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# **Proposed HGV Maintenance and Storage Facility, Stockton-on-Tees Planning Statement**

Ford & Slater DAF

May 2022

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of Ford & Slater DAF ('the Applicant'). It accompanies a full planning application for the development of land at Haverton Hill Road in Stockton-on-Tees, for the following:

*“Erection of maintenance and storage facility for large commercial vehicles (Use Class B2/B8) with associated servicing, vehicular access and landscaping”*

1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to assess the application proposals against the Development Plan for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council as well as other material considerations, including relevant national planning policy.

1.3 This includes consideration of Local Plan Policy SD4, in the context of the applicant's locational requirements and synergies with surrounding renewable/recycling uses.

1.4 The Statement should be read in conjunction with the other documents which accompany this application, including:

- 1 Application Covering Letter prepared by Lichfields;
- 2 Application forms and certificates prepared by Lichfields;
- 3 Application drawings, prepared by JJJ;
- 4 Design and Access Statement (P1046-P02), prepared by JJJ;
- 5 Energy Statement (P1586 Rev A), prepared by plc;
- 6 Soft landscaping scheme (1147.01), prepared by DPLA;
- 7 Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (22090 V2), prepared by OS Ecology;
- 8 Phase 1 Geo-Assessment (21-1063-RO1), prepared by Wallace Engineering;
- 9 Flood Risk Assessment, Sequential Assessment and Drainage Strategy (2373 Rev A), prepared by Wallace Engineering; and
- 10 Transport Statement and Framework Travel Plan, prepared by Arup.

## 2.0 The Site and Surroundings

2.1 The application site ('the site') is located to the south of Haverton Hill Road, which connects the site and nearby areas to the A19 to the southwest. The site comprises previously developed land, formerly in heavy industrial use prior to its reclamation in the 1990s. It currently includes areas of hardstanding, scrubland and disused roads, and extends to around 1.4 ha.

Figure 2.1 Site Location



Source: Google Earth

2.2 The site benefits from an existing vehicular access off the unnamed road emanating from the southern arm of the Haverton Hill Road roundabout.

2.3 The site is bound:

- to the north, by Haverton Hill Road, with recycling uses beyond;
- to the east, by a logistics facility;
- to the south, by the River Tees; and
- to the west, by a large previously developed site (with planning permission for a waste pyrolysis plant, ref 21/0848/FUL) and haulage firm beyond.

2.4 The area surrounding the site is characterised by a number of green, renewable energy and recycling facilities, including Haverton Hill Recycling Centre; a Household Waste Recycling Centre; Scott Bros Recycling Ltd; SUEZ recycling and recovery UK and Ballast Phoenix Ltd.

- 2.5 From a review of online information available from the Environment Agency, the site is situated within a combination of Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3.

Figure 2.2 The application site, and existing vehicular access



Source: Google Earth

- 2.6 The site is not located within a Conservation Area or in close proximity to any protected heritage assets.

## Planning History

The relevant planning history for the site is as follows:

- **92/1386/P:** Reclamation of vacant industrial land by deposit of demolition waste; erection of site fencing the erection of temporary amenity building and hardcore crushing plant. Approved with Conditions on 14 August 1992
  - **91/1100/P:** Tipping and formation of landscaped mounds. Approved with Conditions on 27 September 1994.
  - **03/2769/EIS:** Reclamation of former shipyard site and provision of infrastructure including roads, footpaths, cycleways, river edge revetment and structural landscaping. Approved with Conditions on 30 November 2006.
  - **03/2781/EIS:** Outline application for the redevelopment of former shipbuilding yard and retention of existing uses for business, industry, warehousing, distribution (B1, B2, B8) with associated works. Approved with Conditions 30 November 2006.
- 2.7 Despite the site's remediation and the fact it has been subject to previous applications for business and industrial uses, it has not proven possible to viably develop the site over the subsequent 20 year period.



