



Twycross Zoo - East Midland Zoological
Society Limited

NATIONAL SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION CENTRE, TWYCROSS ZOO

Planning and Heritage Statement





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WSP

Level 2

100 Wharfside Street

Birmingham

B1 1RT

Phone: +44 121 352 4700

WSP.com

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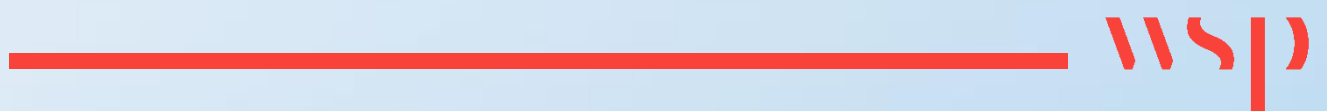
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CONSULTATION BOARD

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INTRODUCTION



1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by WSP on behalf of Twycross Zoo – East Midland Zoological Society Limited ('the client'). It forms part of a full planning application for a National Science and Conservation Centre (NSCC) at Twycross Zoo.
- 1.1.2. The NSCC is the next stage of the Zoo's £55m strategic investment masterplan and comprises the development of the Twycross Life Sciences Park, which will be a STEM Centre of Excellence. Funding from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund was secured for the scheme in 2021.
- 1.1.3. The description of development for this application is:
- “Development of new animal enclosures and associated infrastructure, new lecture theatre, education block, education facilities and associated residential block and lodges, new access from Orton Hill, new car park, landscaping and all other associated works.”*
- 1.1.4. This Planning Statement provides an assessment of the proposals against the relevant national and local planning policies and other material considerations. The remainder of the document is set out as follows:
- Section 2 describes the application site, its surroundings and the local context relevant to the application;
 - Section 3 details the pre-application engagement;
 - Section 3 describes the proposals;
 - Section 5 sets out the planning policy context;
 - Section 6 examines the key planning considerations; and
 - Section 7 draws conclusions.
- 1.1.5. In addition to this Planning Statement, a list of supporting documents and drawings that accompany this application is provided within the covering letter.

1.2 TWYCROSS ZOO

- 1.2.1. Twycross Zoo was established in 1963 and became a charitable trust in 1972 – The East Midland Zoological Society. Due to being the only UK zoo home to all four great ape species (chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans and bonobos), the Zoo is renowned as a specialist primate centre and is an internationally recognised conservation charity and award-winning visitor attraction. The Zoo exists to support conservation, education and research of some of the most endangered species on the planet.
- 1.2.2. Twycross Zoo is an award-winning visitor attraction, welcoming over half a million visitors each year. Visitors can view the animals and visit the indoor and outdoor play areas, cafes, and restaurants.
- 1.2.3. In the last 10 years, the Zoo has successfully bred 72 different species of animal, created new habitats for endangered and critically endangered species, contributed over £450,000 to the work of global conservation organisations, inspired over half a million school children and teachers and facilitated more than 500 research projects.
- 1.2.4. The Zoo has been rationalising and enhancing its campus over recent years to provide a visitor experience aligned with the best modern zoos in the country and Europe. Investment has been



made in improving exhibit habitats, customer services and bringing attractions like the Gruffalo experience which meet customer needs.

2 CONTEXT

- 2.1.1. This section provides a description of the site and its background, as well as setting out relevant planning history.

2.2 APPLICATION CONTEXT

- 2.2.1. The NSCC is the next stage of the Zoo's strategic plan to deliver a £55m vision. A core element of the masterplan is the development of the Twycross Life Sciences Park, which will be a STEM Centre of Excellence. Investment to date (£8.4m) has delivered important new habitats, driving revenue and allowing continued investment in research, education and conservation in the Life Sciences Park.
- 2.2.2. The proposed development seeks to secure the next stage of development in the masterplan for the Zoo – the NSCC. Funding from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund was secured for the scheme in 2021.
- 2.2.3. The proposals will make a significant contribution to the international conservation of biodiversity. This purpose-built centre will support conservationists and scientists around the world with a facility for both research and teaching. The Centre's contribution to supporting conservation; animal welfare; biosciences; STEM activities and public engagement with science will mean that it will propel the Zoo, Leicestershire and the UK right into the heart of the fight against the global extinction crisis and significantly shape the outcomes of the crisis.

2.3 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.3.1. The site is located within the boundary of Twycross Zoo and comprises land to the south of the Zoo, located partially in the area open to the public (specifically the lemur enclosure) and the private land to the south of this, which has been used as a compound for other aspects of the Zoo.
- 2.3.2. The wider Zoo site covers an area of 32ha and is located circa 0.8km to the south-west of Norton-Juxta-Twycross and circa 1.8km to the north-west of Twycross. The Zoo is currently accessed from Burton Road to the north.
- 2.3.3. The application site is circa 1.64ha in area, predominantly comprising existing animal enclosures, fields and open area with a small area of hardstanding accommodating vehicle parking and various small shed-like structures associated with the Zoo. There is a tree belt that runs east-west through the centre of the site, which forms part of the boundary for the existing lemur enclosure. This part of the site falls within the area of the Zoo's existing licence.
- 2.3.4. The site is bound to the north and east by land and buildings associated with the Zoo. To the south, the site is bound by a hedgerow, beyond which lies agricultural fields. To the west, the site is bound by Orton Hill, beyond which lies further agricultural fields and some associated agricultural buildings, sheds and other structures.

