

Mr A Freeman  
C/o Intelligent Plans and  
Examinations Ltd  
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Bath  
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## Planning Policy

Planning Policy  
Cheshire West and Chester Council  
The Portal  
Wellington Road  
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CH65 0BA

**Please ask for:** Catherine Morgetroyd  
**Email:**

**Web:** [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

**Date:** 3 March 2026

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our reference NP013    your ref: 01/AF/BNDO    please ask for: Catherine Morgetroyd

Dear Mr Freeman,

### **Cheshire West and Chester – Response to Examiner’s Initial Questions Blacon Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) Examination**

Further to your letter dated 19 February 2026, please find below a response from the Council to your initial questions. Blacon Neighbourhood Alliance Neighbourhood Forum have provided a separate response to your questions.

Please see below the Cheshire West and Chester Council (CW&C) response to the following questions:

1. A Neighbourhood Development Order must not grant planning permission for a development where planning permission is already granted. Please confirm that no such planning permission has been granted.
2. Does the Council have any reason to suppose that, with up to 64 car parking spaces (and a Travel Plan and cycle parking), the proposal would be unacceptable?
3. Has the Neighbourhood Development Order been screened for Habitats Regulations Assessment (under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017)? Would HRA be necessary? Has this conclusion been confirmed by Natural England? Is there any relevant correspondence from Natural England other than the Regulation 16 response dated 29 January 2026 to the Community Neighbourhood Plan?
4. It is also necessary to consider whether the Order falls within Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Please provide a screening opinion/determination.

The other questions are for Blacon Neighbourhood Alliance only.



CW&C response:

1. I can confirm that no planning permission has been granted for the proposals in the NDO (i.e. for an indoor sports, recreation and community use building at Carins Crescent, Blacon) or for any similar proposal on that site.
2. It is difficult for CW&C to comment on whether the proposal is acceptable in terms of parking provision due to the level of uncertainty about scale and nature of the proposed building and the likely uses. Decisions on parking are taken using a vision-led approach where sustainable transport modes are prioritised, taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location. Policy T 5 in the Local Plan (Part Two) states the proposals will be supported that “provide sufficient parking facilities to serve the needs of the development and have regard to the Council’s latest adopted parking standards for cars and other vehicles as necessary, including cycles”. Policy T 5 is considered to be a strategic policy. The Council has a Supplementary Planning Document on Parking Standards. This was updated in February 2022 and is available at: [Supplementary Planning Document: Parking Standards - Updated February 2022](#). The standards are ‘maximum’ rather than ‘minimum’ standards.

The total proposed floorspace for the building is set out in the NDO as 3,120m<sup>2</sup> and this comprises Class E(d) indoor sports and recreation and Class F2(b) community uses, but details of the split between the uses is not provided. The concept building layout shows the sports and recreation part as around a third of the building and the ‘hall’ as about two thirds. However, the ‘hall’ may be used for either football or community use and the concept layout is just indicative, so the split between the uses could be different. There is existing parking on the site for the current pitches and youth club building and in future, parking would be required to serve football matches and training on the outdoor pitches. No information has been provided about how the site would be managed as a whole, so it isn’t clear whether there could be matches on both pitches at the same time as clubs, classes or events within the proposed building. The building zone plan shows 1,764m<sup>2</sup> for parking, but this is just an example and the exact level of parking provided could differ. Space would also need to be provided for access and circulation within the car parking.

Based on the information provided, it would appear that 64 parking spaces could potentially be provided on the site, and this could be sufficient for a development of this type in this location. Any overspill would be likely to be for small periods and unlikely to generate a level of harm which would amount to a conflict with local and national policy. However, as set out above – it is difficult to be certain on this due to the lack of certainty about the proposed development, uses and proposed level of parking provision.

3. HRA screening has been undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, but not specifically for the NDO. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policy BLACON1 which relates to the sports and community hub building. The proposals within BLACON1 are virtually the same as the proposals within the NDO. In the table in Appendix 5 of the HRA screening for the

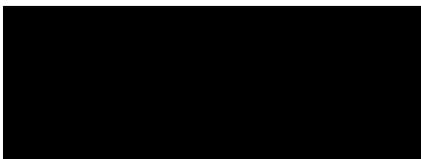
Neighbourhood Plan, it specifically states for policy BLACON1: “very small scale site and a significant distance from any protected sites. Policy mentions meeting drainage standards, so unlikely to have negative impacts on water quality, hydrology or runoff. Provision of a local facility may reduce the need to travel and thereby improve air quality. Provides an alternative recreational facility and will not increase recreational pressures on protected sites. Could potentially impact on abstraction, but individual building only on a small site, so would be a very minor impact. No impact on invasive species. No Likely Significant Effects (LSE).” This concludes that there are no LSE alone or in combination. The conclusion for the HRA screening of the Neighbourhood Plan as a whole is that it is unlikely to have an adverse effect on a European Site, alone or in combination with other plans and projects. As such, Appropriate Assessment is not considered to be required. HRA screening is only required if a project has the potential to cause LSEs. The screening of the Neighbourhood Plan indicates that BLACON1 has no LSEs and therefore the proposed NDO would not have LSEs. Therefore, HRA screening of the NDO is not required.

