Stoneleigh Park: Its Renaissance and Future Development
Environmental Impact Assessment
Non-Technical Summary

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INTRODUCTION

This Non Technical Summary (NTS) forms part of the Environmental Statement (ES) to accompany an Outline Planning Application by LaSalle Investment Management (LIM) on behalf of Mars Pension Trustees Limited (MPTL) for the development/redevelopment and use for buildings at Stoneleigh Park to provide a science, business, technology and innovation park (Use Class B1a and B1b), equine facilities, livestock and agricultural facilities, education and learning (Use Class D1), research (Use Class B1b), sustainability and energy, exhibitions, showground, hotel and conference facilities (Use Class C1/D1), animal husbandry and animal hospital, visitors centre, camping facilities, together with other ancillary uses and activities including retail, leisure and catering, and associated roads, footpaths, cycle routes, junctions improvements, parking, servicing and landscaping (including offsite highways infrastructure) which support the functioning of the park and demolition of some buildings and infrastructure.

Stoneleigh Park as an agriculture-related science park fits with the freeholder, the Royal Agricultural Society for England’s (RASE), Practice with Science agenda – one of the core charitable purposes funded by the income generated by Stoneleigh Park. The application area includes 101.6 of the existing Stoneleigh Park and the site location is shown in Figure 1.
The application seeks an increase in quantum floor space on site of up to 22%. The development will be supported by highway improvements and parking. The on-site bridge, at the Northern Entrance, is subject to an existing planning consent for improvements to Gate 3 (Ref: W/12/0229) and an application for a new roundabout, at the Southern Entrance, has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and is currently being considered (Ref: W/12/0230). Within the site there will be enhancements to pedestrian and vehicle access together with enhancements to site-wide landscaping. The aim is to secure the future of the park and redevelop the site as a modern science park with facilities to aid the promotion of the agricultural, equine and rural economy.

THE DEVELOPER

This Planning Application has been prepared and submitted by Harris Lamb on behalf of LIM (The Applicant).

LaSalle Investment Management are the managers of the largest private portfolio of science parks in the UK and one of the world’s leading real estate investment managers and are responsible for the management and development of Stoneleigh Park. LaSalle Investment Management is committed to the sustainable growth of the science parks which they manage in order to help secure their continued success. It is LIM’s intention to help Stoneleigh Park to become a leading site for agricultural and equine based research. LaSalle Investment Management is prepared to commit a considerable amount of investment within the Park in order to help secure its future.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The ES has been prepared by Ecus Ltd and technical specialists to accompany the Planning Application in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment, 2011). It includes consideration of potential effects to the environment that may occur throughout the life of the project including during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. The potential for cumulative effects to occur in conjunction with other major schemes in the vicinity has been included within the assessment of impacts.

SITE SELECTION AND LAYOUT DESIGN

Consideration of design alternatives has been undertaken as an intrinsic part of the scheme development and the proposed Stoneleigh Park scheme has been through several design iterations, to achieve the final layout; the main objective of which was to emphasise the site as a national hub for rural and sustainability research alongside equine centre of excellence and innovation science park whilst minimising the environmental impacts, such as landscape, visual and ecological effects.

A series of revisions to the Masterplan have progressively refined the project and changed the layout in light of greater knowledge of the technical constraints to the scheme, the environmental effects of the proposals and consideration of the feedback and comments on the proposals from the public consultations.

The Masterplan design was considered against landscape and visual criteria which were drawn from the baseline study, good practice and the assessors’ experience of assessing similar development. The design process also proceeded in response to consultation with WDC. Early assessments were used to inform the design of the Masterplan in an iterative way. Key considerations included:

- The need for the proposed Masterplan to complement and enhance the existing character of Stoneleigh Park.
• The potential effects on views to and from heritage assets including Stoneleigh Abbey and Registered Park.
• The need for the proposed Masterplan to retain the open character in the northern part of the site.
• Avoidance of impacts to veteran and significant mature trees.
• Enhancing habitats for wildlife, including the protected species great-crested newt.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME

The proposed scheme comprises an Outline Planning Application covering approximately 101.6 ha of land for the development/redevelopment and use for buildings at Stoneleigh Park.

