

By email  
17 June 2025

Lynn Parker  
Development Management  
Shropshire Council  
1-2 Castle Gates  
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SY1 2AB

Your ref 24/04831/FUL  
Our ref 292083-00

Dear Lynn,

## **Attingham Outdoor hub**

### **Response to consultee comments and public representations**

Following your correspondence dated 6th and 21st March 2025 summarising consultee and public comments on the Attingham Outdoor Hub planning application (ref: 24/04831/FUL), please find below our formal response, structured by topic areas:

1. Landscape and Visual Impact
2. Green Infrastructure
3. Drainage and Surface Water
4. Highways and Transport
5. Parish Council and Ward Member Comments
6. Public Representations

We have collated all feedback and reviewed this with our technical teams and the National Trust. We hope this submission provides sufficient clarification of the key matters raised. Where information is still in preparation, we have indicated timelines for submission.

### **1. Landscape and Visual Impact**

In response to the landscape-related consultee comments provided by ESP Ltd (dated February 2025), Arup's Landscape Architecture team has completed an updated Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) to address the specific observations raised. This includes the addition of new viewpoints, revised assessments, photographic clarity, and more robust referencing to local landscape typologies.

The updated LVA (ref: 292083-ARUP-ZZ-XX-RP-LD-0001) has been submitted to the Council alongside this response letter. We kindly request that it be shared with the relevant consultees and statutory stakeholders as part of a formal re-consultation process, as necessary.

In the table below we provide a high-level summary of how the comments have been addressed:

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ESP Comment / Recommendation	Response
Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) should be explicitly linked to Shropshire Landscape Typology.	The revised LVA includes updated baseline descriptions in Section 5.3 explicitly linking the LLCAs to the Shropshire Landscape Typology.
Two previously requested viewpoints were missing, and Wrekin photography unclear.	Viewpoints from B4394 and U5216/10 have been added, Wrekin photographs retaken, and annotation added to all visualisations.
Inconsistencies in summary and appraisal tables should be corrected.	All relevant tables (Tables 3–8, B.5, C.9) have been updated for consistency with the recorded assessment.
Design proposals should respond further to Design Midlands’ recommendations.	Responses to all design recommendations are provided in detail in Appendix B of the updated LVIA and in the Design and Access Statement. These include celebration of the runway, integration of historic landscape character, and improved path network clarity.
Second design review panel was recommended.	Following revising the LVIA, we believe these updates addresses the key issues.

Regarding comments relating to the strategic intent behind the proposal, Section 2 and 3 of the Design and Access Statement (DAS) sets this out, including the rationale for not linking the Outdoor Hub directly to the existing Attingham Park site. The project is deliberately conceived as a complementary but standalone visitor offer. While both ESP Ltd and the Design Midlands Panel suggested that this rationale could be more clearly expressed, we respectfully disagree.

It is worth noting that the site is currently vegetated and largely cropped or wooded, with no remaining airfield surfacing or buildings visible within the open areas of the site. Thus, currently there is little physical evidence that would allow interpretation of the former use of the site.

The proposed development is fundamentally a project seeking to widen public access to the countryside and its recreational potential, rather than a traditional National Trust offer. However, in developing our proposals we have recognised the opportunity to celebrate the former historical use of the site and would highlight that the design retains and references the alignment of the linear runway through planting, path alignment, and view framing. The scheme would include interpretation boards and information to allow visitors to understand the former use. The architecture incorporates subtle cues inspired by the site’s heritage, such as the control tower, without resorting to pastiche. We see no merit in trying to replicate the design and layout of long-lost airfield buildings and the placement of the building is considered an appropriate balance between site/operational constraints and needs and heritage/landscape considerations and is supported by a design optioneering process explained within the DAS.

In summary, we consider the revised LVIA and supporting documentation to provide a robust and proportionate response to the issues raised. The proposals remain landscape-led, well-integrated into their setting, and sensitive to both the local context and historic landscape character.