2.4 ALLOCATIONS AND DESIGNATIONS

- 2.4.1. The main Zoo site is allocated in the Local Plan 2006 to 2026 (NOR07) as the Zoo. The south / southwestern part of the site is identified in the current Local Plan (2006-2026) as being within the countryside. However, the whole of the site is encompassed within the expanded boundary of Twycross Zoo within the draft Local Plan (2020-2041) Regulation 19 document.

- 2.4.2. The site is located in Flood Zone 1, which has the lowest probability of flooding and is therefore the most suitable for development in this regard.
- 2.4.3. The site is in proximity of one heritage asset, which is the Orton House Farmhouse (Grade II listed) and is located 110m south-west of the site. However, there is little intervisibility between the heritage asset and the site owing to a buffer provided by vegetation and trees.

2.5 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.5.1. Twycross Zoo has an extensive planning history since opening in May 1963. Previously approved proposals to develop the Zoo include the construction of a number of new animal enclosures such as the erection of a Nyala stable (LPA ref: 18/01144/FUL), a tiger house (LPA ref: 17/01230/FUL) and a chimpanzee house (LPA ref: 16/00251/FUL).
- 2.5.2. Other approved proposals to redevelop the Zoo include the creation of a themed family adventure area (LPA ref: 21/00224/FUL), the erection of a discovery centre (LPA ref: 16/01122/FUL), the erection of an elevated timber walkway and timber shelter (LPA ref: 17/00082/FUL) and proposed toilet block and external ramp (LPA ref: 18/01024/FUL).

3 PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1.1. Twycross Zoo recognises that engagement is critical to ensure that the local community and key local stakeholders are aware of development proposals at the Zoo. As such, the Zoo has engaged with the local community, local members and planning officers.
- 3.1.2. The engagement process has been designed around best practice as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'), which advocates that frontloading engagement can result in more positive planning outcomes and better gains for local communities (per Paragraph 39) and Paragraph 41 notes that resolving matters early in the pre-application process can reduce delays latter on.

3.2 ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

- 3.2.1. A pre-application enquiry was submitted to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council in November 2022 (Ref: 22/10166/PREMAJ). This enquiry sought advice from the Council for the proposed NSCC.
- 3.2.2. The pre-application engagement comprised a written request for pre-application advice and was then supported by three pre-application meetings. The scheme was presented to officers during these meetings, and a range of matters were discussed including design, the principle of the development and the technical assessments that would be required to support an application.
- 3.2.3. The discussions were positive and productive, confirming that the principle of development was consistent with the development plan, and the project team was able to iteratively develop the design in collaboration with officers.

3.3 ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PUBLIC AND KEY STAKEHOLDER

- 3.3.1. As part of the engagement with the public and key stakeholders (such as local members) a letter was sent to relevant parties on 27 September 2023. The letter outlined the proposed development and requested that any feedback be shared.
- 3.3.2. Information was also posted on information boards at the Zoo, which can be found in Appendix B, and on the Zoo's website. This enabled the wider public to also be aware of the proposals.
- 3.3.3. A public consultation event to showcase and discuss the proposals also coincides with the finalisation and submission of the application, taking place on 11 October, allowing people to drop into the event and discuss the proposals with a member of the team.
- 3.3.4. At the time of submission, WSP are not aware of any feedback received as a result of the consultation letter, consultation board or the information on the Zoo's website.

4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1.1. The proposals involve the development of the NSCC and a new orangutan enclosure. The NSCC will be a higher education campus facility with educational, research and ancillary residential facilities.
- 4.1.2. The NSCC will be a purpose-built centre south of the main Zoo, offering researchers from around the world the opportunity to study orangutans, as well as over 100 endangered species in naturalistic environments, and supporting conservationists and scientists with a world class facility. This aspect of the development will comprise three main buildings, that will be connected. These buildings will comprise a new 216 seat lecture theatre, an education block comprising laboratories and classrooms, and an ancillary residential block and ancillary social space. In support of the residential block, there will also be six lodge units located to provide additional accommodation for researchers based at the Zoo on a longer basis.
- 4.1.3. The higher education facilities include research and breakout rooms, labs, classrooms and a lecture theatre and conference centre. In addition to the educational facilities, the campus building will provide en-suite bedrooms (including accessible provision) with shared social space and kitchen and utilities facilities to accommodate students and researchers visiting the centre. These facilities will all be contained within a two-storey building.
- 4.1.4. The teaching and research facilities contained within the campus will focus on conservation, animal welfare, biosciences, STEM activities and public engagement with science. The proposed higher education campus represents a major expansion of the Zoo's award-winning education programme which aims to increase visitors' awareness, knowledge and understanding of animals and their plight in the wild. In addition to serving higher education purposes, the facilities will also accommodate children on educational / school visits.
- 4.1.5. The NSCC building will also include area for a PV installation on the roof of the building. This will enable the development to meet Part L of the Building Regulations. An indicative area for this has been marked up on the roof plans.
- 4.1.6. The existing orangutan enclosure is currently located to the centre of the Zoo and is surrounded on all sides by other buildings and enclosures, limiting the opportunities for development around the site. To enable the NSCC to come forward, the enclosure needs to be located adjacent to a higher education campus to allow students and researches the optimum opportunity to study the animals directly. The enclosure will therefore be relocated to this new site so that the NSCC can come forward as a single cohesive development.
- 4.1.7. A new two-storey habitat and visitor centre will be built on the site and will accommodate two male, one female and a juvenile group of orangutans, as well as providing associated facilities for visitors and researchers.
- 4.1.8. In addition to the habitat building, there are several other enclosures (of a significantly smaller scale). These comprise:
 - The boardwalk;
 - Bird house and aviary;
 - Three additional animal habitats;
 - Outdoor classroom over an animal habitat, overlooking the Orangutans;

- 2 x outdoor classrooms/structures in the NSCC gardens;
- An Indonesian “village” made up of themed shelters and viewing huts; and
- A retail / VR structure on exiting the orangutan building.