The scheme includes for the potential development of approximately 23,640 m² of new floorspace within a 16,915 m² footprint for the uses identified above. The impact of this will be reduced by the demolition of 25 existing buildings comprising 6,340 m² of floorspace and 4,988 m² of building footprint is also included. An indicative Masterplan showing how the proposed increases in floorspace could be accommodated on the site is shown in Figure 2.
The implementation of the Masterplan will result in a 28 % increase in floor space and 15 % increase in building footprint compared to existing buildings on the site. This equates to a 22 % increase in floor space and 14 % increase in footprint when considered in conjunction with cumulative schemes. The final developed footprint on implementation of the Masterplan and cumulative schemes would be 94,959 m$^2$, which is a less than 0.1 % increase compared to the previously developed footprint of the site. The proposed development will result in only a 2 % loss of greenspace, which is focussed around the core of the site, which is well screened within the surrounding landscape and already supports a number of buildings.

Given that the future occupancy of each plot is not currently known, outline design details have been provided. Generally buildings will be constructed for specific tenants, but some speculative development may be undertaken if economic and market conditions are appropriate.

The indicative Masterplan includes a maximum building height of approximately 13.3 m. The Masterplan proposes siting taller buildings in a central landscaped corridor with formalised planting that will reduce the impact from key views and offer a well-connected centre for users.

The scheme will incorporate significant landscaping that will build on the applications that have previously been submitted. Pedestrian footpaths and cycle-ways will be provided to allow safe movement throughout the site and cycling use will be encouraged to and from site for day to day use.

The landscape strategy includes a range of planting types that define specific character areas, provide additional visual screening, seasonal interest and increased biodiversity. Native tree and shrub planting will be undertaken with native grassland improvements to ensure the development sits well within the surrounding context.

Attenuation of the surface water will be undertaken on a plot by plot basis or in an overall holistic scheme. A drainage survey will be undertaken at the detailed design stage for each building to confirm the location, depth, size and fall of the surface water network. This will enable an assessment at the detailed design stage for the location of any storage and control facility and to determine the capacities and capabilities of the current surface water network.

To encourage more sustainable vehicle travel, parking adjacent to new or refurbished buildings will include priority parking for car sharers in convenient locations and liftshare promoted through a Travel Plan. Car parking for the disabled, powered two-wheelers (motorbikes and scooters) and employee and visitor cycle parking will be provided in accordance with the vehicle parking standards as adopted by WDC.

To encourage an environment rich in colour and texture, some degree of flexibility will be permitted for the construction materials. The appearance of the buildings will be designed to reflect the agricultural nature of Stoneleigh Park. The development will be rural in character and appropriate in the context of the wider area. Buildings will be orientated to allow maximum passive solar gain to minimise heat and light requirements.

The scheme includes a strategy for developing renewable energy solutions on site to meet the WDC 10 % renewables target. This is included within the Sustainability Statement and identifies options including use of roof-mounted Photo-voltaic (PV) panels on new buildings, which would ensure that the proposed scheme meets or exceeds the 10 % target.

Off-site infrastructure improvements to the highway network are proposed within the accompanying Transport Assessment. The development will be progressed in response to
market demand and interest from potential occupiers. This will, in turn, be supported by off-site infrastructure improvements agreed with WCC.

A Construction Method Statement (CMS) will be prepared and implemented that will identify the significant environmental risks during construction and set out methods and procedures for managing these risks.

An outline Lighting Strategy for the site has been prepared and is included within the Design and Access Statement. The design seeks to provide sufficient lighting for the purposes of the development whilst ensuring that sensitive lighting, including measures such as low level directional LED bollard lighting are included through much of the park to minimise the potential for effects to sensitive environmental receptors including protected bat species and the adjacent Grade I Listed Stoneleigh Abbey.

