

COMMITTEE AGENDA REFERENCE: 5A

APPLICATION REF:	RU.23/0118
LOCATION	Longcross South, Longcross Road and Kitsmead Lane, Longcross, KT16 0EE
PROPOSAL	Temporary planning permission for the use of the land for film studio purposes including the erection of studio stages and workshops, erection of cabins and marquees within dedicated zones, and the use of the land for associated filming purposes and as studio backlot (part retrospective)
TYPE	Full Planning Permission
EXPIRY DATE	16/08/2023
WARD	Longcross, Lyne and Chertsey South
CASE OFFICER	Melissa Gale
REASON FOR COMMITTEE DETERMINATION	Major application
<i>If you have questions about this report please contact Ashley Smith, Victoria Gibson or the case officer.</i>	

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Planning Committee authorises the HoP:	
1.	Grant temporary planning permission subject to conditions

2. DETAILS OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site forms a large proportion of the land forming the Longcross Garden Village site allocation south of the M3. The site is allocated under policy SD9 of the Local Plan for residential development including employment and associated community uses. The wider Longcross south site borders the M3 to the north, Kitsmead Lane to the east, Longcross Road to the south and to the west the former Longcross Barracks. Following the adoption of the 2030 Local Plan the site now lies within the urban area. The site was formerly used by the Defence & Research Agency (DERA) as a military tank testing facility together with land north of the M3. The southern site, comprises former tank testing facilities, including a concrete test track (forming a circuit around the site's periphery) and significant other areas of hardstanding, including a 'multi-gradient vehicle drop' and large central 'skid pan' area of hardstanding. The site also includes pockets of trees and woodland, in particular along the road boundaries, with eastern and southern tree belts being protected by TPO (No.6). More recently the whole of the southern site area is now covered by an area Tree

Preservation Order (TPO no.461).

- 2.2 The current application relates to a total site area of approximately 56.8 hectares located within the wider Longcross south site. It includes access to the public highway utilising the existing vehicular road bridge over the M3 connecting the northern and southern site, and providing access over the M3 to the north and onto Chobham Lane via the existing roundabout junction. There are currently two points of access into the southern Longcross site, including the existing vehicular access off Longcross Road to the south. The site area includes the majority of the existing test track roadway which extends around the perimeter of the site, the central 'skid pan' hardstanding area, the 'multi-gradient vehicle drop' and land to the north, west and south of the scheduled ancient monument and includes areas of open land and hardstanding as well as areas of trees and scrub. There are several existing buildings associated with the former use of the site within the application site area.
- 2.3 The site lies within the 5 – 7 km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA), with the far western boundary abutting the 400m SPA buffer zone with Chobham Common which is located to the west and south and which is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area and Special Site of Conservation. The site lies within the urban area and forms part of the designated Longcross Garden Village (policy SD9), which identifies the site for a new settlement comprising residential and employment uses. Both the sites north and south of the M3 have over recent years been used for film purposes with the use of the southern site having intensified following the lease of the northern film studio site to Netflix and the lease of the southern site to Serious Stages.

3. APPLICATION DETAILS

- 3.1 Full planning permission is sought for the temporary use of the land for film studio purposes including the erection of studio stages and workshops, erection of cabins and marquees within dedicated zones, and the use of the land for associated filming purposes and as studio backlot (part retrospective). The application site is currently being used for filming purposes and is referred to as Longcross Studios, with the majority of the structures (Meganova, stage and workshop buildings) having already been erected on site and in use for film related purposes. The current application is seeking to regularise the current use of the land and the erection of the buildings and structures together with proposals for additional buildings on site. Since the submission of the planning application work has commenced on Meganova E and F and Stage 9 in the northeast corner of the site. The structures/buildings which have not been constructed to date are Meganova G and H which are proposed towards the northern boundary on existing hardstanding, directly to the south of the M3. The table below details the existing and proposed buildings/structures to which this application relates. Permission is being sought for a temporary 5 year period.
- 3.2 The current application covers a large proportion of the Longcross Garden Village site allocation south of the M3, excluding the south eastern area of the site allocation. The application excludes the listed Barrowhills House, the Bowl Barrow Scheduled Ancient monument and surrounding land to the south and east, but does include the existing perimeter roadway (test track) which provides access around the site.

The buildings range in size. The application includes the following:

Structure	Status	Maximum Height	Floor Area (Internal) m2	Construction
Meganova A	Retrospective	18.2m	2268	Low level concrete panels and composite wall panels

Meganova B	Retrospective	18.2m	2730	Low level concrete panels and composite wall panels
Meganova E (phase 1)	Construction commenced	36.3m	1431	PVC fabric sheets
Meganova E (phase 2)	Proposed	19m	1431	Low level concrete panels and composite wall panels
Meganova F	Now complete	24.4m	2268	Low level concrete panels and composite wall panels
Meganova G	Proposed	18.2m	2268	Low level concrete panels and composite wall panels
Meganova H	Proposed	18.2m	2268	Low level concrete panels and composite wall panels
Stage 1	Retrospective	21.6m	4095	PVC fabric sheets
Stage 2	Retrospective	16.9m	2898	PVC fabric sheets
Stage 3	Retrospective	14.5m	1175	PVC fabric sheets
Stage 4	Retrospective	14.8m	2686	PVC fabric sheets
Stage 5	Retrospective	15m	938	Low level concrete panels and PVC fabric sheets above
Stage 9	Retrospective	15.6m	1258	PVC fabric sheets
Workshop 1	Retrospective	7.6m	883	Composite wall panels with PVC fabric pillow roof
Workshop 2	Retrospective	7.6m	883	Composite wall panels with PVC fabric pillow roof
Workshop 3	Retrospective	6.7m	439	Composite wall panels with PVC fabric pillow roof
Workshop 4	Retrospective	6.7m	439	Composite wall panels with PVC fabric pillow roof
Workshop 5	Retrospective	15.3m	1246	PVC fabric sheets
Workshop 6	Retrospective	12.8m	569	PVC fabric sheets
Workshop 7	Retrospective	13.6m	425	PVC fabric sheets

- 3.3 Meganova's E and F are located to the far north-east corner of the site are currently under construction and comprise the largest of the buildings. Meganova F has a height of 24.4m, while Meganova E is proposed at 36.3m in height for a temporary period of one year to accommodate specific filming requirements before reducing in height to 19m for the remaining temporary time period sought. Work has continued on Meganova E during the course of this application and the internal structure is nearing completion. It will then be sheeted with silver/grey PVC sheeting.
- 3.4 The application defines 3 areas of the site which are utilised as 'Backlot' areas where temporary outdoor sets can be constructed for filming purposes. In addition, a number of areas are identified as 'temporary marquee and cabin zones'. These are intended to

provide specific zoned areas to be used flexibly for the erection of temporary marques and cabins for filming support and set design. These are proposed to be up to 12m in height and are likely to include PVC roof marquees with panelled or PVC walls. This would enable temporary structures to be erected and dismantled within these defined zones over the temporary 5 year period sought to reflect the requirements of particular film production companies utilising the relevant part of the site at the time. These are likely to be used for a variety of supporting uses including storage, costume, make up, carpenters' workshops, painters workshop, action vehicles and special effects. These relate to areas of predominantly existing hardstanding with no additional hardstanding proposed.