The screening determination was sent to Natural England on 7 November 2025. Natural England responded on 11 December 2025 and their response is provided as an attachment to this letter. Natural England conclude that “It is Natural England’s advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that significant effects on Habitats Sites are unlikely”.

If the NDO proposal had been put forward as a planning application, the Development Management Team would have used the Government’s risk impact assessment zones for designated sites to determine whether there would be an adverse effect. This is criteria based and looks at the location and type of development. We have run the proposal through the mapping and it states that we do not need to consult Natural England because the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites, so we are satisfied that there is no need to screen the development under the HRA regulations.

4. The Environmental Impact Assessment analysis and screening proforma is attached. This identifies that the proposal is not Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development.

Yours sincerely



Catherine Morgetroyd

Principal Planning Officer (Planning Policy)

Date: 11 December 2025  
Our ref: 532883  
Your ref: Blacon Neighbourhood Plan



Ms Catherine Morgetroyd  
Cheshire West & Chester Council

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Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Ms Morgetroyd

### **Blacon Neighbourhood Plan - SEA/HRA & Marine Plan Screening Consultation**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 07 November 2025.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

#### **Screening Request: Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

**It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that significant effects on Habitats Sites are unlikely,**

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland.

Where Neighbourhood Plans could have significant environmental effects, they may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended). The Neighbourhood Plan proposals should also be screened to ascertain whether Strategic Environmental Assessment is necessary. Further guidance on deciding whether the proposals are likely to have significant environmental effects and the requirements for consulting Natural England on SEA are set out in the [planning practice guidance](#).

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle  
Consultations Team

## EIA ANALYSIS AND SCREENING PROFORMA

### ANALYSIS

<b>1</b>	<b>Case Details</b>	
<b>a</b>	LPA Case Reference	
	N/A	
<b>b</b>	SOS Case Reference	
	N/A	
<b>c</b>	Site Address	
	Cairns Crescent, Blacon, Chester	
<b>d</b>	Brief description of development	
	NDO for sports and community hub, repositioning of sports pitches, provision of car and cycle parking and reprovision of children's play area.	
<b>e</b>	Approval of reserved matters?	
	Yes	
	No	No
	Approval of conditions?	
	Yes	
	No	Conditions will be prepared and approved separately.
If YES, enter the description of development subject of the related planning permission		
<b>f</b>	Area of development/works/new floorspace (as appropriate)	
	Up to 3,120 sq m building, plus additional external work.	
<b>g</b>	Development Type	
	Class E(d) and F2(b), with additional external works.	
<b>2</b>	<b>EIA Details</b>	
<b>A</b>	<b>Schedule 1</b>	
<b>(i)</b>	Is the proposed development Schedule 1 development as described in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations?	
	Yes	
	No	X
<b>(ii)</b>	If YES, under which description of development in Column 1 i.e. No.s 1-13?	
	N/A	
<b>B</b>	<b>Schedule 2</b>	
<b>(i)</b>	Is the proposed development Schedule 2 development as described in Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations?	
	Yes	
	No	X – due to the small scale of the proposal it would not be considered an urban development project including more than 1 hectare of urban development and the overall area of the development does not exceed 5 hectares
<b>(ii)</b>	If YES, under which description of development in Column 1 i.e. No.s 1-13?	

	N/A	
<b>(iii)</b>	Is the development within, partly within, or near a “sensitive area” as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations?	
	Yes	
	No	X
<b>(iv)</b>	If YES, which area?	
	N/A	
<b>(v)</b>	Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded/met?	
	Yes	
	No	X
<b>(vi)</b>	If YES, which applicable threshold/criteria?	
	N/A	
<b>3</b>	<b>LPA/SOS Screening</b>	
	<b>All applications inc reserved matters/conditions</b>	
<b>(i)</b>	Has the LPA issued a Screening Opinion (SO)?	
	Yes	
	No	X
<b>(ii)</b>	Has the SOS (GO) issued a Screening Direction (SD)?	
	Yes	
	No	X
<b>(iii)</b>	If YES, is a copy of the SO/SD on the file?	
	Yes	N/A
	No	N/A
<b>(iv)</b>	If YES, is the SO/SD positive?	
	Yes	N/A
	No	N/A
	<b>Reserved matters/conditions applications only</b>	
<b>(i)</b>	Was original PP subject to EIA screening?	
	Yes	N/A
	No	N/A
<b>(ii)</b>	Was a SO/SD issued for the original PP?	
	Yes	N/A
	No	N/A
<b>(iii)</b>	If YES, is a copy of the SO/SD for the original PP on file?	
	Yes	N/A
	No	N/A
<b>4</b>	<b>Environmental Statement (ES)</b>	
	Has the applicant supplied an ES for the current or previous (if reserved matters or conditions) application?	
	Yes	
	No	X

<b>Name</b>	Catherine Morgetroyd, Principal Planning Officer Cheshire West and Chester Council
<b>Date</b>	10/11/2025