CONSULTATION AND SCOPING

A formal Scoping Request was made and a response from WDC was obtained. The scoping process identified key environmental issues to determine which elements of the proposal were likely to cause significant environmental effects and established the work required for the preparation of the ES.

In addition to the formal consultation with WDC, consultation on the proposed development was undertaken directly between the technical specialists responsible for the assessment and a range of organisations, including statutory consultees.

In respect of Community Consultation a public consultation process has been carried out by LIM and the Team. Public consultation comprised of public exhibitions, meetings with local resident and interest groups, providing and distributing leaflets, literature and information about the project and its development throughout the time of preparation of this Application.

To assist consideration of the application the Applicant organised a series of public consultation events most notably on 31st May 2012 at Stoneleigh Park and 2nd June 2012 at the Kenilworth Show.

Meetings have taken place on a regular basis with officers at the Council and other statutory consultees including Warwickshire County Council Highways Department and the Highways Agency. Details of specific correspondence can be found within the Design and Access Statement as well as the Transport Assessment.

The consultation process has influenced both the content of the ES and helped form the principles upon which the proposals have been designed.

PLANNING POLICY

A detailed analysis of the key planning issues is set out in the Planning Supporting Statement. It has been established that the proposed development is Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) compliant.

The NPPF directly supports sustainable economic development. Local Authorities are required to plan proactively to meet development needs. There is a requirement to support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses and enterprises in the rural areas through both the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

The NPPF allows for limited infilling and the partial or complete redevelopment of the previously developed sites in the Green Belt provided that the development would not have
a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the purposes of including land within it. Unlike PPG2 – Green Belts, which set out specific advice on the scope of redevelopment and infilling in Major Development Sites (MDS), the NPPF does not set out detailed restrictions on infilling or redevelopment other than ensuring that the impact of the development does not adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt or purposes of including land within it. The proposed development will result in only a 2% loss of greenspace, which is focussed around the core of the site, which is well screened within the surrounding landscape and already supports a number of buildings. As the proposed development will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the current use or adversely impact upon the purposes of including in the Green Belt it is appropriate in this respect.

Warwick District Local Plan and Policy SSP2 identify the forms of development that are appropriate within MDS in the Green Belt. The policy advises that redevelopment and infilling development in MDS is appropriate provided that it is for either:

- employment purposes, or
- forms of development identified in the policies supporting text (in the case of Stoneleigh Park the requirements of Policy SSP3).

As the proposed development is for employment uses it is appropriate within the context of Local Plan Policies SSP2 and SSP3. In addition, the majority of buildings that are proposed in the less developed northern portion of the site are for agricultural and equine land uses that would be considered appropriate for the Green Belt.

There are no emerging policy documents or other material circumstances, relevant to the development, which suggests that the proposed scheme is inappropriate.

**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL**

Landscape and visual assessment was undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects from Ecus Ltd in accordance with professional best practice and the guidelines set out by the Landscape Institute. This has included consideration of the effects of the proposed development on the Landscape Character, on openness and on sensitive visual receptors including local residencies, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and designated heritage assets.

The study has produced computer generated Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) both with and without screening from existing buildings and vegetation to identify areas and points from which the proposed development would be likely to be visible. These have been confirmed through a series of site visits.

No significant impacts on the physical or visual characteristics of the Local Landscape Type (LLT) Arden Parklands or Green Belt were identified beyond the application area. Land within the site is characterised as previously developed land and the proposals are considered to comprise limited infilling of an existing scheme, of an appropriate scale and character to the Green Belt.

The proposals would have some effects on the open character as experienced from within the site, although the effect is not significant and no significant impacts on the wider Green Belt as experienced from outside the park are predicted.

