

5 December 2023

By Email Only

Our Ref: 33313558300/A3/PN/sl

Dear Councillor,

ITEM 5 – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE 6 DECEMBER 2023

LCC/2022/0044 – CUERDEN STRATEGIC SITE, EAST OF STANIFIELD LANE, NORTH OF CLAYTON FARM, WEST OF WIGAN ROAD, LOSTOCK HALL (LANCASHIRE CENTRAL)

We write in relation to the above application which will be considered by Members at your meeting on Wednesday. The application has been submitted by Lancashire County Council and Maple Grove Developments, part of the Eric Wright Group.

The application proposes the development of circa 51 hectares of land to provide up to 160,000 sq m of employment/commercial development along with 116 new homes.

The Site is one of the most significant economic development sites in Lancashire and provides a once in a lifetime opportunity to achieve a dynamic, sustainable, best in class development that will generate significant economic, social, and environmental benefits.

We are pleased that your officers are supporting the application and recommending it for approval.

The Officers Report (OR) provides a comprehensive and balanced assessment of the application proposals and considers all relevant matters. It provides a legally robust basis upon which to base your decision.

Background

As you will be aware, the redevelopment of the Site for employment purposes has been a long-standing policy aspiration. It was first allocated for development in the South Ribble Local Plan 2000 and more recently in the South Ribble Local Plan 2015 under Policy C4. Further, South Ribble Borough Council adopted a Masterplan for the Site in 2015 encouraging its development for employment and ancillary commercial uses and residential.

As the OR notes, the current planning application is supported by a full suite of supporting documentation including an Environmental Statement and clearly sets out that the application accords with the site-specific policy and the general development management policies of the development plan. It should therefore be supported.

Form of Application

The application has been submitted in outline form, but with some elements submitted for approval at this stage.

The Parameter Plans set out the key development characteristics of uses, quantum and height, whilst the Design Code sets out key principles future reserved matters applications will need to adhere to ensure a high quality development.

Details are however provided on two key elements, namely:

- the onsite strategic road infrastructure necessary to open the site up for development (at a cost of circa £57m); and
- the strategic site landscaping.

Both elements are required to be provided before the Site becomes operational and will ensure that the infrastructure to service the Site and the compensatory strategic landscaping is provided at the outset.

The outline application approach is common for large scale proposals, allowing an element of flexibility whilst establishing key principles. Importantly, any future reserved matters applications will need to provide additional on plot landscaping and demonstrate how from a layout and design perspective, they accord with the Parameter Plans and Design Code.

Consultation

As the OR notes, the application has been the subject of a comprehensive pre and post submission programme of engagement and consultation with local residents, key and statutory stakeholders, and your officers. As a result, the scheme has been amended to address a number of their comments/concerns.

The application has the support of the Environment Agency, Natural England, National Highways, LCC as highway authority, Historic England and the Lead Local Flood Authority. There are no technical reasons why the application should not be supported.

Further, the application has been subject to very little public/resident objections (8 in total) and the comments raised have been considered and addressed in the OR.

Whilst a neighbouring landowner Brookhouse has been particularly vocal, their comments are clearly commercially driven and as the OR comprehensive and robustly sets out are without foundation.

Benefits

Finally, the application scheme will deliver a number of significant benefits. These are summarised in the OR but will include:

- the creation of between 2,200 – 5,600 full time equivalent jobs (dependant on final scheme mix) across a number of employment sectors with 300 temporary construction jobs per annum;
- the generation of between £95-£390 GVA per annum to the Lancashire economy;
- additional business rates, Council tax, new home bonus and Community Infrastructure Levy receipts;
- delivery of much needed housing including affordable houses;
- retaining and enhancing existing landscape features and extensive green infrastructure;
- provision of green links through the Site linking to the wider green network;
- provide a bio-diversity net gain across the Site;
- enhancing the accessibility of the Site to all users (pedestrians, cyclists, bus, and horse riders); and
- enhancing the retail and leisure offer of the local area.

These benefits are substantial and should weigh heavily in favour of the application.

STANTEC UK LIMITED