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Mr R Hope
Development Management Group
Lancashire County Council
PO Box 100
County Hall
Preston
PR1 0LD

21616/A5/PR/PN
24 February 2023

Dear Rob,

**APPLICATION REFERENCE LCC/2022/0044
LANCASHIRE CENTRAL, CUERDEN STRATEGIC SITE, EAST OF STANIFIELD LANE, NORTH
OF CLAYTON FARM, WEST OF WIGAN ROAD, LOSTOCK LANE, LOSTOCK HALL, LANCASHIRE**

We write in relation to the above planning application on behalf of Maple Grove Developments and Lancashire County Council ("the Applicants").

Following the close of the statutory period of consultation we note that responses have been received from two planning authorities, namely South Ribble Borough Council (SRBC) and Preston City Council (PCC). This letter (and associated attachments) provides a response to the comments made by each authority.

South Ribble Borough Council Comments

SRBC debated the Proposed Development during its Planning Committee Meeting on 10 November 2022. A letter detailing SRBC's recommendations was subsequently issued, dated 18 November 2022. Whilst we note and welcome the fact that SRBC raise no 'in-principle' objection to the application they have raised a number of issues and sought further information/clarification. We respond to the points raised below.

Development Viability

SRBC state that no financial viability assessment has been provided to support the application and to justify the non-employment uses proposed within the application scheme as required by Policy C4 of the South Ribble Local Plan. This is not correct.

The application is supported by a Financial Viability Statement prepared by CBRE (dated July 2022).

Application of the Retail and Leisure Sequential Test

SRBC's comments suggest that any main town centre uses provided as part of the scheme should be subject to a sequential assessment.

The applicants position on the need for a sequential assessment is clearly set out in the Retail and Leisure Assessment submitted as part of the application. However, and notwithstanding this position, the applicant has nonetheless undertaken a sequential assessment. This is set out in the attached Supplementary Retail Note.

The assessment considers a number of potential sites, none of which are available or suitable for the proposed development, even allowing for flexibility in relation to scale and format.

As a result, we maintain our position that the proposed development complies with the requirements of the sequential test (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework) and in turn Policy C4 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

Assessment of Retail and Leisure Impacts

SRBC's has requested that further scenarios are modelled as part of the retail impact assessment set out in the Retail and Leisure Assessment, in order that the potential impacts of the Proposed Development are fully understood.

The applicant has undertaken the additional modelling requested and an updated retail impact assessment is included as part of the attached Supplementary Retail Note.

The note concludes that even considering the alternative scenario's requested, the impact identified on existing centres are within acceptable limits, therefore the additional sensitivity testing does not alter the overall conclusions set out in Section 6 of the Retail and Leisure Assessment. The application scheme will not give rise to any significant adverse impacts.

Developing Part of the Allocated Cuerden Strategic Site

SRBC note that the application relates only to part of the land allocated under Policy C4 and have requested that due consideration be given to the development potential of the remaining parcels of land that form the allocation. They note that no aspect of the Proposed Development should prejudice the development potential of the whole site allocation.

This is a point which the Applicants have taken seriously from the outset, and which is explained in detail in the submitted Planning Statement. Clearly, the applicant does not control all of the land within the Policy C4 allocation and cannot therefore predict whether the land outside the application site will be brought forward in the future.

However, the application scheme has been designed to maximise the opportunities of this additional land coming forward for development. For example, the application scheme will deliver the significant off-site infrastructure necessary to open the site up for development and the significant on-site infrastructure necessary to open the site up (subject to an appropriate contribution) and the proposed application scheme (as shown on the submitted Parameter Plans) provides direct access into the additional development plots (outside the application site). We therefore believe the application scheme maximises the opportunity for these additional development plots (beyond the applicant's control) to come forward for development in the future.

The Applicant therefore strongly believes that the application is structured in such a way that it would not prejudice the development of the remainder of the Policy C4 allocation.

Compliance with the 2015 Cuerden Strategic Site Masterplan

SRBC has reminded LCC (as determining authority) that it should take account of the 2015 Masterplan produced by AECOM and adopted for development management purposes by SRBC. The existence and significance of the 2015 Masterplan has been used to inform the application proposal. Its relevance is

set out in the Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, and Design Code submitted in support of the application.

The Applicant considers that the Proposed Development fully accords with the 2015 Masterplan.

Wording of Design Code

SRBC have requested that the Design Code, a document submitted as part of the application, be listed as an approved document and that a condition be included as part of any permission granted, to require future phases of development (those proposed via Reserved Matters applications) to adhere to these requirements.

The application (and Design Code) was submitted on the basis that there would be a condition (on the planning permission if granted) requiring all future reserve matters application to adhere to the design principles set out in the Design Code. As a result, the Applicant is happy to accept this requirement.

Assessment of Highway Impacts

SRBC have requested that the potential highway impacts of development be assessed to safeguard the amenities of residents. This process is underway and negotiations between the Applicant, National Highways and LCC Highways are ongoing.

Potential Omission of Vehicular Access to Stanifield Lane

SRBC have also requested that the Applicant consider whether vehicular access via Stanifield Lane is necessary, suggesting that the road already suffers from congestion and that the development could be served solely via the M65 Terminus Roundabout.

For context, we note that this recommendation did not feature in the SRBC officer's report to committee and was instead added at the request of Members following debate. To that extent, there is very little justification provided for this request.

It is the Applicant's view that vehicular access onto Stanifield Lane is necessary, justified, and should be supported. Such a position is consistent with the access and movement strategy set out within the 2015 Masterplan and the previous 2017 planning permission. Further, access from Stanifield Lane forms an essential part of the access strategy for the Proposed Development providing direct access into Zones E and D which cannot be accessed from the M65 Terminus Roundabout (without third party land).

The access proposals have been fully assessed within the Transport Assessment submitted in support of the application and this is subject to ongoing assessment by National Highways and LCC as Highway Authority.

Application of a Vehicle Weight Limit on Stanifield Lane

SRBC have suggested that the use of Stanifield Lane by HGVs may have a detrimental impact upon road capacity, highway safety, and residential amenity, and have questioned whether a weight limit should be applied to vehicles passing along the road. Again, this was a point which did not feature in the SRBC's officers report but was added at the request of Members. No justification for this request has been provided.

As we have set out above the access proposals and highway implications of the Proposed Development have been fully assessed within the Transport Assessment submitted in support of the application. This is subject to ongoing assessment by National Highways and LCC as Highway Authority.

Response to Comments made by Preston City Council

Whilst we note that Preston City Council ("PCC") do not raise an objection to the nature of the proposed development, in their response dated 8 November 2022, they have requested that the timing of its delivery be restricted.

PCC suggest that a phasing schedule is required in relation to any office floorspace, with a view to protecting investor confidence in the Station Quarter Regeneration Framework Area, in Preston.

No basis is provided for this requirement, and no evidence has been provided to indicate that the Proposed Development would impact on the Station Quarter Regeneration scheme. Even if such evidence was provided, it needs to be recognised that the application site is allocated for employment uses (including offices) in an adopted Local Plan and there is nothing within planning policy at any level (national or local) that introduces an office impact test. As a result, such a request would not be consistent with paragraph 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that planning conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and the development proposed, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. PCC's request does not meet these tests.

As a result, the Applicant would not accept the imposition of a such a condition.

Summary and Conclusions

We trust that the above clarifies our position in relation to the comments received from SRBC and PCC. However, should you require any further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact Paul Newton or the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,



PAUL REEVES
Planning Associate

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