The proposals would not result in any significant visual effects on receptor groups or designations that have been identified in the ZTV. A structural landscaping strategy for the proposed scheme has been developed that would further screen views of the site particularly from the north and east, including from Stoneleigh Abbey Registered Park.
The site includes a number of registered veteran trees and other significant mature trees that are characteristic of the site and surrounding parkland. The Masterplan design has been developed to avoid impacts to these trees and landscaping associated with the proposed scheme includes avenue tree planting and planting of parkland trees that will help to enhance the character of the site and integrate it within the surrounding landscape. Some micro-siting may be required at the detailed design stage to ensure that significant trees are not affected.

The proposed scheme would not conflict with any other landscape policy or designations. The implementation of the proposed Masterplan is not considered likely to result in significant cumulative effects when considered in conjunction with any of the cumulative schemes considered within the assessment.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE

Archaeology and cultural heritage assessment was undertaken by Ecus Ltd. A Desk Based Assessment (DBA) was undertaken that consulted a wide range of historical and archaeological existing data sources. This provided information on archaeological assets and archaeological potential of the site and identified the requirement for further archaeological investigations or mitigations as appropriate. The assessment included consideration of the potential for the introduction of the proposed development into the landscape to result in significant effects to the settings of above ground heritage assets. Viewpoint assessment for key heritage assets undertaken as part of the landscape and visual assessment was used to inform this process.

The site is situated within an area which is known to support historic activity from the prehistoric era to the 19th century. However, the limited of evidence for below ground artefacts recorded during archaeological investigation within the site combined with both a long history of ploughing and more recent development of Stoneleigh Park indicate that overall the likelihood of extant archaeological features being present within the site is considered to be low. However, there is some (moderate) potential for remains to be present in the southern half of the site, which is located within a medieval monastic outer precinct of Stoneleigh Abbey and in situ medieval remains have been identified through previous archaeological investigation.

As a result there is some potential for impacts to currently unknown below ground archaeology during the construction phase. A targeted phase of archaeological evaluation will be undertaken at the location of each of the proposed buildings prior to any construction being undertaken. This is cannot be undertaken as part of this Outline Application as the exact locations of buildings have not been confirmed at this stage and there is a risk that remains could be disturbed unnecessarily.

A written scheme of investigation will be devised in consultation with the County Archaeologist at the reserved matter stage for each plot. In line with the aims of the proposed scheme the potential for community engagement and involvement in relation to archaeological assessment will be explored.

In relation to the potential for impacts to setting, the assessment has considered the potential for the scheme to affect the settings of heritage assets within 3 km of the site. The potential for impacts upon heritage assets to arise during the operational phase of the scheme relates primarily to the visibility of proposed buildings in glimpsed views from key heritage receptors on the fringe of, and within, the ZTV. There are not expected to be significant effects outside of this envelope due to the low-lying location of the site, the generally low height of proposed buildings and the existing development on the site.
The majority of the heritage assets present within the study area are not expected to have views of the proposed scheme. The Grade I Listed Stoneleigh Abbey may have some visibility from the upper floors on the north and east side of the building, but the Abbey is screened from the application area by existing trees and buildings and the magnitude of change will be low and will not significantly alter the setting of the Abbey.

There is some potential for glimpsed views of the scheme from the upper stories at the northern end of the Abbey Gatehouse. No key views from the Abbey Gatehouse will be significantly altered by the proposed scheme. There is some potential for glimpsed views of the scheme from the upper stories at the northern end of the Gatehouse. No key views from the Abbey Gatehouse will be significantly altered by the proposed scheme. As such the magnitude of change from the addition of the proposed development to Stoneleigh Park is considered to be of negligible impact to this heritage asset.

There will be no significant changes in views to any of the Grade I, II* or II Listed Buildings in the study area. For most of the buildings any change will be of low magnitude and the effect will be slight. No significant effects to the settings of any of these assets are predicted to result from the implementation of the proposed Masterplan.

No significant impacts to Schedules Ancient Monuments (SAM) are predicted to occur. For many of these monuments the setting is not as important a component of their designation as it is for other designated heritage assets.

The proposed development will not be visible from Ashow Conservation Area, and although there are likely to be some areas of Stoneleigh Conservation Area from which the scheme will be visible, the site is well screened and this will not result in significant impacts to the setting or historic character of the Conservation Area.