- 3.5 Planning permission was recently granted under reference RU.22/1508 for two recently constructed sound stage structures/buildings known as meganova C and D, for a temporary 5 year period (expiring 1st January 2028). These consented buildings are located fairly centrally within the site and have a maximum height of 18m. Most of the structures are located on existing hardstanding and some in part on bare earth. Whilst there are extensive areas of hardstanding associated with the former military use of the site, it is also recognised that there has been additional hardstanding put in and small areas of woodland, trees and undergrowth removed over more recent years. Some of this activity has taken place prior to the current occupiers of the site, but recognising some of this has taken place more recently to facilitate the existing film studio use. At the time the trees were not protected and therefore no constraints existed for their removal. An Area Tree Preservation Order is now in place across the site which prevents further tree loss or harm to protected trees without the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority.
- 3.6 The submitted Planning Statement advises that the creative industries have been experiencing rapid growth and with limited capacity at existing large established studios, production companies have been seeking alternative facilities. Longcross South has become established as a centre for film and high-end television productions. The applicants are seeking to regularise existing structures and expand their ability to house global productions to meet demand and keep investment coming to Runnymede and the wider UK. The supporting statement confirms the applicants have an agreement in place with the landowners to utilise the site for a temporary period.
- 3.7 Access to the site is currently via an existing entrance south of Barrowhills House off Longcross Road, which leads to the existing internal perimeter road formerly use and referred to as the 'test track'. A secondary point of access exists to the north of the site over the M3 into the northern Longcross site via existing internal Accommodation Bridge. However, access over this bridge has been restricted over recent months due to work being undertaken on the northern site.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 The following history is considered relevant to this application:

Reference	Details
RU.22/0393	Outline planning application with all matters reserved (except for means of site access with Longcross Road and Kitsmead Lane), for a mixed use Garden Village development comprising: residential development (Use Classes C3), care home/extra care accommodation (Use Class C2), land reserved for up to 10 travelling showpeople plots (sui generis), retail, food and drink (Use Classes E and F.2), public house (sui generis), community facilities (Use Classes E, F1 and

	<p>F2), employment use (Use Class E), a primary school including early years provision (Use Class F1), public open space including allotments, sports pitches and ancillary facilities (Use Class F2), Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (Use Class F2), landscaping and associated infrastructure and works including enabling demolition and ground works (Environmental Statement submitted)</p> <p>Under consideration</p>
RU.22/1508	<p>Two Film Studio Sound Stages (for a temporary period of 5 years) (retrospective) Known as Meganova C and D and located to the north of the central 'skid pan' area.</p> <p>Consent granted 24 March 2023 for a temporary period expiring on 1st January 2028.</p>
RU.21/1806	<p>Proposed siting of temporary structures and the use of land for filming including: 2 no. temporary structures on existing car park and 1 no. temporary structure on former tennis court, erection of 1 no. marquee and retention of existing marquee and siting of 9no. attached portacabin units together with temporary surfacing for car parking and associated temporary internal access.</p> <p>Granted consent 21/01/2022 (relates to land to the south of Barrow Hills House)</p>
RU.23/0795	<p>Variation of Condition 2 (Temporary Permission) of planning approval RU.21/1806 (Proposed siting of temporary structures and the use of land for filming including: 2 no. temporary structures on existing car park and 1 no. temporary structure on former tennis court, erection of 1 no. marquee and retention of existing marquee and siting of 9no. attached portacabin units together with temporary surfacing for car parking and associated temporary internal access) to extend the temporary permission by up to 3 years.</p> <p>Granted consent 15/11/2023 (As above - relates to land to the south of Barrow Hills House)</p>
RU.04/1297	<p>Certificate of Existing Lawfulness for a mixed lawful use involving military related and non-military commercial uses which were carried out by or on behalf of the Crown for the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the testing & evaluation of tracked and wheeled military vehicles; (2) driver training courses using military vehicles; (3) subject to (i) and (ii) below and between the hours of 8am to midnight and for a maximum of 4 occasions between the hours of midnight to 8am. Monday to Friday for film and media work including the filming of television shows (4) Subject to (i) below and between the hours of 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) civilian commercial automotive vehicle testing and other specialist tasks relating to the testing of new & used motor vehicles, heavy goods vehicles, emergency service vehicles and motorcycles; (b) automotive club events including static exhibitions and shows of all makes and models of vehicles; (c) corporate driving events including recreation, entertainment and corporate hospitality events, and (d) driver training courses using civilian vehicles (5) Subject to (i) below and between the hours of 08.00 to 18.00 for a maximum of

	<p>ten motor rally events per annum to be held no more frequently than one event every four weeks and each event to last no longer than two days including setting up and testing the facilities.</p> <p>(i) the qualifying noise level for vehicles not to exceed 100dB(A) measured at 0.5m from the source of the noise, and</p> <p>(b) Any use of motor vehicles between the hours of 18.00 and 08.00 not to amount to a common law or statutory nuisance and any noise, vibration, light, smoke or fumes caused by any of the above events and the use of any motor vehicle to be limited to such emissions as are reasonably associated with the traffic of a normal urban carriageway between such hours.</p> <p>Grant Certificate 27/05/2005 This covers a large proportion of land but not all of the southern site and identified buildings</p>
RU.02/1414	<p>Certificate of Existing Lawfulness for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of the northern site/land and specified buildings for B1 (Business) use • The use as a test track for the testing of military vehicles (southern site with exception of area around Burrow Hill House) and specified buildings • The use as a golf course within Class D2 (assembly & leisure) and 3 specified buildings (land south of Barrows Hill House) • Use as a hotel within Class C1 (Hotels) and 3 specified buildings (Burrows Hill House and immediate surroundings) <p>Use of the site for B1 (Business) use with minor ancillary uses including B8 (storage/ distribution), A3 (Food & Drink), D1 (non institutional uses), D2 (assembly & leisure) and sui generis hostel use (Longcross Barracks deleted from application) (Additional supporting information received 1st August 2003)</p> <p>Granted 26/09/2003</p>

5 SUMMARY OF MAIN RELEVANT STRATEGIES AND POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance.
- 5.2 The Runnymede 2030 Local Plan was adopted on 16 July 2020 and the policies have to be read as a whole. Any specific key policies will be referred to in the planning considerations, main policies relevant to the current application include: Policies SD3, SD4, SD7, SD8, EE1, EE2, EE3, EE4, EE7, EE9, EE10, EE11, EE12, EE13.
- 5.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which might be a material consideration in determination:
- Runnymede Design SPD (2021)
 - Thames Basin Heath SPA SPD (2021)
 - Green and Blue Infrastructure SPD (2021)
 - Runnymede Parking Guidance SPD (2022)

6. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Consultees responses

Consultee	Comments
SCC Drainage - LLFA	<p>Objection</p> <p>We object to the proposed development. The proposed surface water drainage scheme does not meet the requirements set out in the NPPF, its accompanying PPG and the Non- Statutory Technical Standards for sustainable drainage systems. Insufficient information has been provided. If approved conditions are recommended.</p> <p>Officer note: see section 7.28 below. The applicants have been in discussions with the LLFA to develop a drainage strategy for the site which has now been largely implemented. The final updated drainage strategy is awaited from the applicant to enable the LLFA to be able to provide an updated response and can be addressed by condition.</p>
Historic England	<p>Not offering advice in this case. Recommends views of specialist conservation and archaeological advisors are sought.</p>
RBC Heritage and Conservation	<p>No objections</p> <p>The proposals are not considered to have an adverse impact on the setting of significance of Barrow Hill and Barrow Hill Garden Terrace or on the setting of significance of Longcross Church.</p>
Surrey Wildlife Trust	<p>Further information is sought. To include a detailed quantitative and qualitative assessment of the presence of woodland and lowland dry acid grassland as a baseline habitat, impacts to these habitats, and then a strategy of compensation which would allow the LPA to assess the application in line with their Biodiversity Duty. Further clarification is also required regarding species surveys and whether any bird mitigation is required.</p>
RBC Contaminated Land	<p>No objection.</p> <p>The report submitted with the application recommends further investigative works be carried out prior to a change in use to a more sensitive user such as residential. However, for the current commercial use, no further investigative work is required.</p>
RBC Environmental Health	<p>Recommends appropriate planning conditions to secure an Operational Management Plan (or similar) to detail how external areas will be managed to limit potential for impact from noise and light on nearby residential properties. In addition, recommend the plant noise levels in table 1 of the noise report conditioned.</p>
SCC Archaeology	<p>No objections</p> <p>It does not appear that the structures required extensive and deep foundations and so as the level of ground disturbance is unlikely to have disturbed archaeological remains should they be present</p>

	then I have no archaeological concerns in this case.
SCC Highways	<p>Recommends Refusal on the following grounds:</p> <p>Without the Accommodation bridge linking the site with the northern site and the train station, the site is in an unsustainable location, and is a considerable distance from surrounding amenities. The proposed use would further encourage substantial use of private motor vehicles as a mode of transport, and discourage walking, cycling and use of public transport, and is therefore contrary to the sustainable objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), the Runnymede Local Plan and the Surrey County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP4).</p> <p>Officer note: see section 7.20-7.24 below.</p>
SCC Trumps Farm	<p>Given proximity to Trump's Farm closed landfill site, the impact of potential landfill gas migration should be fully considered as part of the planning application.</p> <p>No strategy provided to investigate or manage potential land contamination</p> <p>SCC would like to retain access to the 2 groundwater monitoring boreholes</p>
SCC Minerals and Waste	No objection subject to adequate facilities for waste storage and recycling, and any construction, demolition and excavation waste generated is limited to the minimum necessary and opportunities for re-use and recycling are maximised.
National Highways	<p>Recommends a Condition to secure a Construction Traffic Management Plan to ensure proposals do not impact on the safe and efficient operation of the SRN (M3 and M25 motorway)</p> <p>(comments on updated Travel Plan Statement and associated Transport Technical Note awaited)</p>
Natural England	<p>No objection, advising:</p> <p>Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on the Chobham Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and has no objection.</p> <p>Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have likely significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Area of Conservation and has no objection to the proposed development.</p> <p>Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the site has been notified and has no objection. Reference to standing advice regarding protected species</p>
Cadent Gas	No comments received