## 3.0 The Proposed Development

### About Ford & Slater DAF

- 3.1 Ford & Slater DAF are one of the largest commercial vehicle dealer groups in the UK, with around 650 staff and 13 regional sites.
- 3.2 Against the background of growth in demand for HGV services in response to both Covid-19 and wider economic trends, Ford and Slater are seeking to expand their operation throughout the country, including through the amalgamation of a smaller patchwork of smaller dealerships into a single flagship facility on Teesside. This would cater for vehicle servicing and maintenance across the North of England, with a small ancillary element of truck sales via appointment only.

Figure 3.1 An existing DAF facility



Source: Ford & Slater DAF

- 3.3 Key milestones in Ford & Slater DAF's recent performance include:
- Over £10 million invested in new dealerships in the last ten years;
  - Eleven dealerships across the East Midlands and East of England, over 525 employees
  - Winner of the Motor Transport Apprenticeship of the Year Award in 2018
  - Winner of the PACCAR Financial International Dealer of the Year in 2018
  - Winner of Retail Sales of the Year in 2018
  - Winner of DAF's International Dealer of the Year 2020
- 3.4 The company owns the majority of its dealerships, with profits continually re-invested into the business since 1991.
- 3.5 The development of a flagship Ford & Slater DAF dealership in Stockton would see prospective customers from across the North of England visiting the facility in order to view



DAF's latest vehicles and products, as well as servicing a wide range of local industrial and logistics businesses within the immediate surrounding area.

## The Application Proposals

- 3.6 The proposed development comprises a new maintenance, storage and servicing facility for HGVs and large commercial vehicles, to be operated by Ford & Slater DAF.
- 3.7 The facility would extend to 2,600 sqm, within Use Class B2/B8, and comprise two main elements, as follows:
- 1 a workshop and parts store; and
  - 2 offices and administrative activities.

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Figure 3.2 A precedent image for the proposed facility



Source: JLL

- 3.8 The proposals are intended to provide a new state-of-the-art maintenance facility, primarily used for 24-hour servicing and storage, with an ancillary sales element. The main purpose of the facility is to provide an accessible and modern facility to enable the maintenance and repairs for DAF trucks.
- 3.9 Access is proposed to be formed from an existing vehicular access to the east of the site, on the southern approach of the Haverton Hill Road roundabout. Given the nature of the surrounding area the highway network has been designed to accommodate HGVs and industrial activities.
- 3.10 There will be storage for 40 commercial vehicles, with facilities for overspill to the west of the site, on the workshop side of the building. The site has been designed with HGVs in mind with wide aisles leading to the truck parking.
- 3.11 Overall, 51 car parking spaces are proposed, including two EV spaces and three disabled spaces. Both the disabled parking spaces and the EV spaces are located close to the office entrance, with covered cycle parking proposed close to the office entrance.
- 3.12 As a flagship facility for Ford & Slater DAF, the site will incorporate a range of sustainable technologies, including rooftop photovoltaic panels and ground source heat pumps to

provide energy to the building. Furthermore, truck EV charging infrastructure will be introduced to allow the maintenance and service of electric commercial vehicles in the future; future-proofing the development for changes in the commercial vehicle industry.

Figure 3.3 Scheme Layout



Source: Proposed Site Plan (drawing no. 90-000 P03)

- 3.13 It is anticipated that the proposals will create 51 jobs in total; 37 in the workshop and 14 in the office. The development will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, excluding Christmas day, Boxing day and New Year's Day, with approximately 37 total employees working on site at any one time.
- 3.14 The ancillary truck sales element to the proposal would not be a conventional 'dealership' use, and instead is focused on appointment-only sales, with most targeted towards bulk fleet orders. The operator's online website also allows for configuration and ordering of trucks for pickup at the facility.

## Pre-Application Engagement

- 3.15 A formal pre-application enquiry was submitted to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in February (ref. 22/ 0131/PRE) and a meeting was held with the Planning Services Manager on 31 March 2022. The principle of the proposed development was discussed, and agreement reached regarding the scope of the subject planning application.

## 4.0 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 This section of the Statement outlines the planning policy context against which the application should be assessed. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 at Section 38 (6) requires the determination of planning applications to take place in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations, such as the National Planning Policy Framework, indicate otherwise.

