

Area West Committee – 20th March 2013

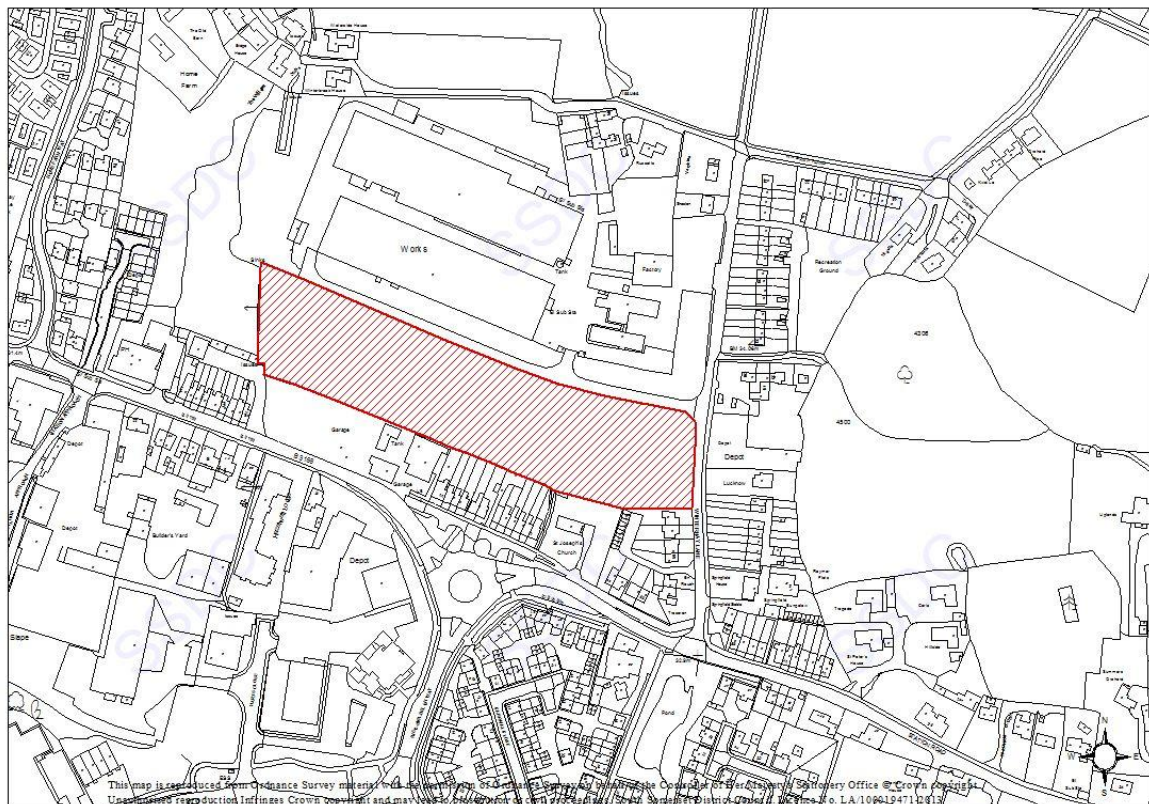
Officer Report on Planning Application: 12/03979/OUT

Proposal:	The erection of a mix of two, three and four bedroom dwellings and new access (Outline). (GR 335206/115028)
Site Address:	Former Factory Winterhay Lane Ilminster
Parish:	Ilminster
ILMINSTER TOWN Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr C Goodall Cllr K T Turner
Recommending Case Officer:	Andrew Gunn Tel: (01935) 462192 Email: andrew.gunn@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date:	30th January 2013
Applicant:	Powrmatic Ltd
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mr Stuart Rackham First Floor South Wing Equinox North Great Park Road, Almondsbury Bristol BS32 4QL
Application Type:	Major Dwlg's 10 or more or site 0.5ha+

REASON(S) FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application is brought to committee in order for the committee members to fully consider the planning issues, in particular loss of employment land and relationship with adjacent commercial occupiers.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



The site, formerly occupied by Powrmatic Ltd, is located on the western side of Ilminster, to the west of Winterhay Lane. It occupies an area of 1.74ha. Adjacent to the site are a range of both commercial and residential properties. Daido and an access road is located to the north with residential properties to the east, a mix of commercial and residential properties to the south, and vacant commercial land to the west. The site is flat with the majority of the site covered in hardstanding (remains of the previous commercial use). The eastern section of the site is currently a grassed area.

The northern boundary of the site is currently defined largely by a 1 metre high rubble bank along with a few trees, with a hedgerow at the eastern end enclosing the grassed area. The southern boundary contains a mix of fencing, hedgerows and a limited number of trees, whilst a row of Leylandii trees run along the western boundary. A hedge runs along the eastern boundary fronting onto Winterhay Lane.

This is an outline application seeking consent for 77 dwellings, comprising a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bed units. 35% of the dwellings will be affordable, which equates to 27 dwellings. Vehicular access will be gained via 4 separate points along the northern part of the site directly from the existing access road that serves Daido. This access road also previously served Powrmatic Ltd until they vacated the site a few years ago and moved to the western edge of Ilminster. This access road is accessed via Winterhay Lane to the west of the site, which in turn is accessed from Station Road, one of the key routes into and out of Ilminster. An emergency access is also proposed directly from Winterhay Lane at the western end of the site along with a proposal to widen the access road at the junction of Winterhay Lane and the access road.

The application has been supported by a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, Environmental Site Assessment, Statement of Community Involvement, a Habitat Survey, Flood Risk Assessment, Marketing report, a Noise Impact Assessment and a Transport Assessment.

PLANNING HISTORY

12/00357/EIASS - Proposed Residential Development - EIA Screening and Scoping request. (No EIA required).

No relevant planning applications applicable to this site.

The former factory on this site closed in 2007 and Powermatic relocated to Hort Bridge, Ilminster.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Relevant Development Plan Documents

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan (adopted April 2000)

STR1 – Sustainable Development

Policy 35 – Affordable housing

Policy 49 – Transport Requirements of new development

South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006)
 ST5 – General Principles of Development
 ST6 – Quality of Development
 ST10 – Planning obligations.
 TP1 – New Development and pedestrian provision.
 TP7 – Residential parking provision.
 ME6 – Retention of Employment land and premises
 EP1 – Pollution and Noise.
 HG6 – Affordable housing

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):
 Introduction: Achieving Sustainable Development: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

Chapter 1 – Building a strong competitive economy
 Chapter 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
 Chapter 7 – Requiring good design

CONSULTATIONS

Ilminster Town Council:

Recommend approval subject to the following conditions:

1. Confirmation from Highways Department as to whether or not a mini-roundabout is required at the junction with Station Road.
2. The findings of the business survey which is currently being undertaken need to be taken into account particularly any comments about land available for general business use.
3. Computer modelling to see traffic flow based on more than one survey session.
4. Impact on First and Middle Schools capacity.
5. Noise - More information required about the impact of noise from adjacent businesses (including the garage workshop) upon the proposed dwellings.

Highway Authority:

Principle

The site lies in an area where there is residential use and employment use. The site is poorly located for the services and amenities of Ilminster such as the shops and the schools but is well situated for employment. It is a brownfield site and within development limits and it must be a decision for Local Planning Authority to decide on the principle of this development in this location.

Transport Assessment

There are some difficulties with the Transport Assessment but these are relatively minor in relation to the traffic impact. The assumptions made about trip generation and trip distribution are questionable but the likely implications are minimal. Similarly the traffic impacts have been calculated for the year of application and five years on rather than the year of opening and 5 years from then. With all these observations, the impact on the network from correcting these small discrepancies would be minimal and would not affect the conclusions.

Parking

There are more difficult issues relating to the parking on site. This outline application seeks to deal with access and layout at this stage but only an indicative layout has been supplied. The parking level offered is based on the car ownership levels for the whole of Ilminster which are lower than is typical for zone B from the Parking Strategy.

Rather than having broad brush solutions, the Highway Authority has developed its parking strategy based on house sizes and the census data for the types of houses proposed. This logic leads to a parking level some 40 spaces greater than is proposed given the mix of housing proposed. By including mainly family sized dwellings of 3 or more bedrooms, the likelihood of 2 car families is high from the census data collected in that postcode and the parking strategy level of 187 spaces is considered more appropriate.

In addition, the mix of allocated and unallocated spaces should be considered. Unallocated spaces are more efficient since they are more likely to be occupied for more of the time, by visitors and delivery vehicles for instance, and this can be effective in reducing the amount of parking required. Consideration should be given to the mix of allocated and unallocated spaces in the development. At least one allocated space per dwelling is better than none, however.

Parking space sizes also need to be addressed. Spaces fronting the highway should be 5 metres to prevent vehicles overhanging the highway. Spaces which are obstructed by a wall or fence at the rear for example, should be 5.5 metres long since cars don't drive in until they hit the obstacle but stop short. Spaces fronting garages should be 6 metres to allow room for the operation of the garage door.

It may be possible to achieve the necessary changes to the parking provision and layout without significant changes to the layout. If this is the case, the Highway Authority suggests a condition to promote a parking strategy to ensure that, prior to commencement on site, the level and type of parking proposed is appropriate to serve the development.

Travel Plan

The submitted Travel Plan has not been developed in association with the Transport Assessment. There should be correlation between the forecast trip rates and the targets within the Travel Plan. By starting with incomplete site audits, the Travel Plan does not examine the sustainable links and how future residents will use them. The ease of use is particularly relevant to the likely success of the Travel Plan in meeting its targets.

There is no method of testing the achievement of targets if there is no robust monitoring strategy for the development. Annual audits for 5 years will have to be carried out and the results should be entered on to the SCC website (iOnTRAVEL) within 2 months of the survey so that SCC can assess the results.

The targets in the Travel Plan should be based on census data for Ilminster which can be obtained from ONS. These values can then be used as a baseline from which reductions resulting from the Travel Plan measures can be estimated. These targets should be realistic, be presented for 5 years and should be linked to the monitoring regime.

There is mention of the use of ATCs in the monitoring section but not where they might be and how the data will be gathered. The monitoring commitment should extend to 5

years after 80 percent occupation of the development.

The use of car parking spaces for low carbon vehicles and car sharing is a valuable measure for encouraging low carbon travel. The inclusion of electrical car charging points is also essential. Cycle parking for all dwellings is also required and the cycle parking must be capable of being used by when all the parking spaces are occupied.