## 2. Green Infrastructure

We have reviewed comments from Shropshire Council’s Green Infrastructure Advisor and have provided clarification and context for how the proposals for the Attingham Outdoor Hub respond to relevant policies and green infrastructure objectives.

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### Green Roofs & Green Infrastructure Connections

Green roofs were considered during early design development but were ultimately not included in the final proposals for viability reasons. However, the overall landscape-led approach to the scheme has ensured that green infrastructure connections have been prioritised throughout. Woodland planting has been expanded and strategically placed to enhance site-level connectivity between existing habitats. Although not all areas of SEN corridors directly fall within the red line boundary, the proposals align with their intent by extending habitat provision and ecological links within and beyond the application site. Notably, the creation of new mosaic habitat around the runway, and use of wildflower and wetland planting in the central field area, contributes positively to habitat variety and connectivity.

### Reflection of Local Landscape Character

The scheme has been carefully designed to respond to the landscape setting and its identified typology. The Design and Access Statement (Section 3.4) references Shropshire Council's 'Shropshire Landscape Typology' and recognises that the site falls within the 'Estate Farmlands' character type. The masterplan maintains the fundamental structure and patterns associated with this landscape: the existing field structure has been retained, with proposed path and cycle routes aligned along existing field margins and hedgerows. The central runway and adjacent fields celebrate both the agricultural and historic airfield character, while providing new visitor access and habitat creation. The choice of planting—native and locally appropriate species—draws on local Biodiversity Action Plans and reflects the evolution of this site from agricultural use to a sensitive visitor-focused space.

### Pedestrian Link to Attingham Park

The lack of direct connectivity between the new Outdoor Hub and Attingham Park is intentional. The decision reflects a strategic management approach to visitor movement, allowing the National Trust to carefully manage numbers and avoid overburdening sensitive heritage and ecological features within the main park. This design principle helps safeguard the setting of the registered park and garden, while allowing the Outdoor Hub to offer a distinct, landscape-led experience.

### Transport Links from Wider Area

Although the masterplan cannot directly deliver improved public transport infrastructure outside of the site boundary, it does enhance site accessibility internally through improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. The Design and Access Statement includes a diagram of routes and access points within and around the site. Discussions with Sustrans are ongoing, but the organisation is currently unable to promote an active travel route directly to the site. Nevertheless, new signage and information boards will promote routes to the wider area. Improvements to the crossing point on the B4394 will further support pedestrian access.

### Village Green Accessibility

The central "village green" space has been designed with accessibility in mind. A fully surfaced path runs around its edge, and the field itself is flat and maintained as short-cut grassland, allowing for inclusive use by visitors with mobility needs. Multiple entry points ensure inclusive access from various directions.

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### Play Area Design and Inclusivity

At this stage of the planning application, play features have been shown indicatively to reflect scale and location. It is proposed that the detailed design of play spaces be secured by condition. A play brief will be prepared, and the National Trust will work with a specialist play provider to ensure that play features are inclusive and in keeping with the landscape-led ethos of the development. The aspiration is to create play spaces that reflect the character and themes of the site; nature, heritage, and recreation -while providing features suitable for a range of age groups and abilities. Safety surfacing and path connections will also be resolved through detailed design and secured as part of any condition discharge process.

### 3. Drainage and Surface Water

We appreciate Shropshire Council's comments and confirm our proposed approach. The drainage strategy for the Attingham Outdoor Hub has been developed to ensure appropriate surface and foul water management in accordance with best practice and policy expectations.

#### Existing Drainage Network (Catchment 1)

In response to the request to confirm the condition, efficacy, route, and outfall of the drainage network in the northern part of the site, a CCTV survey has been undertaken to assess key pipework. Specifically:

- **MH ATT 11A:** The survey extended 71.39m along this pipe before terminating due to silt build-up. Minor debris and root ingress were observed but not considered significant. The survey concluded that the pipe is in an acceptable condition.
- **MH ATT 7A:** This chamber was not subject to internal survey due to its location within dense woodland. However, visual inspection confirmed flow through the structure and connected pipework, as noted in the inspection chamber record card.

