



APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION 16/00472/DPP, ERECTION OF RESEARCH AND IMAGING FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED OUTBUILDING, GENERATOR AND SUB-STATION; AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT LAND AT EASTER BUSH SOUTH, EASTER BUSH, ROSLIN

Report by Head of Communities and Economy

1 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION AND RECOMMENDED DECISION

- 1.1** The application is for the erection of a research and imaging facility and associated outbuilding, generator and sub-station; and associated works at land at Easter Bush South, Easter Bush, Roslin. There have been no letters of representation and consultation responses from Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA); Transport Scotland; East Lothian Council Archaeology Service; the Council's Policy and Road Safety Manager; and the Council's Environmental Health Manager. The relevant development plan policies are RP1, RP2, RP3 and RP4 of the Midlothian Local Plan 2008 (MLP). Policies STRAT5, ECON2 and IMP2 of the Proposed Midlothian Local Development Plan 2014 (MLDP) are material considerations. The recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to conditions and securing developer contributions.

2 LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1** The application site is an agricultural field of approximately 1.35 hectares. The field is roughly triangular and slopes downhill from a high point at the southern end of the site.
- 2.2** The site is situated to the south east of the existing buildings at the University of Edinburgh's Easter Bush Campus. The Campus incorporates the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies; the Roslin Institute; and associated functions.
- 2.3** The site is bounded to the north west by a burn; to the east by the route of the Campus perimeter road and then a tree belt separating the Campus from the neighbouring BioCampus site; and to the south west by an area of open ground beyond which lies the construction site for the Campus Energy Centre.

- 2.4 The site forms part of site Bt2; a 5.8 hectare site proposed in the MLDP for biotechnology/knowledge based industries.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application relates to the erection of a research and imaging facility which will support the study of the biology of large animals. The facility will have scanning and imaging facilities similar to those found in a human hospital; such as MRI, ultrasound and CT scanners. The main building will also house the Agricultural Engineering Precision Innovation Centre (Agri-EPI) which will deliver research, development, demonstration and training on precision agriculture and engineering for the livestock, arable, horticulture and aquaculture sectors.
- 3.2 The development will consist of a main building, housing all the research and imaging facilities, with a footprint of 3,675 square metres; an attached animal holding area with a footprint of 1,424 square metres; a detached external store with a footprint of 213 square metres; and an external yard area of 682 square metres. A generator and sub-station building with a footprint of 92 square metres will be erected to the east of the main set of buildings. In addition to the buildings the development will also comprise a service yard and entrance; and a car park.
- 3.3 The main frontage of the facility will be 88.6 metres in length, oriented towards the south west and will front onto land that will be incorporated within the central landscaping spine of the Campus. The main building and attached animal holding area will form a series of five parallel roof ridges. From an eaves height of 4 metres on the main frontage the building height will rise through ridges of 7.8 metres and 10 metres to a peak height of 12.5 metres; the height then falls through ridges of 9.6 metres and 7 metres to an eaves height of 4.4 metres at the rear of the animal holding building. The building walls will be timber clad and the roof will be finished with metal roofing panels; two of the roof planes will include arrays of solar panels. The built form of the building is inspired by modern agricultural buildings; however the detail design elements, roof profile and finish materials create an enhanced agricultural aesthetic that is in keeping with the character of many of the animal housing buildings at Easter Bush.
- 3.4 The research and imaging functions associated with the building will employ 8 to 12 dedicated staff who will move to the site from existing facilities at Roslin and at Dryden Farm. The Agri-EPI facility will provide facilities for 20 staff; however it will have a dedicated day to day staff of 3 to 4 people who will be decanted from existing facilities at Easter Bush. The building will also include space to accommodate a meeting/conference of approximately 100 people; however this will be a very occasional use of the space with existing conference and meeting facilities at Easter Bush likely to take priority for such events.

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Easter Bush Campus is a long-established university campus which is home to several facilities relating to veterinary medicine and bioscience. Easter Bush was originally a farm steading and there are some 19thC farm buildings remaining, although they have been converted to uses related to the campus. The Campus saw significant development in the 1960's and again in the last 20 years; the majority of the buildings on the campus date from these two periods.
- 4.2 The application site was the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion (16/00269/SCR) as a precursor to the current application; an Environmental Statement was not required. In addition, a Pre-Application Consultation exercise (16/00179/PAC) was carried out by the applicant prior to the submission of the current application.