The Travel Plan should be secured by a Section 106 agreement. Financial contributions such as the Travel Plan Fee will have to be paid and these payments cannot be secured by condition. If the necessary changes are made to the Travel Plan, it can be appended to the Section 106 agreement with the main provisions detailed in the agreement. If the Travel Plan has not been agreed, the Travel Plan schedule in the agreement will have to contain all the relevant detail setting out what the Travel Plan will contain and a timetable for completing it.

Potential Section 278 Works

There are problems with making changes to the adopted concrete road. The proposal will look to widen this road in places but it is not acceptable to have a longitudinal tie-in between new tarmac and existing concrete. The affected sections of concrete will have to be removed and reconstructed in sympathy with the widened sections and this includes where footways are proposed alongside the carriageway.

The existing section of road is long and straight and could encourage speeds in excess of 20 mph which is what we would seek in a residential area. Some traffic calming would be appropriate in this area.

It is not unusual at the moment for cars to park on the access road and it may be necessary for parking restrictions to be introduced by way of an appropriate Traffic Regulation Order.

There are no crossing points proposed where the estate roads meet the existing access road. There is a requirement for crossing facilities at each of these junctions or alternatively the junctions could become footway crossovers with continuous footway along the access road. This detail will need to be agreed during the technical approval stage.

Estate Roads

Some of the proposed turning areas appear to be sub-standard. We would expect all turning heads to enable an 11.8 metre, 4 axle refuse truck to turn and some appear to be tight. Swept path analysis will confirm whether this can be achieved.

There is no need for visibility splays of 2.4 by 43 metres if the necessary traffic calming measures are implemented. 2.4 by 33 metres would be appropriate for 20 mph and this is the designed speed standard that we would expect. There should be no obstruction greater than 300 millimetres forward of the splays and these areas should be available for adoption.

The transition from street with footway to shared surface needs to be addressed. There needs to be a change of colour and a barrier feature such as flush kerbs to alert drivers to the changed condition and there needs to be an obvious transition for pedestrians. There are instances in the current layout where the footway ends abruptly at a car parking space giving a disjointed transition for pedestrians.

The emergency access on to Winterhay Lane from street 1 is acceptable in principle but it is not acceptable to have the pedestrian route with parking spaces served from it as well. Ore thought needs to go into the layout of this section to cater for all the likely users.

It has been noted that there is a culverted watercourse running under the site at present which will be retained. With no way of knowing whose responsibility this watercourse is, the Highway Authority is nervous about the implications for any highways that run over it. This feature will form a highway structure wherever it supports the proposed highway and we will need Agreement in Principle (AIP) from our structures team that the proposed highway's integrity will not be threatened by this feature. This will form part of the technical approval phase.

As a result, the Highway Authority raises no objection to this application subject to the following conditions.

5 conditions have been recommended by the Highway Authority.

Planning Policy:

The application site is located within the defined Development Area for Ilminster. It was last used by Powrmatic Ltd in 2007 and is currently a vacant site. The disused Powrmatic buildings were demolished shortly after the closure of this site and its relocation to Hort Bridge, leaving a largely flat, concreted, serviced site. Diado Industrial Bearings (Europe) Ltd operate from an adjacent site to the north and to the south are a number of residential premises.

The Planning Policy Context

The South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011 was adopted in April 2006. All but five of the policies and proposals within this plan were formally saved in April 2009, and remain saved until such time as they are replaced by any new policies adopted by South Somerset District Council.

In addition to the above, in light of the appeal decision for land to the rear of Wincanton Community Hospital, Dancing Lane, Wincanton (29th August 2012) it has been established that the Council does not have a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land. In such circumstances the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date (NPPF paragraph 49). Housing applications should therefore be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of development. In this Council's case the principal effect is that saved policy ST3 Development Limits no longer applies in relation to housing or mixed use proposals (but still does in relation to non-housing applications).

In this context, the main policies of relevance are ST5: General Principles of Development, EP1: Pollution and Noise and ME6: Retention of Land and Premises. These policies seek to avoid placing people at risk of noise pollution, avoid placing noise sensitive development in the vicinity of noise generating development, and seek to protect loss of employment land where it would have a significant adverse effect on employment opportunities.

Proposed Submission South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028)

The emerging Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in January and an Examination is anticipated to commence on the 7th May 2013.

The main policy of relevance to the proposed development is emerging Policy EP3:

Safeguarding Employment Land. It must be noted that limited weight can be afforded to the emerging Local Plan policies and proposals as many are subject to objection and have yet to be considered by an independent planning inspector.

Policy SS5: Delivering New Housing Growth seeks to develop an additional 332 dwellings in Ilminster (out of 531 dwellings) to 2028, and a proposed strategic direction for this growth has been identified. The level of proposed residential development sought by the applicant is not considered to be unreasonably high in the context of the Local Plan housing requirements for Ilminster and if there were no other planning policy concerns this may be considered acceptable, this however is not the case.

In the context of sustainable development, the South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011 employment land allocations for Ilminster have been carried forward into the emerging Local Plan (Policy EP1: Strategic Employment Sites), because of their significance and the need to balance employment land and residential development in Ilminster, a point I will expand upon later.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF affords significant weight to the need to support economic growth through the planning system and states that plans should support existing business sectors.

The NPPF is also clear that the long-term protection of employment sites where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment purposes is not supported and where applications to change the use of commercial land to residential are submitted, unless there are strong economic reasons why the development would be inappropriate, such applications should be approved.

On the basis of the above policy framework, from a planning policy perspective the central issue in relation to this application is the potential negative impact the loss of this employment site would have upon Ilminster. Through evidence, it will be demonstrated that this site has the potential to be developed for employment uses, assisting in creating a more sustainable, self-contained Ilminster through delivering jobs locally and redressing some of the 'unbalanced' development that has occurred in the past.

The relevant issues covered in this response are:

1. The loss of employment land and evidence of local business interest in the Winterhay Lane site
2. Sustainability of the proposed development and 5 year land supply
3. Potential impact on the operation of Diado

1. The loss of employment land and evidence of local business interest in the Winterhay Lane site

The site is employment land (B2), and therefore there is a requirement for the applicant to demonstrate that the loss of this land would not have a significant adverse impact on employment opportunities (Saved Local Plan Policy ME6) and that there are no strong economic reasons why the development would be inappropriate (paragraph 51 of the NPPF).

The Winterhay Lane site is considered to be the most deliverable employment site in Ilminster. It is a serviced site and has the potential to come forward immediately, whereas the other employment land prospects in Ilminster (strategic employment sites identified in emerging Policy EP1) require resources which render them longer term prospects. The deliverability of the strategic employment allocations is covered in detail

in the Council's Economic Development objection to this application, but to summarise contrary to what is stated in the applicant's planning statement, the land is valuable employment land, and there is no overriding need to redevelopment the site for residential purposes which outweigh this value.

In addition to the allocated land there are existing premises that are available and on the market in Ilminster, and these have been submitted by the applicant to argue that the loss of the Winterhay Lane site is not significant. Again, these sites are considered in greater detail in the Council's Economic Development objection, but to summarise, these alternative premises are older warehouse and workshop premises, with limited access to fast broadband and half the sites are based in Ilton which is 3 miles from Ilminster. The Council's evidence demonstrates that supply does not meet demand and evidence of significant demand is identified in the questionnaire survey undertaken late last year.

The planning statement submitted cites the Council's Employment Land Review and Workspace Demand Study as evidence of no demand for small workspace units; therefore the Council has undertaken a survey of local businesses that demonstrates there are businesses, local to Ilminster, who are interested in relocating to the Winterhay Lane site. In November 2012 a questionnaire survey was undertaken, in the context of this and other potential application for residential development, to establish if there was any demand for employment land in Ilminster and on the Winterhay Lane site. The questionnaire and results are appended in Appendix 1 & 2.

The questionnaire was sent to 238 businesses and 92 respondents returned completed forms (a 39% response rate) with 19 businesses looking to expand their business or relocate to alternative sites/premises. Following further follow-up work by the Area West Regeneration team, it has been established that there are at least 5 businesses, local to Ilminster who are interested in relocating to the Winterhay Lane site. See Appendix 3 for a summary of these further discussions.

These 5 businesses between them currently employ 40 people and are looking for a minimum of 570 sq m of B1 premise space on a freehold or leasehold basis. The businesses are currently located out of the town and wish to be located in a more central location with access to fast broadband. The Council's RICS registered Valuer has made an assessment of the price these businesses are prepared to pay for new office premises and confirms that this is reasonable in today's market:

"The information we have here all breaks back to around £10-12 per sq ft, which in itself does not sound unreasonable. There will of course be variances, dependent on how much car parking is required and if this can be included or is an extra; and how long the lease term is that they are prepared to take. A more flexible lease term, say 12 months with high levels of car parking would cost more. A three year lease term with a small amount of car parking might cost less.

There is very little advertised at present - rents start at £7.50 per sq ft – at Minster Business Park; another advertised at Ashwell Business Park equates to c.£11.20 per sq ft..... so right in the middle of the range of rents prepared to be paid from respondents.

I think that we could say that respondent expectations seem broadly in line with market offers in the area and certainly within a realistic range." (See Appendix 4 for summary).

On the basis of the above, there is clear, evidenced demand for this site. There are local businesses who have either outgrown their existing site or are home based and keen to find premises in Ilminster, but cannot find suitable premises on the market today. The concern is that if this site is lost to residential development these businesses will

eventually move out of Ilminster altogether which would have a significant adverse impact on employment opportunities, these businesses currently sustain 40 employees and if they have the opportunity to relocate, could grow and sustain more jobs in Ilminster and therefore there are strong economic reasons to refuse this application. Additionally, by having the opportunity to relocate locally, the smaller premises that become vacant provide an opportunity for other start-up businesses, thereby expanding the range and choice of sites available on the market in Ilminster.

2. Sustainable Development, sustainability of the proposed development and 5 year land supply

The NPPF states in paragraph 14 that a presumption in favour of sustainable development should be at the heart of decision making. In light of the appeal decision for land to the rear of Wincanton Community Hospital, Dancing Lane, Wincanton (29th August 2012) the applicant is correct to state that the Council does not have a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land. In such circumstances the NPPF advises that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date (NPPF paragraph 49). Housing applications should therefore be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of development (NPPF paragraph 14).