Based on the survey findings, it is considered that the condition of the existing pipe network is suitable to support the proposed development. As a precautionary measure, the pipework will be fully cleaned by the contractor prior to construction. If required, localised repairs will also be undertaken. These commitments are reflected in the updated planning submission drawings.

#### Ordinary Watercourse Consent (Catchment 2)

We acknowledge that the proposed works to the culvert in Catchment 2 will require Ordinary Watercourse Consent (OWC) under the Land Drainage Act 1991, which is separate legislation and not a planning consideration. The requirement for this consent is noted however, and will be addressed in full prior to the commencement of works. It is proposed that this requirement be highlighted through an informative on the planning decision, to enable coordination with the appointed contractor and allow preparation of a Method Statement as part of the consent application.

The updated drainage drawings demonstrate that:

- No terminated flows will be left without a defined outfall.

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- Two existing culverts on the southern edge of the former runway currently discharge to a buried chamber (co-ordinates: 356810.3238, 310522.6196), which then routes flows southwest to an existing outfall.
- Where culvert diversions are proposed east of this chamber, any incoming pipes will be removed as part of the building works. These flows will be captured by the proposed new drainage system.
- The western section of culvert will remain in situ and connect into the proposed drainage network to maintain existing flow continuity.

The Drainage Layout Plans have been updated to reflect this arrangement. We note the Council's standard requirement for a 3m easement on either side of new culverts. We have begun discussions with Helen Walters (Senior Land Drainage Officer) to better understand the operational requirements behind this, and we are happy to continue working with the drainage team through the detailed design and consenting stages to explore whether a suitably refined easement arrangement can be agreed in this instance.

### Foul Water Drainage

The foul water drainage strategy has been reviewed by the Lead Local Flood Authority and is considered acceptable in principle. However, we acknowledge the requirement to demonstrate acceptance of the proposals by the Environment Agency through the appropriate permitting route.

Our proposals have already been shared with the EA and it has been confirmed that a bespoke Environmental Permit will be required. While a formal permit has not yet been secured, this is expected to follow once detailed design is finalised and the EA is able to confirm agreed discharge limits and water quality parameters. This process will be completed prior to construction, and we propose that submission of the final permit be secured via planning condition.

## 4. Highways and Transport

We have reviewed the comments from Shropshire Council's Highway Authority and are producing additional information and updates to address the points raised. This work is currently ongoing and is being undertaken by Arup's Transport Planning team, with the aim of submitting the additional material by early-August 2025.

The key areas of additional work and our response to each are outlined below:

### Detailed Accident Analysis:

A full analysis of Personal Injury Collision (PIC) data is being commissioned and will be included in the updated Transport Note. This will provide further clarity on existing highway safety conditions and demonstrate how any potential risks associated with the proposed development can be mitigated.

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### **Dropped Kerbs and Tactile Paving:**

These elements are being reviewed and will be noted on updated drawings where necessary. While we understand these are often secured via condition, it may be helpful to include reference to them in the Road Safety Audit (RSA) and design drawings for completeness.

### **Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA):**

Arup is in the process of commissioning an independent Stage 1 RSA to assess the proposed access arrangements, including pedestrian crossing points. The Designer's Response will be prepared by Arup and submitted alongside the audit results.

### **Road Hump Adjustment:**

The existing location of the road hump on the private access is being reviewed. Any required adjustments will be addressed through revised access drawings or managed during detailed design stages, as appropriate.

### **Swept Path Analysis:**

Additional swept path drawings will be produced to demonstrate access for fire tenders and larger service/delivery vehicles. We will utilise information from the National Trust on the size of their largest operational delivery vehicles across other sites to ensure appropriate provision is made within the site layout.