UK Power Networks	No comments received
SSE Power Distribution	No comments received
Thames Water Utilities	No objection on bases that the foul water is to discharge into a septic tank and surface water will not discharge into public network. Advises LLFA approval is needed.
Affinity Water	No objection
Surrey Heath BC	No objection
Woking BC	No comments received
Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead	Acknowledgement received
Virginia Water Neighbourhood Forum	No comments received
Chobham Parish Council	<p>Objection for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale could have a significant effect on Chobham Common SPA due to noise, light and increased activity • Intensification of use of surrounding road and lanes, unsuitable for HGV's • Stable Hill and Windsor Road junction particular concern due to limited sightlines • Impact of potential for evening and night shoots and HGV movements at night • If approved, regard to be had to HGV weight limit in Cobham High Street and B386 Chertsey Road when considering HGV routes.

Representations and comments from interested parties

6.2 A total of 178 Neighbouring properties were consulted in addition to being advertised on the Council's website, within the local press and in addition to site notices.

A total of 3 letters of objection have been received which includes 2 letters sent on behalf of the Wenworth Residents Association, raising the following:

- Object unless conditions secured to protect local residents amenity from light and noise, as past events have proven lighting and noise for outdoor filming affected neighbouring residential amenity
- Any lighting should be positioned (height/mass/brightness) to not disturb local residents
- Presence of bats across site and would expect EPS licence to be secured and appropriate mitigations put in place

- Should condition night shoots to max 20 events per 365 day period and to notify local residents in advance.
- Construction noise should be limited to 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm Saturday to protect local residents. To include the build and deconstruction of each production/film event.
- Outdoor filming can result in noise disturbance from explosions, fireworks, music, director loudspeaker etc and loud, excessive, filming noise should be limited to 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm Saturday to protect local residents and their pets. Notice should be provided of any significant loud filming events.

Wentworth Residents Association:

- Importance of an enforceable Construction Traffic Management Plan which should be compliant with the Virginia Water Traffic Mitigation strategy; to include routing of construction vehicles
- A condition to secure and monitor an Operational traffic management plan is required having regard to the significant additional vehicle movements generated by the additional floorspace, and variations in movements due to nature of film making leading to 'spikes' in movements and more vehicles on the roads. In addition, impact of larger vehicles on amenity of residents including noise.
- Construction Environmental Management Plan should be conditioned
- Significant increase in floorspace proposed although not clear from application what elements are retrospective/ new and need to be properly considered and mitigated

In addition, 24 letters of support have been received, these appear to be largely from people who work or have worked at the site or are associated with the film industry.

- Growing industry with demand for space, will bring more productions, and benefit UK film industry.
- Current shortfall for specialized studio spaces and backlot areas close to London has led to productions moving abroad or elsewhere. Keeping productions in the UK is essential for continued economic growth of British film industry.
- Location is excellent and highly accessible base of staff and sub-contractors
- Will create job opportunities and revenue beneficial to the local area, stimulates local businesses in loggings, transportation and hospitality sectors
- Will help the local economy and create more skilled jobs in the area
- 5 year permission will enable business to plan effectively, provide certainty and would encourage workforce to relocate to area
- Impressed with progressive and inclusive approach of Serious international to their business. Excellent, reliable company.
- Development is sensitively done and in keeping with the surrounding area
- Longcross Studios is unique and stands out from other studios, rare to have such a facility in the UK
- The studios have demonstrated their Eco responsibilities with their green policies

7. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 In the determination of this application regard must be had to the Development Plan and National policy within the NPPF. The application site is located within the urban area where the principle of such development is considered to be acceptable subject to detailed consideration. This must be considered in light of the presumption in favour of sustainable development advocated by the NPPF. The key planning matters are:

- Principle of use and Implications for Policy SD9 Longcross Garden Village site Allocation
- Design and appearance
- Amenity
- Access and Highways
- Heritage
- Energy and Sustainability
- Drainage
- Contamination
- Trees
- Ecology
- Habitats Regulations/ impact on TBHSPA

7.2 Principle/use

The application site lies within the urban area and forms part of the wider designation of Longcross Garden Village within the Local Plan which seeks to deliver a mixed-use development including the delivery of circa 1,700 additional dwellings. A separate outline planning application has been submitted for the redevelopment of the southern site to deliver a garden village under reference RU.22/0393, and is currently under consideration. The current largely retrospective application for the film studio use of the site and associated buildings and structures, is seeking to provide an economic use of the use prior to the redevelopment of the Longcross Garden Village.

7.3 Whilst the film use provides economic benefit and supports the local film industry, it is also necessary to ensure any permission does not undermine the delivery of the site for housing and associated uses to form the Longcross Garden Village. The associated outline planning application for the Garden Village was submitted in March 2022 and is currently under consideration to deliver up to 1700 new dwellings. It is recognised that the delivery of the Garden Village will be undertaken on a phased basis and could take around 10 years to fully complete. It is anticipated the earliest works are likely to commence would be circa 2025, given the need to secure planning permission, the complexities of the associated section 106 legal agreement and need to secure reserved matters and relevant conditions. The phasing of the delivery of the Garden Village is yet to be agreed and will be subject to securing planning permission. As such any planning approval for the temporary film use of the site and associated structures would need to ensure that this did not prejudice the appropriate phasing of the delivery of the Garden Village.

7.4 Whilst the stage buildings and film use occupy a large proportion of the site they do not cover the whole southern Garden Village site area. A temporary permission is sought for up to 5 years. It is noted that the application was submitted in January 2023 and is in the most part retrospective. However subject to how the site is phased for delivery it is possible that some areas forming part of the current application may be required whether for direct construction or to support the construction works associated with the Garden Village. It is therefore considered appropriate to include a condition requiring details of the phased removal of structures and ceasing of the current film related use in order to reflect and ensure that the phased delivery of the Garden Village is not undermined (subject to approval).

Whilst a 5 year temporary permission is being sought, as this is a retrospective application it is considered appropriate to condition the temporary permission to be reflective of when the application was submitted, therefore expiring on 31st January 2028. This would ensure that together with conditions as referenced above, that the delivery of the Longcross Garden Village, Local Plan allocated site was not prejudiced. However, notwithstanding any planning consent for the site, Crest Nicholson as land owners of the site have the ability through their lease agreement with the applicant to take back relevant parts of the site as and when required. Therefore, the granting of a temporary permission for the film studio use would not prohibit the redevelopment of the Longcross Garden Village.

7.5 Economic benefits

It is also a consideration that the NPPF supports economic growth and local business needs, and this is also reflected within Local Plan policies. Paragraph 81 of the NPPF states that 'significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development'. The NPPG also recognises the benefits of the clustering of certain activities including creative activities to support 'collaboration, innovation, productivity, and sustainability, as well as driving the economic prospects of the areas in which they locate' (para.032). Longcross is well placed within the existing cluster of studios in the South East of the UK, and has become an important site supporting a number of blockbuster movies and productions. The use of the southern site also compliments the existing presence of Netflix film studios located to the north of the M3.

7.6 A number of letters of support have been received and are summarised at 6.2 above and which are primarily from those working within the film industry including those who have worked or are working at Longcross. Letters received reinforce the importance of the site in supporting the British film industry as well as the benefits from the creation of a range of jobs and supporting local business such as hospitality industry. This is further reflected within the supporting 'Anticipated Economic Impact' statement submitted in support of the application. The statement highlights the value and economic impact resulting from the growth in the Film and Television facilities sector. It states '*the current shortage of skilled crew needed Will see huge opportunities for school and college leavers in the screen-based industries at all levels of production and supply*'. '*In Runnymede specifically, this will support the initiatives being undertaken at Royal Holloway University*' The statement advises '*It is anticipated that Longcross Studios will support in excess of 2000 FTE jobs directly related to production activities with a similar additional number of FTE jobs supported in non-film and television related industries (split between local employment and UK PLC)*' and '*These jobs span the employment sector: for example, not only production, crew and actors, but also carpenters, electricians, painters, catering staff, security to name but a few*'. In addition, benefits to business and supply chain supporting the film use within the wider local area including hotels, restaurants, shops, construction supplies, plant hire etc. The site lies within the urban area and the stages and associated film use provide an effective and efficient use of the site prior to its redevelopment for housing as well as supporting economic growth which is afforded significant weight in the consideration of this application.