- 4.1.9. These features are minor in nature and will be relocated from elsewhere on the Zoo. The details of these features have been provided in the DAS.
- 4.1.10. The buildings have been designed in a way to ensure that they are of a high architectural quality, while also providing a functional and high-quality environment for both animals and humans. The proposed development will respond positively to its surroundings, with the key buildings (NSCC and orangutan enclosure) taking cues (in the form of red brick) from the surrounding area.
- 4.1.11. The wider development on the site will ensure that there are nods to key themes of the ‘Indonesia’ area, however these details will be confirmed at a later date owing to sensitivities surrounding the confidential nature of the Zoo’s commercial operation. These are largely the features outlined in bullet points above.
- 4.1.12. The proposed development also includes a comprehensive landscaping scheme that will ensure that the development maintains the open and natural feel of the area and breaks up the built development through greenery.
- 4.1.13. Primary visitor access for the main Zoo will remain from Burton Road, whilst the existing site access to the southwest of the site from Orton Hill will be enhanced and used as a dedicated access for the NSCC. This will mean that the access and parking facilities will only be used by those visiting the site for the NSCC, which is likely to be outside the main visitor hours of the Zoo. Details of this can be found in the Transport Statement.

5 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1.1. This section sets out the legislative and policy background relevant to the proposed development. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations to be taken into account include the policies in the NPPF and the associated planning practice guidance ('PPG').
- 5.1.2. A full list of relevant planning policies is outlined at Appendix A of this document and a high-level summary of the development plan is set out below.

5.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.2.1. The NPPF was revised and published on 5 September 2023. Any applications made after this date are required to give material consideration to this version, even if the adopted Development Plan documents were adopted under a previous version of the NPPF.
- 5.2.2. The NPPF highlights that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which should be pursued in a positive way.

5.3 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 5.3.1. The Development Plan comprises the following documents:
- Core Strategy (2009); and
 - Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP) (2016) Development Plan Documents (DPDs).
- 5.3.2. The relevant planning policies are set out in Appendix A.
- 5.3.3. The draft Local Plan (2020-2041) undertook the Regulation 19 consultation in March 2022. The next stage of consultation is not expected imminently, with the Local Development Scheme (LDS) suggesting that the Regulation 19 consultation will take place in May 2024. The LDS suggests the draft Plan will be adopted in August 2025. While the draft Plan has not undergone examination, it has been consulted on, and as such is a material consideration and should be afforded some weight in the decision making process.

6 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1.1. This section addresses the key planning considerations relevant to the proposal. The planning case for the proposed development will be examined against planning policy and any other material considerations, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 6.1.2. The key considerations in the determination of this application are as follows:
- Principle of development;
 - Design;
 - Heritage;
 - Sustainability features;
 - Ecology;
 - Arboriculture;
 - Landscaping;
 - Flood risk and drainage strategy;
 - Transport; and
 - Ground conditions.

6.2 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.2.1. The site for the proposed development partially overlaps the existing Zoo and is located within the Zoo's existing licence. This is where the development associated with the animal habitation will be located and the principle of this is therefore entirely consistent with the existing use of the Zoo.
- 6.2.2. Further, while the southern portion of the site lies outside the existing boundary of the Zoo in the adopted Local Plan, it is entirely within the boundary of the Zoo in the draft Local Plan, per draft Policy CLT04. This shows that the Council (and planning policy) recognises the requirement for the Zoo to expand its conservation efforts and supports this.
- 6.2.3. The development is located in the countryside and therefore is required to comply with Policy DM4 of the SADMP, which seeks to protect the countryside from unsustainable development. This policy outlines that development will be considered sustainable where it significantly contributes to economic growth and job creation. For the reasoning set out below, the proposed development complies with this part of the policy and therefore is considered as sustainable development within the countryside.
- 6.2.4. The development has three component parts which can be broken down into the following categories:
- Animal enclosures and associated visitor/ research facilities; and
 - NSCC and ancillary classrooms, laboratories and residential accommodation.

NSCC AND ANIMAL ENCLOSURES

- 6.2.5. Adopted and draft local planning policy explicitly supports the role of the Zoo (in terms of both tourism, conservation and education) and its expansion. For example, Policies 12 and 23 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM24 of the SADMP outline that planning policy and decisions will support the role of the Zoo as a tourist destination and support the extension of the Zoo where it can be demonstrated that:

- It is of high quality design that fits in with the surroundings;
- Adds to the area's local distinctiveness;
- Complements the tourism themes of the area; and
- Adds to the economic wellbeing of the area.

- 6.2.6. This Planning Statement, and the supporting documents demonstrate that the proposed development is entirely consistent with the above requirements and therefore the principle of development is consistent with the aims and aspirations of both the adopted and draft Local Plan.
- 6.2.7. Policy CLT04 of the draft Local Plan outlines that within the Twycross Zoo Special Policy Area, proposals for developments directly related to the Zoo as a visitor and tourist facility and proportionate facilities related to life sciences and animal conservation, research and education will be supported. The proposed development falls within the Twycross Zoo Site Boundary outlined in Policy CLT04. The development is consistent with these aims as NSCC and animal enclosures proposed in this development are therefore consistent with the above aspects.
- 6.2.8. The proposals will bolster the education and employment offer at the Zoo. The Centre will support cutting-edge research and education at the Zoo and help to retain and generate new jobs for local people. The proposals will therefore enable the Zoo to invest, improve and adapt, in turn supporting economic growth, safeguarding local jobs and contributing positively to the local economy, demonstrating further consistency with the adopted policy.
- 6.2.9. The principle of the use of the site for purposes ancillary to the Zoo has previously been accepted as demonstrated by the planning history outlined in this Planning Statement.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 6.2.10. Further to the above, Paragraph 8 of the NPPF outlines that all development should be sustainable economically, socially and environmentally in order to be considered sustainable development. The principle of this development is inherently sustainable (per the NPPF definition), as outlined below.