### The Development Plan

- 4.2 The statutory Development Plan for the site comprises the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Local Plan (adopted 2019). Figure 4.1 below shows the Local Plan Policies Map which indicates those site-specific policies which are relevant to the site.

Figure 4.1 Local Plan Designation (site indicated in red)



Source: Stockton Local Plan Policies Map

- 4.3 As shown by Figure 4.1, the Site is allocated for 'Specialist Employment Uses' at Local Plan Policy EG4 (Seal Sands, North Tees and Billingham), forming part of the North and South Tees Cluster. This allocation extends to approximately 38 ha of available land, intended for the use of operational facilities, river-based logistics, the storage of hazardous substances, decommissioning of marine vessels, and energy generation plants and infrastructure.
- 4.4 Whilst Policy EG4 seeks to promote such Specialist Uses first and foremost, it also confirms alternative employment uses may be supported, where:

- 1 The proposal is linked to existing, committed and proposed investment in the area; or
- 2 There are no other locations within the employment land portfolio which can accommodate the proposed development.

4.5 Other policies which are relevant to the application proposals include:

- **Policy SD1 (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development)** sets out that where planning applications accord with the policies in the Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) they will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- **Policy SD2 (Strategic Development Needs)** establishes a supply of 120 hectares of land for specialist employment uses, including the chemical and process industry, energy generation, waste processing, port related uses and other uses, which demonstrate operational benefits to the North and South Tees Cluster.
- **Policy SD4 (Economic Growth Strategy)** identifies where economic growth will be directed, and supports the redevelopment of previously developed land, in particular prominent sites which have been derelict for a significant period of time. It also sets out that port-related development and other suitable economic growth uses will be encouraged at Billingham Riverside.
- **Policy SD8 (Sustainable Design Principles)** states that the Council will seek new development to be designed to the highest possible standard.
- **Policy TI1 (Transport Infrastructure)** sets out how a safe and sustainable transport network will be maintained.
- **Policy ENV 1 (Energy Efficiency)** encourages all developments to minimise the effects of climate change through meeting the highest possible environmental standards during construction and occupation.
- **Policy ENV4 (Reducing and Mitigating Flood Risk)** confirms that all new development will be directed towards areas of the lowest flood risk to minimise the risk of flooding from all sources, and will mitigate any such risk through design and implementing sustainable drainage (SuDS) principles. Development on land in Flood Zones 2 or 3 will only be permitted following the successful completion of the Sequential and Exception Tests (where required), and the submission of a site-specific flood risk assessment.
- **Policy ENV5 (Preserve, Protect and Enhance Ecological Networks, Biodiversity and Geodiversity)** confirms the Council will protect and enhance the biodiversity and geological resources within the Borough, and that development proposals should seek to achieve net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.
- **Policy ENV7 (Ground, Air, Water, Noise and Light Pollution)** sets out that development proposals which may cause groundwater, surface water, air (including odour), noise or light pollution either individually or cumulatively will be required to incorporate measures as appropriate to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause unacceptable impacts on the living conditions of all existing and potential future occupants of land.

## Supplementary Planning Documents ('SPDs')

- 4.6 Supplementary Planning Document 3: Parking Provision in Developments (2011) was adopted by the Council on 19 October 2011.
- 4.7 The SPD sets out guidance for Applicants on the parking standards requirements associated with development in the Borough. The previous draft of Supplementary Planning Document 3, which was adopted in 2006, has now been withdrawn.

## National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.8 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') was revised on 20 July 2021 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 4.9 This revised Framework replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, revised in July 2018 and updated in February 2019. At the heart of this Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and confirmation that LPAs should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area.
- 4.10 The following paragraphs of the Framework are relevant to the proposals:
- **Paragraph 11** which explains that when considering proposals LPAs should approve development that accords with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
  - **Paragraph 81** which sets out that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
  - **Paragraph 83** which states that planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.
  - **Paragraph 85** which encourages the use of previously developed land, and confirms sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
  - **Paragraph 122** which acknowledges that planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability. Where the local planning authority considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan, in the interim, prior to updating the plan, applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.