7.7 Design and Appearance

The NPPF places a strong emphasis on good design. The site is located within a former military site and whilst it contains only limited number of former military buildings the site includes extensive areas of hardstanding associated with its former use set within pockets of woodland and surrounded by a belt of trees along the site boundaries. The temporary structures have been sited to maximise the use of existing areas of hardstanding and areas

of bare earth. Whilst there has previously been some change to surface treatment in parts of the site, this is not considered to have significantly changed the appearance of the site as a whole which retains the important trees and woodland areas both within and surrounding the site. Whilst the redevelopment of the site for the Garden Village has yet to be formerly determined, the works undertaken to date to facilitate the current use and development is consistent with the current proposals for the Garden Village.

7.8 Whilst the buildings are large, they are of a functional industrial appearance reflecting the nature of the use. They are of a simple design and neutral colour finish (grey, white and silver) providing a muted appearance which minimises the visual prominence and visual impact from wider viewpoints. Furthermore, the form of the buildings is characteristic of the site's former military history and the studio use, existing buildings and stage buildings on the neighbouring northern site. The appearance of the buildings is considered acceptable having regard to the temporary permission sought and when viewed within the context of the large site area within which they are located and existing trees.

7.9 Landscape and Visual

The Longcross south site is a large and relatively self-contained site which is well screened with woodland tree belt along the site boundaries. The application is in the most part retrospective with the majority of the buildings and structures already present on site. Despite the large size of these buildings, given the size of the site, the surrounding topography and extensive trees coverage that surrounds the site, there are limited views of existing structures from the wider area. This is primarily limited to the north, from the M3 and the adjacent roads, which is already influenced visually by the M3 and existing development. The scale of the buildings is viewed within the wider context of the site, and where they are visible they are in part screened by existing trees such that they are not considered to unduly harm the character and appearance of the area.

7.10 A landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVIA) has been submitted in support of the application. This considers existing viewpoints including near, middle and long distance views, including from the neighbouring SPA. Surrounding vegetation largely obscures views towards the main parts of the site. Whilst there are occasional glimpsed views through and above the tree cover of structures, this relates primarily to those adjacent to the M3, and this limited visibility is considered to have a limited effect on the overall landscape character.

7.11 The main impact would be from Meganova E proposed in the north-east corner of the site and currently under construction with main internal structure/frame currently in situ. The first phase would be significantly higher than other buildings on the site. This building has been designed in two phases, proposing a height of 36m for a maximum one year period before reducing to maximum 19m. The topography of the site varies with higher land levels more centrally within the site. This tallest building would be sited on a lower part of the site which helps in limiting the visual prominence of the building. Furthermore the siting of this building would be at the furthest point from the SPA, and separated by higher land levels, buildings and trees which provide a degree of screening, such that any views of this structure would be more distant. It is recognised that the significant height of this building would have wider visual presence. It is however noted within the LVIA, that there are also distant views of other taller built form from other locations on the Common and so would not be out of character. Notwithstanding this, whilst it is acknowledged that there would be a visual impact resulting from the scale of this building, it is considered that this would result in limited harm and would be for a short temporary period as consent is sought for a limited period of 1 year before reducing in height to 19m which is comparable to the existing adjacent Meganova stage building. The main frame of this building is now in place on site reflecting its maximum height, and which helps to demonstrate its limited visual harm that results.

7.12 It is recognised that there will be changes to the structures on site over the temporary period sought, within the temporary marque and cabin zones in response to the requirements of the different companies utilising the site. The application proposes a maximum height of 12m within these zones but suggests that the majority of structures would be lower than this. Whilst this would be lower than adjacent stage and meganova buildings, it is recognised that this will add to the quantum and visual impact of buildings on site. It is considered that the maximum height within these temporary structure zones should be restricted to 8m maximum height which would ensure that these development is more proportionate and ensure the scale of development across the site would not result in visual harm. The application site is of a sufficient size to enable these buildings to be comfortably accommodated and is reflective of how the site has been operating to date. Permission is sought for a temporary period and in combination with the limited visual impact of the buildings and use the design, appearance and wider visual impact of the buildings and use is considered to be acceptable.

7.13 Amenity – noise and disturbance

Whilst the application site is generally well contained, there are a number of residential properties to the south of the site which lie relatively close to the site boundary. These are the properties that have the potential to be directly impacted by the studio use of the land and are considered further below. To the north of the site, the existing residential properties at Longcross north are separated by the M3 motorway. Having regard to existing elevated background noise from the motorway and the adjacent acoustic fence, it is not considered that the development and use of land results in noise disturbance or harm to the amenities of these properties. It is also acknowledged that there are several existing properties located to the east off Kitsmead Lane. The development in this location is limited to the existing internal access road with good tree coverage and distance separating the uses and buildings with neighbouring properties off Kitsmead Lan, such that there is considered to be no material harm to residential amenity.

7.14 The closest residential properties are located to the south of the site off Longcross Road, and just over 100m from the closest stage building. However, it is recognised that the use is not solely contained to within the stage buildings, with a distance of approximately 20m separating the rear gardens of the closest properties and the site boundary, approximately 40m to the nearest temporary marquee and cabin zone and approximately 100m to the central backlot area. The application is accompanied by a Noise Report which considers the operational impact of the film stages as well as the building services plant. The use of the stage buildings for filming purposes requires relatively low internal noise levels. Having regard to existing M3 motorway noise impacts, many of the stages are and have been built with good sound insulation. This not only limits noise into the building but also minimises break out of noise from the building. The construction of the buildings vary, some are of a high-performance solid construction, some a combination of solid panels and lightweight PVC and others a PVC fabric construction. This is considered within the noise report which concludes that noise levels from the stage buildings would be well below baseline ambient noise level and low enough that the impacts from the closest stage buildings would be insignificant resulting in acceptable noise levels that would not harm residential amenity.

7.15 The potential for noise, is not limited solely to the use of the buildings but the wider use of the site for film related purposes and including the temporary marque and cabin zone and areas used for backlot for open filming purposes. The application is largely retrospective, and whilst it is acknowledged that the nature of the film use results in varied levels of activity on site, this will be dependant on the number of production companies on site at any one time and where they are within the filming process for example whether preparing and

constructing sets, or filming. It is acknowledged within the noise report that the main noise source will be from construction and striking of film sets which whilst temporary will take place relatively regularly. Whilst the process of filming itself is likely to be relatively quiet with the exception of particular scenes which may generate loud noise, such as a special effect generating a 'bang' for example, this is expected to relate to isolated events. There is also likely to be more activity associated with a higher number of people on site.

- 7.16 As this is largely a retrospective application, it is also a consideration that only one letter of representation has been received from neighbouring properties relating to noise and light disturbance, with recommendations to ensure appropriate conditions are in place to avoid any future impacts. The Councils Environmental Protection officers have considered the application and submitted noise report and have raised no objections. They recommend a condition to secure the plant noise levels in accordance with table 1 of the noise report. They have further confirmed that they have received sporadic complaints about noise and light nuisance from external filming activities and recommend a condition requiring an operational management plan or similar which details how external areas will be managed to limit the potential for impact from noise and light on nearby properties. It is considered that any potential harmful impacts can be addressed through appropriate management and control of activities on site.
- 7.17 Access to the site utilises existing entrance points both over the existing internal M3 Accommodation bridge to the north or existing access onto Loncross Road to the south. Both of which are located away from existing residential properties. Given the size of the site, once on site activity is distributed throughout the site including vehicular movements such that the intensification of the site for film related use is absorbed across a wide site area. This help minimise the impact of the proposed use on the wider area and local residents. Most of the buildings are already present on site, and those under construction or not yet built are located along the northern boundaries of the site and away from residential properties such that the associated construction works would not result in harm to residential amenity. A temporary marque and cabin zone is located close to the southern site boundary. It is recognised that this could lead to changing structures in this location. Given that a good separation distance of over 70m from the nearest residential property would be provided, this would ensure that the structures did not result in harm to neighbouring amenity. With conditions in place to secure appropriate management of the site to ensure noise impact can be managed and controlled together with restrictions on location and hours or activity/filming, it is considered that the continued use of the site as a film studio and associated buildings, structures and zones, can be undertaken without harmful impacts to neighbouring residents and is considered acceptable in line with national and local policy, including policy EE2.
- 7.18 **Lighting**
The application does not include any details of existing or propose external lighting whether freestanding or fixed to the buildings. The plans do illustrate exterior lighting on the stages and workshops which consist of minimum power emergency exit lighting and a downwards facing flood light above roller doors on structures fixed to the building. The buildings and structures are of sufficient distance from neighbouring properties to ensure this would not lead to harm to residential amenity. The application also indicates low level lighting is proposed alongside main movement routes within the site to facilitate movement during the darker months of the year however no details have been submitted with the application. No additional permanent free standing lights have been installed on site although it is acknowledged that production companies do set up temporary lighting when required. It is also noted that lighting may be required during some filming periods within the backlot areas, resulting in temporary lighting structures for set filming purposes. Whilst there are trees along the boundary to the south of the site, which affords a degree of screening to the properties to the south, it is considered appropriate to secure details of how temporary