The applicant cites in their planning statement that the Council should have a 5 year land supply, plus a 20% buffer as the Council has consistently failed to meet its annualised housing target. I have been advised by the Council's Strategic Monitoring Officer that the Council currently has a 4 years and 8 months supply of deliverable housing land. This will be presented to members at the Council's District Executive meeting in April when they consider the District Council's Annual Housing Monitoring Report. This is still not the 5 year supply plus an additional buffer of 5% as required in the NPPF (paragraph 47) and established by the planning inspector at the Verrington Appeal.

Whilst the need for a 5 year land supply is important, it should be noted that in addition to paragraph 49, the NPPF also advises that where relevant policies are out of date permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of so doing would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted (NPPF paragraph 14). There is no automatic assumption that sites will be approved.

The emerging Local Plan strategy seeks to promote sustainable development and the vision for 2028 sees settlements such as Ilminster, having built upon their existing roles, offering greater self-sufficiency with a better balance of jobs to dwellings, thereby promoting greater self-containment. The Plan seeks to develop an additional 340 dwellings in Ilminster (out of 531 dwellings) to 2026, and a strategic direction for this growth has been identified. It also seeks to encourage the delivery of 343 jobs, 226 in B uses. The proposed residential development would deliver an additional 77 dwellings, and whilst this is not considered to be unreasonably high in the context of the Local Plan housing requirements for Ilminster and would assist the Council to reach its 5 year land supply, it would be at the expense of potentially sustaining 40 jobs and growing additional ones in Ilminster, which are crucially important for achieving a better balanced settlement.

Further to this point, it is recognised in the emerging Local Plan that there has been an imbalance in the past in terms of the delivery of jobs and homes, it should be noted that the population of the Ilminster Ward grew by 20% between 2001 and 2011 (census data), whereas the jobs have grown only by 5% between 2003 and 2010 (Nomis data).

The lack of a 5 year land supply is fully recognised, but this site will result in a loss of employment land, and it is considered that the policy framework also supports the retention of valuable employment land, which is a greater priority in the context of sustainable development for Ilminster. The development of the Winterhay lane site purely for residential development would demonstrably harm the sustainable development of Ilminster, particularly as the Council has evidence that the site could potentially deliver at a minimum 18% of the B use jobs requirement to 2028. In light of this, it is the view of planning policy that sustainable development includes all three elements of the definition, social, economic and environmental and losing this site to a purely residential use is not sustainable development.

3. Prejudicing the operation of Daido

Daido is a highly important and long-established local employer in Ilminster and currently employs approximately 240 people. Planning policy would not support any form of development that would prejudice the operation of this business as this would have a significant impact on employment opportunities in the town (Policy ME6). Concern arises from the proximity of Daido to the proposed residential development. Whilst a noise assessment has been undertaken which establishes that there is noise produced during operational hours, and that this noise is not sufficient to cause problems to residents, the concern is that this is based on existing operations, should Daido's operational hours change, or operational process, then this could create tension between the uses.

It was on this basis that the option to redevelopment the site for a mixed use was raised as it could provide a buffer between Daido and any residential development.

4. Mixed-use Scheme

Planning Policy has been supportive of a mixed use scheme on this site for a number of years. In March 2011 officers met with representatives from Daido to discuss their future requirements and potential redevelopment of part of their site to residential, in relation to the emerging draft Core Strategy. Following this meeting Powrmatic were contacted to discuss opportunities for their site. A mixed use scheme was always envisaged on the site. This perspective was also articulated at the major applications meeting in December 2011.

I note in the planning statement from the applicant that a mixed use scheme providing some B1 uses was discounted on the site in light of emerging Local Plan Policy EP2: Office Development. This policy, whilst in line with the approach taken in the NPPF, can be afforded little weight as it is an emerging policy (see earlier points) The approach taken in the policy seeks proposals for office development to be firstly located within the defined Town Centre before less sequentially preferable sites (like the Winterhay Lane site). The purpose of Policy EP2 is to focus growth in town centres, thereby increasing footfall and so supporting the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Ilminster is a healthy Town Centre, the South Somerset Retail Survey Update 2009 (July 2010) illustrated how there were only 3 vacant units in the town centre, representing a 5% vacancy rate, well below the national average of 12% at the time. The Ilminster Town Centre Shopping Survey, last undertaken in September 2012 illustrates that there are only 4 vacant units in Ilminster Town Centre (see attached map), the national average is now around 14%, and this yet again demonstrates the strong demand for retail property in Ilminster.

This point aside, the vacant properties are:

- 4c Ditton Street - 36sq m/ 387 sq ft
- 12a Silver Street - 246 sq m/ 2,647 sq ft
- 3-5 East Street - tbc
- Old Magistrates Court, East Street – 110 sq m/ 1,184 sq ft (over numerous levels)

The employment survey work indicates that only one of the vacant premises may be of a suitable size (12a Silver Street) given that the requirements are for premises of 1,250 sq ft or greater. This was discounted for operational reasons.

The nature of the vacant premises, coupled with the healthy nature of Ilminster Town Centre, suggests that it may be difficult to focus B1 uses into the Town Centre, but this would need to be explored more fully through a sequential test and discounting it at this stage seems premature.

Summary

On the basis of the above, a planning policy objection is raised to the proposed development, it is contrary to the principles of sustainable development outlined in the NPPF and contrary to Local Plan Policy ME6 and emerging Local Plan Policy EP3. These concerns outweigh the favourable conclusion that the residential development of the site will assist the Council to achieve its 5 year land supply. There are also concerns over the future of Daido in light of its proximity to the proposed development.

Economic Development:

We have given full consideration to this application and our view has been informed by the planning documents provided and communication with the applicant and their agents. This extends from pre-application discussions to the most recent correspondence on alternative employment premises and existing demand.

The applicant argues that there is a good supply of employment land in/around Ilminster and that a lack of demand has been evidenced by the marketing of their site. A marketing report has been provided to support this view.

Given the significance that we attach to this employment site and thus the likely adverse implications of its loss (to a purely residential scheme), we have undertaken extensive local consultation. This consultation helps us to form a better understanding of the employment land provision around Ilminster and the challenges that are presented by the different employment sites. SSDC have assembled an evidence base of local demand for B use premises through detailed a local survey and the results have been analysed by our Planning Policy, ED and Community Regeneration teams. The analysis of this survey is provided by separate response from SSDCs Planning Policy Team.

As a result of our review and our consultations we believe that the application in its current form should be refused on the basis of:

- 1) The unacceptable loss of the town's most viable & deliverable serviced employment land;
- 2) The lack of sustainably located alternative B use land in Ilminster.

Our evidence suggests that B use demand does exist locally. Our evidence also indicates that allocated employment land further away from the town is less deliverable and less sustainable than the site under consideration. It is our view that the Winterhay

Lane site is too valuable an employment site to lose to residential use.

The agent acting on behalf of the applicant has provided a list of alternative available sites around Ilminster, including the challenging Hort Bridge site. We have looked at each of these sites in turn and feel able to demonstrate their incompatibility with the B1 use demand evidenced in our local business survey. In our opinion the undeveloped sites detailed do not compare favourably to the far more sustainable and deliverable former Powrmatic site.

Additionally, the reluctance of the applicant to consider, as suggested in pre-app discussions - a mixed use scheme to incorporate a strip of predominantly B1 use as a 'buffer' between Daido and the wider residential component is disappointing. We hope that an acceptable resolution can be reached on this point and a more sustainable future for the site promoted.

Main Issue 1) The loss of Ilminster's most deliverable employment site

The applicant argues that there has been little demand for the former Powrmatic site other than from residential developers. They also argue that the marketing of the Hort Bridge site is in itself evidence that alternative provision exists. It is our opinion that although the Hort Bridge site (incorporating the former Horlicks site) is allocated as employment land, it has significant locational and site constraints (including lack of servicing and floodplain proximity - **see Fig 1**) that will make it difficult to bring forward the land forward for employment purposes.

Hort Bridge

Whilst Hort Bridge is designated employment land, it is mostly greenfield and brownfield and which does not constitute serviced development land. The implementation of roads, utilities and services adds a significant cost liability to any proposal for development coming forwards.

A good portion of the Hort Bridge land is affected by flood plain designation and the costs of mitigating this problem for any proposal is likely to be substantial.

These matters in isolation could render some development proposals unviable, meaning that these sites will not come forward until measures can be taken and designs presented that overcome these matters with minimising associated costs. This will take time and although some of these areas have been marketed at present, we are not aware of any genuine interest that is at a stage where the sites can be delivered in the next 2 years.

Winterhay Lane

Conversely, Winterhay Lane site comprises land that is fully serviced and subject to planning permission could be delivered in the shorter term, without the additional costs referred to above. Therefore, this warrants Winterhay Lane site being considered as prime employment land.

Whilst concerns have been raised that there is no demand for employment use by the applicant in this location, SSDC have undertaken a recent study which shows that there is latent demand for B1 office use, for the expansion of existing local businesses and new businesses, as well as storage and offices.

Therefore, it would be reasonable to expect some employment use on this site as part of

a redevelopment proposal, as there is known demand for some smaller scale units. These employment units would also act as a buffer between existing industrial and residential uses, making for a more comprehensive scheme and alleviating future concerns between the residential and industrial uses.

Employment uses should also consider 'employment functions' and not solely 'B' use classes. For example, there may well be other 'Class Uses' which employ people which would work well in this location, for which there is demand that has not been investigated fully. For example 'D' uses, dentists, crèche or community facilities.

If a mixed use scheme were proposed and flexible 'employment' use accommodation were developed and marketed for a period of time, the demand that SSDC is aware of could be investigated jointly with the developer, to see if 'pre-lets' could be put in place for the employment element of the scheme.

If after a fair period of time for marketing, the units are not taken up, then under the Government proposals from later this spring, the GPDO will allow, subject to conditions being met, for B1 offices to be converted to residential use without planning consent. This would be the developers fall-back position.

However, unmet demand for employment accommodation locally has been demonstrated; and this avenue would need to be investigated fully, before 100% residential development would be considered on this site.

There is little serviced employment land currently available locally that could be delivered in the short term to meet this demand and from an employment and Economic Development perspective it would not be acceptable to allow local business to move out of the area on the premise that there is no demand, when the reality is that there is no appropriate employment accommodation locally for them to move into.

