Land between A505 and Greenfield, Royston, Hertfordshire
Kiafield Properties Ltd

May 2018

BIDWELLS

PLANNING STATEMENT

LAND BETWEEN A505 AND GREENFIELD, ROYSTON, HERTFORDSHIRE

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Quality Assurance

Site name:	Land between A505 and Greenfield, Royston
Client name:	Kiafield Properties Ltd
Type of report:	Planning Statement
Prepared by:	Stacey Rawlings
Signed	
Date	May 2018

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared and submitted by Bidwells on behalf of Kiafield Properties Ltd (“The Applicant”) in support of a full planning application for earthworks on part of the land between the A505 and York Way, Royston ("the Site").

1.2 North Hertfordshire District Council ("the Council") is the local planning authority with jurisdiction over the planning application.

1.3 The application Site is part of a wider vision to create a new commercial gateway into Royston at the 11-hectare site between the A505 and York Way (“the Royston Gateway”). Planning permission for Phase 1, which included the erection of a B8 industrial unit, food retail unit and new link road on land to the east of the application Site, was secured in early 2015 (LPA ref: 14/0908/1). This has been updated by a revised planning permission for an alternative food retail scheme and link road in November 2017 (LPA ref: 17/01024/1). Work has since commenced on the link road and the retail plot. As part of those works, the applicant seeks permission to use the material that is being excavated to fill a depression on the wider site as part of a ground levelling exercise.

1.4 The primary purpose of this Statement is to set out the environmental and technical aspects of the proposal in order to assess the proposed development against relevant development plan policy and material planning considerations.

1.5 The Council's guidance has been followed in the preparation of this Statement including the Council's checklist for validation of planning applications. The scope has been checked with planning officer prior to submission.

1.6 The application includes:

- Planning Design and Access Statement prepared by Bidwells;
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage technical note prepared by WSP;
- Existing Ground Conditions prepared by Notcutts
- Ecology Update prepared by GC
- Location Plan and Proposed site levels
- Existing levels

2.0 Background

Site and its surroundings

2.1 The Site is located to the north west of Royston town centre and the existing Orchard Road Industrial Estate, and to the south east of the A505.

2.2 The Site measures 1.03 hectares.

2.3 The Site is bounded by the A505 to the north and the existing built-up area of the Orchard Road Industrial Estate along York Way to the south. The adjacent land to the west is consented for retail and a new link road.

2.4 The Site comprises grassland. There are no public rights of way within the application boundary.

2.5 The Site is designated as being within Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's flood risk maps, as such is not located in a flood risk area. Due to the nature of the proposed earthworks and the resulting ground raising/levelling, a technical note has been prepared by WSP to outline the hydrological implications from the change in levels to this part of the site.

2.6 There are no Listed Buildings on the Site or located within close proximity to the Site.

2.7 In terms of wildlife designations, there is one statutory site within 2.0km of the Site: Therfield Heath LNR & SSSI. This statutory site is separated from the Site by physical barriers including a main road and a railway, therefore populations of species from this LNR / SSSI are considered unlikely to move between it and the Site.

Site Planning History

2.8 There is no planning history for the site. As referenced above, the immediately adjacent land has full planning permission for retail units and a new link road which is currently being implemented as follows:

Full planning permission ("Phase 1")

2.9 In February 2015, full planning permission (LPA ref: 14/01809/1) was granted for:

"*the erection of industrial warehouse building for the purposes within Use Class B8 (Storage or Distribution) with offices and ancillary facilities, service yard and 60 car parking spaces; erection of foodstore together with associated car parking (200 spaces); provision of new road on junction of A505 and new link road to Orchard Road Industrial Estate*"

2.10 In February 2015, amendments to the service yard entrance, elevations and landscaping scheme were approved as a Non-Material Amendment to planning permission ref: 14/01809/1.

2.11 The above application represented "Phase 1" of the wider Royston Gateway scheme. The Phase 1 permission consists of an A505 southbound roundabout junction and slip roads, a spine road through the development area connecting with Greenfield to the south and a connecting link to York Way. Development has commenced and this permission is therefore extant.

2.12 A further full planning permission has now been consented (LPA ref 17/01024/1) in November 2017 for:

"*Erection of 2 retail foodstores with ancillary café; provision of 170 associated car parking spaces; plant and services yards; provision of new road on junction of A505 and new link road to Orchard Road Industrial estate; landscaping and all other associated works"* on a similar site to the 2015 consent referred to above.

2.13 This consent extends the road link to connect to the edge of the proposed site and seeks an alternative retail scheme to reflect the change in occupier requirements. The retail scheme is being implemented which has given rise to the current application for redistributing the existing material onto the adjacent land to level the area.

2.14 A further planning permission has been granted on 21 February 2018 for "*Erection of new Industrial building within Class B1c with offices and associated facilities, access, service yard, car and cycle parking and landscaping*" off Greenfield (LPA ref 16/02834/1). This scheme is currently being amended through application 17/04357/FP for a similar development on the same plot. Once construction commences, the excavated material is also expected to be used as fill.