The existing Stoneleigh Park is visible from some areas of the Stoneleigh Abbey Registered Park and the application area itself forms part of the (undesignated) parkland. The landscaping strategy for the proposed scheme includes additional screening to the site boundary to minimise the appearance of built development when viewed from the Registered Park and avenue planting within the application area will help to integrate the site with its surrounding landscape.

The development of the proposed scheme in combination with cumulative schemes in the local area, including the Equine Wellbeing Centre (EWC) and recently consented office development within Stoneleigh Park will not result in significant effects to the settings of any of the heritage assets present within the vicinity of the site.

No significant impacts to the settings of any designated heritage assets are anticipated to result from the implementation of the proposed Masterplan.

**ECOLOGY AND NATURE CONSERVATION**

An assessment of the ecological impacts of the redevelopment of Stoneleigh Park has been carried out by Ecus Ltd following the guidelines set out by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

The assessment process has identified and evaluated a number of key ecological features within, and adjacent to, the application area. This included survey of habitats and species within the application area. Surveys were carried out for protected habitats and species including hedgerows, badger, amphibians and reptiles. An assessment of the suitability of the site for hazel dormouse was also undertaken. Information relating to badgers is provided as a separate Appendix to the ES as this species is at risk of persecution.
Consultation was undertaken with statutory nature conservation organisations and other wildlife interest groups and this, along with the field survey, helped to ensure that all habitats and species that may be affected by the development were fully considered.

The surveys and consultation identified the presence of bat roosts and great-crested newts within the site boundary. Common pipistrelle bats are present in some of the buildings that will be demolished and this work will be carried out under licence from Natural England to ensure that no significant impacts to bats result from the demolition works.

Small populations of great-crested newt were recorded from two of the ponds on the site. The majority of buildings included on the indicative Masterplan are either located too far from the pond locations to be likely to affect these populations or are located on land such as existing buildings or hardstanding or amenity grassland areas that are not likely to be used by newts. There may be potential for the construction of some of the buildings close to the ponds, particularly Building N and Building P in the northeast of the site to affect newt populations, which, without mitigation would represent a significant impact to this species. Once the detailed designs of buildings in these locations are known, detailed mitigations will be put in place to ensure that great-crested newts and their habitats are protected during works. In some instances this may require a licence from Natural England. Depending on the timescales of development additional surveys may be required in future to ensure that the detailed design process considers the most up to date information.

Dormice and otters are present within the local area, but are not known to use the application area. Otter are known to use the River Avon adjacent to the Park, but the Masterplan is not anticipated to affect the river and no impacts to otter are predicted. Hazel dormice are present within 2 km of the application area, but the locations of these records are separated from the site by the River Avon and there is no direct link between recorded populations and the site. The wooded areas on the site are not ideal for dormouse as they lack a structural understorey and the Masterplan layout does not include landtake of the wooded areas. Searches for signs of dormouse including nut hunts did not record any signs of dormouse activity, but due to the timescales of the project these could not be undertaken at the optimal time of year. However, as the indicative Masterplan does not include landtake of wooded areas that could be suitable for dormouse no impacts to this species are anticipated to result from the scheme as proposed.

No reptiles were recorded on site during the surveys. However, the possibility that grass snake may use the banks of the River Avon from time to time cannot be ruled out. No disturbance to the habitats that could be used by grass snake is anticipated and no impacts to any grass snake that may be present in these areas are anticipated to result from the scheme as proposed.

The development of the Masterplan has been an iterative process that has considered the ecological interests of the site and its surroundings. Aspects of the design that were influenced by the ecological requirements of the site included ensuring that the outline layout was located away from existing woodland, ponds and badger setts, where practicable, and linear features including hedgerows and woodland edge habitats.