Main Issue 2) The lack of alternative B use land & premises in Ilminster

To support the application, the agent has provided details of available floor space in and around Ilminster. Both ED and our Community Regeneration Officer have reviewed all of the suggested alternative sites and can confirm that the majority of the premises highlighted are warehouse and workshop space and this does not match the local demand for the office space that is evidenced in the local business survey.

Around half of the sites indicated are also located in Ilton. Whereas the Winterhay Lane site lies just 0.5 miles from the town centre, the Ilton sites are 3 miles in distance. Commuters from Ilminster to these sites have no realistic option other than to drive to and from work each day, with no opportunity for local spend or use of other town centre services during the day.

The SSDC Community Regeneration Officer is in contact with many Ilminster businesses and reports that those wanting to work in Ilminster require good broadband infrastructure in an office environment which is ideally placed close to the town centre so that those that wish to can walk or cycle.

In light of this it especially significant that:

- 1) the Winterhay Lane site is within easy walking distance of the town centre (and none of the other allocated employment sites around Ilminster are so), but
- 2) the serviced site lies just 600 meters (**see Fig. 2**) from the Ilminster BT exchange

which is now in the process of being upgraded to Superfast fibre optic under the Connecting Devon & Somerset Programme.

This upgrading is largely in response to demand (registered and anticipated) from businesses in the town and is only the 2nd of South Somerset's exchanges to be deemed commercially viable to receive the upgrade. This upgrading will benefit sites closest to the exchange most as Broadband speeds reduce the further from an exchange a premises is located, making Winterhay Lane one of the most attractive sites to businesses from a host of modern sectors.

Summary:

After a considered review of both the evidence presented as part of the application and that emerging through robust local investigation, it is the strong recommendation of SSDC's Economic Development Team that this application be refused for the following reasons:

- The unacceptable loss of the town's most viable & deliverable serviced employment land. This is prime employment land and the last site you would consider losing if the sustainability of the town is a consideration.
- The lack of alternative sustainably located serviced employment land elsewhere in Ilminster that could be delivered in the short term. The alternative sites suggested by the agent are simply not comparable to the Winterhay Lane site. Existing premises are unsuited to local demand and allocated sites are significantly less viable (see Fig. 1).
- The level of local B use demand suggested by the agent differs from that reported by local businesses through robust survey and qualitative interview. The true evidence of demand for industrial use of the Winterhay Lane site has not been tested because the site has been cleared of the former building.

The v. recent increased attractiveness of the Winterhay Lane site given the BT SuperFast Broadband upgrading of the exchange located just 600 meters from the site (Fig. 2). This is a key aspect of existing local demand and is especially relevant to the future use of this site.

Environmental Health Officer:

The ambient noise survey undertaken has determined that existing noise levels should not adversely affect future residents and the installation of standard trickle ventilation and thermal glazing will be acceptable for all bedrooms and living rooms.

What some residents will occasionally be subjected to is the occasional impact noise (bangs crashes) as a result of Daido current waste management practices, also the infrequent use of a tannoy.

There are a number of waste storage skips to the west of the Daido site, and the nature of the waste produced and its tipping into storage skips does create noise but not at a level that would in my opinion constitute a nuisance or loss of amenity.

The noise survey undertaken also represents current operating practices at Daido. Should Daido look to expand or change current operating practices, noise levels may increase this could result in future conflict between residents and the company concerned.

Housing Officer:

Policy requires 35% affordable housing split 67:33 social rent: intermediate.

On that basis we require 18 units for social rent and 9 units for shared ownership/other intermediate products.

I would like to propose the following property mix based on the current Housing Need Register data:-

6 x 1 bed, 12 x 2 bed, 7 x 3 bed and 2 x 4 bed.

I would expect the affordable units to be pepper potted throughout the site. I would suggest that the units are developed to blend in with the proposed house styles and would prefer the 1 beds to either be houses or to have the appearance of houses, I would not like to see a block of flats as I do not believe this will fit with the proposed development.

Landscape Officer:

I have reviewed the design and access statement submitted in support of the above outline application seeking to establish residential development at the above site.

We have previously reviewed a couple of sketch proposals in the evolution of this scheme, and discussed it at pre-application surgery. The resultant layout, which establishes a strong street frontage facing the current factory site; well-arranged internal courtyards; good pedestrian links; open space that ties into adjacent open ground to enhance its siting; and landscape provision, is much improved for this dialogue, and provides a decent basis for the resultant reserved matters application, assuming you are minded to approve this. At this stage, I have no landscape issues with this proposal.

Environment Agency:

No objection to the application subject to conditions and informatives in relation to surface water drainage, contamination, remediation, storage of fuels, a site waste management plan and dealing with waste materials.

Engineer:

Condition required for submission /approval of drainage details which need to incorporate principles set out in the Flood Risk Assessment for control of surface water.

Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium:

No objection subject to imposition of a condition in relation to submission of details for surface water. Furthermore, that access must remain to enable access to the watercourse on the western edge of the site.

Ecologist:

I'm satisfied with applicant commissioned ecological assessment and am in agreement with its conclusions and recommendations.

The only significant wildlife issue is the presence of a small population of slow worms on the site. They are legally protected against deliberate and reckless harm or killing (such as could occur from construction activity). However, the legislation doesn't specifically protect their habitat so their presence isn't a significant constraint to development of this site. A mitigation plan or method statement will be required and I recommend this is conditioned:

The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced (including any ground works or site clearance) until a mitigation plan or method statement detailing measures to avoid

harm to reptiles has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and timing of the plan, unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: For the protection of a legally protected species to accord with policy EC8 of the South Somerset Local Plan, and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

I also recommend an informative to endorse the recommendations made in sections 7.2, 7.3 and 7.5 of the report.

SSDC Community, Health and Leisure:

Contributions totalling £377,443.67 (£4,901.87 per dwelling) are sought for the following:

- An on-site equipped play area (£66,236).
- Contribution towards enhancement of off site youth facilities at Ilminster recreation ground (£13,005)
- Enhancement or expansion of sports facilities at Ilminster recreation ground (£30,554)
- Contribution towards provision of new changing rooms at Ilminster recreation ground (£62,034)
- Contribution towards the enhancement of existing or the development of new, community hall provision in Ilminster (£40,031).

In addition, a commuted sum totalling £69,860 for the above facilities.

Strategic facilities to include contributions towards a theatre/art centre contribution towards the Octagon, Yeovil (£24,104), provision of a new 3G pitch in Ilminster (£6,191), a new and/or enhancement pool in Chard (£14,0946), anew indoor tennis centre in Yeovil (18,250) and a new sports hall in Ilminster or towards new hall in Chard (£29,339).

Open Spaces Officer:

I am happy with the location of the Open Space; linking in with the footpath. The size, at 700sqm complies with policy CR2 if this is Open Space only. (Requirement is between 678 and 847sqm for 77 houses). However the plan indicates 700sqm for Children's play and I see from reading the planning statement that I recommended a LEAP (!) – surprising as I do not represent play and would not know whether or not a LEAP is required and what the footprint is. If a Leap (or other equipped play) is required it needs to be an area in addition to the 678sqm minimum of Open Space.

County Education:

The development of 77 dwellings would be expected to require 11 First School places. Greenfyld First School is already over-subscribed and will come under increasing pressure from this and other developments in the town. The long-term plan is to provide a replacement site for an enlarged school on County-Council owned land near the new surgery.

In the short term, it may be necessary to provide additional temporary accommodation, although the site is quite constrained. Either way, developer contributions will be required to provide additional places. As the cost per place is £12,257, the total contribution would be £134,827. The planning statement submitted with the application refers to a sum of £110,313, but this is based on an assumption at the pre-application stage that the development would comprise just 60 dwellings. The subsequent higher figure is as a result of this number increasing.

REPRESENTATIONS

1 letter received in support of the application welcoming the fact that the applicant has

taken on board comments raised during the public exhibition.

7 Letters/emails received raising the following concerns:

- Potential access/amenity issues alongside our property- would seek fencing around development to prevent this from occurring.
- Houses shouldn't be too close to existing properties.
- Increase in roadside parking along Winterhay Lane and access road to Daido – would potentially create disruption to lorries and may cause accidents.
- Significantly concerned about possible risk of complaints from future occupiers of the development in relation to commercial activities taking place at Daido and Brakes Motor Company.
- We have plenty of houses at present, retain the land for commercial purposes
- Increase in traffic and at all times of day/night
- Concern about ability of local roads/junctions to serve the development.
- Building a roundabout at the end of Winterhay Lane would require removal of the Burma Star Memorial Garden.
- Concern about increased use of footpath adjacent to no 68 Station Road. To be used as one of the key pedestrian routes – it should not be used. It is not proposed to be upgraded and will remain a muddy, unlit access. Ownership of this lane is not clear.
- Local sewers would not cope.
- Was told that no houses could be built on this employment site
- What impact would this development have on the proposed housing growth for Ilminster?
- The Prime Minister has said that it is for the local people to decide what happens in terms of housing but this hasn't happened.

In addition, a circular letter has been signed and submitted by 6 local residents. It asks that consideration is given to amending the plans to place the access road at the rear of our gardens to avoid overlooking but also because turning into and exiting onto the Riec Sur Belon roundabout is hazardous. In particular, poor visibility along Station Road from the access road in front of houses no.68 to 88. This provides an opportunity to improve highway safety.

CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of development

The site is located within the development area as defined in the saved South Somerset Local Plan. Therefore, there is a presumption in favour of development subject to compliance with other local and national policies. In addition, the NPPF has at its centre, a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Thus, planning applications should be approved unless there are any adverse impacts that would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'. It is considered that in this case, there are 2 possible adverse impacts that have to be assessed against the governments requirement for allowing sustainable forms of development. These 2 issues are the loss of employment land and the potential for conflict between the proposed residential properties and adjacent commercial businesses.

Loss of employment land

As outlined above, one of the key issues is considered to be the loss of employment land. Objections have been received from both the Spatial Policy and Economic Development Officers in respect of this issue. Until 2007, Powmatic occupied and ran their business from the site. Since then, the factory building was demolished and the land has remained unoccupied.

In respect of the lawful use of the site, the agent has stated in the Planning Statement that appeal cases have confirmed that the use rights of a site cease if the building to which that use relates has been demolished. Moreover, given that the site is now currently vacant, there is no existing employment use against which the saved employment protection policies in the adopted Local Plan can be applied. The Council accept that use rights have been lost as the building no longer exists i.e. planning permission will be required for any new employment buildings. However, notwithstanding this point, the Council maintain that as the last use of the site was for employment purposes, it is correct for one of the grounds for the Council to assess this application is the loss of employment land.