floodlighting would be managed to ensure that any lighting used does not lead to harmful neighbouring impacts. A previous issue has been experienced as a result of night shooting close to the neighbouring southern boundary. The applicant has advised that they have since implemented a studio policy to ensure neighbours are notified of any night shooting and for any lighting rigs not to point towards the southern boundary. It is considered that with appropriate siting of any lighting and use of screening, together with conditions to limit nighttime filming/shoots, and control of use of sensitive areas of the site, that this would ensure neighbouring amenity can be safeguarded.

- 7.19 As no specific lighting details or specifications have been provided with the application, and having regard to existing tree cover and presence of bats within the wider Longcross South site, a condition is also recommended to secure the details of the external lighting, in order to ensure the siting and intensity of illumination is appropriate, and where appropriate timing of illumination. Ecological impacts are considered further below.

7.20 Highways

Vehicular Access to the site is currently via an existing entrance south of Barrowhills House off Longcross Road, which leads to the existing internal perimeter road formerly use and referred to as the 'test track'. A secondary point of access exists to the north of the site over the M3 into the northern Longcross site via an existing internal bridge (M3 Accommodation Bridge). However, access over this bridge has been restricted over recent months as a result of works that have been undertaken on the northern site. The application includes the use of the bridge which is expected to provide a second point of access to the site and connects to Chobham Lane via the existing roundabout junction serving the northern site. This will ensure that access to the site is distributed across both access points and wider highway network, whilst providing a direct route to the Longcross railway station. Given the nature of the film related use, traffic movements and activity on site vary dependant on filming schedules and what production companies are on site at any one time. A Transport Assessment has been submitted to support the application which considers the potential trip generation resulting from the proposed development. It concludes that the development which is subject of this planning application would lead to an increase in vehicular movement of between 118-142 trips during the peak hours. Taking into account the variability in the level of activity associated with filming schedules, the effects of these vehicular trips on the highway network will not be felt at all times. Movements associated with the Film Studios also do not conform to normal employment profiles and will take place across the day, with a number of arrivals and departures falling outside of the typical 'peak' conditions on the road network. The Transport Assessment has identified very limited implications for the capacity of the road network associated with the operation of the Longcross Film Studios, even when accounting for the additional floorspace that the proposed development would create. The County Highways Authority have raised no objection on highway safety or capacity grounds. It is further noted that the site is currently operating as a film studio and the application is in the most part retrospective. Furthermore, the availability of two access points serving the site enables traffic movements to be distributed across the highway network.

- 7.21 The County Highway Authority also recognise the need to ensure access is available from Longcross Road should vehicular access across the internal M3 Accommodation bridge be restricted at any time. Longcross railway station lies to the north of the site, and access over the internal M3 road bridge provides an accessible route to the station which provides sustainable travel options to access the site. The County Highway Authority have recommended the application is refused, their sole reasons relates to concerns regarding the availability of the use of the internal M3 Accommodation bridge, without which they consider would place a reliance on private motor vehicles to access the site from Longcross

Road. Whilst it is acknowledged that access across this bridge link is currently prevented by locked gates and as such access to the site is currently only achievable via the southern Longcross Road (Barrowhills) site entrance, it is understood that the applicant is seeking to secure the reopening of the bridge providing access to the north. In addition, the use of this bridge is proposed within the submitted draft Travel Plan.

- 7.22 County Highway have advised that in order to address their concerns they need to be satisfied why the bridge is currently closed and to be confident that modifications proposed to the bridge can be undertaken. Whilst the supporting information includes a plan of proposed modifications to the bridge to create a segregated carriageway and cycle and pedestrian path across the bridge, this is proposed as part of the separate Garden Village application and is not considered necessary for the current temporary film studio use of the land in which site access is controlled by security with no general public access. The bridge has previously been in use by vehicular traffic to serve the southern site, and was previously controlled by security and limited to a single lane / one direction flow of traffic which was controlled by lights. County highways have indicated that a shared use of the carriageway across the bridge for cyclists would be acceptable for this application but have some concerns as to whether pedestrian and cyclist use of the bridge would be permissible by National Highways who are responsible for the bridge. National Highways have made no comment on the use of the bridge as part of their formal response on this application. They have recently been reconsulted following the receipt of the updated Travel Plan and no comments have been received to date.
- 7.23 Given the retrospective nature of the application, that existing vehicular access points are (in the case of the southern access) or have been (in the case of the M3 Accommodation bridge) utilised and County Highways Authority have raised no objections on highway safety grounds. The only concern raised by County Highways relates to the ability to secure direct access across the M3 to the north and the railway station via the internal Accommodation bridge. To allow for a situation in which the bridge was not available for use, including any restrictions on use by pedestrians and cyclists, the proposed Travel Plan includes proposals for the provision of a stand-alone dedicated shuttle bus to provide alternative means of access between the site and Longcross railway station. In addition to this, Longcross benefits from a digital on demand bus service which connects to key hubs and can utilise pick up points both north of the bridge as well as by the southern road access. Officers are confident that with conditions in place reflecting those recommended by County Highways Authority to secure measures for safe access of pedestrians and cyclists to Longcross North and with provision of cycle facilities on site as well as securing a Travel Plan, that this would ensure that the safe use of the bridge can be provided and alternative measures secured should it not be available for any reason, and would address the sustainability objections raised by County Highways.
- 7.24 The southern site is a large, contained site with extensive areas of hardstanding including around the stage buildings the subject of this application. This enables car parking to be appropriately managed on site. In addition, National Highways have been consulted having regard to the sites location adjacent to the M3 motorway. Their interest lies with proposals that have the potential to impact on the safe and efficient operation of the strategic road network (SRN), in this case the M3 and M25 motorways. No objections are raised by National Highways to the planning application, however they have recommended a condition to secure a Construction Transport Management Plan (CTMP). As most of the temporary structures/buildings are already present on site (with the exception of Megnova G and H), having regard to the nature of the construction utilising prefabricated components, it is not considered that the works would generate any significant construction traffic movements and would therefore have a limited impact on the wider road network. However, as this is a temporary permission, a condition to secure a CTMP for the removal of the buildings/structures to which this application relates is considered to be appropriate to

ensure the limit the impact on the wider road network. The application is therefore considered compliant with Policies SD3 and SD4 of the Local Plan.

7.25 Heritage – Listed Building

Special regard must be given to the protection and enhancement of existing heritage assets. Development that affects Runnymede's heritage assets should be designed to protect, conserve and enhance the significance and value of these assets in accordance with Policy EE3 (Strategic Heritage Policy) of the Local Plan. In addition, Policy EE4 (Listed Buildings) states that the Council will support appropriate development which seeks to maintain, sustain and enhance the significance and special architectural and historic interest of Listed Buildings in the Borough.