The outline landscape strategy for the proposed scheme has been developed with consideration of the ecological requirements of the habitats and species interests present within, and adjacent to, the application area and includes provision for managing ponds where great-crested newt are present in a sensitive way to promote the conservation of this species on the site. It is recommended that a detailed landscape and ecology enhancement and management plan is developed to consolidate and confirm the recommendations following receipt of planning approval.
In summary the majority of the potential effects of the proposed development are predicted to be neutral, of net local benefit or of no significance outside their area of immediate effect. The potential for adverse effects to protected species, including badgers, bats and great-crested newts, has been largely avoided through the sensitive location of areas of new construction, which will be reflected in the detailed design of the individual applications. Therefore no significant adverse residual impacts to nature conservation are anticipated to arise from the development as proposed.

**NOISE AND VIBRATION**

A noise impact assessment has been undertaken by NoiseAssess. Because the planning application is for outline permission and the locations and end uses of buildings are not fixed it is not appropriate, or possible, to undertake detailed noise assessment in respect of individual buildings at this stage. However, the assessment has included general consideration of the likely effects of construction and demolition works and considered the likely requirements in respect of noise sensitive uses that are contained within the Masterplan, particularly the proposed campsite and hotel extension.

A noise survey was undertaken at four noise sensitive locations around the park to establish the ambient noise levels. The scope of the assessment was discussed with the Environmental Health Officer at WDC.

The Transport Assessment undertaken as part of the application has indicated that the predicted traffic flows on the public highways adjacent to the site and through Stoneleigh Village will be lower following the implementation of the development proposals than they would be in the ‘do minimum’ scenario. As the noise from traffic on the public highway will not increase there is not expected to be any adverse impact from highway noise.

The impact of noise from traffic movements within the site resulting from this development is likewise not expected to be significant.

It is not anticipated that there will be any significant noise issues arising from the change of the campsite area from temporary to permanent use and none of the end uses within the proposed Masterplan are considered likely to generate high levels of noise or vibration. However, where sensitive or noise generating end uses are proposed it is recommended that this be reviewed at the detailed design stage.

In common with all projects of this nature, construction and demolition works can give rise to temporary noise effects. Appropriate steps can be taken to control noise where necessary, as set out in British Standard (BS) BS5228, which provides guidance on control of plant and activity noise levels from construction and demolition sites. A detailed construction programme will be available at the detailed design stage when full calculations of construction noise can be undertaken. However, it is proposed that the construction activities will be phased over time such that noisy activities are confined to restricted areas of the site at any one time. Appropriate mitigation controls and recommendations given in BS5228 will be included in the Construction Environmental Management Plan.

**AIR QUALITY AND DUST**

The air quality impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed development at Stoneleigh Park have been assessed by Air Quality Consultants. Existing conditions within the study area show good air quality, with concentrations all well below the air quality objectives.
The operational impacts of changes in traffic emissions arising from the changes in traffic on local roads, due to the development, have been assessed. Concentrations have been modelled for eight worst-case receptors, representing existing properties where impacts are expected to be greatest. In the case of NO$_2$, the modelling has been carried out assuming both a) vehicle emissions decrease (using ‘official’ emission factors) and b) do not decrease in future years. This is to allow for current uncertainty over emission factors for nitrogen oxides (NO$_x$) that have been identified by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (Carslaw et al., 2011).

It is concluded that concentrations of Particulate Matter (PM) PM$_{10}$ and PM$_{2.5}$ would remain below the objectives at all existing receptors in 2026, whether the scheme is developed or not. In the case of nitrogen dioxide (NO$_2$), the annual mean concentrations remain below the objective at all existing receptors in 2026, whether the scheme is developed or not, and whether or not a reduction in vehicle emissions of nitrogen oxides is assumed.

The proposed scheme would decrease traffic volumes on local roads by a small amount. These changes would lead to an imperceptible decrease in concentrations of PM$_{10}$ and PM$_{2.5}$ at all existing receptors, and the impacts would all be negligible. In the case of NO$_2$, there would be small decreases at most receptors, with a medium decrease at one receptor. The impacts would be negligible at all receptors.

