parking scheme does not increase built form within the site that would have any detrimental harm to the character and setting of the local area or Listed Building. Subject to appropriate surfacing together with the relevant mitigation and planting works, I do not consider that the proposal would result in any significant demonstrable harm.'

'The provision of gates and canopies around the building would not raise any issue subject to appropriate design and detailing.'

6.50 Given the foregoing, it is demonstrated that the proposed development delivers on the functional and operational needs of Warwickshire Police and in doing so has delivered on key aspects of 'high quality design' that would be required of any development proposal, including providing appropriate levels of vehicle parking to meet the operational needs and ensuring highway safety, the provision of safe and accessible pedestrian footways, designing out crime and the fear of crime, providing inclusive and accessible design and supporting the transition to low carbon energy.

6.51 Furthermore, the proposed development has been designed to minimise the use of undeveloped land and/or the operational / playing field and is sensitive to the built heritage including the protection of curtilage listed structures and enhancement of the Woodcote House Listed Building setting. Whilst a change would occur, notably in the area of the operational / playing field, due to the introduction of car parking and

associated infrastructure, this is the minimum required to meet the operational and functional needs of the development, has adopted the principles and feedback from the Council's Pre-application Advice and has been carefully and sensitively designed to protect and mitigate the impacts on the wider landscape setting, visual amenity, natural environment and existing and proposed future residential properties with the implementation of a comprehensive landscaping scheme that delivers a net biodiversity gain and enhanced ecological networks and green infrastructure. Accordingly, it is therefore considered that the proposed design and layout should be considered acceptable.

Neighbouring Amenity / Noise

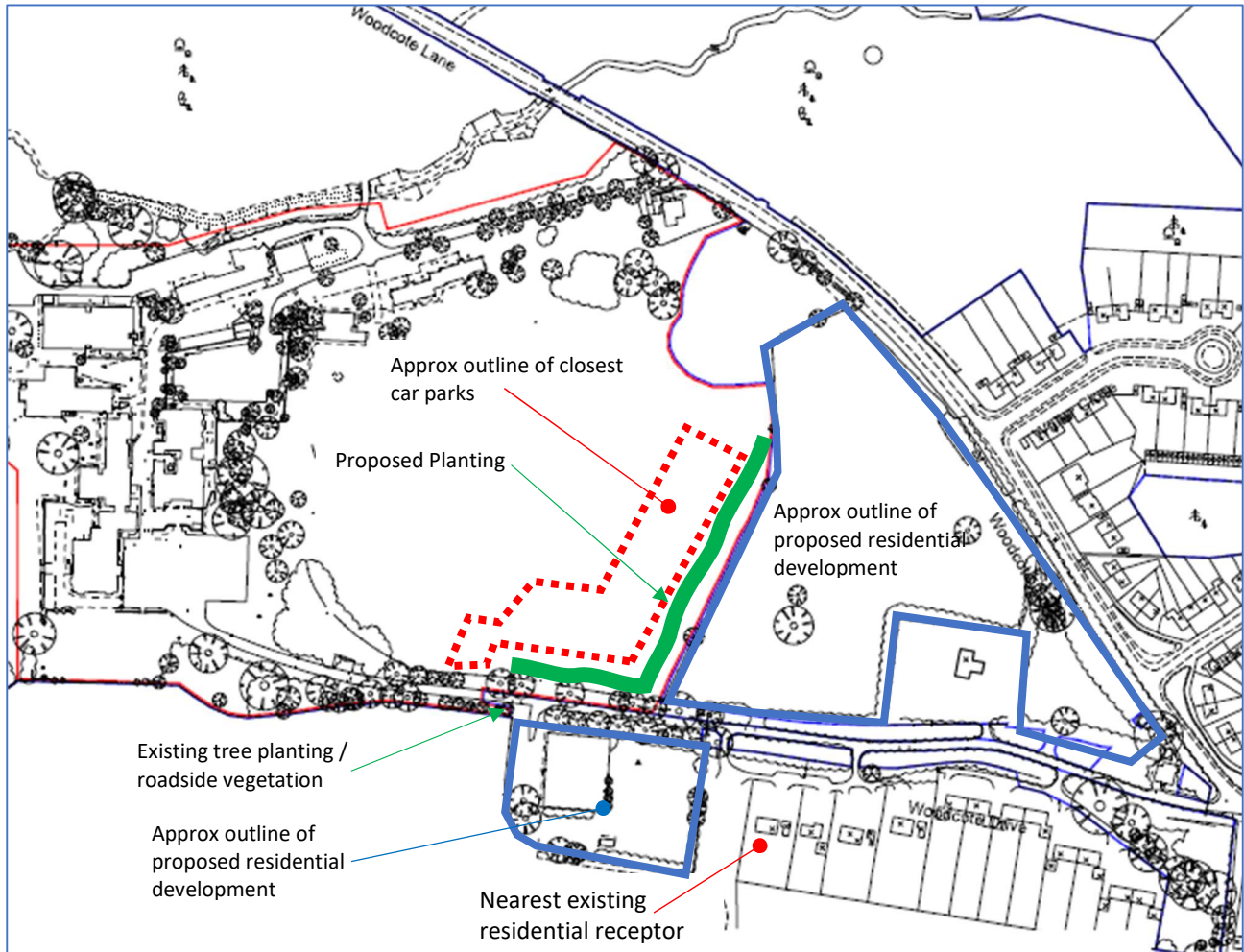
- 6.52 The nearest residential properties to the proposed development are the existing properties to the south-east of the application site that share the private access drive and those future properties to the east and south of the site, on the Cala Homes site/s, for which planning permission has been granted for up to 83 dwellings. Residential properties along Woodcote Lane to the east are circa 95m, at their closest, from the application site; notwithstanding the properties generally being set back on the opposite side of the road to the application site, Woodcote Lane is lined by existing hedgerow and tree (and street lit) and the intervening land is the subject of the above mentioned planning permission, such that the opportunity for any impacts arising, would be extremely limited and, in future, set in the context of the intervening new residential development and its associated built form, street lighting, cars, people and associated activity into the area.
- 6.53 The Pre-application Advice identifies the potential residential amenity issues as relating to visual impact, albeit noting the substantial landscaping and low-level lighting is proposed, and the potential for noise disturbance.
- 6.54 The nearest existing residential property is No 14 Woodcote Drive, circa 67m to the south-east of the south-east corner of the application site (see **Figure 6.3**); the dwelling is set back from its boundary and currently screened from views of the application site by existing roadside vegetation as shown on the Arboricultural Survey. As shown on the proposed Landscape Masterplan (see **Drawing 24113.111 L**), further landscape planting