- 7.26 The development has been assessed by the Councils Heritage advisors who have raised no objections to the proposals, which they note would adhere to the core conservation principle of reversibility, on heritage grounds. A Grade II listed Barrow Hills House and terrace is located within the wider Longcross South site but the current application does not include the Barrowhill and its immediate area. Furthermore, Barrowhill is currently in use as a film set which is unrelated to this current application. The immediate setting of the heritage assets is limited to that within the extensive tree belts and hedgerows surrounding the house, garden terrace, and immediate garden. This screening allows only glimpsed views to and from the heritage assets from within the wider setting. The various changes in use of the Site have, over time, eroded most of the original intended setting of the heritage assets. As such, the wider setting is not considered to make a positive contribution to the significance of the heritage assets or the ability to appreciate that setting. Consequently, the proposals are not considered to have an adverse impact on the setting of significance of Barrow Hill and Barrow Hill Garden Terrace. To the south off Longcross Road is the Grade II Listed Longcross Church, Lychgate with attached Churchyard Wall, however the development site does not form part of its setting which is confined to its immediate setting and therefore is not considered to be impacted.

7.26 Heritage – Archaeology/Scheduled Ancient Monument

The application proposes temporary structures and buildings close to but not within the defined Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and includes works within the designated Area of High Archaeological Potential. Surrey County Archaeology have reviewed the application and have raised no objections to the application. They have advised that it does not appear that the structures required extensive and deep foundations and so as the level of ground disturbance is unlikely to have disturbed archaeological remains should they be present then they have no archaeological concerns in this case. It is noted that the area at the top of the test ramp, to the north of the SAM and to the west of the SAM is proposed as temporary marquee and cabin zones. This will utilise areas of existing hard surfacing and no changes to existing ground are proposed under this application. It is considered necessary to impose a condition in order to ensure this remains the case having regard to the transient nature of the use and associated structures and ensuring that associated works do not result in ground disturbance. The application does not result in harm to heritage assets and as such is considered compliant with Policy EE3 and EE4 of the Local Plan and NPPF.

7.27 Energy and Sustainability

The buildings are proposed for a temporary period and comprise a varied fabric, solid and marquee form which include prefabricated components which can be deconstructed and are fully reuseable and/or recyclable. This means they can be dismantled and re-used on other sites once the facilities need to be removed from site which reduces waste as supported by

Policy SD7. The stages and associated facilities were at the time the application was first submitted, powered by a series of generators given the lack of alternative energy provision available. These include use of hybrid generators with a large battery pack, meaning that the generator will only be running 50% of the time when in use. The applicant has been seeking to reduce the reliance on generators and over the last few months have installed and commissioned an electricity supply to the site and are in the process of moving the workshops and stages onto mains power. In addition, they have also installed a 200kw solar system and have additional solar provision due to be installed early 2024. These are fully demountable so they can be re-used at the end of the temporary permission. Given the temporary nature of the permission sought which limits the alternative options available, the applicant has demonstrated a commitment to minimise carbon emissions. The applicant has advised that they are investigating the potential for more solar installations, battery energy systems and green hydrogen systems which reflects the requirements of Policy SD7.

7.28 Drainage

The site lies within flood zone 1 and is at low risk of flooding. The application is for a 'less vulnerable' (commercial) use which is considered appropriate within this zone. The application is also supported by a Drainage strategy. Surrey as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have reviewed the application and whilst they have expressed concerns regarding the initial drainage strategy information that has been provided. However, the applicants have since been in discussions with the LLFA to develop a revised drainage strategy for the site which reflects the requirements of the LLFA, and this has in part been implemented to date. The final strategy document is being prepared following LLFA advice which should address previous issues raised. However, in advance of this a condition is recommended to ensure an appropriate drainage strategy is agreed and implemented which is compliant with the requirements of the NPPF, PPG and the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for sustainable drainage systems. Waste water is currently collected and stored on site and disposed of via a waste removal company and as such Thames Water have raised no objections to the application.

7.29 Contamination

A ground conditions report in respect of contaminated land has been submitted to support the application. This follows previous ground investigation work and has not indicated the presence of widespread ground contamination of concern. The report concludes that the contaminants found are not considered to warrant remedial action for the current commercial film studio use. The Councils Contaminated Land officer has reviewed the information submitted and is satisfied that the report submitted with the application recommends further investigative works be carried out prior to a change in use to a more sensitive user such as residential. However, for the current commercial use, no further investigative work is required. The application is therefore considered to be compliant with policy EE2.

7.30 Trees

Most of the structures are located on existing areas of hardstanding and some in part on bare earth. Whilst there are extensive areas of hardstanding associated with the former military use of the site, it is also recognised that there has been additional hardstanding put in and small areas of woodland, trees and undergrowth removed over more recent years. Some of this activity has taken place prior to the current applicant's occupation of the site, but recognising some of this activity has also taken place more recently to facilitate the current film studio use. At the time the trees were not protected and therefore no constraints existed for their removal. An Area Tree Preservation Order is now in place across the site which prevents further tree loss or harm to protected trees without the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority. It is further noted that trees which have previously

been felled, were identified within the Longcross South planning application (RU.22/0393) for removal as part of the wider redevelopment of the site for Longcross Garden Village, although noting that this application has yet to be formerly determined. No additional trees are required to be felled under the current application. The site maintains a robust belt of trees around the perimeter of the site as well as areas of woodland within the site which contribute to the unique character of the site.

7.31 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement has been submitted to support the application. This identifies tree protection measures and methodology to ensure existing trees are suitably protected including installation of tree protective fencing/barriers in key identified locations together with a programme of remedial works to certain identified areas. Whilst existing trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order, given the importance of trees within the site and the transient nature of the film production use and temporary structure zones and backlots, Conditions to secure suitable tree protection measures is considered appropriate.

7.32 During the course of the application the applicant has undertaken measures to assist with tree protection on site including installing protective fencing around key areas of trees within the site. The location of the additional Meganova stage buildings yet to be constructed on site are located on an existing open area of land and hardstanding which extends along the northern edge of the site. As they are sited some distance from existing trees these can be constructed without harm to trees. It is acknowledged that the temporary zone and backlot areas are sited adjacent to areas of existing trees. Whilst trees are afforded protection through a Tree preservation Order, a Condition is considered necessary in order to secure a scheme for the protection of these trees in order to ensure the film operations and associated activity, including the construction and dismantling of structures within the temporary marque and cabin zones, and use of the backlot areas do not result in harm to these existing trees.

7.33 Ecology

The nature of the former military use has resulted in extensive areas of hardstanding and it is these areas that have been maximised to form the siting of the structures and temporary zones forming this current application. An ecological Assessment has been submitted to support the application. The Ecological Assessment details that two Habitats of Principal Importance are located within the 'Site'. These are broadleaved woodland and lowland dry acid grassland. It further acknowledges that works associated with the retrospective application has resulted in the loss of "*small areas of woodland and acid grassland*" and that that the impact to lowland acid dry grassland is "likely to be a residual adverse impact of County level".

7.34 This is largely a retrospective application and the 2 additional Mega Novas yet to be constructed are located on areas of existing bare ground associated with form military use of the site. The temporary zones and Backlot areas also utilise areas of existing hardstanding and whilst there has been some increase of the areas of hardstanding over the recent couple of years, no additional works are required or proposed. Surrey Wildlife Trust has reviewed the application and has sought additional information including more detailed quantitatively assessments which would help inform compensation requirements. This includes further monitoring in respect of badgers and reptiles as the Ecological Assessment recognises that the "potential level of impacts upon both badgers and reptiles are unknown".

7.35 An Ecological response letter has recently been produced to respond to the comments raised by Surrey Wildlife Trust. This provides clarity regarding the baseline ecological

position. It further advises that having regard to the temporary nature of the application, a suitable reinstatement strategy is proposed to be secured by condition, in order to secure the restoration of the various habitats present to their status and extent as set out in the 2019 EPR survey work. The response also provides information on recent survey work undertaken to support the separate Garden Village application. This shows that none of the badger setts previously recorded on site are now active. Two of the Meganova for which retrospective permission is sought have been constructed in close proximity to existing setts that are now abandoned. However, it is not known if the setts were abandoned prior to works to construct the buildings being undertaken or not. The report indicates that no further impacts to badgers from the Application are considered likely. The response also indicates that some areas previously identified as reptile habitat have been disturbed or cleared. It is unclear whether this has led to the reduction in reptile population recorded on site. No further impacts from the application are considered likely and a reinstatement strategy will ensure any loss of habitat is temporary. In respect of birds, updated surveys in 2023 undertaken to support the separate Garden Village application have found a similar species present as previously recorded. Having regard to the temporary nature of the works enabling habitats to be restored post permission the application is not considered that long term, permanent effects to the breeding bird population are anticipated. It is recognised that there would be a temporary loss of habitat from the areas of woodland/scrub that have been cleared to enable the construction of the buildings. The application also proposes enhancements within retained woodland through the erection of new bird boxes of various types.

