

Stowmarket Member Update Note

Application 1421/07 : Use of land and construction of buildings and hard standings for storage, distribution (B8 uses) 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, Creeting St Peter (part in Stowmarket).

This briefing note provides a 'Position Statement' on the status of the planning application which is currently undetermined. *It provides an amended version of the previous note circulated to the Duty Officers and Local Members on 8th July 2009, to enable its content to be noted by members of the Cedars Park Residents' Association and other interested third parties.*

Summarised Position

The above planning application is effectively being 'held in abeyance' pending the District Council's consideration of a preferred housing and employment strategy for the Stowmarket area, which is proposed to be set out in the Stowmarket Area Action Plan Development Plan Document (SAAP).

Members are due to consider / approve the next consultation stage (Regulation 27) of the SAAP at a meeting of the Environment Policy Panel scheduled for the 22nd September 2009, at which time the findings of the Western Suffolk Employment Land Review would also be presented for Member consideration.

Once approved by the Panel, the SAAP is then expected to be published for a 6 week consultation period in October 2009, following which all representations duly made would be considered - a Submission Stage version of the SAAP (Regulation 30) is then expected to be sent to the Secretary of State in December 2009, with an independent examination following in Spring 2010 to test the SAAP for its legal compliance and soundness.

Background for Officer / Member information & overview purposes

1) Background Studies which are material to the consideration of the proposals

As the application proposes strategic transport and employment related facilities, the consideration of its merits is influenced by a range of regional and sub regional background studies which have been prepared (and are currently being prepared), to identify transport and employment priorities and policy objectives for the East of England Region and its associated sub regions, including the 'Rest of Suffolk Area' – these are summarised below;

- **November 2008 : Regional Freight Study (EERA)** – sets out a policy framework for freight including support & encouragement to developing additional rail based inter modal terminals to effectively serve the Haven Port's & London area;
- 3 – 4 new strategic rail freight interchanges (RFI) are needed to serve London / SE & East England – RSS Policy T10 identifies a need for at least one RFI in East of England;
- **November 2008 : Felixstowe Port Logistics Study (SCDC & partners)** – identifies the land use requirements associated with the growth of the port to 2023 associated with the Felixstowe South Reconfiguration (FSR) programme;

- Acts as an evidence base for DPD preparation within Suffolk Coastal DC, Babergh DC, Ipswich BC and Mid Suffolk DC – principally guides employment land requirements and allocation strategy across these District’s to provide for the sustainable expansion of the port;
- Confirms that meeting the ports growth needs is of national as well as regional and local concern;
- Forecasts growth in container traffic of 2 million TEU’s over the period 2007 – 2023 generating an off port land demand of circa 115 ha (planning for success scenario);
- Off port land demand represents approximately 30% of the gross volume of TEU’s entering the port of which 10% is transhipped & 90% achieved by land connections - 70% of land connections are sent directly by road / rail to destination markets or distribution centres outside the study area (>100 miles);
- 30% of land connections remain in study area & a ‘Port Centric Catchment Area’ of 30 miles has been established where off port land demand is proposed to be met;
- Gross total forecasted (potential) supply to meet need has been identified as circa 333 ha on basis of 9 x shortlisted sites comprising commitments and sites being promoted for B8 related use;
- SMMDP Site (Site 13 – Land off Mill Lane, Stowmarket) has been identified as a candidate site for meeting part of the land demand – the site & transport appraisal criteria in the study indicate that the site has potential for inter modal facilities and is potentially suitable for B8 purposes;
- The nine shortlisted sites and the total gross land supply information is set out in the table below;

Potential Port Land Availability - Gross Supply

Site No	Location	Planning status	Potential area (ha)	Mix of Uses B1/B2/B8	Within Port centric area (30 miles)	Potential rail Connection
1	Innocence Farm, Felixstowe	Not allocated / committed	75	Unspecified	Yes	Yes
2	Shepherds Grove, Stanton	Allocated & committed	53	B1/B2/B8	No	No
3	British Sugar, Sroughton	Allocated	31	B1/B2/B8	Yes	Yes
4	Fagbury cliff, Trimley, Felixstowe	Not allocated / committed	18	Unspecified	Yes	Yes

5	Cuckoo Farm, Colchester	Allocated	20	B1/B2/B8	No	No
6	Trinity 2000, Felixstowe	Allocated	10	B1/B2/B8	Yes	Yes
9	Suffolk B Park, Bury St Eds (phase 2)	Allocated	68	B1/B8	No	No
13	Land at Mill Lane, Stowmarket *	Application submitted for multi modal B8 centre	38	B8/B2	Yes	Yes
18	Orion Court, Gt Blakenham	Part allocation / part commitment	20	B1/B2/B8	Yes	No
	Gross	Total	333	B1/B2/B8		

***Note** It should be noted that not all of the sites tabled above lie within the Port Centric Catchment Area, and therefore may not fulfil commercial criteria related to the ‘cost of shunt’ as outlined in the Study.