is proposed along the eastern and southern boundaries of proposed Car Parks A and B; given the proposed development is predominantly at ground level (car parking, with vehicle barrier) and the associated activity (people and cars) also at low height the proposed development would not lead to an unacceptable change in visual amenity.

6.55 The proposed residential development to the east of the application site (Cala Homes) would result in future occupiers in proximity to the site's boundary and would introduce new built form, street lighting, cars, people and associated activity into the area. With reference to the Cala Homes proposed Landscape Masterplan (as uploaded to the Reserved Matters application, drawing P21-0622-06 C) it is noted that all dwellings would be side-on to the proposed Car Parks and it is proposed to retain the majority of trees along the boundary within their site, to be supplemented by new tree and hedgerow planting. Given the foregoing and the relative height, activity and landscaping of the proposed development/s, there would not be an unacceptable harm to visual amenity of future occupiers.

6.56 Similarly, the proposed residential development to the south of the application site (also Cala Homes) would introduce new built form, cars, people and associated activity, forming a physical extension to built form on Woodcote Drive (albeit separately accessed). These properties would be opposite the proposed car parking, albeit separated by the private access drive, set back from the site's boundary with existing tree planting supplemented by new hedgerow, effectively enclosing the 'former tennis court' site. Given the foregoing and the relative height, activity and landscaping of the proposed development/s, there would not be an unacceptable harm to visual amenity of future occupiers.

Figure 6.3 – Plan showing existing Relative Position of Existing and Future Residential Properties



6.57 The Lighting Design (letter report), prepared by DSA Consultants, dated 4 December 2024, sets out the relevant design criteria and standards, and details of the proposed lighting scheme and timescales. It is noted that the car parks nearest residential receptors, i.e. the visitor car park (Car Park A) would be lit from dusk to 10pm (7 days per week) and the overflow car park (Car Park B) would generally be unlit except when activated for specific events. The proposed lighting has been selected on the basis of need for lighting and location and has been designed to be high quality, with precision optics to control distribution of illumination and minimise light spill, with zero upward light output ratio and asymmetric distribution and single head luminaires also fitted with shields to mask direct view of light sources from behind, designed in accordance with recommendations set out in the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light (see **Lighting Design (Letter Report)**).

6.58 Whilst the proposals would introduce new lighting, the sensitive design and timings and

relative position to existing dwellings and intervening vegetation, would not lead to an unacceptable harm. For similar reasons and noting the proposed residential development (Cala Homes) would also introduce new lighting (including light spill from dwellings, external lighting and roadside lighting), the proposed development would not lead to an unacceptable harm to future occupiers of the residential development.