5 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 The **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)** has no objection to the proposal. Initially SEPA objected to the proposal on the grounds of flood risk; however following the submission of additional information by the applicant the objection was withdrawn.
- 5.2 **Transport Scotland** has no objection to the proposal.
- 5.3 East Lothian Council **Archaeology** Service has no objection to the proposal.
- 5.4 The Council's **Policy and Road Safety** Manager has no objection to the proposal. The response notes that while a relatively large building the specialist nature of the use will ensure that the use will not generate a significant number of vehicle movements. The response also notes that previous Transport Assessments and the recently prepared Bush Transport Strategy have identified that improvements are necessary at the A702/Bush Loan junction; the Transport Strategy includes a preliminary design for a roundabout. At present no funding mechanism or procurement programme has been brought forward by the landowners and developers in this area for the detailed design and construction of this roundabout. Until a clear strategy and timeframe is identified for the provision of this infrastructure major traffic generation developments in this area, which would result in additional traffic using this junction, could not be supported.
- 5.5 The Council's **Environmental Health** Manager has no objection to the proposal.

6 REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations have been received in connection with this application.

7 PLANNING POLICY

- 7.1 The development plan is comprised of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (June 2013) and the Midlothian Local Plan, adopted in December 2008. The Proposed Midlothian Local Development Plan 2014 has been submitted to the Scottish Ministers and is subject to an examination which is likely to be concluded in late Spring 2017. As this plan is at an advance stage of preparation and represents the settled view of the Council it is a material consideration of significant weight in the assessment of the application. The following policies are relevant to the proposal:

Midlothian Local Plan 2008 (MLP)

- 7.2 Policy **RP1: Protection of the Countryside** states that development in the countryside will only be permitted if: it is required for the furtherance of agriculture, including farm related diversification, horticulture, forestry, countryside recreation, tourism, or waste disposal (where this is shown to be essential as a method of site restoration); it is within a designated non-conforming use in the Green Belt; or it accords with policy DP1.

Policy **RP2: Protection of the Green Belt** advises that Development will not be permitted in the Green Belt except for proposals that:

- A. are necessary to agriculture, horticulture or forestry; or
- B. are for opportunities for access to the open countryside, outdoor sport or outdoor recreation which reduce the need to travel further afield; or
- C. are related to other uses appropriate to the rural character of the area; or
- D. are in accord with policy RP3, ECON1, ECON7 or are permitted through policy DP1.

Any development proposal will be required to show that it does not conflict with the overall objectives of the Green Belt.

- 7.3 Policy **RP3: Major Non-Conforming Land Uses in the Green Belt** states that planned development of established activity at non-conforming sites will be permitted. The Bush Estate is one such site and Easter Bush Campus is included within that site.
- 7.4 Midlothian Local Plan Policy **RP4: Prime Agricultural Land** states that development leading to the loss of prime agricultural land will not be permitted unless the site is allocated to meet structure plan

requirements; or there is a locational justification for the development and it accords with all other relevant Local Plan policies and proposals.

Proposed Midlothian Local Development Plan 2014 (MLDP)

- 7.5 Policy **STRAT5: Strategic Employment Land Allocations** states that development for employment uses will be supported on sites identified as strategic employment allocations. The application site forms part of a larger site identified on the Proposals Map for biotechnology/knowledge based industries.
- 7.6 Policy **ECON2: The Bush Bioscience Cluster** states that the cluster, of which the application site forms part, will be safeguarded for the specific purpose of supporting and expanding bioscience research and development. Development will be supported subject to detailed design, scale and landscape impact being acceptable and the necessary local and strategic infrastructure requirements of the Plan being met.
- 7.7 Policy **IMP2: Essential Infrastructure Required to enable New Development to Take Place**, states that new development will not take place until adequate provision (related to the scale and impact of the proposed development) has been made for infrastructure, environmental and community facility requirements identified in the Plan. Within the A701 Corridor the following essential requirements, that are relevant to the current application, are identified:
- A701 Relief Road and A702 Link; and
 - A701 public transport, walking and cycling improvements on existing route (Straiton roundabout to A701/A703 junction).