- **January to August 2009: Western Suffolk Employment Land Review (WSELR)** – joint study by SCC, MSDC, SEBC & FHDC to determine a suitable split / apportionment between the District’s for accommodating the 18,000 RSS job growth target for the Rest of Suffolk Area;
- WSELR will provide a market review / appraisal of existing employment sites and policy options / allocations strategy for any new sites needed to accommodate the RSS needs – the study should consider a period to 2025 beyond the timeline of the current RSS which is set to be rolled forward to 2031 when reviewed in 2009/10;
- WSELR will act the principal evidence base for DPD preparation (alongside the Port Study), to support the employment strategy and site allocations for MSDC including the approach of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan and Site Specific Allocations DPD’s;

2) The Local Development Framework Process – Consideration of Land Bid Sites for Employment & Housing Development

- The application site is the subject of a ‘land bid’ for mixed B1/B2/B8 employment purposes and associated transport and community based infrastructure provision, recently submitted as representations to the Stowmarket Area Action Plan Pre Submission / Issues & Options: Sites (Reg 25) Consultation which closed on 18th May 2009.

- An exhibition followed on 6th June 2009 at the Stowmarket United Reformed Church and provided an opportunity for members of the public to inspect the major land bid sites being put forward by promoters for employment and housing purposes to meet the growth needs of the East of England Plan to 2021/25 and beyond, including the subject site above.
- The consideration of land bids for employment and housing is progressing and this process materially affects the consideration of the merits of major sites, such as application 1421/07 which is currently undetermined;
- The land bid submissions are due to be considered by Members of the Environment Policy Panel over the period July – September 2009, as part of the process of devising an employment and housing strategy to meet the District’s growth needs. The Proposed Submission / Publication (Regulation 27) version of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan is programmed for a 6 week public consultation in October 2009, at which stage it would be evident whether the Council considers the site to have merit for employment purposes.
- In the event that the site is subsequently identified for mixed B1/B2/B8 purposes, consideration would need to be given to the optimum use of the land in terms of employment mix, job generation and the community infrastructure which would be scoped as part of a related ‘Infrastructure Development Programme’ for the site to provide the development parameters for a revised planning application – this process would have a bearing on the purpose and merits of application 1421/07.

3) Provisional Timetable for the Determination of the Application

- The timetable for the determination of the application is linked with the preparation of the Western Suffolk Employment Land Review and the District Council’s consideration of its findings. The outcome of this process would be the formulation of a preferred employment strategy to identify how the growth needs of Stowmarket and the wider District can be delivered - this is scheduled to take place over the period to October 2009;
- In determining the location and number of sites to deliver ‘Stowmarket’s’ growth needs (including employment sites), the District Council is currently undertaking the following DPD consultation / work programme;
 - Stowmarket Area Action Plan Proposed Submission / Publication Consultation (Regulation 27) – programmed for October 2009;
 - Stowmarket Area Action Plan ‘Submission Stage’ (Regulation 30) - December 2009;
 - Independent Examination of the Stowmarket Area action Plan for legal compliance and soundness – February / March 2010;
 - Prospective adoption of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan – April/May 2009;

- The merits of the application site as a potential ‘employment area’ to contribute towards the District’s growth needs to 2025 (and beyond to 2031), would therefore need to be considered within the Stowmarket Area Action Plan process, before further consideration can be given to the merits of the site for B8/B2 purposes, i.e. primarily serving the needs of Felixstowe Port as proposed in the planning application;
- The applicant and MSDC have agreed that it would be appropriate to ‘extend the time period’ for the determination of the application until 8th October 2009 in the first instance, pending the outcome of key stages of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan consultation process as outlined above – further extensions of the time period for the determination of the application may therefore be necessitated, if the site is considered to have a role to play in the Council’s emerging employment strategy;

4) Status of the Briefing Note

- This is a ‘without prejudice’ factual update for planning application 1421/07 and is prepared for information purposes only – no inference should be drawn from this note in relation to the due process associated with the consideration of the merits of the application;
- Further Member update notes (and factual briefings) are likely at future stages of the SAAP process.

James Lawson on behalf of the Mid Suffolk DC Case Officer Team

29th July 2009