- 6.59 The planning application is also accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment Report, prepared by NoiseAir and dated 9 January 2025. The Assessment seeks to address the potential impacts arising from the proposed new Car Parks and associated vehicle movements, particularly in respect of the existing and proposed new housing to the east/south-east of the application site. The Noise Impact Assessment concludes that all calculated sound levels are likely to be within guideline BS 8233:2014 levels and thereby would not lead to an unacceptable harm.
- 6.60 Accordingly, it is demonstrated that whilst the proposed development would result in a localised change, the effect would be insufficient to cause an unacceptable harm on the amenity of existing or future residential properties in terms of visual amenity, lighting or noise.

Heritage Considerations

- 6.61 The planning application is accompanied by a Heritage and Archaeology Statement, prepared by Pegasus Group, January 2025.
- 6.62 The application site is located on land within the grounds of and to the east of the Grade II Listed Building 'Woodcote'; first listed on 23 January 1987, the property is identified on the official listing as comprising in the main an 1861 building, extended in 1869, by John Gibson in a Jacobean style for the then owner Henry Christopher Wise. The listed building is located to the south-west of the Police Headquarters. In addition, the application site forms part of the 'Locally Important Park and Garden at Woodcote House', a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) as identified in the WDLP.
- 6.63 The Leek Wootton Conservation Area is located circa 200m to the east of the application site at its closest point, which is the East Lodge situated at the junction between Woodcote Lane and Woodcote Drive; the Conservation Area is separated from

the application site by the intervening property Broome House and its associated boundary planting and the consented new residential development (Cala Homes) on the eastern boundary of the application site, such that there would be no anticipated impacts.

- 6.64 There are no statutory designated Scheduled Monuments or non-statutory designated Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields identified at or near the application site and no properties identified on the Council's 'The Local List of Heritage Assets'.
- 6.65 The Pre-application Advice noted that *'The revised parking scheme would not increase built form within the site that would have any detrimental harm to the character and setting of the local area or Listed Building'*. Further, that the WDC's Conservation Officer had been consulted and advised that they are *'... satisfied that neither option [referring to the two Pre-application Advice car park location options] would result in any significant harm to the setting of the Heritage Assets'*, and that *'In terms of the minor alterations to the stables area, the provision of canopies would be limited to modern infill structures and would not result in any detrimental impact on the Heritage Assets'*; further, that *'The provision of new gates within the existing openings would also be acceptable if freestanding as this is wholly reversible and would not impact on the existing historic walls'* and in concluding *'Subject to the appropriate design and materials, both these elements would not result in harm to the character or setting of the Heritage Asset'*. Accordingly, the Council considered that at the pre-application stage that the proposed development would be acceptable in heritage terms.
- 6.66 The Statement noted that there is potential for negative impacts in so far as the as the introduction of the three car parks (A, B and C) and the associated infrastructure and tree removal, and similarly, but to a lesser degree, through the modification of Car Park D, with loss of green space to the front of Woodcote House and changes in the broader vicinity and approach to the Listed Building. Further, it was noted that the security barriers and security huts would result in changes to the character of the two approaches and entrance to the former kitchen garden, albeit already modified in character and used for car parking. To mitigate these effects, it is proposed to introduce additional planting to break up any long views towards the new car parking

and infrastructure, as shown on the Landscape Masterplan, particularly to the east and west of Car Parks A and B and to the south of Car Park C, as well as additional planting to the north-east extending the woodland cover in this area.

- 6.67 The new gates and sun canopies to be installed adjacent to the Stable Block, whilst modern in design, would be free standing and as such could be installed and removed (if required) without harm to the fabric of the building.
- 6.68 In addition, it is proposed to reinstate of the historic 'Yew Walk' which would serve as the link between Car Parks A and B and the complex of buildings, to provide a new pathway to the east of the Stable Block following the tree lined approach to the kitchen garden to serve as a link between Car Park D and the complex of buildings, to provide additional planting south of the Comms Block which would better reflect the historic designed character of this part of the site and soften views of the Comms Block from the immediate surrounds of Woodcote and the adjacent pleasure grounds, and to remove the car parking immediately to the east of Woodcote, which would be replaced with formal planting to reinforce the formal status and emphasise the building entrance; all these measures would provide a heritage enhancement and add to the 'public benefits' of the scheme.
- 6.69 Further additional heritage enhancements could be achieved through the softening of the character of pathways to the south and west of the Woodcote House; these are shown on the drawings but fall outside the application site boundary, although within land under the applicant's control.
- 6.70 The Statement concluded there would be a less than substantial harm, at the lower spectrum, to the Grade II Listed Building 'Woodcote' as consequence of the changes within the wider setting and a minor impact on the overall heritage significance of the non-designated heritage asset, the 'locally important park and garden at Woodcote'. Notwithstanding, it is concluded that given the limited harm to the significance of these heritage assets and the aforementioned heritage enhancements, forming part of the wider public benefits derived from the scheme (including the wider policy support to the provision and operational efficiency of public service infrastructure), the proposed development accords with the relevant policy principles of the NPPF (paragraphs 214 and 215).