- 7.36 As this is largely a retrospective application with the use and works continuing on site it is considered that any harms that have resulted from the development and use of the land can be addressed through condition to seek additional information and associated mitigation measures. This planning permission provides a mechanism to secure mitigation and compensation, including control over lighting and hours of operation/night shoots and securing works to compensate for any harms or impacts that have occurred to date. With such conditions in place this will ensure that the use of the site can continue without any further detrimental harm to protected species whilst securing appropriate mitigation for any harms that may have occurred. In addition, following the removal of the temporary buildings, structures and associated works, a condition to secure the appropriate restoration of the site together with ecological enhancements will enable biodiversity net gain to be achieved.
- 7.37 The location of the stages falls within an area of the site which is shown indicatively for development under the Longcross Garden Village outline planning application RU.22/0393. Whilst the Garden Village application has not been formerly determined to date, it is recognised that this wider site redevelopment will result in trees and habitat loss to facilitate the quantum of new homes and supporting facilities, and which will also secure appropriate new tree planting and ecological mitigation enhancements as part of the Garden Village development including securing Biodiversity Net Gain. Therefore, should planning permission be granted for the wider Longcross Garden Village a Restoration and Ecological Enhancement Plan would not be feasible for this application as it may impact on the development of the Garden Village. However, a condition is recommended, to ensure appropriate mitigation and enhancements can be secured in the event planning permission is not secured for the wider redevelopment of the Longcross Garden Village. This would ensure that any impact to existing habitats, ecology and species are appropriately mitigated.
- 7.38 Habitats Regulations and Thames Basin Heaths SPA

The Proposed Development is located within the Zone of Influence of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC), it is necessary to consider the likelihood of significant effects

upon the integrity of the conservation objectives of the designated sites, as a consequence of the development, and whether or not an Appropriate Assessment should be undertaken prior to any grant of permission. The application has been submitted with various supporting documents which demonstrates the limited impacts resulting from the film use and associated structures and buildings the subject of this application. Having regard to the nature of the use it is considered that this application would not give rise to significant environmental effects. The site lies within 5km (approximately 700m) of Chobham Common which forms part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Natural England have provide a response to the application and have advised that they consider that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on the Chobham Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In addition, they also confirm that based on the plans submitted, they consider that the proposed development will not have likely significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Area of Conservation and will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the site has been notified, and has raised no objection to the application and therefore a likely significant effect can be ruled out.

- 7.39 Having regard to Environment Impact Assessment, whilst the application exceeds the indicative threshold of as listed under Sch,2, Column 1, 10(b) of the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations, the application proposals would not give rise to impacts warranting EIA, having regard to the further assessment criterion set out under Schedule 3 of the Regulations, in particular considering the characteristics of the development, type and scale of impact in this location. Furthermore, having regard to the advice of Natural England and nature of the proposed development, whilst there may be some impact on the surrounding area and nearby designated sensitive areas as a result of the development, it would not be of a scale or nature likely to result in significant environmental effects. Whilst the Garden Village application for the residential redevelopment of the site has been considered as EIA development, the current film studio application is considered of differing character. The primarily impacts being visual but would be time limited and are not considered to result in significant environmental effects requiring an EIA. Irrespective of this, the planning considerations are considered in full above.

8. PLANNING OBLIGATIONS/COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

- 8.1 The proposal is not CIL liable.

9. EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Consideration has been given to Articles 1 and 8 of the First Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights. It is not considered that the decision would result in a violation of any person's rights under the Convention.

Consideration has been given to s149 of the Equality Act 2010 (as amended), which has imposes a public sector equality duty that requires a public authority in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic

and persons who do not share it.

It is considered that the decision would have regard to this duty.

10. CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 The application is in the most part retrospective, and the granting of planning permission enables conditions to be imposed to ensure that the continued use and development of the site can continue whilst securing appropriate mitigation measures and ensuring neighbouring amenity is safeguarded. The application site is relatively self-contained, although there are several residential properties which bordered the site and with appropriate conditions in place would enable the continued use of the site without harm to residential amenity and ecology. The application supports the economy and local jobs as well as supporting the UK film industry and specifically helping grow the film industry in the SE and Surrey area. This application provides an effective and efficient use of this former military site, prior to the sites redevelopment for residential/ Longcross Garden Village.
- 10.2 The development has been assessed against the following Development Plan policies - SD3, SD4, SD7, SD8, EE1, EE2, EE3, EE4, EE7, EE9, EE10, EE11, EE12, EE13. of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan, the policies of the NPPF, guidance in the PPG, and other material considerations including third party representations. It has been concluded that the development would not result in any harm that would justify refusal in the public interest. The decision has been taken in compliance with the requirement of the NPPF to foster the delivery of sustainable development in a positive and proactive manner.

11. FORMAL OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

The CHDMBC be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the following planning conditions:

- 1 Temporary permission - reinstatement (buildings and land use)

The development (including buildings/ structures, hardstanding and ancillary structures/ items and equipment) and the use of the site for film studio purposes hereby permitted shall be discontinued and associated buildings and development removed on or before 31st January 2028. For the avoidance of doubt this includes the removal of the meganova, stage buildings and workshops and any associated equipment, structures, facilities etc that have been brought onto the site to support the film studio use including within the 'temporary marquee and cabin zones'.

Reason: To ensure protection of the amenities of the area, ecology, visual impact and to ensure the buildings and use do not prejudice the wider redevelopment of the site for the delivery of Longcross Garden Village in compliance with Policy SD9, and EE1 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

2 Removal Method Statement

A method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority detailing the method for the removal of the buildings and structures hereby approved and any associated works required for the clearance of works and operations, discontinuance of the use of the film studio (with the exception of structures within the defined temporary zones which is covered separately by Conditions), prior to the removal of any of the buildings or structures hereby approved. This shall include details of a timetable or phasing plan for removal, including method of deconstruction/demolition and removal, and measures to safeguard and mitigate residential amenity, ecology and highway impacts associated with the removal of the buildings and structures and site clearance. Works shall be undertaken in accordance with the details as approved.

Reason: To protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties and to protect wildlife and avoid adverse impacts on the highway including the strategic road network and to comply with Policies EE2, EE9, SD4 and SD5 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

3 Restoration and Ecological Enhancement Plan

A Restoration and Ecological Enhancement Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority at least 12 months prior to the expiry date of this permission (by 31st January 2027), which shall provide a scheme of works for the restoration of the site including proposals to provide ecological and biodiversity restoration and enhancement measures, including details for management and maintenance for a minimum period of 5 years, and details of the timescales and arrangements for its implementation. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan unless and within the agreed timescales unless it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that this would conflict with any subsequent planning approval for the redevelopment of the site.

Reason: The applicant has sought a temporary planning consent, and to mitigate and enhance the appearance, ecology and biodiversity of the area and to comply with Policies EE1, EE9, EE11 and SD9 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

4 List of approved plans

The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the plans listed on the submitted Drawing Register dated 25/01/2023 and received 18/01/2023.

Reason: To ensure high quality design and to comply with Policy EE1 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance in the NPPF

5 External materials (approved details)

The development shall be carried out in accordance with submitted and approved external materials as detailed on the approved plans and summarised on page 15 of the Design and Access Statement.

Reason: To ensure high quality design and to minimise the visual impact and comply with Policy EE1 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

6 CTMP

Prior to the construction of Meganova G and H, a Construction Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the agreed details should be fully implemented prior to start of construction works.

Reason: To mitigate any adverse impact from the development on the M3 and M25 Motorways and to ensure that the M3 and M25 continue to be an effective part of the national system of routes for through traffic in accordance with section 10 of the Highways Act 1980 and to satisfy the reasonable requirements of road safety.

7 Temporary zones

All structures and marques associated with the temporary film studio use hereby approved, with the exception of the meganovas, stage and workshop buildings specifically identified on the approved plans, shall be restricted to within the defined 'temporary marquee and cabin zones' as defined on drawing no. 22_LX_SOUTH_MP_P Rev 4. Within the temporary marquee and cabin zones' there shall be no ground works, changes to, or alterations of existing ground levels, and no structure, marque or associated equipment or material shall exceed 7m in height above existing ground levels.