Environmental

- 6.2.11. The proposed development will be environmentally sustainable as there will be a net gain in biodiversity resulting from the proposals when compensated offsite. The development will take all available opportunities to enhance the ecology and biodiversity of the site, making efforts to retain trees wherever possible and to protect and enhance wildlife.
- 6.2.12. Further the principle of the development, which has conservation and science at its heart is fundamentally environmentally sustainable. The conservation and research associated with the scheme will ensure that these endangered animals will be protected and that their habitats (while at the Zoo will be enhanced).
- 6.2.13. In addition to the above, the development will aspire to have roof-mounted PV panels on the NSCC development. This will enable the development to produce its own renewable energy and will help the development meet Part L of the Building Regulations.
- 6.2.14. The enhancement of the habitats for animals is central to the Zoo's aims as a conservation body. The development will ensure that the animals have the highest quality habitats available, and their quality of life is enhanced through this development. This therefore demonstrates that the scheme is committed to persevering the natural environment and enhancing the environment for those animals at the Zoo, ensuring they are provided suitable environments.

Social

- 6.2.15. The NSCC aspect of the scheme will provide significant social benefits and represents sustainable social development. The scheme will facilitate significant further research regarding the animals at the Zoo, and further conservation efforts through enhanced understanding.
- 6.2.16. The development therefore represents a significant investment in the Zoo's research capabilities and the education sector, with researchers from prestigious institutions using the facilities to further understanding and conservation efforts. This will also assist funding opportunities for the education sector, and therefore have positive implications for jobs in this sector.
- 6.2.17. Further the facilities will be used by schools to further student's knowledge and will provide a key opportunity for school children to understand more about conservation and the animals at the Zoo, in a better capacity than if they were a tourist.
- 6.2.18. The development will enable the current generation of academics to further their understanding of the species at the Zoo, and provide educational opportunities for schoolchildren who, through the opportunities associated with the NSCC could become the next generation of researchers.

Economic

- 6.2.19. The Zoo is a charity and therefore needs to maximise all possible revenue streams to ensure that it can continue its mission of sustainability and conservation. As a result of the proposals, the Zoo will be able to drive further investment, improve and adapt the facilities at the Zoo, including future habitats.
- 6.2.20. In addition to the above, with increased revenue streams and further investment in conservation, research and the academic sector, there is also a clear economic benefit in terms of job creation in these sectors, with the scheme driving forward opportunities for further external funding streams for research. In total, the proposed development will create 44 permanent jobs.

6.3 DESIGN

- 6.3.1. The Animal Habitat and Visitor centre will be located to the north of the site, with the orangutan enclosure located to the east, west and south of this building. The education campus building, and the residential building will be located to the south-east, with lodges along the bottom half of the eastern boundary.
- 6.3.2. The buildings will comprise red brick walls and the roofs will comprise a mixture of red tiles, green roof.
- 6.3.3. The external materials used within the proposed development will complement the surrounding architecture, taking inspiration from the local surroundings. Seating will be provided, comprising a steel base and hardwood timber slats, which will encourage socialisation outside the buildings. The hard landscape surface materials comprise a porous bound gravel surface (as part of a wider SuDS strategy). The surface materials of textured dry-stone walls ensure cohesiveness with the local landscape, and along with the quality paving, furniture and rough textured retaining walls, provide a tactile experience.
- 6.3.4. Therefore, the proposals are in compliance with Policy DM10 of the SADMP, which outlines that development will be permitted when it complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area, with building materials respecting existing buildings in the local area.

- 6.3.5. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF outlines that developments should be sympathetic to the local area whilst being visually attractive and functioning well within the overall quality of the area. As demonstrated throughout this planning statement and the DAS, the proposals are compliant with Policy PMD01, which highlights that the highest standards of design, architecture, inclusivity and placemaking are required for proposed developments.
- 6.3.6. Policies 12 and 23 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM24 of the SADMP outline that planning policy and decisions will support the role of the Zoo as a tourist destination and support the extension of the Zoo where it can be demonstrated that:
- It is of high quality design that fits in with the surroundings; and
 - Adds to the area's local distinctiveness.

6.4 HERITAGE

- 6.4.1. The site is located 110m north-east from Orton House Farmhouse (Grade II listed). While the proposed development is in proximity to the heritage asset, there is little intervisibility between the proposed development and the asset. As such, there will be no impact on the heritage asset or its setting. This assessment (per the requirements of Paragraph 194 of the NPPF) is expanded on in the *Heritage Considerations* section of this statement.
- 6.4.2. The proposed development complies with Policy DM12 of the SADMP, which sets out that proposed developments should secure the continued protection or enhancement of any affected heritage assets and their setting, as well as contributing to the distinctiveness of the area and wider borough.
- 6.4.3. The proposals also comply with Policy HE01 of the draft Local Plan, which outlines that the historic environment should be conserved, enhanced and sensitively managed, and Paragraph 197 of the NPPF, which highlights the desirability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets.
- 6.4.4. As outlined above, and in the *Heritage Considerations* section of this statement there is no intervisibility between the asset and the proposed development and as such any impact is minimal, meaning the development is consistent with both the NPPF and adopted / draft local planning policy.