Highways and Parking

- 6.71 The planning application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment, prepared by Apex Transport Planning, dated 7 January 2025.
- 6.72 The Transport Assessment confirms that the site is within acceptable walking distance from Leek Wootton, as well as from most of Hill Wootton and the southern extents of Kenilworth, based on published guidance on acceptable walking distances, and that there are footways along Woodcote Lane and connecting roads into Leek Wootton. Further, it is confirmed that the site is within acceptable cycling distance from Leek Wootton, Hill Wootton, Kenilworth and parts of both Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa, based on published guidance on acceptable cycling distances for commuting, noting also that there is an on-road national cycle network (NCN) route which passes from Kenilworth, through Leek Wootton, south towards Warwick. Opportunities for use of public transport are also noted, with nearby bus stops in Leek Wootton albeit services are limited, and by rail combined with a 10-minute cycle or 25-minute walk. Accordingly, the site is in an accessible location and as such the Transport Assessment concludes there are a choice of modes of travel available for staff and visitors.
- 6.73 Notwithstanding, as has been evidenced (both elsewhere in this Planning Statement and in the Transport Statement) the existing parking capacity at the site is insufficient to the meet the daily needs of the Police Headquarters and the unique nature of their operations. The implications of insufficient parking are summarised as ad-hoc parking/use of passing bays causing obstructions to vehicle flow and delays to blue-light emergency response, the parking on grass verges causing damage to grass/tree roots which is also unsightly, the frustration both to staff and the local community arising from on-street parking within the village and the lack of secure parking for operational vehicles. The Transport Assessment confirms that there are no relevant parking standards applicable to the Police Headquarters and accordingly, the need for additional parking capacity has been assessed on the basis of the average daily staff, the use of the training facility, the need for secure parking of operational vehicles, with an average daily allowance for visitors (based on historic records) set in the context of the percentage of staff working shift working patterns and engaged in emergency response, and the relative lack of public transport options to meet these unpredictable working

hours, the health and safety concerns and restrictions on use of public transport including with regards to uniformed officers. It is therefore demonstrated that there is an evidenced need for additional parking and that the proposed parking provision is not excessive in the context of this need and the unique circumstances of Police Headquarters' operations; it is also confirmed that the proposed parking is provided in accordance with the space requirements of the Parking Standards SPD.

- 6.74 The proposed development would deliver 19 parking spaces that are Equality Act compliance (sized and marked for disabled badge parking), 20 spaces for bicycles, 10 spaces for motorcycles and 19 electric vehicle charging points, which accord (as relevant) to the Council's Parking Standards SPD.
- 6.75 The existing access arrangements from/to Woodcote Lane would be largely unchanged; in summary, the existing two-way access through the southern access would remain unchanged and continue to serve the existing residential properties on Woodcote Drive and consented new residential development (Cala Homes) as well as the proposed new parking (Car Parks A and B); however, access through the Police Headquarters would be via a newly enforced on-way system with security barriers preventing unauthorised access; the exit would be through the slightly modified existing northern access to Woodcote Lane. The Transport Assessment sets out the design of the one-way system and northern access modifications and confirms that the existing/amended access arrangements will improve vehicle movements and safety within the site and that the accesses are considered appropriate and safe. Provision is made for the access/egress of service vehicles, including new turning head; the Transport Assessment has undertaken swept path analysis as relevant and confirms that the arrangements for service and delivery vehicles, which are broadly unchanged, are safe and suitable, with Fire Service tenders able to achieve access within 45m of all buildings. It is therefore demonstrated that the site access to/from the public highway and layout arrangements within the site are safe and suitable and as appropriate taken into account service,
- 6.76 Finally, it is emphasised that the proposed development seeks to deliver an appropriate level of parking for existing operations at the Police Headquarters; there is no increase in the number of staff or increase in operational floorspace of buildings, nor thereby an increase in vehicle movements. Accordingly, and as confirmed in the Transport

Statement, the proposed development would not result in a capacity issue on the highway network nor unacceptable impact on road safety, nor would the residual cumulative impacts on the road network be severe, such that, in accordance with the NPPF 2024 (paragraph 116) should not be refused on highway grounds.