The Spatial Policy Officer has outlined the relevant key policies in both the current and emerging Local Plan and within the NPPF in respect of housing policies, sustainable development and safeguarding employment land. Moreover, this response outlines the details of a recent employment survey of businesses in Ilminster which demonstrates that there are 5 Ilminster companies who are interested in relocating to the Winterhay Lane site. This finding is contrary to the applicant's submitted marketing report which states that there is no viable demand for the site other than from residential developers.

In terms of the policy context, the Council accepts that it currently does not have a 5 year supply of housing land as required by the government, although it is not far short of that target with 4 years 8 month's supply. Nevertheless, this shortage has to be given very strong consideration when assessing applications for housing.

Current local plan policies seek to protect employment land where the loss of such land would have a significant adverse impact on employment opportunities. The clear view of policy and economic development officers is that this is the most deliverable employment site in Ilminster. It is a serviced site and could be brought forward in the short term. It is correct that this is not the only available employment land in Ilminster i.e. it does benefit from a significant employment allocation on land at Hortbridge and there are other sites/buildings suggested by the applicant. However, in terms of the allocated land, this is not currently serviced, will be expensive to bring forward due to site constraints and importantly would not be available in the short term. Moreover, as outlined by the Spatial Policy officer, the vacant commercial properties currently available do not meet the requirements of those businesses expressing a desire to move to the application site.

In addition to the above, government policy in the NPPF makes it clear that Council's should not seek to protect allocated employment sites where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Whilst this is not an allocated employment site, consideration should be given to alternative uses such as housing, particularly given the active marketing of the site and the lack of employment use over the last 5 years. However, in this case, it is considered that based upon the evidence obtained from policy and economic development officers, there is a reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment purposes. Notwithstanding the current lack of a 5 year housing land supply, given the lack of alternative suitable and currently available employment sites, it is considered that the loss of employment land would have a significant adverse impact on employment opportunities in Ilminster. On this basis, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to both local and national policies that seek to protect employment land.

A further important point to stress is that from a policy perspective, the emerging Local Plan, as enshrined in the NPPF, is to achieve sustainable forms of development, and in particular, to seek greater self-containment with a better balance of homes and jobs. There has been an historic imbalance in terms of delivery of jobs and homes reflected by the fact that the Ilminster Ward grew by 20% between 2001 and 2011 whereas jobs have

grown only by 5% between 2003 and 2010. It is therefore clear that the loss of this site for employment purposes would significantly undermine the development of Ilminster in a sustainable manner.

Comment has been made about bringing forward a mixed use scheme on this site comprising both commercial and residential uses. Whilst this approach may certainly address many of concerns raised, this is not the proposal submitted by the applicant and it is the submitted scheme that has to be assessed.

Highway and access issues

Vehicular access into the site will be gained directly from the current access road off Winterhay lane, which in turn is accessed via Station Road. The existing access road currently serves Daido and also previously served Powrmatic when the firm was operating from the application site. The Highway Authority does not raise any objection to the proposed development but did raise some issues in relation to the number and size of car parking spaces, further consideration given to the mix of allocated and unallocated spaces, aspects of the Travel Plan, technical issues regarding the alterations to the adopted concrete road, request for crossing points and layout of the estate roads.

In response to the Highway Authority comments, the applicant's highway consultant has advised that traffic calming measures will be introduced and that there is no objection to parking restrictions along the access road. The introduction of yellow lines along the access road in order to control parking can provided through a separate process (a Traffic Regulation Order). The applicant is willing to provide a reasonable contribution towards the TRO.

Moreover, the applicant would also provide crossing points on the new estate roads at the junctions with the adopted access road. Also, in relation to the layout of the estate roads, the applicant will accept a condition to ensure that an appropriate internal layout is provided.

In terms of the Travel Plan, the applicant accepts that this can be addressed through the s106 process but have pointed out that some of the points raised have already been addressed in the submitted Travel Plan and that not all of the issues raised are appropriate for the size, scale and nature of the development. With regard to the car sharing spaces and electric car charging points, the provision of the latter is summarised in the submitted travel plan document and it is considered that the provision of sockets in garages is sufficient.

In response to a question from the Town Council, the Highway Authority have advised that there is 'absolutely no requirement for a roundabout at the junction of Station Road and Winterhay Lane'. The Transport Assessment was asked quite specifically to look at this junction and we have accepted their findings that the capacity of the current arrangement will not be exceeded'. In addition, the Highway Authority advise that the capacity of both the roundabouts were specifically scoped within the Transport Assessment and the capacity of these roundabouts is not an issue. Moreover, in response to concerns expressed by local residents, there are no particular safety issues in relation to the roundabout.

The Highway Authority are satisfied that the applicant has agreed to address most of the initial areas of concern as outlined above. However, whilst not forwarding a refusal for the undersupply of parking spaces, the Highway Authority are seeking an additional 41 car parking spaces i.e. 187 as opposed to the proposed 146 spaces. The difference is explained by the fact that because of the type of houses proposed in the development, i.e. family homes, there is a greater likelihood of two car families and thus the Highway

Authority are seeking additional provision. Moreover, they are concerned at the consequences of having too little parking i.e. on-street parking leading to obstruction on the highway, particularly for refuse and emergency vehicles.

Whilst it may be argued that accessibility of the site will have no or very little effect on car ownership and that a good Travel Plan can affect car use but not car ownership, the number of spaces has to be balanced with the overall aim to provide a quality living environment. Yes, insufficient parking spaces can lead to parking on roads etc. and lead to a reduction in the quality of a living environment. However, this scheme is proposing 146 spaces or the equivalent of 2 spaces per dwelling. Based on information submitted by the Highway consultant, the vast majority of households have either 1 or 2 cars (87% of total couple family households). Taking into account this information, the proposed 2 spaces per dwelling is considered to provide an acceptable level of provision. Moreover, the quality of the layout, which is considered to be good, would be compromised by introducing a further 40 spaces.

Relationship with adjacent employment premises

Concern has been raised by the Council's Spatial Policy Officer, from 2 adjacent businesses and a matter raised by the Town Council, with regard to the possible amenity issues that may arise due to the proximity of 2 commercial/industrial businesses adjacent to the proposed application site. The biggest concern being that future residents of the proposed scheme may be exposed to noise and thus raise associated complaints in relation to commercial activities taking place at those adjacent businesses.

The Daido Metal industrial works located to the north of the site and Brakes Motor Company to the south of the site are the 2 businesses that adjoin the site. The relationship issue with adjacent employment users was raised by the Council during the pre-application stage. Accordingly, the applicant commissioned a Noise Impact Assessment and submitted the subsequent report as part of the application. This report assesses the noises emitted from the Daido site and its impact on the future residential use of the application site. The report identified that the main source of noise from the Daido site stems from the northern warehouse and steel processing building on the eastern side of the Daido site. The closest existing residential properties are located approximately at a distance of 45 metres to the nearest Daido buildings with the closest proposed residential properties at a distance of approximately 25 metres from the nearest Daido buildings.

The assessment comprised the recording of noise measurements over a week period at different locations at the Daido site to determine existing noise levels. This included both day and night recordings due to the 24 hour operation at Daido. The conclusion of the noise assessment was that the level of noise would not reach levels that are likely to generate complaints, as assessed against the criteria of British Standard BS4142. Thus, on the basis of this report, there will be no adverse effect on the amenity of the future occupiers of the site from industrial noise.

No specific assessment was made in relation to the garage business to the south of the site. However, given that there are existing residential properties on either side of this business, as close as some of the proposed new dwellings, and that there are no known noise complaints from those occupiers, it is considered unlikely that this business, as currently operated, will generate noise complaints.

Notwithstanding the above conclusion in respect of noise levels, it should be borne in mind that the noise assessment and conclusions are based on current recorded noise levels based on the existing working practices of Daido. Those working practices may change in the future or indeed, a new business may purchase the site carrying out

different work practices and hence possibly creating different noise levels. Thus, there is a risk that the current acceptable levels of noise emitted by Daido, are exceeded in the future. If this were to be the case, it is trusted that any noise issues that may result can be satisfactorily addressed. However, based upon the applicant's evidence submitted as part of this application, and that the Council's Environmental Health Officer has not raised an objection, it is not considered reasonable to object to the application on noise grounds.

Residential Amenity

Outside of noise considerations, it is not considered that the proposed scheme will create any harmful overlooking and/or loss of privacy to neighbouring residential occupiers. There are a number of terraced properties to the south but due to their lengthy gardens and proposed layout of the new properties, this is considered to be an acceptable relationship and thus would not result in any harmful amenity issues. There are also properties along Winterhay Lane located to the south east of the site. The nearest property faces gable end on to the site although there are windows in the north elevation. However, the nearest proposed dwellings are set back from the boundary and screening is proposed along the boundary. As the proposal is in outline, details of the houses along with boundary treatments will need to be agreed at any future reserved matters stage. However, it is considered that the scheme does not give rise to any residential amenity concerns.

Layout

Approval is being sought at this outline stage for the proposed layout of the scheme. The layout of the scheme has been subject to pre-application discussion and has subsequently been revised to take account of those discussions. It is considered that the proposed scheme will provide a strong street frontage, has well arranged internal courtyards, good pedestrian links, an area of open space that is adjacent to existing open ground, and landscape provision throughout the site. Moreover, the layout of the housing and each of the internal roads have been arranged to serve only a limited number of houses, thus avoiding one main estate road running through the whole development. The result is that the layout is much more conducive to providing a better quality living environment and will also keep vehicle speeds much lower within the development and hence safer for residents.

Ecology

A habitat survey was undertaken and submitted as part of the application. The Council's Ecologist is in agreement with its conclusions and recommendations, with the only significant issue being in relation to slow worms. A condition is therefore recommended in respect of submission of mitigation plan with regard to reptiles.

Flood Risk

As required for sites over 1 hectare, a Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken and the report submitted with this application. The site is located in Flood Zone, thus defined as being at little or no flood risk. The Environment Agency has been involved in discussions with the applicant about the best way to drain the site. Underground storage is considered acceptable for the required attenuation volume to ensure that the site does not increase flood risk. On the basis of the above, there is no objection to the scheme in terms of flood risk.