6.5 SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

- 6.5.1. As outlined earlier in this statement, the proposed development is inherently sustainable development owing to the aims and ambitions of the Zoo (regarding conservation and education) and the fact that it will be powered by a PV installation included within the proposal.
- 6.5.2. As an assessment regarding sustainable development has been made elsewhere in this statement, this section will focus on the approach to renewable energy and the sustainable infrastructure (such as the PV installation) incorporated into the scheme.
- 6.5.3. As outlined in the Energy Statement, the scheme will aspire to have PV panels on the roof the NSCC building, which will enable the development to generate its own renewable energy. This will reduce the Zoo's reliance on fossil fuels and cut the carbon emissions associated with the operation. This will therefore be a central part of the Zoo's strategy for moving towards a more sustainable future.
- 6.5.4. Owing to the details outlined above, the proposals are in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF and Policy DM1 of the SADMP, which outline that planning applications should be considered

in terms of achieving sustainable development, including economic, social and environmental development.

- 6.5.5. Further the proposed development also complies with Policy CC01 of the draft Local Plan, which outlines that proposals should support the borough becoming carbon neutral and minimise carbon emissions, maximise carbon storage and mitigate and minimise the impacts of climate change.

6.6 ECOLOGY

- 6.6.1. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been prepared by Middlemarch, which outlines that material ecological considerations include the River Mease SAC / SSSI, habitats (ditch, hedgerows, trees, woodland and pond) and a number of species (amphibians, badgers, bats, birds, other mammals).
- 6.6.2. The PEA confirms that through effective mitigation, any impact on ecology / biodiversity can be mitigated, and the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment confirms that there will be no net loss as a result of the development.

PHOSPHATES

- 6.6.3. The PEA recommends that further consideration is given to whether Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) will need to be undertaken to determine whether the proposals would have a significant effect on the River Mease SAC. This recommendation is as the drainage strategy for the site had not been produced at the time of writing, and the site is located adjacent to (but not in) the River Mease SAC catchment area.
- 6.6.4. As outlined in the Drainage Strategy, while the site is located on the edge of the catchment, surface water will drain away from the catchment towards the south owing to the site's topography. Therefore, there are no issues associated with phosphate infiltration associated with surface water drainage.
- 6.6.5. Further, the impact of foul drainage has been considered. Per the Drainage Strategy, there are no public or private sewers that can be used by the development and as such, the proposed development will be required to use septic tanks to dispose of foul waste. As such the waste can be controlled and prevented from entering the catchment of the SAC.
- 6.6.6. Based on the above, it can be demonstrated that phosphates can be prevented from entering the catchment (and therefore be prevented from impacting on ecological value) through the drainage strategy. As such, the need for a HRA can be scoped out.

BATS

- 6.6.7. Following the recommendations of the PEA, a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment has been undertaken and a report has been prepared by Middlemarch. This explains that a building and a tree on site were assessed as having high potential to support roosting bats, whilst another building and tree had a low potential to support roosting bats. The remaining buildings and trees had negligible potential to support roosting bats.
- 6.6.8. The assessment also outlined that the habitats on site (particularly the woodlands, trees, scrub, hedgerows, ponds and grasslands) offer a high value foraging habitat for bats.
- 6.6.9. Owing to this it is recognised that the proposed demolition works have the potential to disturb a bat roost if they are found present. However, the proposed tree removal works should not impact the trees possessing bat roosting potential (as they will be retained), although the construction works

could cause disturbance. New lighting also has the potential to impact foraging and commuting bats.

6.6.10. In order to mitigate the above, the following measures will be implemented:

- Further surveys will be carried out for structures with bat roosting potential (including the Lemur House and the ivy-covered shed);
- Tree T21 has high potential to support roosting bats and will be retained, however, further surveys will be carried out if the tree will be affected in any way;
- Proposed lighting is carefully designed to minimise potential disturbance and fragmentation;
- The proposed design minimises effects on bats, through avoidance of loss of features with bat potential, mitigation measures and compensation where necessary; and
- The development will enhance the site for bats through the provision of bat boxes.

6.6.11. Further studies will be undertaken to investigate the presence of bats in the areas where there is potential for their presence and the design of the proposals will minimise effects on bats.

GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

6.6.12. Two records of Great Crested Newts exist within 1km of the site and the PEA recommended that a Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment and Survey should be undertaken for all ponds within 500m of the site.

6.6.13. Following the production of the PEA, Middlemarch undertook a Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment and outlined that the proposals will impact suitable terrestrial habitats in proximity to a potential Great Crested Newt breeding pond and further surveys will be required to determine whether they are likely to be present on site.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)

6.6.14. The proposed development will ensure there is a BNG of at least 1% resulting from the development in line with Policy DM6 of the SADMP and Paragraph 174 of the NPPF. The Biodiversity Metric Assessment (BMA) prepared by Middlemarch outlines that the proposed development will result in a net loss of 6.43 BU (habitats), 2.45 BU (hedgerows) and 0.96 BU (rivers and streams). The BMA outlines that there are limited opportunities to provide further habitat creation/enhancement within the red line boundary and offsite compensation will instead be required.

6.6.15. Draft Policy NAT08 of the draft Local Plan requires developments to demonstrate a 10% BNG. However, the pre-application advice received confirmed that 10% BNG will not be required for this development given that the draft Local Plan is yet to be adopted, and the secondary legislation of the Environment Act (2021) is yet to come into force.

6.6.16. Therefore, having regard of the above, the scheme will be policy compliant with regards to BNG and the proposals will be able to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity if compensated offsite.