## Summary

- 4.11 Part of the application site comprises land allocated for specialist employment uses at Local Plan Policy EG4. However, this allocation extends to around 38 ha and may also support applications for alternative employment uses providing:
- 1 The proposal is linked to existing, committed and proposed investment in the area; or
  - 2 There are no other locations within the employment land portfolio which can accommodate the proposed development.

- 4.12 In terms of national policy, the NPPF supports economic development, the re-use of previously developed land, and emphasises the need for planning policy and decisions to reflect changes in demand for land, allowing applications for alternative uses where the use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area. It also states that planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.
- 4.13 Overall, whilst the land is designated for specialist employment uses, there is scope for development for alternative employment use, providing the above criteria within Policy EG4 are met. Detailed consideration is given to these criteria at Section 5.



## 5.0 Compliance with Planning Policy

5.1 This section assesses the proposals against the planning policy identified at Section 4.0.

### The Principle of Development

5.2 The statutory development plan allocates the application site for Specialist Uses at Local Plan Policy EG4 (Seal Sands, North Tees and Billingham). This allocation extends to approximately 38 ha of available land.

5.3 Policy SD2 defines ‘specialist’ uses, noting that they should demonstrate operational benefits to the North and South Tees Cluster. They include developments intended for the use of operational facilities, river-based logistics, the storage of hazardous substances, decommissioning of marine vessels, and energy generation plants and infrastructure

5.4 However, Policy EG4 also sets out criteria whereby alternative employment uses may be supported, stating:

*“**Alternative employment uses**, excluding town centre uses and other uses that would generate significant populations, **may be supported** at Billingham Riverside **if**:*

- a *The proposal is linked to existing, committed and proposed investment in the area; **or***
- b *There are no other locations within the employment land portfolio which can accommodate the proposed development.”*

**(Lichfields’ emphasis)**

5.5 Ford & Slater DAF have very specific locational requirements which have informed the selection of the subject application site at Haverton Hill Road. These include:

- the site must be in close proximity to the A19;
- the site must be in proximity to potential service customers;
- and land which must be freehold.

5.6 In this context, and considering the subject application proposals against each of the criteria from Policy EG4 in turn:

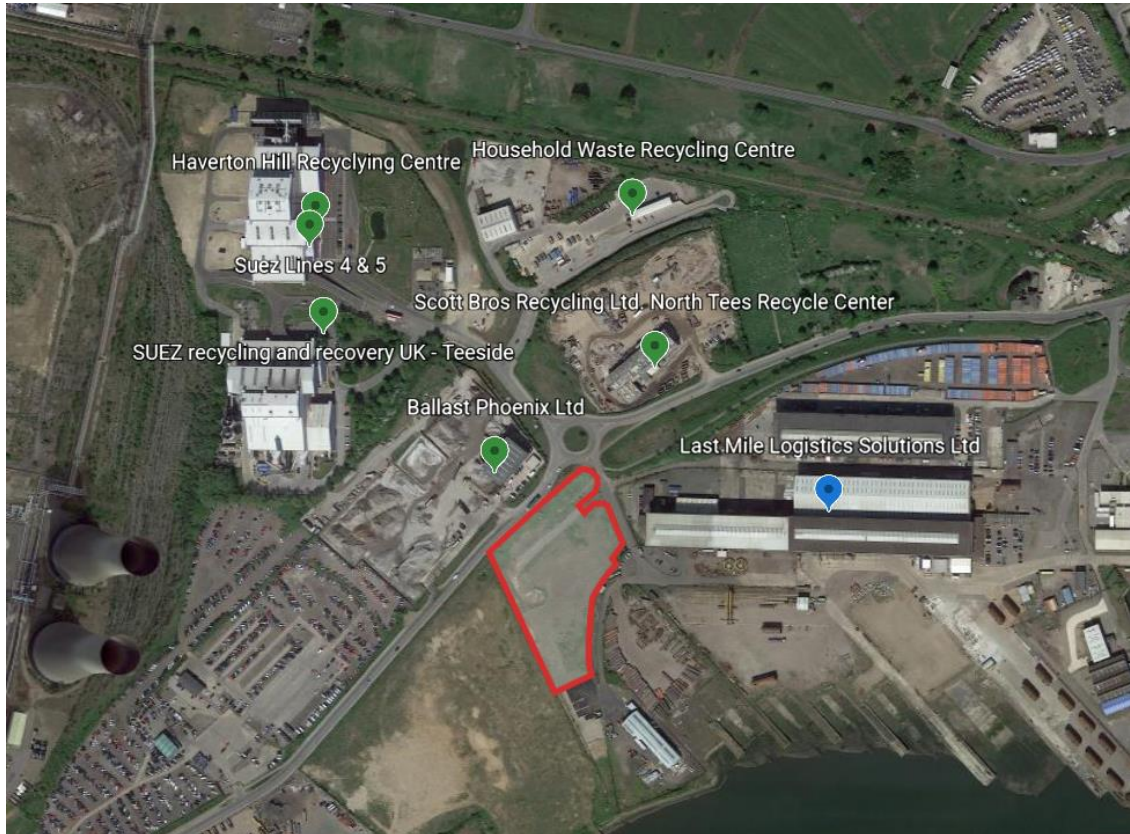
### Links to Existing, Committed and Proposed Investment