3.0 Description of Proposed development

3.1 The application seeks consent to utilise existing material from the adjacent construction activity to bring an area of depression level with the existing landform around the site. The works include a topsoil strip and movement of approximately 6,700 cubic metres of fill material (chalk) with a topsoil cap of 0.3m.

3.2 All vehicular movements connected to this proposal will be internal to the application site and the adjacent land in the same ownership. There is no requirement to use public roads to redistribute the excavated material. Overall, this will reduce the need to export the material off-site to landfill which will have a benefit to the wider construction traffic impacts.

4.0 Technical Assessments

4.1 A number of technical reports were commissioned to assess the suitability of the wider site for development. Those relevant to the ground conditions and proposed works also submitted in support of the application; along with additional reports specific to the proposed works. A brief synopsis is provided below:

Ground Conditions

4.2 Nottcuts and WSP has carried out detailed investigations through the existing planning permissions to a Phase 2 Assessment to conclude that the existing material is suitable for the proposed earthworks.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

4.3 Ecology work connected to the implementation of the 2014 and 2017 planning permissions on the adjacent land apply to this wider site. The land was concluded to be of low wildlife value and this continues to be the case. Additional checks for reptiles and breeding birds was undertaken before the commencement of work on the wider site. The results are included with this application for ease of reference. No further surveys are considered necessary.

Aboricultural

4.4 The application site has no trees or hedgerows.

Flood Risk and Drainage

4.5 WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff have prepared a technical Note to set out the hydrological implications of these earthworks.

Landscape and Visual Impact

4.6 The principle of landscape and visual impact has been recently assessed under extant planning permissions 14/01809/1 and 17/01024/1. The permitted 'Phase 1' development immediately adjacent to the Site was deemed to be acceptable in landscape and visual terms. This ground levelling application does not raise any further landscape issues. It will not be perceptible from the existing A505 or new link road works due to the levels involved and the finish to reinstatement the existing topsoil as a cap.

Archaeology

4.7 There are no heritage assets recorded within the proposed development site. None are recorded in the immediate vicinity and the site is not in an area of high archaeological interest. Earlier desk based assessments undertaken to inform other applications on the wider site and nearby sites to the south did not reveal any archaeological interest of significance requiring investigation. On this basis we do not consider the proposal carries any impacts in this respect.

5.0 Development Plan Policies and Material Considerations

5.1 The purpose of this section is to assess the proposed development against relevant development plan policies and material considerations.

5.2 In deciding planning applications, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

Local Plan No.2 with alterations (adopted 1996)

5.3 The Development Plan for North Hertfordshire District comprises the Saved Policies from the replacement Local Plan No.2 with alterations (adopted 1996). Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, permission was granted by the Secretary of State to save the policies beyond this date. The 2007 Saved policies are considered in this report.

5.4 The relevant Saved policies include:

- Policy 6 Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt
- Policy 9 Royston Development Limits
- Policy 14: Nature

Emerging Development Plan

Proposed Submission Local Plan 2011 -2031

5.5 The Proposed Submission Local Plan 2011- 2031 is currently being examined.

5.6 The following draft policies are relevant to the proposals:

- Policy NE1: Landscape
- Policy NE7: Reducing flood risk
- Employment Allocation RY9: Land north of York Way

Supplementary Planning Documents

5.7 There are no SPDS relevant to the proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

5.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) came into immediate effect upon publication on 27 March 2012. The NPPF promotes sustainable development in planning and positive growth. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

5.9 The paragraphs of particular relevance to the determination of this application include:

5.10 Paragraph 14, which states that:

"*At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking. [plan-making text omitted in the interests of brevity*].

For decision-taking this means:

■ *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*

■ *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

– any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or

– specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."

5.11 Paragraph 215 states that:

"*due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given*".

5.12 Paragraph 216 states that:

"*decision-takers may also give weight to relevant polices in emerging plans according to: the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given); the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in emerging plan to the policies in this Framework."*

Planning Practice Guidance

5.13 On 6 March 2014 the DCLG launched the Planning Practice Guidance Web-Based Resource (PPG). In total, there are to date 48 different guidance categories within the PPG, covering a variety of issues such as neighbourhood planning, planning appeals, environmental impact, development viability and housing and economic assessments. The PPG has informed the baseline assessments undertaken and we consider the proposals are in general accordance.

The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)

5.14 There is no CIL in effect in North Hertfordshire District Council. Notwithstanding this, the Regulations are partly relevant.

5.15 Section 122 (2), Part 11 of the 2010 regulations states:

"A planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is –

(a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;

(b) directly related to the development; and

(c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development."

5.16 The technical assessments undertaken to date do not show any effects requiring off-site mitigation to be secured through a planning obligation.

6.0 Evaluation

Policy compliance

6.1 The application Site lies outside, albeit immediately adjacent, Royston's Town Boundary and Development Limits as set out under Policies 8 and 9 of the Local Plan 1996. Thus, the Site is located within the "Rural area beyond the Green Belt" to which Local Plan Policy 6 applies.