8 PLANNING ISSUES

- 8.1 The main planning issue to be considered in determining this application is whether the proposal complies with development plan policies unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The consultation responses received are material considerations.

The Principle of Development

- 8.2 Easter Bush Campus and the research functions associated with it are one of the longstanding uses that form part of the Bush Bioscience Cluster. Policies RP3 of the current MLP and ECON2 of the MLDP are intended to support and facilitate the planned expansion of the existing uses within the cluster. The applicant for the proposal is the University of Edinburgh and the proposal is planned development related to existing operations at Easter Bush; the proposal therefore complies with policies RP3 and ECON2.

Transportation Infrastructure

- 8.3 Midlothian Council and the various organisations with land interests at the Bush are aware that improvements to the transportation infrastructure, in the area surrounding the Bush, will be necessary if the Bush Bioscience Cluster is to develop to its full potential. Previous Transport Assessments prepared in relation to applications within the Bush have identified that the junction of the A702(T) and Bush Loan is operating at close to its maximum capacity. Some assessments have identified that improvements to the junction should be a priority action to facilitate development at the Bush; however, it has proven difficult for all parties to reach agreement on a funding mechanism or procurement programme that would allow a detailed design to be prepared.
- 8.4 With a view to resolving this issue the University of Edinburgh has commissioned consultants to prepare a preliminary design solution for the A702(T)/Bush Loan junction. The design solution arrived at is the relocation of the junction to a location north of the existing junction; the formation of a new three arm roundabout; and the formation of new access roads to link the roundabout to the existing road layout. The preliminary design solution has been included as an appendix within the Bush Transport Strategy; a draft version of which was published in September 2016. The action plan associated with the Strategy identifies that the programme for delivery of the roundabout should commence in 2017.
- 8.5 Notwithstanding this fact neither Transport Scotland nor the Council's Policy and Road Safety Manager have identified the roundabout as being necessary to support the current application. While the proposed building is relatively large this space is necessary to accommodate the specialist equipment required to support the key functions of the building. Despite its large footprint the building will have a typical occupancy of approximately 15 staff; given this staffing level it will not generate a significant number of vehicle trips. It would therefore not be reasonable to seek contributions for the junction improvement in relation to this application. The trip modelling information provided with the Strategy indicates that improvements to the junction will be required after 2017; it is therefore unlikely that further applications at the Bush will be supported without a finalised design and funding programme being agreed for the proposed A702(T)/Bush Loan roundabout.

Use Classification of the Building

- 8.6 The Town and Country (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997 sets out 11 use classes within which a broad range of uses of land and/or buildings can be categorised; while the Use Classes Order seeks to accommodate a breadth of uses it is not possible to accommodate all uses and in some instances uses will not fall within one of the established uses and will instead be considered to be *sui generis*. Uses for Research and Development of products and processes fall within Class 4 (Business); however, Class 4 uses must be capable of being

carried out within a residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area by virtue of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

- 8.7 Due to the size of the animal holding area associated with the proposed Facility the use would be likely to disrupt the amenity of a residential area by virtue of noise and smell; the use can therefore not be considered to be a Class 4 use. It is the Planning Authority's view that the proposed facility is a Class 10 (Non-Residential Institution) use. This class includes use for the provision of education; as the facility will be operated by the University of Edinburgh this is considered to be the most appropriate class for the facility. Stating a position with regard the buildings use, in terms of the Use Class Order is important in terms of potential future uses and extensions to the building.

Scale, Design and Finish Materials

- 8.8 The scale and massing of the building have been determined by the need to accommodate large areas of scanning and imaging equipment and to provide heating and ventilation to service the equipment. Articulating the roof space via the series of ridges ensures that the mass of the building is reduced and creates a visually interesting profile when viewed from the main Campus buildings to the north west. The design and finish materials of the building borrow from the vernacular of modern agricultural buildings; this is in keeping with the style and character of many of the large buildings at Easter Bush which commonly feature variations on modern agricultural themes.