### **Car Park Management Strategy:**

The Highway Authority requests the submission of an Events Management Plan and a Car Park Management Strategy. We would like to note that an Events Management Plan (dated October 2024) was submitted as part of the original planning application, and it includes a dedicated chapter on traffic and parking management.

We would welcome the Highway Authority review this document, as it already addresses many of the matters raised by them. If any further detail is still deemed necessary, we would be happy to agree this through a suitably worded planning condition.

### **Directional Markings in the Car Park:**

As noted, any issues regarding line marking on gravel surfacing can be addressed through condition. No further action is required at this stage.

Should the Highway Authority have any further specific requirements or wish to discuss elements of this response in more detail, we would be happy to arrange a meeting with the Arup project team and the National Trust.

## **5. Parish Council and Ward Member Comments**

The table below provides a summary of the key comments received from Parish Councils and the Ward Members, alongside our responses addressing each point:

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Summarised PC & Wards Members Comments	Response
<p><b>Increased Traffic and Congestion:</b> Both parish councils are concerned about the anticipated increase in visitor numbers exacerbating existing traffic congestion and safety issues.</p>	<p>The Transport Assessment prepared (Arup, September 2024) assessed anticipated traffic impacts and concluded that the proposed development would not significantly exacerbate existing congestion. Following comments from SC Highways officers, the additional work highlighted in in Section 4 of this report is being undertaken to address matters of safety and traffic management. Traffic calming and highway improvements at key junctions, including Norton Crossroads, can be explored in collaboration with SC Highways.</p>
<p><b>Inadequate Consultation:</b> The council’s express dissatisfaction with the level of engagement from the National Trust regarding the project. They report a lack of ongoing communication since an initial presentation, and a complete absence of further consultation in the interim 18 months before the planning application submission.</p> <p>Both parish councils request that the planning application be withdrawn to allow for extensive community consultation to address and possibly mitigate the highlighted issues</p>	<p>Consultation was undertaken with stakeholders and summarised within the Statement of Community Involvement (December 2024). Whilst there is no statutory requirement for pre-application consultation and thus no basis for withdrawal of the application, we recognise concerns expressed by the Parish Councils and confirm that the National Trust is committed to continued community engagement as the project progresses.</p>
<p><b>Impact on Local Amenities:</b> There is concern that the new development will strain local amenities due to a significant rise in the number of visitors, potentially reaching over a million by 2030. This could lead to increased wear and tear on local infrastructure and possible degradation of resident quality of life due to overcrowded facilities and public spaces.</p>	<p>The potential impacts on local amenities have been carefully considered. Facilities within the Outdoor Hub have been designed specifically to manage and accommodate the anticipated visitor numbers, thus reducing pressure on existing local infrastructure. In addition, it is anticipated that increased footfall in the area may bring positive economic benefits to nearby local businesses such as pubs, cafés and shops. Detailed management plans will be developed to ensure that any increase in activity is well managed and that impacts on the local community are appropriately mitigated.</p>
<p><b>Safety at Norton Crossroads:</b> Specific worries about Norton Crossroads relate to the frequency of serious accidents. The councils highlight that previous discussions about improving safety at this junction have not yet resulted in physical changes.</p>	<p>The applicant recognises local concerns regarding safety at Norton Crossroads. The Transport Assessment proposes measures to enhance road safety which can be further developed in liaison with SCC Highways, if requested. Additional information in respect of accident data and analysis will be provided as described in section 4 of this letter.</p>
<p><b>Public Safety and Access for Pedestrians and Cyclists:</b> The Parish Councils are worried about the safety of pedestrians and cyclists accessing the new hub, noting that the roads around the site are hazardous. They are concerned that the proposed measures to improve access routes are still theoretical and lack detailed planning.</p>	<p>Pedestrian and cycle safety has been addressed through provision of improved pathways and cycle access as detailed in the Transport Assessment and Design and Access Statement. While existing routes present challenges, proposals aim to enhance accessibility and safety. SC Highways support the new crossing point on the B4394 but have requested that tactile paving and dropped kerbs are indicated on the drawings. They have also requested a Road Safety Audit (RSA) to include the crossing and this has been commissioned and will follow.</p>