Nature Conservation

- 6.77 The planning application is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment (EiA), prepared by Ecology Solutions, dated 19 December 2024; the Assessment includes the findings of species-specific surveys and the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric, dated December 2024.
- 6.78 Designated Sites - The nearest ecological statutory designated sites are the Oakwood and Blacklow Spinneys Local Nature Reserve (LNR) circa 2.7km to the north-west and the Sherbourne Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) circa 7.9km north-east; the nearest international nature conservation sites are greater than 20km and not considered further. The Lunch and Cattle Brook Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is located immediately to the north of the application site and is designated for its mixed woodland, ponds and watercourse; there is a further area to the west of this LWS which is identified as a potential LWS (pLWS). The Assessment concludes that there will be no adverse direct or indirect effects on these designated sites; further that the adoption of best practice in construction will ensure that the risk of impacts on these designated sites during construction would be appropriately mitigated.
- 6.79 Habitats – The Assessment identifies that the application site comprises predominantly modified fields, mature trees, pockets of woodland and developed land, as well as areas of scrub, introduced shrub, bare ground, ruderal vegetation and vegetation gardens; invasive species have also been identified. The habitats are generally determined to be of low distinctiveness, with the woodland, native scrub and trees of medium distinctiveness. The Assessment concludes *‘It has been recommended that the habitats of elevated value, in particular the woodlands, scrub and trees, are retained. Notwithstanding, habitat enhancements such as the creation of wildflower meadows, new areas of woodland and enhancement of retained woodland and scrub, as well as tree planting have been recommended’*; such measures have been incorporated into the

Landscape Masterplan which was developed alongside the EclA.

- 6.80 Badgers and Hedgehogs – Ecological surveys did not identify any active Badger setts / entrances within the boundary of the application site, such that the appropriate mitigation would be a precautionary approach during construction.
- 6.81 Bats - Bat surveys recorded moderate-high numbers of common widespread bat species using the site, with seven trees identified as having potential for bat roosting, and all these trees will be retained. The Assessment identified that the appropriate mitigation would be sensitive lighting to avoid light spillage of suitable foraging and commuting habitat, identified as mostly within the north-western corner of the application site, which is away from the proposed new car parking areas (Car Parks, A, B and C).
- 6.82 Birds – The Assessment concluded that the habitats within the application site provide foraging and nesting opportunities for many species of birds of conservation concern. Accordingly, the appropriate mitigation would be for any suitable bird nesting habitat to be cleared outside of the nesting season (March to August inclusive) or, where this cannot be achieved, for a survey for nesting birds to be carried out immediately prior to works, with any confirmed nests left in situ until the young have fledged. In addition, a check for Barn Owl immediately prior to any works being carried out is also recommended should tree T6 be deemed to be impacted, to ensure no impacts to this Schedule 1 species; it is noted that there is no intention to remove T6 as part of the proposed development.
- 6.83 The retention of the majority of scrub, woodland and mature trees, as well as the provision of new trees, wildflower meadows, scrub, woodland and landscape planting across the application site will maintain and enhance opportunities for birds, while the erection of bird boxes within the site will also provide new nesting opportunities.
- 6.84 Great Crested Newts - The Assessment concluded that the application site offers limited suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newts with the three off-site ponds considered not to offer suitable aquatic habitat. Accordingly, it was deemed unlikely that this protected species will be impacted.
- 6.85 Invertebrates - The Assessment considered it likely that the application site would support a range of common and widespread invertebrate species. Appropriate habitat

enhancements and creation are proposed, together with a sensitive habitat management regime, will provide enhancements to foraging and breeding invertebrate populations, with particular benefits secured for saproxylic organisms, as deadwood habitats.

- 6.86 Mammals - No evidence of any other notable mammals were recorded within the application site.
- 6.87 Biodiversity Net Gain – The Assessment concluded that the proposed development would achieve an BNG of 10.46% which exceeds the statutory minimum 10%.
- 6.88 In summary, it is concluded that the potential impacts of the proposed development would be a loss of some habitat, including the modified grassland, broadleaved woodland, ruderal vegetation, bramble scrub and some trees, with impacts on the eastern foraging/commuting corridor arising from the loss of habitat and introduction of lighting. To mitigate these effects, it is proposed that the areas of retained woodland and trees be protected during construction, that a sympathetic lighting scheme be adopted for bats, and that precautionary construction measures including pre-work surveys and site management measures be adopted in respect of bats, nesting birds, Barn Owl, Badgers and Hedgehogs. Further, habitat creation and enhancements are proposed including the creation of species-rich grassland, new scrub, woodland and tree planting, with infilling of hedgerows, across the application site and along foraging and commuting corridors, with further enhancement through installation of bird and bat boxes and creation of log piles for amphibians and invertebrates. Overall, it is concluded that the proposed development would deliver a net biodiversity gain that exceeds the statutory minimum.
- 6.89 It has therefore been demonstrated that the proposed development has been sympathetically designed to reduce the potential impacts on habitats and to protected and priority species, and provides appropriate mitigation measures and enhancements, that would maintain and reinforce ecological connectivity and deliver a net biodiversity gain, the long-term management of which could be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition. Further, there would be no adverse impact on statutory international, national or locally designated sites.