Developer Contributions

- 8.9 Scottish Government advice on the use of Section 75 Planning Agreements is set out in Circular 03/2012: Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements. The Circular advises that planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:
- Necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms (paragraph 15)
 - Serve a planning purpose (paragraph 16) and, where it is possible to identify infrastructure provision requirements in advance, should relate to development plans
 - Relate to the proposed development either as a direct consequence of the development or arising from the cumulative impact of development in the area (paragraphs 17-19)
 - Fairly and reasonably relate in scale and kind to the proposed development (paragraphs 20-23)
 - Be reasonable in all other respects
- 8.10 In relation to Midlothian Council, policies relevant to the use of Section 75 agreements are set out in the MLP and MLDP and Midlothian

Council's Developer Contributions Guidelines (Supplementary Planning Guidance).

- 8.11 This proposed development, of which the principal element is the provision of a research and imaging facility, has been assessed in relation to the above guidance and it is considered that a Planning Obligation is required in respect of the following matters:

A701 Relief Road and A702 Link

- 8.12 The site is within the A701 Corridor Strategic Development Area. The MLDP states that contributions will be sought in relation to the proposed A701 Relief Road and A702 Link. A proportionate contribution will be required from this development.

A701 public transport, walking and cycling improvements

- 8.13 The site is within the A701 Corridor Strategic Development Area. The MLDP states that contributions will be sought in relation to measures to prioritise the existing A701 (from Straiton roundabout to the A701/A703 junction) for walking, cycling and public transport improvements. A proportionate contribution will be required from this development.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 That planning permission be granted for the following reason:

By virtue of its scale, location, design and use the proposal complies with policies RP1, RP2, RP3 and RP4 of the Midlothian Local Plan and policies STRATS, ECON2 and IMP2 of the Proposed Midlothian Local Development Plan 2014.

Subject to:

the prior signing of a legal agreement to secure the provision of developer contributions towards A701 Relief Road and A702 Link; and A701 public transport, walking and cycling improvements. The legal agreement shall be concluded prior to the issuing of the planning permission. The applicants will be given a 6 month time period to work with Midlothian Council to conclude the agreement with the sanction of the Committee reconsidering the application and potentially refusing permission if the applicant does not conclude the agreement.

and the following conditions:

1. Development shall not begin until details of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. Details of the scheme shall include:
 - i notwithstanding that delineated on docketed drawings, existing and finished ground levels and floor levels for all buildings, open spaces, SUDS and roads in relation to a fixed datum;
 - ii proposed new planting in areas of open space, including trees, shrubs, hedging, wildflowers and grassed areas;
 - iii location and design of any proposed walls, fences and gates, including those surrounding bin stores or any other ancillary structures;
 - iv schedule of plants to comprise species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/density;
 - v programme for completion and subsequent maintenance of all soft and hard landscaping. The landscaping in the open spaces shall be completed within six months of the buildings being completed or occupied, whichever is sooner. Any tree felling or vegetation removal proposed as part of the landscaping scheme shall take place out with the bird breeding season (March-August);
 - vi drainage details, watercourse diversions, flood prevention measures and sustainable urban drainage systems to manage water runoff;
 - vii proposed car park configuration and surfacing; and
 - viii proposed cycle parking facilities.

All hard and soft landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the scheme approved in writing by the planning authority as the programme for completion and subsequent maintenance (v). Thereafter any trees or shrubs removed, dying, becoming seriously diseased or damaged within five years of planting shall be replaced in the following planting season by trees/shrubs of a similar species to those originally required.

Reason: To ensure the quality of the development is enhanced by landscaping to reflect its setting in accordance with policy DP2 of the Midlothian Local Plan and national planning guidance and advice.

2. Development shall not begin until details, and if requested samples of materials to be used on external surfaces of the buildings; hard ground cover surfaces; means of enclosure and ancillary structures have been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. Development shall thereafter be carried out using the approved materials or such alternatives as may be agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Reason: *To ensure the quality of the development is enhanced by the use of quality materials to reflect its setting in accordance with policies DP2 of the Midlothian Local Plan and national planning guidance and advice.*

3. The use of the buildings erected on the site shall be for uses within Class 10 (Non-Residential Institution) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997 unless otherwise approved by the planning authority.

