

## **SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

**PAP/2021/0663**

**Land on the north-east of Junction 10 of the M42, Dordon/A5, Polesworth**

**Outline planning permission for the development of land within Use Class B2 (general industry), Use Class B8 (storage and distribution) and Use Class E (g) (iii) (light industrial) and ancillary infrastructure and associated works, development of overnight lorry parking and ancillary infrastructure and associated works. Details of access submitted for approval in full, all other matters reserved for**

**Mr D Hodgetts – Hodgetts Estates**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Following publication of the agenda for this Board meeting, the applicant has forwarded a note outlining a number of matters which he considers should be brought to the attention of Members. This Supplementary Report has been prepared in response to this. In short, it refers to matters which the applicant considers have been omitted from the report and to a number of clarifications.

### **2. The Proposal**

2.1 The Board report at para 10.71 says that the weight to be given to the case for supporting the proposal has been significantly increased given changes to the national and local planning background against which the proposal has to be considered, along with the economic benefits of the scheme put forward in support. As a consequence, moderate to substantial weight is given to the need for the development.

2.2 Notwithstanding this weight to be attributed to supporting the proposal, the applicant considers that the full “set” of benefits arising from and support for the proposal, has not been explicitly identified. As a consequence, he outlines the following:

i) The proposal is seeking his proposal to be highly sustainable and to be the greenest business park in the West Midlands. In this respect he draws attention to documentation submitted with the application which describe these objectives – eg. the Design Code and Design and Access Statement. He considers that the proposal would accord with Local Plan policies LP17 on Green Infrastructure, LP27 on walking and cycling and LP35 dealing with renewable energy and energy efficiency.

ii) The submitted documents set out the proposals substantial benefits such a job creation (28FTE in the construction phase and 2082 once operational); GVA values of £19 million through construction and £122 million once operational), the social benefits of the community hub offices, the new and improved cycle and footpaths as well as the environmental benefits through it being a net zero development, the 9 hectares of open space and the bio-diversity nett gain. In this respect he considers that the economic benefits of the proposal would accord with Local Plan policy LP11 on Economic Regeneration.

iii) The proposal would be “rail served” due to its close proximity to the Birch Coppice Rail Terminal.

iv) The support for the proposal has not been fully identified. In this regard, he refers to the following documents – the Coventry and West Midlands HEDNA, the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Transport Plan and the document entitled Future of Freight Strategy. He also refers to support from the Coventry and West Midlands Chamber of Commerce and from Stagecoach in respect to the proposed bus proposals.

### **3. Clarifications**

3.1 The applicant’s note refers to a number of matters which are within the Board report and asks that the Board be advised of a number of clarifications and corrections. These are now outlined.

3.2 The first “group” relates to the description of the proposal itself in Section 4 of the report. The report refers to 3.5 km of new and enhanced public footpaths, bridleways and footway/cycleway routes connecting the site to both Birchmoor and Dordon. The applicant says that 8.9 km of on and off-site provision is being made. The report refers to electric charging points in the car parks for 10% coverage. The applicant says that this is now 20% and that the building designs with solar PV and battery storage, will enable coverage up to 100%.

3.3 The second relates to the nature of the site and its location in the Strategic Gap. The report refers to a relatively flat site as it slopes southwards to the A5. The applicant says that this slope is a 13 metre drop, not a 20 metre drop AOD as stated in the report. He also says that the proposal will not “close” the Gap as mentioned in the report, but acknowledges that it will “reduce” the Gap, still leaving some 775 metres between the edge of Dordon and the eastern edge of the proposed built form. Elsewhere the Gap is not affected. The report in para 10.23 quotes from the St Modwen appeal decision. The applicant says that the full reasoning should be set out. This says that, “I consider that by reason of the large area of farmland that would remain to the north of the A5, the location of Dordon on higher ground to the east, and its materially different character and

appearance to Birch Coppice, subject to an appropriate final design, the proposal would respect the separate identity of Dordon”.

3.4 The third “group” of comments relates to highway matters. The applicant says that the scope of the modelling being undertaken is from the Dordon roundabout to the east to A5/B5404/B5080 to the west and not over the length of the A5 from the M42 to the M69. He says that Staffordshire County Council has no objection and that the applicant remains engaged with the Highway Authorities and particularly National Highways.

3.5 Finally, the applicant points out that fuller details of the proposal are set out in para 4.2 of the report and thus the content of para 10.55 is misleading.

#### **4. Observations**

4.1 In terms of the matters mentioned in Section 3 above, Members are asked to note the clarifications provided, so that they can fully understand the nature and scope of the proposal as a whole. Those Members who visited the site will be aware of the matters raised.

4.2 The latest response from National Highways was attached to the report at Appendix N. Members are asked to refer to the paragraphs therein which refer to the updated position and the confirmation that there is continuing work being undertaken. However it confirms that despite this, National Highways is still not in a position to assess whether the proposals are acceptable in accordance with DfT Circular 01/2022 and the National Planning Policy Framework. Members are advised that in this circumstance, officers are unable to reasonably come to a view as to whether the proposal can be supported under Development Plan policies and the NPPF. Whilst the position of Staffordshire County Council is noted, the relevant Highway Authority to assess the sole access onto the A5 and the impact on the Strategic Highway Network is National Highways. As indicated in the report, Warwickshire County Council will consider the impact on its local road network.

4.3 In respect of Section 2 above, whilst the report refers to the supporting considerations that weigh in favour of the proposal, Members are advised that the benefits as outlined above in Section 2, together with accordance with other planning policies as mentioned, do carry weight and should therefore be assessed as such, within their assessment of the final planning balance. It is acknowledged that fuller details of the proposal are set out in Section 4 of the proposal, but the point that is being made in the assessment is that the proposal remains generic and thus can be considered to be speculative in the context of looking at an “immediate need”.

4.4 In conclusion therefore, Members still have to assess whether the applicant's case as set out in both the Board report as supplemented in this current report, is of sufficient weight to outweigh the harms identified in the main report. Members may well come to the view that they do. However, Officers remain of the view, that the greater public interest from North Warwickshire's perspective, is that the substantial harm to the Strategic Gap outweighs the applicant's case.