5.7 As set out above at Section 3, the application proposals comprise a new maintenance, storage and servicing facility for HGVs and large commercial vehicles, to be occupied by Ford & Slater DAF. The proposals are intended to provide a new state-of-the-art HGV maintenance facility, primarily used for 24-hour servicing and storage, with an ancillary sales element. The main purpose of the facility is to provide an accessible and modern facility to enable the maintenance and repairs for HGVs and other large commercial vehicles.

5.8 As such, the scheme will provide accessible servicing, maintenance and repair facilities to businesses in the immediate vicinity in Billingham and wider Stockton-on-Tees area. In this regard, the area surrounding the site is characterised by a number of green, renewable

energy and recycling facilities, including Haverton Hill Recycling Centre; a Household Waste Recycling Centre; Scott Bros Recycling Ltd; SUEZ recycling and recovery UK and Ballast Phoenix Ltd.

Figure 5.1 Nearby uses dependent upon HGV services



Source: Google Earth and Lichfields analysis

- 5.9 Each of these facilities are more typical of the specialist uses envisaged at Policy EG4, but by their nature are also highly dependent upon HGVs for their haulage, servicing and other operational functions. The proposed development seeks to provide an accessible, high-quality and convenient facility at which both these local businesses and others located elsewhere across Teesside can service their vehicles and also cater for any of their other HGV needs, such as updating their fleet or recovering broken down vehicles.
- 5.10 As well as these operational synergies with surrounding uses, the application proposals will locate a flagship heavy vehicle servicing facility in an area occupied by uses dependent on heavy goods vehicles, thereby supporting existing businesses and investment in the area. The proposals therefore represent a clear opportunity to develop a facility which will bring operational benefits to several existing businesses at Haverton Hill.
- 5.11 The state-of-the-art nature of the facility, as well as its accessibility to and from the A19, will also ensure it acts as a catalyst for further investment in the North and South Tees Cluster; attracting further businesses to the area.

