

Member Briefing Note 1

Application 1421/07 : Use of land and construction of buildings and hard standings for storage, distribution and general industrial (B2 uses), with associated rail sidings, structural planting, flood compensation, surface water storage areas, means of access and associated parking and manoeuvring areas, land adjoining A1120, Creting St Peter (part in Stowmarket).

1) Type of planning application

The planning application is made in outline with ‘access’ forming part of the application – appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved out for future approval.

2) Environmental Statement & Accompanying Documentation

The application constitutes ‘EIA Development’ requiring Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999. It is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) which identifies the ‘significant positive and negative environmental effects’, including the measures proposed to mitigate any negative effects.

The application is also accompanied by the following reports;

- A Transportation Assessment (TA)
- A Flood Risk Assessment
- A Ground Conditions report
- A Planning Statement
- A Design and Access Statement
- Non Technical summaries of the ES and TA have also been submitted in accordance with the Regulations

3) Main elements of the proposals

Description - The application proposes the development of a ‘multi modal’ distribution park, incorporating a road and rail based freight interchange. It would comprise of a range of warehouses and general industrial buildings with associated hard standings, container compounds, access roads and rail sidings. Flood storage and surface water attenuation areas and landscaping would also be provided. The facilities are proposed to operate on a 24 hour basis, 7 days a week.

Site area - The application site as defined by the red line amounts to 45.3 ha (112 acres).

Access - The proposal is to provide road access from the A1120 (Tesco roundabout) in conjunction with an access road to be formed into the site. A secondary access is also proposed to Mill Lane to the North. Rail access is proposed by way of the creation of 'sidings' linked to the existing London – Norwich railway to the South and West.

Form of development - An Illustrative Masterplan indicates that up to 112,000 m² of warehousing floor space and up to 8,000 m² of general industrial floor space is proposed. A significant area of existing wetland would be retained in an open and undeveloped form to the Southern end of the site adjoining the River Gipping – the Illustrative Masterplan sets out the broad development parameters for the proposal, including the location of the accesses (which are fixed), the rail sidings, buildings, hard standings and areas of landscaping and all related infrastructure.

Buildings - The proposed industrial buildings would range in height from 6 – 7.5m and the proposed warehousing would range in height from 12 – 15m. The length and width of the buildings would range from 115 – 300m (length) and 70 – 200m (width).

Employment generation – The applicant has indicated that 1,360 jobs would be provided in conjunction with the proposal (the basis of this calculation will be assessed as part of the proposal) in liaison with consultees such as EEDA.

Construction phase – in the event of a planning permission being granted for the proposals, the applicant has indicated that the development would be brought forward and completed within a 5 year period.

4) The determination procedure

Legislative basis – Section 38 (6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (The Act) states that “if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

The Development Plan – for the purposes of this planning process the ‘Development Plan’ comprises the following material;

- The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) incorporating Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (RPG6) and the Draft East of England Plan (RSS14) as updated by the Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes to Draft RSS (December 2006), which will supersede the development strategy of RPG6 when adopted in 2008;
- The Suffolk Structure Plan 2001 – the development strategy of the SSP will be superseded when RSS14 is adopted in 2008;

- The Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 – the development strategy of the local plan will be superseded when RSS14 is adopted in 2008;
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Preferred Options Development Plan Document (May 2007), the emerging Local Development Framework, sets out the Districts development needs to 2021 in line with RSS14 and will supersede the development strategy of the Local Plan when adopted;

Material considerations – for the purpose of this planning process the following national policy guidance and regional studies are likely to comprise principal material considerations;

- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
- PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)
- PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control (2004)
- PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk (2006)
- PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005)
- Planning and Climate Change : Consultation Document (2006) – supplement to PPS1
- The PPG Series comprising PPG4 (Planning & Small Firms), PPG13 (Transport), PPG15 (Planning & The Historic Environment), PPG16 (Archaeology) and PPG24 (Planning & Noise) will all contain ‘materiality’ in relation to this proposal
- The Regional Economic Strategy For The East of England (RES) : A Shared Vision (2004)
- The Integrated Regional Strategy for the East of England : Sustainable Futures (2005)
- The Regional Economic Strategy for the East of England : Draft Strategy for Consultation (September 2007)
- Consultation Draft of the Revised Integrated Regional Strategy for the East of England (September 2007)
- The above documents set out the likely principal material considerations but this list is not necessarily exhaustive *

5) Consultation responses

Consultation responses have been received from the following external consultees;

- Highways Agency
- SCC Highways
- SCC Strategic Planning
- SCC Countryside Section
- SCC Archaeology
- SCC Fire Service
- SCC Crime Reduction Officer
- Hutchison Ports (UK)
- Environment Agency
- Anglian Water
- Norfolk Property Services
- River Gipping Internal Drainage Board
- Natural England
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust
- Defence Estates
- Ramblers
- Optua Access Group
- Babergh DC
- Suffolk Preservation Society
- Stowmarket Society
- Needham Market Society

Consultation responses are awaited from the following external consultees;

- Network Rail
- East of England Regional Assembly (EERA)
- East of England Development Agency (EEDA)
- DEFRA
- Suffolk Coastal DC

Consultation responses have been received from the following internal consultees;

- Countryside section
- Landscape Officer
- Economic Strategy
- Local Plan Section
- Environmental Health Officer
- Conservation Officer – comments awaited

Consultation responses have been received from the following Town and Parish Council's;

- Stowmarket
- Needham Market
- Creeting St Peter
- Creeting St Mary
- Stowupland

Third party representations have been received from the following;

- Cedars Park Residents Association
- 2,072 households at the time of preparing this note
- Sir Michael Lord MP
- David Ruffley MP
- The Office of Clarence House

6) Update on procedural position and consultee / third party responses

There will be an opportunity for Members to obtain an update on these matters at the briefing meeting.

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