Reason: *To ensure that the uses of the buildings are for the purposes applied for in order to meet the structure Plan Strategic economic land requirements.*

Ian Johnson
Head of Communities and Economy

Date: 21 December 2016

Application No: 16/00472/DPP

Applicant: University of Edinburgh

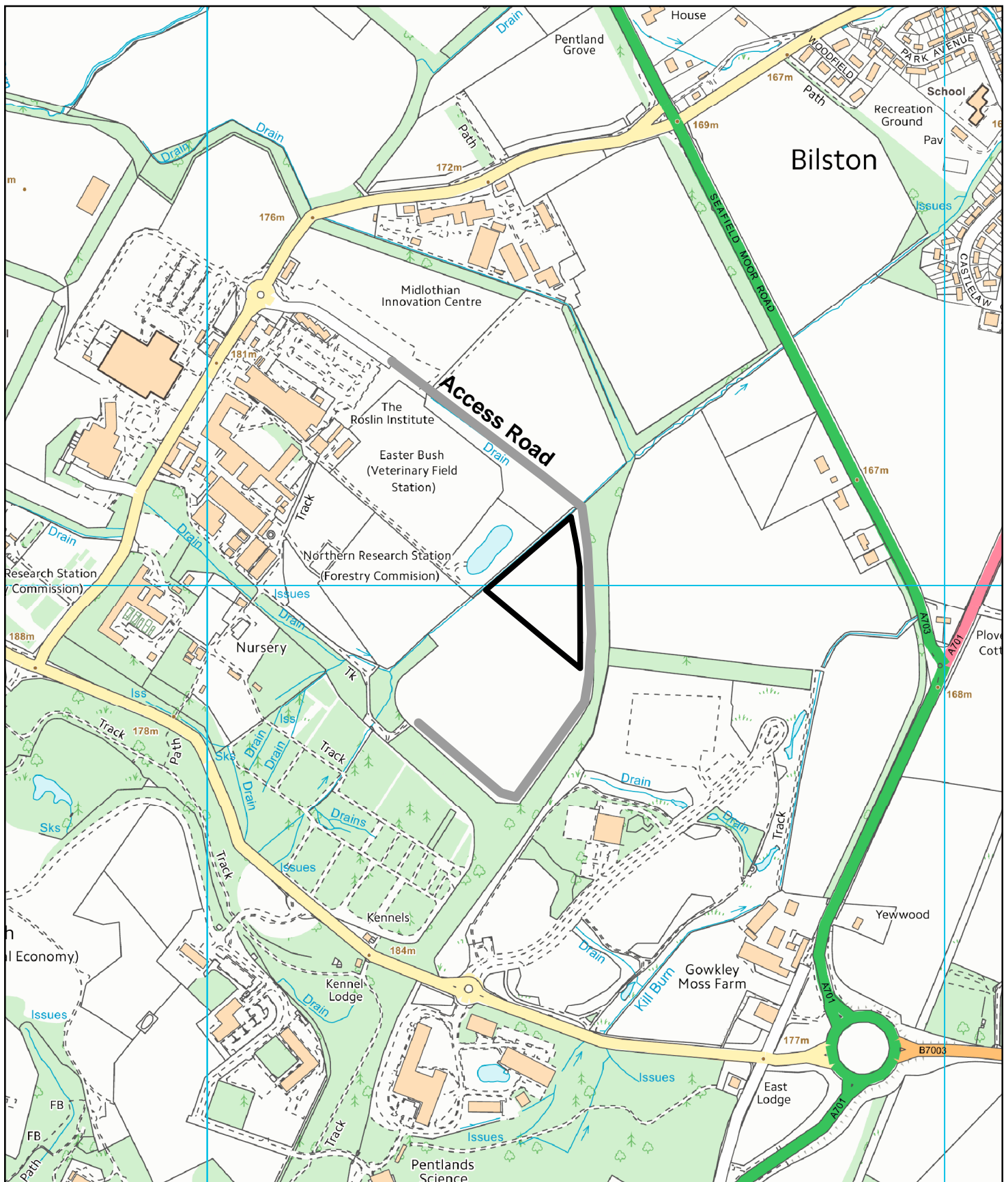
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Background Papers: 16/00179/PAC and 16/00269/SCR



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Erection of research and imaging facility and associated outbuilding, generator and sub-station; formation of service roads and car parking; and associated works at Land At Easter Bush South Easter Bush Roslin

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