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Planning Development

Planning Statement: Land off Grange Road, Soothill, Batley

Site Description

The application site comprises of a parcel of land located at the southern end of the Grange Road Industrial Estate. The site measures approximately 0.4ha and is currently vacant. Access to the site is via an existing access road that runs through the site from Grange Road. The surrounding area comprises of residential dwellings to the west, Bromley Road to the south, an area of trees to the east and industrial premises to the north.



Application Site

Planning History

There is no planning history.

Policy Designation

The application site is located on land which is designated as a Priority Employment Area in accordance with the Kirklees Local Plan Policies Map.

The Proposals

This application seeks planning permission for the formation of a hardstanding area and the change of use of the land for the siting of 78 no. storage containers (part retrospective – the hardstanding area has been put in place already).

The application site formally comprised of self-seeded vegetation, with trees bordering parts of the perimeter. The land was largely cleared by the applicant in the summer of 2023, levelled off, and laid with hardcore.

The proposals would comprise of 78 No. storage containers positioned as shown on the Site Layout Plan. Soft landscaping is proposed along the southern and western boundaries of the site, which would be interspersed with some existing retained trees. The northern section of the site also includes retained trees and vegetation. The storage containers will all match one another in terms of size measuring 5.9m (l) x 2.35m (w) x 2.39m (h), and colour (green). Access to the site would be via an existing internal access road from Grange Road.



Image of the storage containers proposed

Assessment of the Proposals

Principle of Development

Paragraph 85 in the NPPF states,

'Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. 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.'

The application site is located on land which is designated as a Priority Employment Area and as such Local Plan Policy LP8 is also relevant and states,

'Proposals for development or re-development for employment generating uses (as defined in the Glossary) in Priority Employment Areas will be supported where there is no conflict with the established employment uses (as defined in the Glossary) in the area.'

The proposed development relates to the siting of storage containers. This use falls within the Use Class B8 (Storage and Distribution) in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). Uses within Class B8 are considered to be employment generating uses in accordance with the Glossary in the Local Plan. It is envisaged that the proposed development would create three full time positions and three part time positions.

The application site forms part of the larger Grange Road Industrial site, with the other uses on the wider site comprising of uses consistent with business and industry. As a result, it is considered that there would be no conflict caused between the proposed B8 development and the other employment uses on the wider site. The proposals would allow an existing business to expand and grow through the utilisation of this parcel of land within the Priority Employment Area.

Furthermore, the idea of utilising these types of storage container provides a secure, accessible, versatile and cost-effective storage solution for individuals, families and businesses – either for the short or long term. These types of units are also larger and more spacious than traditional self-storage units.

In summary, and particularly given the under-utilisation of this employment land in the past, the proposals provide a beneficial economic use of the site, in line with the designated Priority Employment Area within the Local Plan.

The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable in principle and accord with paragraph 85 in the NPPF and Policy LP8 in the Local Plan.

Visual Amenity

Local Plan Policy LP24 states,

'Proposals should promote good design by ensuring: a. the form, scale, layout and details of all development respects and enhances the character of the townscape, heritage assets and landscape.'

Paragraph 135 in the NPPF also sets out the various design objectives, including the need to ensure that developments: function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive; are sympathetic to local character and history; and establish or maintain a strong sense of place.

The proposed development comprises of a hardcore surface with 78 No. storage containers located on it. It is considered that the general layout of the containers provides a coherent design which would be both practical, but also uniform in character. In order to soften the appearance of the development, areas of soft landscaping are proposed along the southern and western boundaries which includes some existing retained trees. The northern section of the site also includes retained trees and

vegetation. The storage containers proposed would be green in colour. This would enable the containers to be less prominent and more in keeping with the surroundings of the site.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable with regards to visual amenity and complies with Local Plan Policy LP24 and paragraph 135 in the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

Local Plan Policy LP24 states,

'Proposals should promote good design by ensuring: b. they provide a high standard of amenity for future and neighbouring occupiers; including maintaining appropriate distances between buildings and the creation of development-free buffer zones between housing and employment uses incorporating means of screening where necessary.'