6.2 **Policy 6: Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt** restricts development in rural areas in order to maintain the existing countryside and character of villages. Whilst this policy has some continued relevance under the Framework in recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, the adjacent land benefits from planning permission for retail and employment uses includeing a new link road from the A505 to connect to York Way. This planning history confirms that development in this area is unlikely to detract from this policy. This application seeks to alter the adjacent ground level to fill in a depressed area using material excavated from the development site. Therefore, the impact of the proposal on this policy is considered negligible.

6.3 **Local Plan Policy 9: Royston's Development Limits** states that the Council will refuse development proposals outside the development limits boundary shown on the Proposals Map, unless they are acceptable in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt (Policy 6). The proposed earthworks do not conflict with this policy.

6.4 The application Site is part of an area proposed to be allocated for employment under **draft Policy SP3 Employment** and **Employment Allocation 'EY9 Land at York Way**' in the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2011-2035. An extract of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2011-2035 proposals map is shown below:

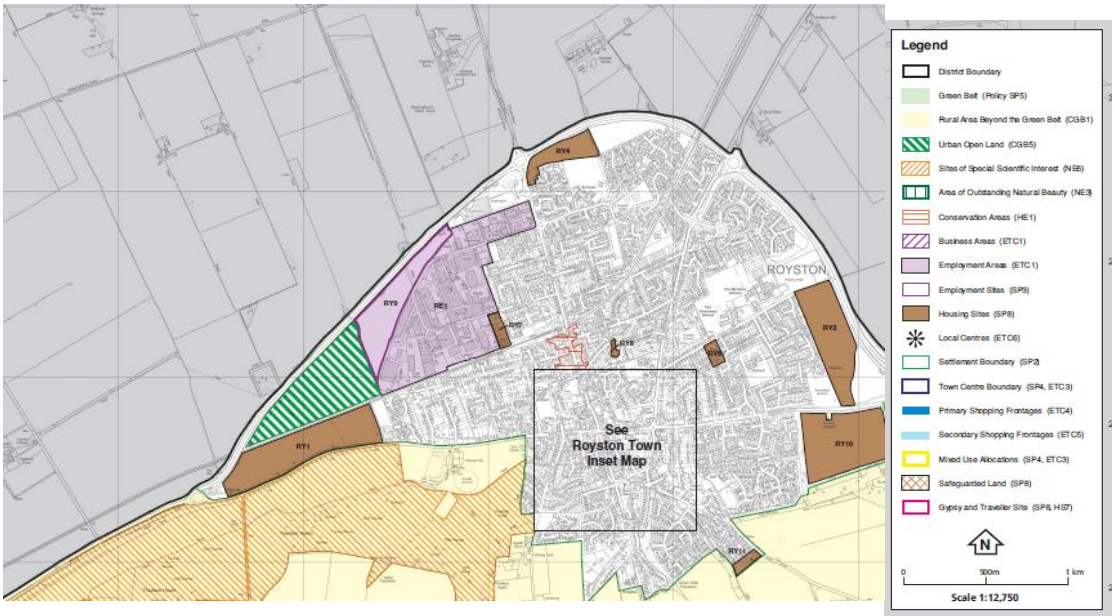

Figure 1: Extract of Proposed Submission Local Plan 2011-2035 Proposals Map

6.5 The proposed earthworks will not prejudice the future delivery of this policy and may facilitate it by levelling the ground in a manner that will not prevent future development occurring in this location.

Transport and highway matters

6.6 All movements are internal to the wider land allocation and do not require the use of adopted public highway. Measures are already in place on site to protect pedestrians using the public footpath through the site as part of the wider site works. There is no additional impact arising for consideration through this proposal.

Flood Risk and Drainage

6.7 The Site lies within Flood Zone 1, which means that the area of land has a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding from the river or sea (<0.1%). The proposal is accompanied by a surface water technical note prepared by WSP to demonstrate that there will be no floodrisk as a result of the earthworks. Therefore, draft policy **NE7: Reducing flood risk** and emerging policy **is** met.

Landscape and ecology

6.8 **Policy 14: Nature Conservation** identifies the need to preserve wildlife through conservation designations and ensuring development will not cause ecological harm. The wider development activity has assessed the ecological impacts and no constraints are identified. The site ecologist has undertaken regular checks and will continue to do so prior to any works commencing in a particular location. The approved reptile briefing note is included with the application for ease of reference.

The resulting ground levelling will have limited harm on the landscape. The topsoil will be stripped and replaced following the earthworks. We do not consider there will be any material harm to draft **Policy NE1: Landscape**.

Conclusion

6.9 The proposed development accords with adopted local plan policy for the area. It will not prejudice the employment allocation and is compatible. The overall effect will be to reduce the amount of excavated material that is removed from the site and its associated traffic movements. Its redistribution across the wider employment allocation will have a beneficial effect on the future development of the site by enabling a more efficient use of land.

6.10 On this basis planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.

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