Arboricultural

- 6.90 The planning application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Survey, Impact Assessment and Protection Plan, prepared by MHP, dated January 2025.
- 6.91 The tree survey identified a total of 126 trees and 13 tree groups, plus 1 woodland within the application site/immediate surroundings; all trees are protected under three blanket Tree Preservation Orders (TPO 440 & 448 and TPO 171 to the north).
- 6.92 The impact assessment identifies that 5 trees: T4 (B1 Lime), T5 (B1 Lime), T36 (B1 Lime), T37 (C1 Cherry) and T103 (B2 Persian Ironwood); and 1 group: G3 partial (A2, albeit mainly yew) and an area of overgrown unmanaged bamboo are proposed to be removed to facilitate development; Appendix 2 of the assessment appraises the potential impacts of their removal, the appropriate mitigation and assesses the significance of harm caused, for which it is noted that 'No' harm would be derived from their removal.
- 6.93 In addition, 5 trees are identified as being of U category, thereby unsuitable for retention; these are: T17 (Red Oak); T42 (English Oak); T61 (Common Beech); T117 (Cherry); and T123 (Cherry); it is proposed that, notwithstanding the proposed development, these trees be removed for good arboricultural management.
- 6.94 The impact assessment also identifies there would be some potential for root severance (affecting two Common Limes within G10) and soil compaction affecting specific retained trees; Appendix 2 of the assessment identifies these trees and appraises the potential impacts, the appropriate mitigation and assesses the significance of harm caused, for which it is noted that 'No' harm would be derived.
- 6.95 Overall, the impact assessment identifies that the extent of tree removal is minor in relation to the overall treescape of the site and there would be no obvious visual harm. Further, that the necessary root severance and potential for soil compaction and associated root damage can be appropriately mitigated and that all retained trees can be protected during construction; such measures could be secured through an appropriately worded planning condition. The assessment also notes that substantial amounts of new planting is proposed and that as these new trees establish and mature the medium and longer term arboricultural gains would exponentially outweigh

the initial losses.

- 6.96 With regards to the loss of trees protected under the blanket TPO's the impact assessment comments that there is no formal access to the application site and as such they make no significant or sustainable contribution to public visual amenity, which suggests their inclusion within the blanket TPO is arguable.
- 6.97 The Pre-application Advice reported on Council's Arboricultural Officer assessment and concluded that '*... in principle he can support the idea of additional car parking to suit the occupancy of the HQ ...*'. Accordingly, the Council considered that at the pre-application stage that the proposed development would be acceptable in arboricultural terms. Commentary was also made in respect of there being no clear connection between the car parking on the eastern boundary and buildings, which has been addressed by the inclusion of a new footpath as shown on the Landscape Masterplan, and the need to address the necessary works required to ensure the successful establishment of new tree planting within the car parking areas, which has been addressed by locating the proposed tree planting generally to car park boundaries or where adequate space in grass verges within the car park, thereby avoiding the need for underground tree pits and reducing the risk of tree failure. Accordingly, such matters have been appropriately addressed.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.98 The planning application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, prepared by K-Ten Consulting and dated 8 January 2025.
- 6.99 The Flood Risk Assessment confirms that the site is in Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding) and that the proposed use, essentially for car parking and landscaping falls within the 'less vulnerable' flood vulnerability classification. Accordingly, the use is acceptable in Flood Zone 1 and it is not required to undertake a Sequential Test or Exception Test.
- 6.100 Further, the Flood Risk Assessment confirms that the overall risk of flooding from tidal, fluvial, pluvial (surface water) and groundwater is low and there is no risk of flooding associated with reservoirs; there are no historic records of flooding with the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and only 4 records of sewer flooding occur within the

wider CV35 postcode.

- 6.101 Infiltration testing confirms that the ground is suitable for drainage by infiltration, which is the highest (preferable) tier of the SuDS hierarchy. Therefore, the Drainage Strategy proposes that all parking bays would be constructed with permeable paving and all access roads in tarmac but with fall to the permeable surfaces. The Drainage Strategy has demonstrated the design is capable of accommodating a 1/100 year annual probability of flooding plus the required 40% allowance for climate change and that all surface water would be contained within the site. A maintenance and management strategy is also provided.
- 6.102 It is noted that permeable paving provides a benefit to water quality and that the proposed scheme is in compliance when assessed against the Water Quality Indices Table (C753 SuDS Manual) for pollution hazard indices.

Air Quality

- 6.103 The planning application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment, prepared by NoiseAir, dated December 2024.
- 6.104 The Air Quality Assessment has considered both the potential construction and operational impacts of the proposed development on air quality and specifically sensitive receptors within the locality. It is noted that the prevailing wind is from the south-west, such as receptors to the north-east were more likely to be affected; furthermore, that there are no nature conservation sites within 50m of the application site and as such ecological receptors were not considered further.
- 6.105 The risk of construction impacts on receptors arising from the construction phase was determined to be either low in respect of earthworks and track-out, or negligible in respect of demolition and construction, with the impact from construction traffic determined to be negligible. Given the stage in the consenting process and the likely construction programme for the application development, it is considered that the residential scheme to the east (Cala Homes) is unlikely to be affected by construction impacts. Mitigation measures including good site practice are identified to further reduce impacts, such that it was concluded that residual effects associated with dust

and particulate matters, and in respect of emissions to air from construction vehicles, would be not significant.