Other Issues

A local resident has raised an issue about the existing lane outside of the application site that runs between No68 Station Road and St Joseph's Church. The applicant does not own this lane, indeed the ownership is not known. It is understood that the lane was used regularly when Powmatic occupied the application site. Its current use has

probably significantly reduced since Powrmatic vacated their site but it seems sensible to make use of the path as a pedestrian link from the site to Station Road. However, it is outside of the control of the applicant and thus there be little that can achieve in terms of improving its condition and its on-going maintenance.

SECTION 106 PLANNING OBLIGATION/UNILATERAL UNDERTAKING

Subject to the planning application being approved:

a) The prior completion of a section 106 planning obligation (in a form acceptable to the Council's solicitor(s)) before the decision notice granting planning permission is issued, the said planning permission to cover the following terms/issues:

- 1 The provision of 35% affordable housing;
- 2 Contribution towards the provision of sport, play and strategic facilities;
- 3 Contribution towards education provision; and
- 4 Submission of a Travel Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse permission.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

01. The proposal will result in the loss of employment land which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme, thus the proposal is contrary to the principles of sustainable development outlined in the NPPF, policy ME6 in the South Somerset Local Plan and to emerging Local Plan Policy EP3.
-



South Somerset District Council Employment Land Questionnaire

IMPORTANT: Consequent changes to land use may affect your business, particularly if you are looking to expand or relocate. Respond now if you want your voice heard.

South Somerset District Council is undertaking a survey into the workspace needs of businesses in the Ilminster area. By filling in this survey you will be helping the Council to identify where current premises and employment sites need protection from redevelopment to other uses or action to deliver, and crucially helping the Council to plan for workspace needs in the future.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope by **28th November 2012**. If you have any queries please speak to Jo Manley, Spatial Planner at South Somerset District Council - 01935 462442 or email jo.manley@southsomerset.gov.uk.

1. Company name and address:

2. Brief description of what your company does:

3. Which category best summarises your business' sector:
(tick the sector that best reflects company's main activities)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture, forestry & fishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional & business services | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, sports & recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retail, hire & repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport & distribution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Media and creative services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catering & accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IT & telecommunications services | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health & social care services | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining, energy & utilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal services | <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Please specify: |

4. Where do you currently operate your business from?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shop | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Factory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Serviced Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Home based |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warehouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

5. What direction is your business heading in (tick as appropriate)

- Seeking to expand
- Maintaining status quo
- Seeking to downsize, rationalise or cease trading

6. Over the next 2 to 5 years, will your current premises suit your needs?

Over next 2 years

- The premises will continue to be generally suitable
- The premises are already unsuitable and it will get worse
- The premises are suitable now, but may become unsuitable
- We are taking steps to improve the business (adding more space, or re-arranging space)

Over next 2 - 5 years

- The premises will continue to be generally suitable
- The premises are already unsuitable and it will get worse
- The premises are suitable now, but may become unsuitable
- We are taking steps to improve the business (adding more space, or re-arranging space)

Please elaborate on any particular issues:

7. If expanding, do you require more space?

- No Yes

If yes, how much additional space do you require (in ft²/ m²)?

7a. How will you achieve this floorspace expansion?

- Extension of existing premises or site
- Extend onto separate additional site or premises
- Redevelopment of existing premises or site
- Relocation to bigger premises or site
-

7b. If you are seeking to extend elsewhere or relocate, what type of site or premises would be your preference?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unserviced site | <input type="checkbox"/> Serviced site (no buildings) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Serviced Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Factory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warehouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Home based |

7c. If you are seeking to extend elsewhere or relocate, what would be your preferred tenure?

- Owned freehold
- Leased
- Rented
- Other - Please specify:

7d. If you are seeking to relocate or extend elsewhere, where would be your preferred location? (see map)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ilminster - Hort Bridge | <input type="checkbox"/> Ilminster - Canal Way |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ilminster - Winterhay Lane | <input type="checkbox"/> Ilminster - existing premises (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ilminster - Other (please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other town - (please specify) |

8. In the last 3 years, have you aspired to relocate or expand in Ilminster and been unable to?

- No
- Yes – if so what prevented you from doing so?

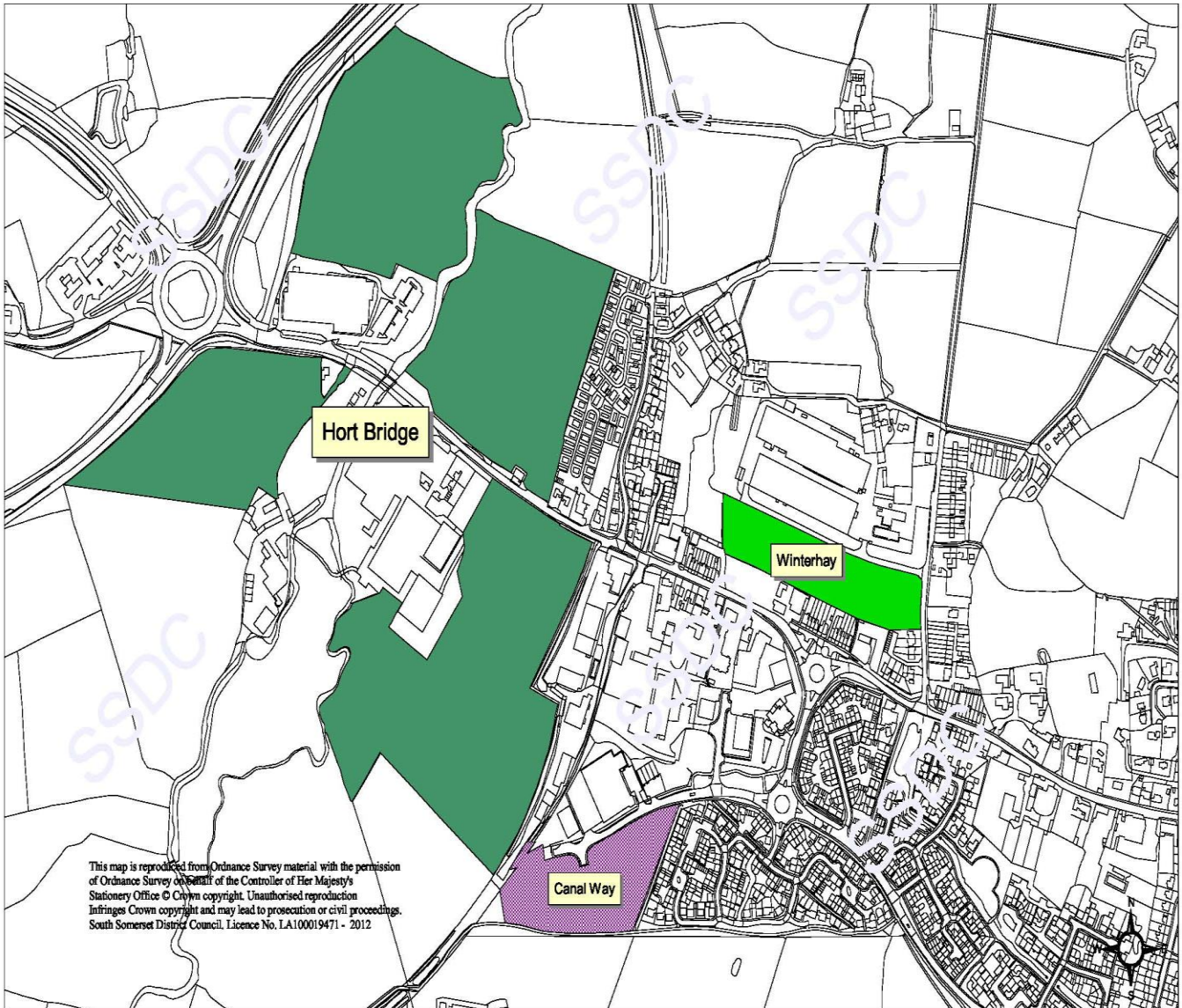
9. If you are seeking to downsize or rationalise your business, are you likely to reduce your floorspace in the next 5 years?

- No
- Yes – if so please estimate total floorspace after downsizing/rationalising:

10. If yes - How are you likely to achieve this?

- Move premises through sale or lease surrender
- Sub-divide and occupy a smaller area

Map showing some of the existing employment sites in Ilminster



THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO COMPLETE THIS FORM
You have provided valuable feedback to help us to decide whether to protect local employment land and/or promote the development of further employment land in Ilminster.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope by **28th November 2012**. If you have any queries please speak to Jo Manley, Spatial Planner at South Somerset District Council - 01935 462442 or email jo.manley@southsomerset.gov.uk.

Appendix 2

Use Class	Current Premises Type	Business Plans	Amount of Land Required	Preferred Tenure	Preferred Location	Other Comments
B1	Office	Seeking to expand over next 2 years	700-1,000 sq ft	Leased workshop	Looking for a workshop on an alternative site, ideally more space on Ashwell Park.	
B8	Warehouse	Premises are unsuitable and seeking to expand over next 2 years	Unsure	Unsure	Ilminster	
	Office	Seeking to expand over next 2 years	100 m2	Serviced site to own freehold	Hort Bridge, Ilminster	Are these home based?
	Office/factory/warehouse (B1,B2 & B8)	Seeking to expand over next 2 years		Office/factory to own freehold	Hort Bridge, Ilminster	Double check these are still looking to expand further as they note something about a recent planning approval.
	Office	Seeking to relocate the business, but not increase the business space.		Rented office	Ilminster	Have tried to move previously but legal cost have inhibited - explore further.
B1	Office	Seeking to relocate to bigger premises as existing premises may become unsuitable	500 sq m/ft?	Leased office	Canal Way, Ilminster	Have tried to move in the past but there has been a lack of suitable premises
B1	Office	Seeking to expand possibly next 2 years	Unsure of size	Rented office	Ilminster (Hort Bridge)	
B1/B2/B8	Home based workshop, office & warehouse	Seeking to expand over next 2 years	250m2	Freehold office/workshop /warehouse	Ilminster (Hort Bridge)	
B1	Home based	Seeking to expand over next 2 years		Rented office	Canal Way, Ilminster	Need office space with good internet access.
	Office	Seeking to expand the business, but not the business space.				Double check the space requirements
	Workshop	Maintain status quo, but premises may become unsuitable		Leased workshop	Winterhay Lane	

A1	Warehouse	Premises are unsuitable and seeking to expand over next 2 years	500 sq ft	Leased warehouse	Winterhay Lane or Hort Bridge, Ilminster	State - "there is a distinct lack of premises in the area and what is available is pretty shoddy".
A1	Warehouse	Seeking to expand over next 2 years as premises may become unsuitable. Unsuitable 2-5 years		Freehold warehouse	Hort Bridge or Canal Way, Ilminster	Seek relocation to a bigger site
	Office	Seeking to expand by extending existing building	No additional space?	Leased office	Ilminster, Hort Bridge	
	Office/workshop	Looking to relocate - home based		Own freehold	Axminster	Why homebased and Axminster?
B2	Workshop	Premises are unsuitable and seeking to expand over next 2 years	3,500 sq ft	Own freehold, but consider renting	Martock	Why Martock?
		Premises are unsuitable and seeking to expand over next 2 years		Consider freehold	Local to Ilminster, but may have specific building requirements - need to check	
B2	Home based workshop	Seeking additional space 2-5 years	50-100 sq m		Buckland St Mary	
B2	Workshop	Premises are unsuitable and seeking to expand over next 2 years	50-75 m2	Freehold workshop	Other - Not Ilminster	Not Ilminster, SSDC and Ilminster Town Council are anti-business, looking to leave Ilminster

Appendix 3

Commercial property requirements in Ilminster.**Business 1**

IT related company with an international client base.