The overall operational air quality impacts of the development are judged to be insignificant. This conclusion, which takes account of the uncertainties in future projections, in particular for NO$_2$, is based on the concentrations being well below the objectives and impacts all being negligible.

The construction works have the potential to create dust, such that there is considered to be a slight adverse impact during construction, without mitigation. The cumulative impacts of the proposed development and other consented developments also have the potential to cause a slight adverse impact. During construction it will therefore be necessary to apply a package of mitigation measures to minimise dust emission. With these mitigation measures in place the residual impacts during construction are judged to be negligible.

**TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION**

This chapter of the report presents details of the anticipated highways and transport impacts of the proposed development. A thorough assessment of the person and vehicle trips which will be generated by the proposed development has been undertaken and these data have then been applied to a number of traffic models to assess the impact of the proposed development on the local and strategic highway networks.

Key observations from the highway modelling work have been presented with accompanying data extracts. The data demonstrates that, in the 2026 ‘Do Minimum’ scenarios, the highway network will become increasingly busy, with delays and significant queuing becoming commonplace.

The proposed development will result in additional vehicle trips to and from Stoneleigh Park, particularly in the AM and PM peak hours. However, a mitigation package has been proposed that will seek to reduce the number of additional vehicle trips by encouraging more sustainable travel behaviour by Stoneleigh Park employees and visitors. In addition, targeted off-site highway works will deliver improvements to capacity which will benefit both Stoneleigh Park traffic and other road users. The net impact of implementing the Stoneleigh Park Masterplan will therefore represent a positive change in comparison with the anticipated situation where the proposed development does not take place. Further information regarding any of the analysis presented in this chapter of the ES can be found in
the JMP Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan documents that accompany this Planning Application.

GROUND CONDITION AND LAND USE

Assessment of ground conditions and land use was undertaken by Ecus Ltd. Baseline conditions of aspects of soil quality and soil contamination in the vicinity of the proposed scheme were defined by means of a desk study, walkover survey and hand-excavation of trial pits within, and close to, the areas of proposed development.

Stoneleigh Park comprises a previously developed land within the Green Belt. This designation applies to the entire area within the application area boundary and the development as proposed will not result in any change to the existing land use in terms of its classification.

Some current and past site uses may have the potential to have caused soil contamination, including the presence of a printers and blacksmith along with above-ground and underground fuel storage tanks. The areas of proposed development were visually inspected during the walkover survey and no significant potentially contaminating activities or evidence of soil contamination was noted.

The majority of the identified potential sources of contamination are not in areas that will be subject to redevelopment and the likelihood of new contaminant linkages being introduced to the site during redevelopment works is very slight. Where development is proposed near to any of these areas further investigation should be undertaken prior to commencement of any development works. The proposals will generally have relatively low potential for human exposure to soils.

Given the very slight risks related to soil contamination from the proposed development for the majority of the site, no specific mitigation measures are considered necessary, except in the vicinity of Building D, where a previous fuel spill has occurred. Intrusive site investigation works should ideally be carried out in order to investigate the potential for soil contamination in this area. However, as the fuel-oil tank is located within the building, which is still in use, intrusive site investigation works would be currently considered impractical, and may not locate all potential contamination due to the existing constraints in the area.

Should any gross soil contamination be identified during redevelopment works at the site, then intrusive site investigation methods should be employed in order to identify and delineate any soil contamination and to provide information for any remedial measures required.

The development will lead to the permanent loss of 4.8 ha of very good, good and moderate agricultural quality land resource. However, the land has not been in agricultural production use for at least 40 years, when the National Agricultural Centre was first constructed. It is unlikely that the land would revert to agricultural production for as long as Stoneleigh Park remains in its current use.

Stripping of the site for construction is unlikely to lead to a significant net loss of soil resources, as the soil would be suitable for transfer to other agricultural sites, or within redevelopment and restoration/reclamation schemes.

