Hi William

Re: application 2024/92651 – Business Kirklees, Invest Team Response

Further to your request for Business Kirklees' feedback on application: 2024/92651 for the erection of industrial units in support of operations falling in use classes E(g)(ii-iii), B2, and B8, I am pleased to comment as follows:

It is noted that the application affects an area of land allocated for housing (HS20) in the adopted Kirklees Local Plan. In view of this the requirement for a strong justification to approve what would essentially be a departure from the plan is noted. It is in this context I have considered this scheme and carefully appraised the alternative opportunities to assist with the economic case for this development, a process which has considered:

- Other employment and mixed-use allocations
- known demand based on current enquiries being supported by the Business Kirklees Invest team
- alternative and similar sites and properties currently on the market

Employment and mixed use (with an employment element) allocations:

It is noted this site equates to an area of 3.34 ha and has the potential to generate circa 11,148m2 (120,000sqft) of industrial floorspace. This would make a welcome contribution to the needs of business and industry, particularly SME operations falling within the manufacturing sector. Having considered alternative sites across the district it is apparent that the geographic spread of supply is heavily weighted towards North Kirklees, with supply in and around Huddersfield and South Kirklees more limited and restrictive in nature. This lack of supply is evidently constraining growth of established Huddersfield based business and potential inward investment opportunities. This is evidenced through the nature of enquiries and support being given to businesses seeking land and property within the area. More information on this is covered further down.

It is important to note the location of this application and the market it would serve. Blackmoorfoot Road falls within an area serving the Huddersfield market, an area where the make-up of employment land supply is characterised by limited small to medium sized sites. Businesses seeking land and property within this locality do so to ensure their workforce retention, particularly in areas where a particular skill set is specialised and very hard to recruit to. Workforce retention is therefore critical to businesses current and future viability and continuity.

Equivalent sites in the Huddersfield economic market area include the 8ha site at Cooper Bridge (allocation ES9). This is the largest of the allocations and is a site which has been acquired by John Cotton Group. The purchase was a strategic one and supports their own expansion needs. Planning (2023/92448) is already being sought to achieve this. The next site of note is at Lindley Moor, a mixed use allocation (MXS3) with the final plot intended for employment use and equates to approximately 6ha. Again, this site has very recently been acquired by MACs Trucks and has been identified for their own expansion needs, with

some limited provision to come forward for business and industry. A new application will be submitted to either amend or replace the current permission (2022/91477) to reflect this. As yet, full details of this and the timescales are unknown. However, it is clear the scheme will reduce the quantum of land to support the needs of other end users.

In addition to the Cooper Bridge and Lindley Moor sites, there are no other allocations that are available or suitable. Other employment allocations have already been built out and the mixed allocations are now coming forward for the University's National Health Innovation Campus at Southgate (MXS2) and for residential and a supermarket at Trinity (MXS4). Therefore, the opportunity being presented here would bring forward much needed employment land supply at a time when provision is heavily constrained in this economic market area. This strain on supply is further evidenced through the number of active business enquiries and the inability to align their needs with existing opportunities.

Business enquiries and ability to meet demand

The table below provides a useful summary of the number of 'active' enquiries the Business Kirklees and the Invest team in particular are dealing with. The figures presented below represent businesses whose requirements are for the Huddersfield area and would align with the opportunity being proposed through this application.

Note: active means conversations with businesses are still ongoing and their needs have yet to be met.

No. active enquiries	Area of need	Building requirement	Sectors	Sum total of floorspace required m2 (sq ft)	Size range of units needed
42	Huddersfield	Industrial unit	Manufacturing, Storage & distribution, Professional scientific & technical and construction	197,754 m2 (2,128,624 sq ft)	139 m2 – 13,395 m2 (1,500 sqft – 135,000 sqft)

As can be seen from the figures above, demand is clearly currently outstripping supply. The number of active enquiries and the total amount of floorspace needed, far exceeds existing capacity. The non-delivery of the application site would continue to constrain the growth of businesses whose needs would otherwise be supported by this scheme and represents the potential risk of missed jobs growth potential and may lead to business relocation to areas outside of Kirklees. These are factors that we believe should be afforded significant weight.

Alternative land and property actively being marketed in the Huddersfield area.

It is also prudent to understand the current market opportunities for land and property being marketed for sale or lease in the Huddersfield area. This has the potential to satisfy some of the current demand and should therefore be taken into account. Having

undertaken a search on CoStar – a market leading commercial land and property search platform – the results only go further to amplify the message that existing opportunities remain very limited and continue to apply a constraint on further business growth and investment.

Based on the two reports attached, these can be summarised as follows:

Land and property for sale

- 9 opportunities identified – 3 land options and 6 properties
- Land options are very limited and restrictive in nature:
    - Bradley Park Landfill, a site which falls within the green belt and is allocated as waste safeguarded site (WS1). Not suitable for business and industry.
    - Parcel 3, Clough Hall Lane, HD4 6TA – agricultural land within the green belt.
    - Plot 2 New North Road – brownfield site allocated for mixed use in the Kirklees Local Plan (MXS4). Plot 1 has been acquired for student/residential use. Bringing forward industrial in this location would introduce a conflicting neighbouring use. This plot also has outline permission for a residential scheme.
- 6 industrial properties, all of which are older in nature and provide limited market appeal due to inefficient layout, insufficient infrastructure 3-phase power - and heights to meet the needs of modern business operations.
    - Total floorspace is 8,497m2 (91,460sqft) leaving a shortfall of 189,257m2 (2,037,162sqft) based on active demand for the Huddersfield area
    - Some of the above sales are investment opportunities with tenants already in occupation of part of the floorspace quoted
    - Some of the properties are within semi-residential areas and likely to limit opportunities to light industrial uses only

Properties for lease

- 13 opportunities identified
- 9 properties are for warehouse / storage distribution operations. This limits their suitability for manufacturing-based businesses
- 4 units are marketed for manufacturing or light industrial
- Total floorspace being marketed is 8,935m2 (96,176sqft) leaving a shortfall of 188,819m2 (2,032,477sqft) based on active demand for the Huddersfield area

It should also be noted most of the properties listed have already been submitted to the active business enquiries, each of which have been dismissed as unsuitable options, and would not support their needs. This further emphasises the need for new modern industrial stock to be brought to market.

Concluding comments

In conclusion, it is apparent there remains significant unmet demand for business and industrial units in the Huddersfield economic market area. Application 2024/92651 has the

potential to bring forward much needed supply and would make a meaningful contribution to alleviate some of the pressures currently being felt by the market. The economic impact would not be insignificant, affording businesses the opportunity to invest, relocate and expand their operations and workforce. This in turn would also free up stock in instances where businesses may relocate from their current premises and therefore become available to other businesses, thus increasing the liquidity of the market. An essential component to support wider economic growth.