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Your ref: Regulation 19
consultation

Our ref: J0048230

The Local Plans Team
South Staffs Council
Wolverhampton Road,
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Monday 13th December 2021

Via email only

Dear Sirs

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION

These representations to the South Staffordshire Council Local Plan Review Preferred Options Consultation have been prepared by Carter Jonas on behalf of South Staffordshire College, who have their Rodbaston Campus within the District. We focus on the matters specifically related to South Staffordshire College (Rodbaston) located at Rodbaston Drive, Penkridge, Stafford, ST19 5PH.

We wish to comment on the **Proposed Policy HC16 – South Staffordshire College:**

“HC16 - South Staffordshire College - Retain existing policy set out in the adopted Core Strategy (Policy EV4), with the exception of removing reference to Masterplan.”

We note that the supporting Paragraph 6.16 on page 76 of the Preferred Options document comments:

“As part of the District’s education offer development associated with the use of South Staffordshire College (Rodbaston) as an education and training establishment will continue to be supported.”

The current development plan for South Staffordshire Council comprises the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2012). Policy EV4 within that document is as follows:

“Policy EV4: South Staffordshire College (Rodbaston)

Within the Special Policy Area defined on the Policies Map, proposals for new development associated with the use of South Staffordshire College (Rodbaston) as an education and training establishment will be supported. Proposals for the site should be in accordance with a Master Plan to be submitted to the Council for approval following consultation with the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Proposals should show:

- a) that the development proposed is for education and training uses directly related to the activities of the College and can include business start up activities to support people into work in areas of employment related to College Curriculum subjects;*
- b) That the development is of a scale and massing appropriate to its location having regard to the guidelines in respect of building footprints, heights and design that are set out in the approved Master Plan;*

- c) *that the design and external appearance of the development is of a high standard and uses high quality sustainable materials;*
- d) *where appropriate, existing buildings that are surplus to requirements are demolished;*
- e) *the provision of satisfactory access and vehicle parking;*
- f) *the incorporation of a satisfactory landscaping scheme, which complements and enhances the development and the local environment;*
- g) *that the development is located outside Flood Zones 2 and 3;*
- h) *that the development will not lead to the loss of sports facilities or, if it does, then compensatory provision/investment in sports facilities can be found in a suitable location elsewhere within the College estate. Any replacement sports provision must be equivalent if not better than that being replaced in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility. Development proposals should be consistent with other local planning policies.”*

South Staffordshire College (Rodbaston Campus) wish to express their support for proposed Policy HC16 which seeks to retain the existing policy wording of adopted Policy EV4. We welcome the ongoing support from South Staffordshire Council for the Rodbaston Campus which is an important educational facility in the region and provides valuable employment and training opportunities.

Rodbaston specialises in providing further and higher courses for construction related industries and land-based activities such as fisheries and aquaculture, animal care and equestrian pursuits. It also offers a range of training services that support land-based businesses. Extensive investment in recent years has enabled the development of an broad range of state-of-the-art learning centre facilities, equipment and buildings. It includes a working farm, animal care unit, veterinary nursing centre, equestrian centre, indoor and outdoor equine centres, floristry centre, gardens and hot houses, a fisheries centre, visitor centre and animal zone. Some residential accommodation is also provided on the site.

It is recognised that Rodbaston is a long established educational institution in the Green Belt and it is the only centre of its kind in Staffordshire delivering land based environmental and sustainable training for industry..

The College supports 1,200 full time students annually, is an important local employer and provides opportunities locally for training and development in sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, animal care, veterinary care, equine and countryside management.

The College has expanded its commercial side over recent years to include Rodbaston Animal Zone, a college-campus zoo which attracts tourists from the local area, whilst also allowing an additional income stream for the College to practice animal and veterinary care.

A policy which aims to support the ongoing use of Rodbaston for educational and training purposes whilst recognising that appropriate business start up activities on the site will complement the primary use of the site for education and training purposes is welcomed. It is important for Rodbaston to be recognised as such in a distinct policy within the emerging Local Plan so that it can continue to operate in the long-term as a valuable educational facility within the District.

South Staffordshire College will continue to work positively with South Staffordshire Council through the local plan process and welcome the opportunity to comment on any future consultation documents.

Yours sincerely,



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Partner

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