No significant impacts in respect of ground conditions, land use or contamination are anticipated to result from the implementation of the proposed Masterplan.
WATER RESOURCES

An assessment of the effects of the implementation of the indicative Masterplan on water resources including and likely changes to flood risk and water quality has been undertaken by Ecus Ltd. The assessment has included desk study, walkover survey and consultation with the statutory authorities including the Environment Agency.

Construction of the proposed development, plus the development itself has the potential to cause adverse effects to surface water in the vicinity of the site. With the correct mitigation measures in place, the development proposals are likely to have little impact upon the quality of surface waters.

A major aquifer is present beneath the site. It is considered that with the mitigation measures put in place to protect surface waters, no adverse impacts on groundwater will be caused by the development.

The proposed development has been designed in such a way so as to minimise the likelihood of a fluvial flood affecting the site. The site will also not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

SOCIOECONOMICS AND TOURISM

Assessment of the economics effects of the scheme as well as the effects on tourism has been undertaken by Sheffield Business School. The study has included consideration of the baseline socio-economic characteristics of the labour market within the local ward and where appropriate, information is compared with that for the Warwick and Coventry sub-region and Great Britain. Based on the land uses proposed, the potential impacts assessed concentrate on those related to employment, productivity/Gross Value Added (GVA) and structure of the local economy. The analysis seeks to measure the impact of the proposal on the economy and on employment and visitors including tourism.

This socio-economic analysis draws on the proposal’s potential to offer both additional direct and indirect employment, educational and visitor facilities and the effect of the proposed development on the wider economy is assessed. The science and technology sector and the knowledge economy have continued to grow despite the recession. Stoneleigh Park can take advantage of both their current resilience and long-term potential and the proposed scheme will boost the sub-region’s reputation for science and the skills pool available to potential tenants.

The proposed Stoneleigh Park development fits well in with the expected economic trends in the sub-regional economy with a gradual restructuring of the economy towards a more ‘knowledge based’ economy, with more emphasis on the higher quality jobs reflecting a move to more scientific and technological based economic activity, increasing the GVA.

The proposed implementation of the Masterplan will create a total of 1,500 jobs over a 15 year periods, which are anticipated to be phased at approximately 100 jobs per year. Stoneleigh Park currently employs 1,100 people over 50 % of whom live within 8 km of the park. The Masterplan is considered to be of beneficial in terms of job creation and diversification of the employment base and there is potential for the scheme to reduce unemployment rates, reduce out-commuting and to provide job diversification and replacement for losses in other sectors. The long term implementation of the Masterplan is not considered likely to put sudden increased burden on housing stock.

Without the redevelopment of the Stoneleigh site the quality of the business units and overall site will mean that rather than new businesses developing on the site it is more likely the
more technical scientific higher quality businesses will move away reducing Stoneleigh contribution to GVA of the local economy.

In addition without the proposed changes to the site the tourism economy is likely to diminish over time. If the proposed redevelopment does go forward there is likely to be growth in higher quality jobs and economic activity associated with the new science park type activities, which is likely to move the tourism activity to a higher GVA by improving the structure of the local tourist economy.

CONCLUSIONS

This Non Technical Summary has outlined the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment for the future development and redevelopment of Stoneleigh Park based on the proposed scheme as presented in the indicative Masterplan. Full details of the assessments undertaken are set out in the Environmental Statement and accompanying technical appendices. Further information on the scheme design, planning policy and community interest package are contained within the Planning Application documents.

No significant residual environmental impacts are anticipated to result from any aspect of the development as proposed. This implementation of the proposed development will not significantly affect green space within the site, with a less than 2% reduction in green space. The development will not significantly affect the characteristics of openness within the Green Belt.

The scheme will provide phased creation of high quality jobs that can be filled predominantly from the existing local catchment of the Park. In the absence of the regeneration it is likely that the contribution that the Park makes to the local economy will decline in future as the fabric of park deteriorates and it is harder to attract high quality science-based businesses and event holders to the Park in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

The full Environmental Statement and its technical appendices have been distributed to WDC and key consultees. It is available for public inspection on the WDC website and at their offices during the statutory consultation period.