SUMMARY

6.6.17. Therefore, the proposals are in compliance with Policy DM6 of SADMP and Policy NAT08, which sets out that development proposals must demonstrate how they conserve and enhance features of nature conservation and outline measures to deliver biodiversity net gain. The proposals are also in accordance with Paragraph 174 of the NPPF, which outlines that proposals should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, whilst providing biodiversity net gains.

- 6.6.18. The above policy is complied with through the ecological protection and mitigation measures that will be in place for the development, which include preventing phosphates from entering the catchment (and therefore preventing them from impacting on ecological value) through the drainage strategy. Also, there will be no net loss of BNG and mitigation measures will be in place to prevent harm to wildlife.

6.7 ARBORICULTURE

- 6.7.1. The proposed scheme seeks to retain as many trees as possible and provides replacement trees to mitigate the loss of trees where possible. Please refer to the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- 6.7.2. The proposals are compliant with Paragraph 131 of the NPPF, which outlines the importance of trees to developments and seeks the retention of existing trees and provision of new trees where possible. The proposed development is also in accordance with Policy NAT03 of the draft Local Plan, which explains that development proposals will be supported which provide tree planting on site and seeks the retention of existing trees unless their removal can be justified.

6.8 LANDSCAPING

- 6.8.1. The landscaping measures include the provision of trees, hedges, ornamental planting, meadow mix wild flowers, amenity grass, as well as bird and bat boxes and log piles.
- 6.8.2. The proposed development is in line with Policy DM4 of the SADMP, which seeks to safeguard the countryside and states that to protect landscape character, the countryside must be safeguarded from unsustainable development. Development will be considered sustainable where it does not have a significant adverse impact on the value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside. The proposals are also in compliance with Policy DM10 of the SADMP, which outline that development should incorporate a high standard of landscaping which adds to the quality of the design and siting. The development also complies with Paragraph of the NPPF, which sets out that developments should be visually attractive as a result of effective landscaping, whilst also being sympathetic to local character, including the landscape setting.
- 6.8.3. The proposals are also in line with Policy PMD01 of the draft Local Plan, which outlines that development should provide an appropriate level of well-designed and well-located high quality landscaping.

6.9 FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE STRATEGY

FLOOD RISK

- 6.9.1. The site is located in Flood Zone 1, which has the lowest probability of flooding and is therefore the most suitable for development in this regard. As such, a sequential test is not required.
- 6.9.2. However, owing to the size of the development, a Flood Risk Assessment has been produced and supports this application. This confirms that there is little risk of surface water flooding and that an (minor) risk can be mitigated through the implementation of a drainage strategy (details outlined below).

DRAINAGE STRATEGY

- 6.9.3. As outlined in the Drainage Strategy, while the site is located on the edge of the catchment, surface water will drain away from the catchment towards the south owing to the site's topography. Therefore, there are no issues associated with phosphate infiltration associated with surface water drainage.
- 6.9.4. Further, the impact of foul drainage has been considered. Per the Drainage Strategy, there are no public or private sewers that can be used by the development and as such, the proposed development will be required to use septic tanks to dispose of foul waste. As such the waste can be controlled and prevented from entering the catchment of the SAC.

SUMMARY

- 6.9.5. The proposed development complies with Policy DM7 of the SADMP, which outlines that proposed developments should avoid adverse impacts from pollution and flooding. This is also in compliance with Paragraph 159 of the NPPF, which explains that development should be directed away from areas at risk of flooding.
- 6.9.6. The proposals are also in compliance with Policy CC02 of the draft Local Plan, which outlines that proposed developments requiring a Flood Risk Assessment should address the actual and residual risk from all forms of flooding and the impact of climate change.
- 6.9.7. In terms of drainage, the proposals comply with Policy DM10 of the SADMP which sets out that an appropriate drainage strategy should be submitted alongside a planning application, which incorporates sustainable drainage methods such as permeable paving, swales, ponds and wildlife areas. The proposed development is also in accordance with Policy CC01, which outlines that proposals should demonstrate that flood risk has been mitigated through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems where appropriate, and Policy CC03, which sets out that development proposals should integrate well-designed and naturalised Sustainable Drainage Systems to manage flood risk and water quality.

6.10 TRANSPORT

- 6.10.1. The development of the NSCC is not expected to substantially increase visitor numbers (and therefore traffic movements) to the site at peak hours. The NSCC will be used throughout the week for educational and research purposes.
- 6.10.2. The proposed development is also in compliance with Paragraph 104 of the NPPF, which outlines that transport issues should be considered from early stages, including the potential impacts on transport networks. This has been assessed and considered from the outset.

PROPOSED ACCESS

- 6.10.3. The development includes a new access from Orton Hill (up graded from the existing gate access used for servicing). This has been tracked to ensure that it can meet the requirements for larger vehicles (i.e. fire engines) and is safe from a visibility perspective. This is confirmed in the Transport Statement that accompanies this submission.

CAR PARK

- 6.10.4. In order to meet the needs of the development, the proposal includes a car park that will provide 45 spaces. This car park will only be in use for those using the NSCC facility. Visitors to the zoo will use the main access and car parks off Burton Road.
- 6.10.5. The car park is consistent with Policy DM10 of the SADMP as it provides EV charging spaces and meets the requirements for car parking spaces established in Policy DM18 of the SADMP.