## **Suitability of Other Locations within the Employment Land Portfolio**

- 5.12 The allocation of part of the site for specialist employment uses at Policy EG4 was informed by the Stockton Employment Land Review (2016) ('ELR'), which assessed the site as 'Haverton Hill D'. Some six years have now passed since the preparation of the ELR, and the wider economic climate has shifted markedly through major international events such as Brexit and the Covid 19 pandemic. Notwithstanding this, the ELR does provide a baseline for monitoring employment land take up across the borough. Beginning with the Council's 2016/17 Annual Monitoring Report ('AMR'), between monitoring periods 2016/17 and 2018/19 the inventory of specialist industrial land remained largely unchanged. This suggests that there was no material take-up of land for new specialist uses at Haverton Hill or across the borough.
- 5.13 A review of the Council's Public Access database indicates that planning permission has subsequently been granted for the development of a waste pyrolysis plant on land immediately adjacent to the application site (ref 21/0848/FUL).
- 5.14 Notwithstanding this, a substantial proportion of the 38 ha of land identified for specialist employment uses at Billingham Riverside remains undeveloped. In this context, and in light of the well-known growth in demand for HGV services in response to both Covid-19 and wider economic trends, Ford and Slater are seeking to expand their operation throughout the country, including through the amalgamation of a patchwork of smaller dealerships into a single flagship facility on Teesside, catering for vehicle servicing and maintenance across the North of England.
- 5.15 The requirement for a large, flat site with freehold ownership in close proximity to potential customers and with excellent accessibility from the A19 limits the suitability of alternative locations within Stockton's employment land portfolio. Moreover, the loss of 1.4 ha of land allocated for specialist employment uses would make no material difference to the availability of land at Billingham Riverside for such uses. Indeed, it amounts to less than 4% of the total land available within the allocation.
- 5.16 In this context, and whilst the Local Plan seeks to promote this area for specialist uses, Paragraph 122 of the NPPF states planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. Applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area. In addition, the NPPF is also clear that:
- significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (paragraph 81);
  - planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors (paragraph 83); and
  - the use of previously developed land should be encouraged (paragraph 85).
- 5.17 The application site has been remediated and available for development for over 20 years, but the subject application proposals represent the first opportunity to develop a viable new economic use which will offer both employment opportunities in its own right, but also contribute toward meeting the operational needs of existing businesses in the area.

- 5.18 Overall, therefore, whilst the site is allocated at Policy EG4 for Specialist Employment Uses, it is considered that the proposed development satisfies the criteria allowing the development of alternative employment uses. The proposals will also bring numerous social, economic and environmental benefits, including various sustainable design features and result in the creation of a flagship HGV facility in Stockton. This is in addition to reusing an area of previously developed land which has remained vacant for some time, which would ordinarily be directly supported by Policy SD4 and the NPPF. The proposed development is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

## Highways and Access

- 5.19 Chapter 9 of the NPPF (2021) (Promoting Sustainable Transport) requires transport to be considered at the early stage of the development proposals. It is recognised at paragraph 111 states that *“development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road would be severe”*.

At a local level, Policy TI1 (Transport Infrastructure) requires development proposals to submit a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. A Transport Statement prepared by Arup and submitted as part of this application. This Statement concludes overall, the proposed development supports strategic sustainable trips and is not anticipated to have a significant material impact on highway safety and impacts on the road network are not considered to be severe.

- 5.20 It is considered that the proposals accord with Policy TI1 of the Local Plan and can be considered acceptable.

## Design

Figure 5.2 A precedent image for the proposed facility



Source: JLL

- 5.21 The revised NPPF (2021) places greater weight and opportunity on good design. Chapter 12 (Achieving Well-Designed Places) states that the creation of high-quality and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Great weight should be put on outstanding or innovative design where it provides

high levels of sustainability. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF sets out the design requirements for developments including that they add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to local character and maintain a strong sense of place. More specifically, Local Plan Policy SD8 confirms the Council will seek new development to be designed to the highest possible standard, taking into consideration the context of the surrounding area and the need to respond positively to the character and sensitivity of the surrounding public realm, landscape character the need to protect and enhance ecological and green infrastructure networks and assets, ensuring that new development is appropriately laid out, and the need to reinforce local distinctiveness and provide high quality and inclusive design solutions.

- 5.22 A Design and Access Statement has been prepared by JJL to accompany the subject application, which confirms that the external appearance of the proposed development will adopt a simple, elegant and modern palette of materials which has been informed by the character of the buildings within the vicinity while also maintaining the applicant's brand identity.
- 5.23 In terms of sustainability, the proposed development will support the use of renewable energy sources where possible and the use of air source heat pumps and photovoltaics will provide a well-rounded and efficient energy strategy for the building. Dedicated EV car parking will be provided to enable the building users to utilise electric vehicles. Furthermore, infrastructure will be introduced to allow the maintenance and service of electric commercial vehicles in the future; future-proofing the development for changes in the commercial vehicle industry.
- 5.24 It is considered that the proposals accord with Policy SD8 of the Local Plan and are therefore acceptable in planning terms.