## 6. Public Representations

The table below provides a summary of the key comments received from members of the public, categorised by sub-theme, alongside our responses addressing each point:

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<b>Summarised Public Comments by Topic</b>		<b>Response</b>
<b>Traffic Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large increase in traffic through Atcham village, especially at the dangerous 6-way junction.</li> <li>- Increased danger to pedestrians near the bus stop.</li> <li>- Difficult junctions due to the site entrance/exit being off a minor road.</li> <li>- Lack of raw traffic data complicates assessment of suitable junction types.</li> <li>- Increased vehicle movements without pedestrian and cycle infrastructure improvements.</li> <li>- Delays in business park access.</li> <li>- No traffic management proposed for B4394 and Norton crossroads.</li> <li>- Increased traffic along B4380.</li> <li>- Need for traffic calming measures.</li> <li>- Disruption to business operations due to increased traffic.</li> <li>- Potential for mixed HGV and visitor traffic causing congestion and safety issues.</li> </ul>	<p>Traffic and junction impacts have been thoroughly assessed in the Transport Assessment (Arup, September 2024), identifying that proposed traffic volumes will be accommodated safely with appropriate mitigation. Detailed junction safety improvements and management measures could be implemented in collaboration with SC Highways if requested. They have requested a Road Safety Audit (RSA) and this has been commissioned and will follow.</p>
<b>Road Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsafe access for the development.</li> <li>- Increased accident risk at Norton crossroads.</li> <li>- No safe cycling route from major cities.</li> <li>- Night-time use of cycle tracks by motorcyclists.</li> <li>- Potential rise in road casualties.</li> <li>- Insufficient road safety measures funded by National Trust.</li> </ul>	<p>Road safety was assessed and addressed within the Transport Assessment and design proposals, which recommend specific infrastructure and safety measures, including improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, traffic calming, and signage. SC Highways have requested additional accident information and a Road Safety Audit (RSA) and these will be provided as part of a pack of additional information for their consideration. Further specific safety measures, such as improvements at identified junctions, will be discussed with the Highway Authority, if requested by them.</p>
<b>Environmental and Community Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impact on wildlife and environment.</li> <li>- Lack of consultation with local residents.</li> <li>- Noise and environmental impacts from site events.</li> <li>- Negative effects on local community and properties.</li> <li>- Possible rise in crime rates.</li> <li>- Effects on local residents' freedom and safety.</li> <li>- Impact on local community's mental health and well-being.</li> </ul>	<p>Environmental impacts, including on ecology, biodiversity, noise, and visual impacts, have been thoroughly considered and mitigated through extensive assessment and mitigation documentation (Ecological Impact Assessment, Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Noise Impact Assessment, and Landscape Visual Appraisal). The National Trust is committed to continued engagement with the community to mitigate potential concerns through event management and environmental stewardship.</p>
<b>Business and Operational Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impact on existing businesses and access rights.</li> <li>- Concerns about parking and its effects on business operations.</li> <li>- Operational challenges for Parcelforce and other businesses within the business park.</li> <li>- Road maintenance concerns with increased traffic.</li> <li>- Hazards to agricultural operations from increased traffic.</li> <li>- Impact on historical bridleway.</li> </ul>	<p>The concerns about business operations, especially relating to traffic management and site access, have been addressed in the submitted Transport Assessment and Access Plans. Proposed management strategies aim to avoid conflict between public and business operations. Ongoing dialogue with affected businesses, along with a detailed Event Management Plan and Car Park Management Strategy, can further address and mitigate potential conflicts.</p>

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## **7. Next Steps**

We trust the above and the enclosed response note provide a comprehensive response to the issues raised. We will follow up shortly with the highways pack. Please let us know if a meeting would be helpful to discuss the outstanding matters.

Regards,  
Matthew

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