TRANSPORT IMPACT AND TRIP GENERATION

- 6.10.6. As a result of the development, a material increase in trip generation is not expected. This is as the only trip generation will be associated with the NSCC building, not an increase in tourists/ visitors to the Zoo.
- 6.10.7. The expected highest number of vehicles arriving at the site in any one hour is 10, around one every six minutes on average. It is considered that this level of demand can be readily accommodated on Orton Hill and at the site access. Given the low level of traffic generation and the level of control that the Zoo has in arranging access for visitors, it is considered that the development would not have any significant impacts on highway safety, in line with Policy DM17 of the SADMP.

TRAVEL PLAN

- 6.10.8. The Zoo recognises that there is a significant need to encourage sustainable travel choices, however owing to the location of the site, it is not easily accessible by walking or public transport.
- 6.10.9. However, the development of the NSCC will have its own parking/ access, as such it is recognised that this will need to be managed in order to promote sustainability and manage transport patterns. As such, the Zoo would be happy to accept a condition that requires a Travel Plan for the NSCC facilities to be produced ahead of first use of the NSCC.
- 6.10.10. We would welcome further dialogue with the Local Highways Authority on this matter and will engage with them to develop the scope of the Travel Plan.

SUMMARY

- 6.10.11. As outlined throughout this statement and within the supporting technical information, the proposals are in accordance with both national and local policy (emerging and adopted). Policy DM17 of the SADMP and Draft Policy HT01 of the draft Local Plan set out that proposals demonstrate there is no adverse impact on highway safety, ensure the development is located in the best place with regards to transport and to demonstrate that the residual cumulative impacts on the transport network are not severe. This is confirmed and demonstrated in the technical transport document that accompanies the submission.

6.11 GROUND CONDITIONS

- 6.11.1. A Preliminary Risk Assessment has been prepared by Clancy Consulting, which outlines there is an absence of potentially contaminative land uses in the vicinity of the site. Therefore, the potential for elevated concentrations of contaminants of concern to be present in soils beneath the site is not considered to be significant. The Assessment outlines that significant sources of ground gas are not anticipated beneath the site but will be monitored and assessment if discovered during intrusive works.

- 6.11.2. As the report confirms that ground contamination is not a material issue for the site, the proposed development is compliance with Policy NAT12 of the draft Local Plan, which sets out the proposed developments should protect land from contamination. The proposals are also in line with Paragraph 183 of the NPPF, which outlines that proposed development should be on a suitable site for its proposed use, taking into account any risks from contamination.

6.12 SUMMARY AND BENEFITS

- 6.12.1. Overall, the proposals represent a sustainable development which is in accordance with local and national policy. There will be significant social, economic and environmental benefits resulting from the development. The principal benefits of the scheme will be through the development of the NSCC will provide significant opportunities for research that will drive future conservation efforts and increase understanding of the animals present at the Zoo. As per the ethos of the zoo, the aim will also be to benefit the animals, providing new, modern, high-quality habitats, to increase the animals' physical and mental activity levels, and encourage natural behaviours.
- 6.12.2. Outside of the direct benefits of the scheme, the development will provide the Zoo with a significant opportunity to increase its funding associated with research and provides an opportunity for the creation of jobs through this, and during the construction phase.
- 6.12.3. The scheme also includes a comprehensive landscaping scheme that will enhance the quality of the environment for visitors and provide a net gain in biodiversity.
- 6.12.4. The proposed development is of high quality design which fits in with the local surroundings and adds to the local distinctiveness. It will also complement the existing tourism attractions within the Zoo, ensuring a cohesive addition to the overall site. The creation of the previously mentioned jobs will add to the economic wellbeing of the area, offering the local people valuable job opportunities.
- 6.12.5. Policy CLT04 of the draft Local Plan outlines that within the Twycross Zoo Special Policy Area, proposals for developments directly related to the Zoo as a visitor and tourist facility and proportionate facilities related to life sciences and animal conservation, research and education will be supported.
- 6.12.6. The proposed development falls within the Twycross Zoo Site Boundary outlined in Policy CLT04. The development is consistent with these aims and the NSCC and animal enclosures proposed in this development are therefore consistent with the above aspects.
- 6.12.7. The proposals will bolster the education and employment offer at the Zoo. The Centre will support cutting-edge research and education at the Zoo and help to retain and generate new jobs for local people. The proposals will therefore enable the Zoo to invest, improve and adapt, in turn supporting economic growth, safeguarding local jobs and contributing positively to the local economy, demonstrating further consistency with the adopted policy.

7 HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

- 7.1.1. The application site does not contain any heritage assets but is located 110m north-east from the Grade II listed Orton House Farmhouse. Therefore, it has the potential to be impacted by the development proposals.
- 7.1.2. This section has been prepared in the context of the national planning policy requirement for the impact of proposed works affecting heritage assets to be assessed, specifically Paragraph 194 of the NPPF, which outlines that development proposals must describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

7.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF ORTON HOUSE FARMHOUSE

Description

- 7.2.1. Orton House Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building of late eighteenth-century origin. The three-storey farmhouse is built in a T-shape with red brick and has a slate roof with brick end stacks. There are storey bands and dentilled eaves, with reduced proportions to the second floor. The building has a regular five-window front, with the centre bay being slightly narrower. There is a glazing bar sash to the first-floor centre and nineteenth-century casements with eighteenth-century openings with gauged brick heads that are slightly arched. There are two stone steps up to the central five-panel door with raised panels, which has a pilastered and pedimented door case and a fanlight with webbed radiating glazing bars.

7.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THE SITE TO SIGNIFICANCE OF ORTON HOUSE FARMHOUSE

- 7.3.1. The site does not currently offer any contribution to the significance of Orton House Farmhouse due to the lack of intervisibility resulting from the substantial screening provided by vegetation and trees in between the site and the heritage asset.