## **Landscaping**

- 5.25 The important role landscaping places within developments has been recognised within the revised NPPF. It states that places should create safe, inclusive and accessible places which promote health and wellbeing. It recognises that trees make an important contribution to character and the quality of urban environments. These principles are reflected in Policy SD8, ENV6, H3 of the Local Plan, where it is stated that developments should create a strong sense of place.
- 5.26 A soft landscaping scheme has been prepared by DPLA and submitted as part of this application. This includes native trees and hedgerows where appropriate to improve site biodiversity, and also utilises a wildflower seed mix along the western and southern edges of the site.
- 5.27 It is considered that the proposals accord with Policy SD8 of the Local Plan and are acceptable in planning terms.

## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 5.28 The subject application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, which assesses the development proposals against the requirements of the NPPF and Policy



ENV4 of the Local Plan, together with SPD1– Sustainable Design Guide (adopted 2011) insofar as it relates to water efficiency and sustainable drainage.

5.29 The Assessment confirms that the sequential and exception tests have been passed, and the proposed development is therefore appropriate in flood risk terms. It is proposed to raise the floor level of the new building 300 mm above the 1 in 100 year plus climate change flood level, and safe access will be addressed through the provision of safe refuge within the new development and a safe route outside the flood extent. In the event of a flood, the road will be set above the flood level and can be accessed via foot from the proposed building with a safe route toward the private access road.

5.30 It is considered that the proposals accord with Policy ENV4 of the Local Plan and are acceptable in planning terms.

## **Ecology**

5.31 At a national level, the NPPF requires developments to minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. This is translated into a local requirement for developments to “*seek to achieve net gains in biodiversity wherever possible*” (Policy ENV5).

5.32 An Ecological Appraisal has been prepared by OS Ecology and submitted as part of this application. This document concludes that the following measures should be incorporated into the design of the scheme to avoid impacts on wildlife:

- Site lighting will be directional and avoid light spill into adjacent areas of retained habitat
- Works will not be undertaken during the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) unless the site is checked by an appropriately experienced ecologist and nests are confirmed to be absent.
- Any excavations left open overnight will have a means of escape for mammals that may become trapped in the form of a ramp at least 300mm in width and angled no greater than 45°.
- Landscaped areas will include opportunities for use by priority butterfly species.
- Landscape planting shall include berry and fruit bearing species to provide increased foraging opportunities in the local area.

5.33 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been prepared by OS ecology and submitted as part of this application.

5.34 It is considered that the proposals accord with Policy ENV5 of the Local Plan and are acceptable in planning terms.

## **Ground Conditions**

5.35 Policy ENV7 states that all development proposals that may cause groundwater, surface water, air (including odour), noise or light pollution either individually or cumulatively will be required to incorporate measures as appropriate to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause unacceptable impacts on the living conditions of all existing and potential future occupants of land and buildings.



- 5.36 A Phase 1 Ground Investigation has been prepared by ERGO and submitted as part of this application. Full details are contained within this assessment, however overall it concludes that a detailed and comprehensive Phase II intrusive geo-environmental ground investigation should be undertaken in order to confirm the findings of the initial investigation.
- 5.37 It is considered that the proposals accord with Policy ENV7 of the Local Plan and can be considered acceptable.

## **The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

- 5.38 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. At paragraph 8 of the Framework it is explained that there are three dimensions to sustainability:
- **Economic** - Fundamentally the proposal will result in significant investment in Billingham Riverside and encourage sustainable economic growth in Stockton-on-Tees. It is anticipated that the proposal will itself create 51 jobs in total, in addition to wider construction and spin-off jobs;
  - **Social** - In addition to the number of skilled jobs created and safeguarded by the proposed development, the new positions will be conveniently accessible and genuinely attainable for local residents. A wide variety of roles will be provided, offering the potential for training and job progression.
  - **Environmental** - The proposed development will aim to provide sustainable design while considering the carbon footprint of the building through not only the construction period but the entire life cycle of the building. The construction materials will be carefully chosen to provide low embodied carbon alongside being functional. The building envelope itself will be designed to provide the most thermally efficient elements possible. The Mechanical and Electrical design will support the use of renewable energy sources where possible and the use of air source heat pumps and photovoltaics will provide a well-rounded and efficient energy strategy for the building. Dedicated EV car parking will be provided to enable the building users to utilise electric vehicles. Furthermore, infrastructure will be introduced to allow the maintenance and service of electric commercial vehicles in the future; future-proofing the development for changes in the commercial vehicle industry.