- 6.106 Whilst there is potential for vehicles movements associated with the proposed development to generate exhaust emissions, it is emphasised that the proposals seek to address existing issues on site and therefore would not generate new vehicle movements on/off the Police Headquarters' site. Accordingly, the Assessment determined that the in accordance with EPUK and IQAM guidance, the air quality impacts associated with the operational phase would be negligible and no further assessment was deemed necessary. The Assessment concluded a predicted negligible impact associated with operational traffic. Potential mitigation measures are identified based on the Air Quality SPD Type, 1, 2 and 3 mitigation; these should be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and would serve to further reduce the potential impacts for which the Assessment concluded the residual impact would not be significant.
- 6.107 Further, that the pollutant concentrations are below the relevant Air Quality Objectives (AQO), noting that the application site is not located in or close to an Air Quality Management Area, all nearby monitoring show concentrations well below the relevant AQOs in recent years and in more polluted areas than the application site, and that the predicted background concentrations are well below the relevant AQOs.
- 6.108 The Exposure Assessment has been carried out for the permitted residential development to the immediate east of the Site; however, as neither the application site or permitted development are within an AQMA nor in an location 20m from above the relevant national objective of where > 10,000 AADT, the proposed development will not expose future occupiers to unacceptable levels of NO₂ or particulate matter, in line with the WDC SPD, and the effects were determined to be not significant.
- 6.109 Further, as there would be no net increase in vehicle trips, the damage costs from transport related emissions are considered to be zero and not assessed further, in accordance with the WDC Air Quality SPD.
- 6.110 Overall, the Air Quality Assessment concluded that '*... the proposed development complies with national and local policy for air quality*' and that '*Based on the assessment results, air quality issues are not considered a constraint to development*'.

6.111 Accordingly, there would be no significant negative impacts on air quality associated with traffic generation within identified AQMAs or on the health and well-being of local residents, with mitigation measures identified to further reduce any potential impacts; further, the proposed development would not give rise to contamination of the air or result in a reduction in air quality and would not give rise to an unacceptable risk or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

S106 / Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

6.112 As confirmed in the Pre-application Advice, the proposed development would not be liable to CIL; however, the Additional Information form has been provided to confirm this is the case.

Summary and Conclusions

6.113 The planning appraisal has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and that, in the absence of any relevant policies in the Development Plan, significant weight should be afforded on the importance of new, expanded and upgraded public service infrastructure in accordance with the NPPF 2024 (paragraph 101).

6.114 The Leek Wootton site having been redesignated the Warwickshire Police Headquarters, the spatial policies of the adopted WDLP and LWGCNP relating to the site's residential redevelopment are no longer relevant. Conversely, it has been demonstrated that proposed development is necessary to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of Warwickshire Police services, to provide for the safety of staff and visitors, and the security and delivery of police service operations and delivers on the key principles of high-quality design, through provision of adequate parking, a safe and suitable vehicle layout, safe and accessible pedestrian routes, designing out the opportunity for crime and fear of crime, delivering an inclusive design and making provision for electric vehicle charging as well as addressing the unique needs of delivering police services.

6.115 Whilst the proposed development would result in a minor incursion into the northern and eastern margins of the operational / playing field, this area is used solely by

Warwickshire Police and primarily for operational purposes as part of the application site's sui generis use as a police headquarters. Further, in the absence of any public access or use, this area does not fall within the definition of 'open space' as set out in the NPPF 2024, as cannot be considered to constitute a 'public value' that offers 'important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity'. Notwithstanding, it is demonstrated that: there would be no loss of community facility and no detriment or prejudice to the provision of community and sporting facilities serving Leek Wootton and the surrounding catchment; the area proposed to be developed is surplus to the Warwickshire Police's requirements for a sports field, albeit noting the single football pitch (the only use in the past circa 18 years) could be marked out, if required; and that the benefits of the proposed development, both operationally and with regards to the enhanced recreational, visual amenity and biodiversity value through extensive landscaping would clearly outweigh the limited harm through this minor incursion. In this respect, and notwithstanding Sport England internal policies, there would be no conflict with the relevant policies of the statutory Development Plan, or NPPF 2024.