Current accommodation - not making good use of space. There are large landing areas and stairwells which cannot be utilised as work space. Also experiencing difficulty with their broadband speed which is effecting growth.

Reaction to commercial properties currently available.

- Unit 3, Broadoak Park – Not suitable as they need office space
- Slape Ind. Estate – unsuitable because it is industrial warehouse and not office space.
- Minster Business Park, Canal Way - Actually spoke to the agent about this approximately 3 years ago. The developer required a commitment of a pre-sale before they would commit to building and this business was not interested in a freehold at that time.
- Cad Road, Ilton – unsuitable location because it is in Ilton. Approximately half the staff at this company walks to work from Ilminster and Ilton is too far out.
- Ilton Business Park – wrong location (see above comment) and some of it is also unsuitable as it is light industrial and not office space.

Reaction to Winterhay Lane

Yes would consider it.

Like the fact that it is in the town.

Requirements of new space

Minimum of 1500 sq foot.

Currently pays £17,000 per annum on a 5 year lease, with break clauses. So would want to pay about the same plus inflation. However, they would also consider freehold as well.

They have 18 employees, half of which live in Ilminster, they would need parking for approximately 10 cars.

Other comments

This company does a lot of work online and needs far faster broadband speeds. They currently have 2 megabyte but ideally want 24. Although there is the potential for them to expand they currently cannot because the slow broadband speed is restricting them. They find clients get frustrated because of the length of time it takes them to download info.

They have looked at moving to Taunton but suitable accommodation there is expensive and then all employees would have to commute. The company wants to stay in Ilminster, it has good road links, and would prefer a more central location where they would be closer to the exchange which would enable better Broadband.

Although they don't have lots of suppliers those they do have are located in Ilminster, so if the company did need to relocate this could have a small knock on effect.

Business 2:

Currently 7 employees, including owners. Provides financial management services such as payroll, book keeping etc.

The business is at capacity and realise that when they expand they will need to move. Also require better broadband and the slow speed is restricting growth. Because they provide payroll and other financial services they need to be able to link into their clients computer systems and this requires good broadband.

Reaction to commercial properties currently available.

- Unit 3, Broadoak Park – Not suitable as they need office space
- Slape Ind. Estate – unsuitable because it is industrial warehouse and not office space.
- Minster Business Park, Canal Way – Have looked at the details online in the past and do not like the big shed look. They would require smart offices with windows, and offices that are easy to maintain and heat. The photos online suggest that the units would be large shed type units with few windows and big doors. This type of building does not look attractive and would not look right to the clients of an accountancy business.
- Cad Road, Ilton – unsuitable location because it is in Ilton.
- Ilton Business Park – wrong location and mainly warehousing.

Reaction to Winterhay Lane

Yes would consider it. Like the fact that it is in Ilminster as half their staff live in the town, as do the owners of this business.

Requirements of new space

Approximately 1250 sq foot.

Would consider both freehold and leasehold.

Need parking for about 5 cars. This is assuming that if they could move they would expand so would have more staff.

Other comments

- Faster broadband is essential for this business to grow, so if it is available in the town would want to move to make use of it.
- Ilminster is a good location, very good road links and nice and central as most of their clients are located in either Yeovil or Taunton. So do not want to have to move to one of those towns because it makes it harder for some of their clients to get to them.
- Need accommodation that looks professional and impressive to clients. Also because they are dealing with other companies finance then security is an issue and very important.
- This company provides book-keeping service to a number of microbusinesses in Ilminster that currently operate from their own homes. They have been told by some

of their clients that they want to expand their business out of the house and into an office but nothing suitable is available. If offices were built in Ilminster there should be a variety of sizes to meet the needs of microbusinesses as well as the larger sized small business.

Business 3

Currently working from own home.

IT related. The company has reached a point where they are being offered more work but cannot currently take it on because the managing director is unable to fit more employees into her home.

Like the previous companies, this company is also experiencing difficulty with broadband speeds so a large requirement for new premises is a good fast broadband connection.

Reaction to commercial properties currently available.

- Unit 3, Broadoak Park – Not suitable as they need office space
- Slape Ind. Estate – unsuitable because it is industrial warehouse and not office space.
- Minster Business Park, Canal Way – This has not been built so cannot be considered.
- Cad Road, Ilton – unsuitable location because it is in Ilton. Some of the current employees do not drive so business is keen to stay in Ilminster.
- Ilton Business Park – wrong location (see above comment) and some of it is also unsuitable as it is light industrial and not office space.

Reaction to Winterhay Lane

Yes would consider new premises here. Like the fact that it is in the town it means they could walk to work as could the other employee who does not drive.

Requirements of new space

Looking for leasehold and would want the following facilities:

1 small meeting room – to hold 8-10 people in boardroom style

2 offices – to house 4 – 6 staff between the two offices.

Small kitchen and toilets and possible a small reception area.

Looking for leasehold. Cannot say whether they want a long term or short term lease.

Would be happy to sign up for a long term lease if the property offered the potential for growth.

Would need parking for 2 cars.

This company already leases storage space in Lopen and would want to ideally bring that equipment to the same location as the office.

Other comments

90% of this company's clients are located away from Ilminster and 50% of customers are based overseas. Fast broadband is essential which makes Ilminster a very attractive proposition if it is going to get superfast broadband.

The owner of this company lives in Ilminster and has a daughter at school so having an office near home would be ideal to enable the juggling of work / life commitments.

This company already has the offer of additional work but cannot take it on because they cannot grow their staff numbers until they find new premises. They envisage taking on mothers who live in the town so recognise that it would be more convenient for additional staff if the office was located in Ilminster because it would fit in with their family commitments.

If they knew good offices were being built at Winterhay Lane they could then properly plan the growth of this company.

Business 4:

Literary business with an interactive website –becoming very popular.

Business is growing and wants to further expand it and requires a workshop with storage.

Basic storage unit that can also be used as a workshop. This does not need to be large, a standard sized unit is sufficient.

This would need to be a freehold property and owner is open to either buying a workshop or buying a plot of land and having the workshop built. The workshop needs to be in Ilminster for convenience where it will be close to his home and office.

Locations he would consider are Canal Way, Hort Bridge & Winterhay Lane.

Business 5:

This is a website based company. They have a staff team of 11 employees which includes a sales team. They are keen to grow the business and see that faster broadband would give them that opportunity. They are getting near to a stage where they will reach full capacity in their current premises.

Reaction to commercial properties available

- Unit 3, Broadoak Park – Not suitable as they need office space
- Slape Ind. Estate – unsuitable because it is industrial warehouse and not office space.
- Minster Business Park, Canal Way – This has not been built so cannot be considered.
- Ilton Business Park – wrong type of property.
- Have looked at Blackbrook in the past but the units were too big and too expensive for their needs.

Reaction to Winterhay Lane

Yes would consider new premises here. It would depend upon the look and quality.

Good location. Most of the staff are located in either Ilminster, Yeovil or Taunton so the Ilminster location is nice and central. Access to A303 is also advantageous because it makes it easy for clients to get to them.

Requirements of new space

- One larger open plan office with ideally 2 smaller glass screened off offices at the end.
- 2 small meeting / break off rooms
- 1 IT room
- 1 conference room
- Kitchen, toilet and shower facilities (as some employees cycle).
- Easy parking for up to 16 cars, which would include clients parking

Would want an office big enough to accommodate up to 20 people. This would give them space to grow, as they do not want to be in a position where they have reached capacity in a new office as soon as they move in.

They currently pay £18,000 p.a. on a 6 year lease with a 3 year break out clause. They would expect to pay approximately £20k per annum on a lease but would also consider freehold.

New office would need to look modern, clean, fresh and professional as this would fit in with the image of the company and would create the right impression to clients.