## **Summary**

- 5.39 Whilst the site is allocated at Local Plan Policy EG4 for Specialist Employment Uses, it is considered that the proposed development satisfies the criteria within the policy allowing the development of alternative employment uses. As well as the operational synergies with surrounding uses, the application proposals will locate a flagship heavy vehicle servicing facility in an area characterised by uses dependent on HGVs, and thereby support existing businesses and investment in the area. The proposals therefore represent a clear opportunity to develop a facility which will bring operational benefits to several existing businesses at Haverton Hill.
- 5.40 The state-of-the-art nature of the facility, as well as its accessibility to and from the A19, will also ensure it acts as a catalyst for further investment in the North and South Tees Cluster;

attracting further businesses to the area. The proposals will also bring numerous social, economic and environmental benefits, including various sustainable design features and result in the creation of a flagship HGV facility in Stockton. This is in addition to reusing an area of brownfield land which has remained vacant for some time, which would ordinarily be directly supported by Policy SD4 and the NPPF.

- 5.41 The application proposal is also found to be acceptable in relation to the relevant technical considerations.
- 5.42 In this context, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with the policies set out within the adopted Development Plan.

## 6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of Ford & Slater DAF. It accompanies a full planning application for the development of land off Haverton Hill Road in Stockton-on-Tees, for the following:
- “Erection of maintenance and storage facility for large commercial vehicles (Use Class B2/B8) with associated servicing, vehicular access and landscaping”*
- 6.2 This Statement has assessed the application proposals against the statutory development plan, as well as other material considerations, including relevant national planning policy.
- 6.3 Ford & Slater DAF are one of the largest commercial vehicle dealer groups in the UK, with around 650 staff and 13 regional sites. In light of the well-known growth in demand for HGV services in response to both Covid-19 and wider economic trends, Ford and Slater are seeking to expand their operation throughout the country, including through the amalgamation of a smaller patchwork of dealerships into a new flagship facility on Teesside. This would cater for vehicle servicing and maintenance across the North of England.
- 6.4 The application site is located to the south of Haverton Hill Road, which connects the site and nearby uses to the A19 to the southwest. The area surrounding the site is characterised by a number of green, renewable energy and recycling facilities, including Haverton Hill Recycling Centre; a Household Waste Recycling Centre; Scott Bros Recycling Ltd; SUEZ recycling and recovery UK and Ballast Phoenix Ltd. Despite the site’s remediation and the fact it has been subject to previous applications for business and industrial uses, it is not proven possible to viably develop the site over the last 20 years.
- 6.5 Part of the application site comprises land allocated for specialist employment uses at Local Plan Policy EG4. However, it is considered that the proposed development satisfies the criteria within the policy allowing the development of alternative employment uses. As well as the operational synergies with surrounding uses, the application proposals will locate a flagship heavy vehicle servicing facility in an area characterised by uses that depend on heavy goods vehicles, and thereby support existing businesses and investment in the area. The proposals therefore represent a clear opportunity to develop a facility which will bring operational benefits to several existing businesses at Haverton Hill.
- 6.6 The state-of-the-art nature of the facility, as well as its accessibility to and from the A19, will also ensure it acts as a catalyst for further investment in the North and South Tees Cluster; attracting further businesses to the area. The proposals will also bring numerous social, economic and environmental benefits, including the creation of 51 new jobs and various sustainable design features, and result in the creation of a flagship HGV facility in Stockton.
- 6.7 It has been demonstrated that the application proposal is acceptable in terms of the relevant technical considerations.
- 6.8 In this context, the proposals are considered to accord with the policies set out within the adopted Development Plan, and the NPPF.



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