- 6.116 The proposed development delivers on the functional and operational needs of Warwickshire Police and has been carefully and sensitively designed to respect the site's heritage, natural assets and landscape setting and to reduce the potential impacts on neighbouring residential properties, having taken on board the Council's Pre-application Advice on design matters. The quantum of parking proposed responding to the identified operational, staff and visitor needs and accessible, bicycle and motorcycle parking and electric vehicle charging proposed in accordance with the Council's Parking SPD standards.
- 6.117 The Heritage Statement identified that there would be a less than substantial harm to the Grade II Listed Building 'Woodcote' and a minor impact on the non-designated heritage asset, the 'locally important park and garden at Woodcote'; however, when considering the public benefits of the scheme derived from both supporting the operational delivery of a public service and the specific heritage enhancements, it is determined that these limited impact are outweighed by the public benefits and thereby acceptable.

- 6.118 The proposed development would not lead to an unacceptable harm to neighbouring residents (existing or proposed) or adverse impacts in respect of highways safety and access, flood risk and drainage or air quality. Further, there would be no unacceptable adverse harm designated nature conservation sites, protected and priority species and habitats, nor loss of aged or veteran trees, with the minor loss of habitat and trees mitigated and enhanced through the comprehensive landscaping scheme, which would also support ecological connectivity and deliver a net biodiversity gain. The long-term management of habitats and tree protection and mitigation measures could be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.
- 6.119 In concluding, this Planning Appraisal has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and that in all other respects (with mitigation) accords with the relevant policies of the Development plan when considered as a whole and that there are no other material considerations to outweigh this consideration. Therefore, in accordance with the provision of the NPPF (Paragraph 11c) and the WDLP Policy DS5 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) the planning application should be approved.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of Warwickshire Police in support of a full planning application for *'External works to improve the safety and security of Police Headquarters' staff, visitors and policing operations. Improvements to include; resurfacing of existing roads, paths and car parks, additional car parking, temporary overflow car parking, pedestrian footpaths, external lighting, CCTV, security barriers, security huts, sunshade canopies, security gates, disabled ramp, garden of reflection, structural landscaping and biodiversity net gain'* at the Warwickshire Police Headquarters, Woodcote Lane, Leek Wootton, Warwickshire, CV35 7QA.
- 7.2 The planning application is submitted following receipt of Pre-application Advice from WDC. Changes have been made to the design to reflect the design comments made by the Council's Planning and Open Spaces Officers, neither of whom raised an objection to the proposals, and the Planning Statement, with supporting studies, has addressed the relevant planning matters as identified in the Pre-application Advice.
- 7.3 The application site comprises 8.8 hectares of land wholly within the boundary of the Police Headquarters property, and is predominantly occupied by a cluster of buildings, including the historic Woodcote House (Grade II Listed Building) and former Stables, and an area of operational / playing field with a private access drive. The site benefits from two access points onto Woodcote Lane; the southern access is also used by residential properties on Woodcote Drive. Other than the Grade II Listed Building and blanket Tree Preservation Orders, the site is free of known statutory environmental (landscape, heritage and nature conservation) designations and is in flood zone 1, representing a low risk of flooding.
- 7.4 The proposed development seeks to address a range of identified operational efficiency, health, safety and welfare and security issues associated with the inadequate parking, lack of pedestrian facilities and the unfettered site access by unauthorised persons, as well as welfare matters for police dogs, persons with mobility issues and the need to facilitate the transition to a low carbon future through electric vehicle charging. It is demonstrated that the proposed development is necessary, to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of this key public service.

- 7.5 The planning appraisal has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and that, in the absence of any relevant policies in the Development Plan, significant weight should be afforded on the importance of new, expanded and upgraded public service infrastructure in accordance with the NPPF 2024 (paragraph 101).
- 7.6 Further it is demonstrated that the proposed development has been carefully and sensitively designed, having responded to the Council's Pre-application advice. Whilst there would be a minor loss of the northern and eastern margins of the operational / playing field there would be no conflict with the statutory Development Plan. In other respects, it has been demonstrated that there would not be an unacceptable harm to residential amenity (existing or proposed) and there would be no adverse impacts in respect of highways safety and access, flood risk and drainage or air quality, or to designated nature conservation sites, protected and priority species and habitats, nor loss of aged or veteran trees; the minor loss of habitat and trees would be mitigated and enhanced through the comprehensive landscaping scheme, which would also support ecological connectivity and deliver a net biodiversity gain and whilst there would be some limited harm to the statutory and non-statutory heritage assets, would deliver a package of heritage and public benefits that outweigh this harm.
- 7.7 In conclusion, this Planning Statement and supporting studies, have demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and that in all other respects (with mitigation) accords with the relevant policies of the Development plan when considered as a whole and that there are no other material considerations to outweigh this consideration. Therefore, in accordance with the provision of the NPPF (Paragraph 11c) and the WDLP Policy DS5 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) the planning application should be approved.

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