7.4 POTENTIAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

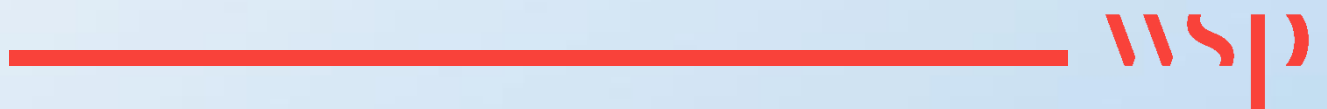
- 7.4.1. While the proposed development is in relatively close proximity to Orton House Farmhouse, there will be no intervisibility between the proposed development and the heritage asset as a result of the existing screening. The listed farmhouse will maintain its existing open agricultural grounds, and the expansion of the existing built form of the zoo southwards will have no impact upon the significance of the heritage asset. On this basis, there will be no harm arising from the proposed development to the significance of Orton House Farmhouse.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by WSP, on behalf of Twycross Zoo – East Midland Zoological Society Limited, to support an application for a National Science and Conservation Centre.
- 8.1.2. This planning application seeks planning permission for:
- “Development of new animal enclosures and associated infrastructure, new lecture theatre, education block, education facilities and associated residential block and lodges, new access from Orton Hill, new car park, landscaping and all other associated works.”*
- 8.1.3. As demonstrated in this Planning and Heritage Statement, the development will be holistically sustainable (in the context of Paragraph 11 of the NPPF) and entirely consistent with both national and local planning policy, particularly the provisions of the adopted and emerging allocation on the site.
- 8.1.4. The proposed development represents a high quality, sustainable development that would provide significant benefits, which include:
- Opportunities for further research into the animals and the enhancement of the Zoo’s conservation efforts;
 - Enhanced habitats and environments for the animals;
 - High-quality design of architectural merit for both the habitats and NSCC buildings;
 - Opportunities for additional funding streams associated with research;
 - Creation of 44 permanent jobs in addition to jobs in the construction phase;
 - Enhanced facilities at the Zoo;
 - Increased education opportunities for school children; and
 - Enhanced landscaping scheme.

APPENDIX A

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT



APPENDIX A – PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

8.1.5. The following areas of the NPPF are relevant to this proposal:

- Paragraph 11 – Sustainable Development;
- Paragraph 84 – Economy;
- Paragraph 104 – Transport;
- Paragraphs 126, 130, 131 – Design;
- Paragraph 154 – Planning for Climate Change;
- Paragraph 159 – Flooding;
- Paragraph 174 – Natural Environment;
- Paragraph 180 – Biodiversity; and
- Paragraph 197 – Heritage.

Core Strategy

8.1.6. The following areas of the adopted Core Strategy are relevant to this proposal:

- Policy 12: Rural Villages; and
- Policy 23: Tourism Development.

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD

8.1.7. The following areas of the adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD are relevant to this proposal:

- Policy DM1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- Policy DM4: Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation;
- Policy DM6: Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest;
- Policy DM7: Preventing Pollution and Flooding;
- Policy DM10: Development and Design;
- Policy DM11: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment;
- Policy DM12: Heritage Assets;
- Policy DM17: Highways and Transportation;
- Policy DM18: Vehicle Parking Standards;
- Policy DM24: Cultural and Tourism Facilities.

Draft local plan 2020-2041

8.1.8. The following areas of the draft Local Plan are relevant to this proposal:

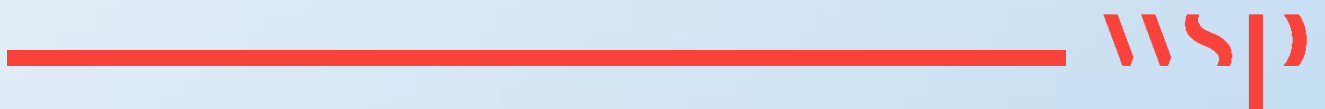
- Policy SS01 – Sustainable Development;
- Policy CC01 – Mitigating and Adapting to Climate change;
- Policy CC02 – Flood Risk;
- Policy CC04 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy;
- Policy CC05 – Sustainable Design and Construction Measures;
- Policy PMD01 – High Quality Design;
- Policy CLT03 – Cultural and Tourism Facilities;
- Policy CLT04 – Twycross Zoo;
- Policy HE01 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment;



- Policy HE02 – Heritage Assets;
- Policy NAT03 – Trees, Hedgerows, Woodlands and Development;
- Policy NAT08 – Enhancing Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity; and
- Policy HT01 – Highways and Transportation.

APPENDIX B

CONSULTATION BOARD



Twycross Zoo

INTRODUCING THE NEW
NATIONAL SCIENCE & CONSERVATION CENTRE
PLUS NEW
HABITATS AND FACILITIES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

To showcase and discuss our proposed exciting National Science & Conservation Center development.
A government levelling up project in conjunction with
Hickley and Basworth Borough Council.

WEDNESDAY 11TH OCTOBER
5.30PM TO 8.00PM

In the "Windows in the Wild" room
Main Entrance Building, Twycross Zoo.

No pre booking needed. Please just drop in and
speak to a member of the team.

tz
Twycross Zoo
IN THE HEART OF CONSERVATION



This cutting-edge research facility and complementary orangutan habitat will focus on enhancing our understanding of the natural world and developing world-leading strategies to protect and encourage the amazing animals we share our planet with.

Planning Application
October 2023

Please contact
marion.dytham@twycrosszoo.org
for more information

Planned Completion
October 2025





Level 2
100 Wharfside Street
Birmingham
B1 1RT

wsp.com

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