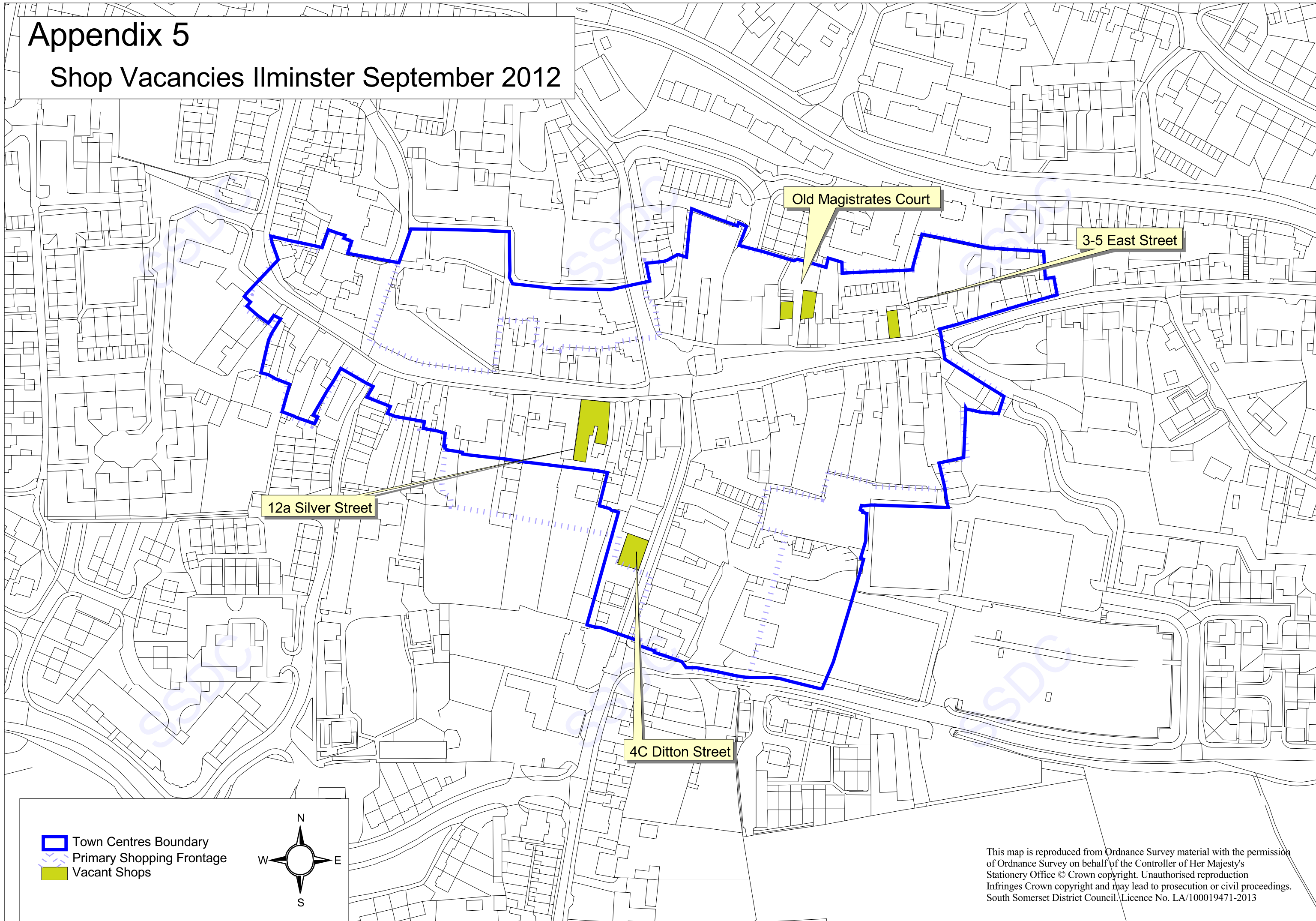
As the business does majority of work online they need fast broadband and make use of computers and phones a lot. This means that a new office would need lots of plugs and phone lines located in the right place so do not have loads of trailing wires.

Appendix 4: Summary of Business Requirements

Business Type	Floorspace Requirements	Price Prepared to Pay (sq ft)	Tenure Type	Number of Employees	Requirements
B1	Minimum 1,500 sq ft (approx. 140 sq m)	Currently £17,000 pa for 1,500 sq ft – so no more than this plus inflation	Either lease or freehold	18 employees	10 parking spaces 24 mg broadband
B1	1,250 sq ft (approx. 120 sq m)	£12-15,000 pa	Either lease or freehold	7 employees	5 parking spaces Fater broadband
B1	1,250 sq ft (thinks) Need – 1 small meeting room (8-10 people boardroom style) 2 offices (for 4-6 staff, over both) Small kitchen and toilet Possible reception (approx. 120 sq m)	£12-15,000 pa	Lease	4 employees	2 car parking spaces
B1	1 large open plan office, with 2 smaller offices 2 small break off/meeting rooms 1 IT room 1 conference room Kitchen, toilet, shower area (suggest 2,000 sq ft) (approx. 190 sq m)	£20,000 pa	Either lease or freehold	11 employees	16 car parking spaces
Totals	Approx. 570 sq m minimum. Does not include business which requires storage.			40 employees	

Appendix 5

Shop Vacancies Ilminster September 2012



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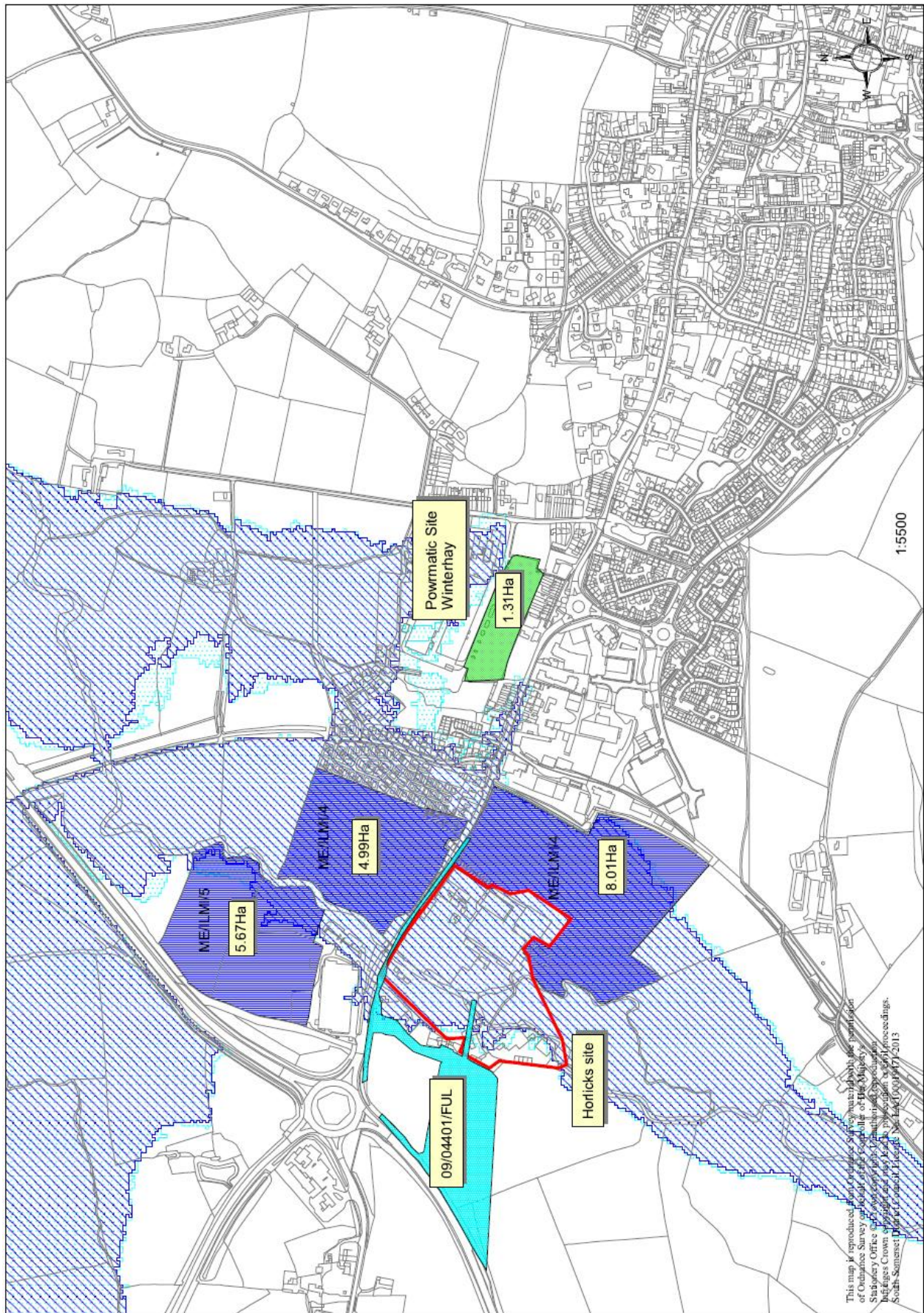


Fig. 1: Hort Bridge & Winterhay Lane Employment Sites inc. Identified Floodplain evidencing comparative deliverability. The former Horlicks site (lined red) is unlikely to come forward solely for employment use while the Highways Depot occupies 09/04401/FUL

SSDC's in-house RIC S registered Development Valuer makes the following observations in comparing the Hort Bridge and Winterhay Lane sites:

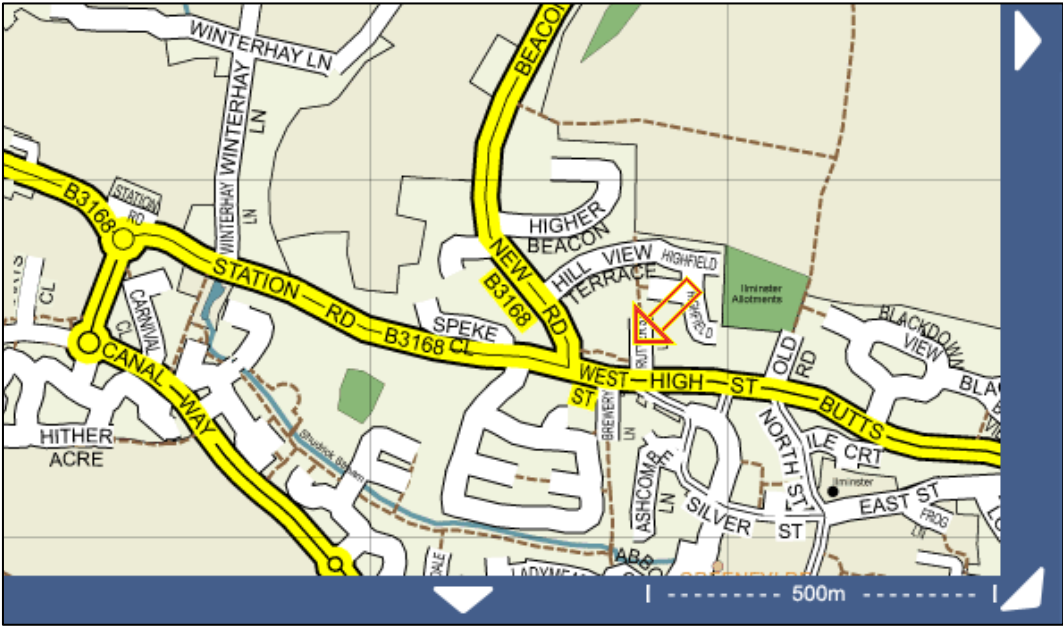


Fig. 2: The Ilminster Broadband Exchange location – C. 600 meters SE of Winterhay Lane.