Paragraph 135 in the NPPF also states that,

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: f) create places ... which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.'

The closest residential dwellings to the application site are No.'s 2-12 Greenhill Court and No.'s 45, 47 and 54 Bromley Road. Given the nature of the proposals, it is considered that the development would cause no undue harm in terms of overshadowing or having an overbearing impact.

In terms of privacy and outlook, existing and proposed soft landscaping would be located along the western and southern boundaries of the site to help screen the development from the neighbouring dwellings. A public footpath also separates the application site from the dwellings on Greenhill Court and the public highway separates the application site from No. 54 Bromley Road. An existing area of vegetation separates the application site from No.'s 45 and 47 Bromley Road. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not be of detriment to residential amenity by way of privacy and outlook.

Regarding noise and disturbance, the proposed customer opening hours are 0700 to 1900 hrs Monday to Saturday and 1000 to 1600 hrs on Sundays. It is envisaged the containers would be used largely by trades people and customers moving house. Trades people are likely to visit the site up to two or three times a week (but possibly less often) Monday to Friday, whereas customers moving house are likely to visit the site two or three times when filling up the container, and then two or three times when emptying the container following their house move. As such, the proposed development would not result in large numbers of customers coming and going on a daily / weekly basis.

The container doors are also proposed to have rubber seals fitted in order to eliminate noise when opening and closing.

It is therefore considered that the proposals would not cause undue harm to residential amenity by way of noise and disturbance.

Given the above, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in relation to residential amenity and comply with Local Plan Policy LP24 and paragraph 135 in the NPPF.

Highways and Access

Local Plan Policy LP21 states,

'New development will normally be permitted where safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and where the residual cumulative impacts of development are not severe.'

Access to the site would be via an existing internal access road through the wider industrial site from Grange Road. 10 No. car parking spaces are proposed on the site to be used by customers. It should be noted that no staff parking is required as the staff working at the site will be based in the applicant's existing portacabins located elsewhere on the wider site.

It is considered that there is ample turning within the application site for vehicles to enter and exit the site in a forward gear. It is also considered that the volume of traffic visiting the application site on a daily basis would not be to the extent that it would cause harm to the existing highway network, or noticeably increase traffic through the wider site.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable with regards to highway matters and accords with Local Plan Policy LP21 and the aims of Chapter 9 in the NPPF.

Biodiversity

Areas of soft landscaping are proposed along the southern and western boundaries. It is proposed that these areas will include indigenous tree and shrub species. Several trees on the site have also been retained in addition to some existing vegetation, particularly in the northern section of the site.

The proposed development therefore accords with Local Plan Policy LP30 and the aims of Chapter 15 in the NPPF.¹

Climate Change

A Climate Change Statement is submitted as part of the application. Given the nature of the proposals, it is considered that energy demand and carbon consumption would be minimal. In addition, no renewable energy sources are being proposed at this stage, and no specific measures have been proposed to reduce air pollution. However, the proposals will provide biodiversity enhancements as discussed in the previous section.

It is therefore considered that the proposals would have a neutral impact on climate change with the biodiversity enhancements proposed providing a marginal positive impact – particularly as the previous vegetation was self-seeded. The proposed development therefore accords with Local Plan Policies LP24 and LP26.

Conclusion

This application seeks planning permission for the formation of a hardstanding area and the change of use of the land for the siting of 78 no. storage containers (part retrospective).

¹ NOTE: this application was submitted prior to the Government's biodiversity net gain scheme coming into force.

As discussed in the preceding paragraphs of this report, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable and there are no significant constraints that would prevent the development with regards to visual amenity, residential amenity, highway matters, biodiversity, and climate change.

The proposed development would enable the applicant to expand and grow their existing business on this Priority Employment Site, whilst also creating six jobs for the local economy.

It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is approved accordingly.

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