Reason: In order to obtain a satisfactory form and scale of development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to comply with Policy EE1 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

8 Meganova E - phasing

On or before the 31st July 2024 Meganova E (as defined on drawing no. 22_LX_SOUTH_MP_P Rev. 4) shall be reduced in height to reflect Phase 2 approved plans (dwg no. XXXX-SS-MNE-ZZ-DR-X-0203 Rev.A1 (Phase 2 - Meganova E Proposed GA East & West Elevations) and XXXX-SS-MNE-ZZ-DR-X-0204 Rev.A1 (Phase 2 - Meganova E Proposed GA North & South Elevations) for the remainder of the temporary permission reflected in Condition 1 above.

Reason: In order to obtain a satisfactory form and scale of development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to comply with Policy EE1 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

9 Management and Operational Plan

Within 3 months of the date of this decision a Management and Operational Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include details for the management and mitigation of the impacts of the use of the site including outdoor filming (including noise disturbance, artificial lighting including temporary lighting, parking and access requirements, traffic management, location of activities, management of night filming or associated activities occurring between the hours of 9pm and 7am) to demonstrate how impacts on residential amenity, ecology and highway safety will be minimised and mitigated. The site shall thereafter only be used for filming in accordance with the approved management and operational plan, unless otherwise agree with the Local Planning Authority in writing.

Reason: To protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties and to protect wildlife and avoid adverse impacts on the highway and to comply with Policies EE2, EE9, SD4 and SD5 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

10 Hours of use

The centrally located circular Backlot area identified on plan 22_LX_SOUTH_MP_P Rev. 4 shall only be used for filming and film related uses between the hours of 7.00am and 9.00pm. Monday to Saturday and may not be used on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Filming should cease at 8.00pm during the months October-March each year. There should be no night shooting outside these hours unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:- To protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties and to protect wildlife and to comply with Policies EE2 and EE9 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

11 External use

External/outside filming or media production shall only take place within the defined 'Backlot' areas as identified on drawing number 22_LX_SOUTH_MP_P Rev. 4 (Longcross South - Site Plan)

Reason: To protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties and to protect wildlife and to comply with Policies EE2 and EE9 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

12 Construction and dismantling works

The construction and dismantling of sets, temporary structures and marquees, and the associated vehicular activity within the 'backlot' areas and the 'temporary marquee and cabin zones' identified on drawing number 22_LX_SOUTH_MP_P Rev. 4 (Longcross South - Site Plan) shall only take place between the hours of 7.30am and 7.00pm Monday to Friday and 8.00am and 1.00pm Saturday and not at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties and to protect wildlife and to comply with Policies EE2 and EE9 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

13 External lighting and floodlighting

A Lighting scheme shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within 3 months of this decision, to include details of existing and proposed external lighting including any lighting fixed to buildings/structures and details of any floodlighting including temporary lighting. Such details shall include hours of use, details of lighting levels and measures to ensure that no direct light is projected into the atmosphere above the lighting installation and measures to protect residential amenity and wildlife. No external lighting shall be installed within the site including any floodlighting, other than in accordance with the lighting scheme as approved. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties and to protect wildlife including bats and bird habitat and to comply with Policies EE2 and EE9 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

14 Ground levels

There shall be no change to existing surface treatment or any changes to existing ground levels without the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to obtain a satisfactory form of development in the interests of the visual amenities and to protect existing trees, wildlife and biodiversity of the area, and having regard to archaeology and land contamination and to comply with Policy EE1, EE2, EE7, EE9 and EE11 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

15 Tree Protection

Within 3 months of the date of this decision a tree protection strategy and method statement for the protection of existing trees shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include details of tree protective fencing and strategy to protect trees from the development and use approved, including works associated from the erection and dismantling of sets, marquees, cabins and associated structures and works, and works within the 'temporary marquee and cabin zones'. The tree protective measures

shall be installed in accordance with the approved tree protection plan and strategy within 2 months of receipt of written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved protection plan and method statement. The protective measures shall remain in place throughout the duration of this temporary permission and until all works are complete including the duration of the removal of the development (including building, structures and associated works) from the land and all machinery and materials have finally left site.

Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition, nor shall any fires be started, no tipping, refuelling, disposal of solvents or cement mixing carried out and ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation or vehicular access, other than that detailed within the approved plans, be made without the written consent of the LPA.

Reason: To protect the trees to be retained, enhance the appearance and biodiversity of the surrounding area and to comply with Policies EE1, EE9 and EE11 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

16 Drainage

Within 3 months of the date of this decision details of the design of a surface water drainage scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details. The design must satisfy the SuDS Hierarchy and be compliant with the national Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS, NPPF and Ministerial Statement on SuDS. The required drainage details shall include:

- a) Evidence that the proposed final solution will effectively manage the 1 in 30 (+35% allowance for climate change) & 1 in 100 (+40% allowance for climate change) storm events, during all stages of the development. Associated discharge rates and storage volumes shall be provided using a maximum discharge rate to be agreed with SCC as LLFA.
- b) Detailed drainage design drawings and calculations to include: a finalised drainage layout detailing the location of drainage elements, pipe diameters, levels, and long and cross sections of each element including details of any flow restrictions and maintenance/risk reducing features (silt traps, inspection chambers etc.).
- c) A plan showing exceedance flows (i.e. during rainfall greater than design events or during blockage) and how property on and off site will be protected from increased flood risk.
- d) Details of drainage management responsibilities and maintenance regimes for the drainage system.
- e) Details of how the drainage system will be protected during construction and how runoff (including any pollutants) from the development site will be managed before the drainage system is operational.

Reason: To ensure that the design meets the national Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS and that the final drainage design does not increase flood risk on or off site and to

comply with Policies SD7, EE12 and EE13 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

17 SuDS (verification)

Within 6 months of the date of this permission, a verification report carried out by a qualified drainage engineer shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This must demonstrate that the drainage system has been constructed as per the agreed scheme (or detail any minor variations), provide the details of any management company and state the national grid reference of any key drainage elements (surface water attenuation devices/areas, flow restriction devices and outfalls) and confirm any defects have been rectified.

Reason: To ensure that the drainage system is constructed to the national Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SUDS and to comply with Policies SD7, EE12 and EE13 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

18 Highways - Travel Plan

Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, within 3 months of the date of this decision, an updated Travel Plan shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in accordance with the sustainable development aims and objectives of the NPPF, Surrey County Council's Travel Plans - Good Practice Guide. And then the approved Travel Plan shall be implemented for each and every subsequent occupation of the development, thereafter maintain and develop the Travel Plan to the satisfaction of the LPA.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users and in recognition of Section 9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, and in order to meet the objectives of the NPPF (2023). To encourage active and sustainable travel and to avoid harmful impacts on air quality and to comply with Policies SD3 and EE2 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

19 Highways - sustainable access to North

Within 3 months of the date of this decision, a programme for the delivery and implementation of measures to secure safe access for pedestrians and cyclists to Longcross North and Longcross Railway station which should prioritise the use of Accommodation bridge where feasible, together with alternative options including a shuttle bus, together with details of timescale for delivery shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the measures shall be provided and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety and in recognition of Section 9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, and in order to meet the objectives of the NPPF (2023). To encourage

active and sustainable travel, and to comply with Policies SD3 and EE2 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

20 Highways - Cycle provision

Within 3 months of the date of this decision the following facilities shall be provided in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for:

- (a) The secure parking of bicycles within the development site,
- (b) Facilities within the development site for cyclist to change into and out of cyclist equipment /shower,
- (c) Facilities within the development site for cyclists to store cyclist equipment,

and thereafter the said approved facilities shall be provided, retained and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety and in recognition of Section 9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, and in order to meet the objectives of the NPPF (2023). To encourage active and sustainable travel, and to comply with Policies SD3 and EE2 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

Informatives:

1 Summary of Reasons to Grant Consent

The decision has been taken in compliance with the requirement in the NPPF to foster the delivery of sustainable development in a positive and proactive manner.

2 The applicant is advised that all the trees within the application site and wider Longcross South site are protected by an area Tree Preservation Order no.461. In addition, for clarification, this permission does not give approval for works to, or for the removal of any existing trees.

3 If proposed site works affect an Ordinary Watercourse, Surrey County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority should be contacted to obtain prior written Consent. More details are available on Surrey County Council's website.

4 If proposed works result in infiltration of surface water to ground within a Source Protection Zone the Environment Agency will require proof of surface water treatment to achieve water quality standards.

5 Sub ground structures should be designed so they do not have an adverse effect on groundwater.