Hearing Position Statement: Laing O’Rourke
Bolsover Local Plan Examination – Issue 7: Employment

January 2019 JB/9361
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Hearing Statement is submitted by DHA (Ref ID: 9557) on behalf of Laing O’Rourke (Ref ID: 9814), who control the Explore Industrial Park (EIP) at Steetley. It should be read alongside the following Reg.19 representations submitted in June 2018:

- **8774**: Local Wildlife Site boundary / proposals map
- **8781**: Flood risk zone / proposals map
- **8782**: WC1 allocation / Proposals map boundaries
- **8783**: WC1 allocation / B1 uses

1.2 Overview

1.2.1 In order to address the Inspector’s specific questions, it is helpful to provide a quick overview of the site’s history.

1.2.2 The EIP site is a large former quarry, colliery and brick refractory site which was acquired by Laing O’Rourke in 2007. The site area is divided almost equally between Bolsover (Derbyshire) and Bassetlaw (Nottinghamshire).

1.2.3 Planning permission was granted in 2007 for the existing pre-cast concrete manufacturing facility, followed in 2010 by outline planning permission for a masterplanned class B1/B2/B8 off-site manufacturing hub on the wider EIP site. Due to the nature of the proposal, 10 years were allowed for the submission of reserved matters.

1.2.4 The enabling works required for the masterplan development have been carried out including extensive decontamination of the site, the creation of development parcels, interim drainage work including the realignment of part of Darfoulds Dyke in accordance with the approved masterplan, structural landscaping works across the site, the translocation of reptiles and an area of ancient woodland, and the creation of an extensive ecological mitigation area.

1.2.5 Planning permission has since been granted for a further large-scale manufacturing facility (the "AMF") to the west of the current factory, within Bassetlaw district. Development has formally commenced on that site.

1.2.6 Other plots within the Bassetlaw part of the site are also currently being used for external storage, on an interim basis, in connection with the existing factory.

1.2.7 Two prototype buildings (an apartment block and a large house) have been constructed on one of the Bolsover plots, for testing and marketing purposes in order to showcase the company’s products. The remaining Bolsover plots (which are furthest from the existing factory) are currently undeveloped.
2 Explore Industrial Park, Steetley (WC1)

2.1 Q142: Is the proposed allocation justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of development?

2.1.1 Outline planning permission has been granted previously for B1, B2 and B8 uses by both Bassetlaw and Bolsover District Councils, demonstrating that the uses are appropriate taking into account the likely impacts. As parts of the site remain undeveloped (although with development platforms and structural landscaping already in place) and the permission is due to expire in 2020, given the suitability of the site and the significant multi-million pound investment which has taken place in it to date, the allocation is completely justified and appropriate. I understand there have been no objections to the principle of the allocation.

2.2 Q143: Is the proposed allocation deliverable and/or developable? In particular, is it:

a) **Confirmed by the landowner involved as being available for the use proposed?**

2.2.1 I can confirm on behalf of the landowner that the site is available for the use proposed.

b) **Supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided?**

2.2.2 A safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians has been constructed in order to serve the existing facility. No further on-site works are required in order to gain access to the site as a whole.

c) **Deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?**

2.2.3 Part of the site has already been developed, and significant funds have been invested in preparing the remainder of the site for development. Substantial ecology, drainage, decontamination and landscape mitigation works have already taken place (see 1.2.4) so that the site is immediately ready for development. The site is clearly deliverable.

2.3 Q144: Would B1 uses be appropriate on this site?

2.3.1 BDC agreed when granting outline planning permission that B1 uses are appropriate on the site. Our objection on this matter related to the omission of B1 uses from the draft allocation, which has since been rectified by BDC as set out in our agreed Statement of Common Ground, allowing this objection to be withdrawn.
2.4  **Q145:** When it is anticipated that the submission of an application for the approval of reserved matters would be forthcoming?

**Q146:** When is it anticipated that development would commence on site?

2.4.1  I will answer these questions together as they are inter-related.

2.4.2  Since outline planning permission was granted in April 2010, planning permission has been granted by both Bolsover and Bassetlaw for developments on various plots within the site, including the AMF, prototype buildings and external storage works referred to in section 1. These have all been granted under new full permissions for technical reasons. In addition, as set out in section 1, details have been submitted through applications for the discharge of conditions and S106 obligations, for a wide array of enabling works.

2.4.3  The existing permission only allows the site to be used for off-site manufacturing and related purposes. As one of the world’s leading construction contractors, Laing O’Rourke regularly bids for major construction projects, some of which may require further facilities to be constructed at EIP, depending on the nature and location of the project. Indeed, we have previously undertaken pre-application discussions with BDC about such potential buildings, although to date the buildings have not been required. However, in the event of a successful bid requiring a new facility to be constructed, it will often be necessary to erect the building quickly.

2.4.4  The future development of plots within Bolsover District is dependent upon the winning of future contracts and that when a new opportunity arises, Laing O’Rourke would need to progress very quickly to seek detailed planning permission. New opportunities to bid for work are considered on a regular basis and, where a new facility at EIP would be required as a result of a successful bid, the site is in a sufficiently advanced position that planning permission or reserved matters consent could be quickly achieved.

2.4.5  As a result, whilst at present there are no detailed proposals for any of the vacant Bolsover plots, that position is liable to change rapidly should a particular contract require development of these plots.

2.4.6  It should be noted that if, as is proposed in the emerging Local Plan, the current restrictions on the use of the site to off-site manufacturing uses only are lifted and a general B1/B2/B8 allocation is confirmed, this would provide greater flexibility. In this scenario, the landowners could market parts of the site for alternative employment uses where this would not conflict with the smooth operation of the existing site, further enhancing employment prospects.

2.5  **Q147:** Is the extent of the allocation accurately shown on the Proposals Map?

2.5.1  Further discussions have taken place between the landowner and Bolsover District Council which have led to minor amendments being proposed to the site boundary. As confirmed in the agreed Statement of Common Ground between both parties, it is now agreed that the extent of the allocation is now accurately shown.
2.5.2 However, Laing O‘Rourke maintains its objection to the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) designation which overlaps with a significant part of the proposed development area. Significant ecological mitigation works were required (and have been completed) in relation to the proposed masterplan development at EIP, in order to allow employment development to take place throughout the proposed allocation area. The LWS boundary should take this into account and be drawn to exclude the proposed allocation area in order to avoid confusion and uncertainty about the extent to which this area is fully developable.

2.5.3 I understand that Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has been consulted and is agreeable to our proposed amendment. I understand also that BDC Officers would also support this amendment but that at the time of writing it has not been formally approved by the Council. Clearly if BDC were to formally agree to this change, my client would be able to withdraw its objection.