

Parking statement - Plot 2 B8 distribution centre

Introduction

- 1.0 This brief note has been prepared to supplement the Design & Access Statement, adding further information and justification for the proposed level of parking within Plot 2 at Dunsbury Hill Farm (DHF).
- 1.1 APP/15/01156 was submitted in early October and seeks reserved matters permission for a new B8 distribution centre for leading lifestyle clothing brand FatFace. The application will see over 18,000 square metres of brand new B8 floorspace, delivered in two phases. A total of **140** car parking spaces are proposed within the site.

Policy context

- 2.0 The current adopted parking standards for non-residential development within Havant Borough Council are set out in Appendix 5 of the Havant Borough Council (HBC) Core Strategy (adopted March 2011). This states that for B8 development **the maximum standard is 1 space per 90 square metres**, which for the development proposed equates to a maximum of **200** spaces. The **140** spaces provided represent **70%** of this maximum standard.
- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sought to remove the 'maximum' parking standard regime embedded in many local authorities' adopted plans. Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states:

'If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, local planning authorities should take into account:

- *the accessibility of the development;*
- *the type, mix and use of development;*
- *the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
- *local car ownership levels; and*
- *an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles'*

- 2.2 A ministerial statement in March 2015 added further clarification to paragraph 39 by adding:

'The market is best placed to decide if additional parking spaces should be provided.'

"Local planning authorities should only impose local parking standards for residential and non-residential development where there is clear and compelling justification that it is necessary to manage their local road network."

- 2.3 Havant Borough Council has recently consulted on a Draft Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that seeks to bring all parking standards into one document. Within this Draft SPD, the parking standard for B8 development is set at a **minimum of 1 space per 90 square metres**, which for the development proposed would equate to a minimum of **200** spaces. The **140** spaces fall below this minimum level. Whilst this Draft SPD has been through public consultation, it has not yet been formally adopted by the council and therefore has some, but limited weight.
- 2.4 Whilst the adopted parking standard remains a maximum, it seems more appropriate to apply the criteria within the NPPF to the development to ascertain that an acceptable level of parking is provided.

Applying NPPF criteria to DHF

- 3.0 From an accessibility perspective, DHF lies directly adjacent to the strategic road network (A3M) with a new access link road connecting the site to Hulbert Road, and is in between the large residential areas of Waterlooville (west of the A3) and Leigh Park (east of the site). This latter point is important in the context of the local labour force being able to car share / travel to work by bicycle/on foot.
- 3.1 With regard to public transport, the nearest rail stations are Bedhampton (2km) and Havant (2.5km), the latter providing up to 8 trains per hour between London and Portsmouth during peak times. The closest bus stops are currently between 350-450m away on Calshot Road and Woolston Road to the east in Leigh Park, with regular local services and routes to Portsmouth. As DHF develops, it is envisaged that a bus service will run through the site and stops are located either side of the road directly outside plot 2, giving excellent accessibility.
- 3.2 Pedestrian and cycle access to the site will be along dedicated shared paths running north and south of the access road. These link into Woolston Road to the east and the residential areas beyond. Park Lane bridleway runs through the wider DHF site, which forms a cycle route linking Tempest Avenue to the west of the A3 to Middle Park Way and Dunsbury Way to the east. Off-road cycle routes continue southbound from Woolston Road, along Middle Park Way and the Hermitage Stream heading towards Havant town centre.
- 3.3 Moving on to the type of development being proposed, the B8 distribution centre will run on a 24/7 basis, with shift patterns meaning a consistent turnover of staff during the working day. It is predicted that the initial development (Phase 1) will employ approximately **140** staff across **three** shifts within the warehouse environment, together with approximately **25** staff within the office and support areas. Given the split between warehouse and office and 24/7 nature of the business, not all of these staff will ever be present on site at one time. The time at the changeover of the busiest two shifts would see approximately 135 staff on site, some arriving and some leaving.

- 3.4 The advantage of a substantial pre-let such as this scheme is that negotiations with the tenant can ensure that the design of the proposal meets all of their operational needs. Whilst this includes design and size of the building, it also includes car parking provision. FatFace have undertaken significant work on current and predicted staff levels for the distribution centre and informed us that **140** spaces would be ample to meet their long term parking needs for the facility. This is based on the three shift operation of their warehouse, running peak warehousing staffing outside of regular office working hours and where many of their staff live and the associated ability to access the site by means other than the car. This development represents a significant investment and expansion in the borough for the company and they would not be committing to a scheme that didn't meet their current and future needs.
- 3.5 The NPPF also raises local car ownership as an issue to consider, and whilst mainly used in the context of setting residential parking standards, it is worth noting that the four wards including DHF and to the immediate east (Barncroft, Warren Park, Battins & Bondfields) are those with the lowest car ownership levels per room in the borough. This factor ties in with the local labour force point made in paragraph 3.0 and staff being able to travel to work by modes of transport other than the car.
- 3.6 Another key issue are the characteristics of the Dunsbury Hill Farm site. Set in a rural environment, the ethos for the business park set out in the Design Code is one of a natural landscape within the woodland setting. A dominance of hard landscaping and large car parks on plots is to be avoided. Whilst sufficient car parking is required to service each development plot, it is essential that large car parks do not detract from the overall 'feel' of the business park. Simply providing the maximum (or in future minimum) number of spaces set out in adopted policy would not only fail to take account of end user requirements as highlighted in paragraph 3.3, it would also not take into consideration the setting of the location.

Travel Plan

- 4.0 It must also be noted that under Schedule 3 of the Section 106 agreement attached to the overarching Dunsbury Hill Farm planning permission, each individual plot is required to prepare a site specific travel plan, to be agreed with Hampshire County Council as highway authority in advance of occupation. The Section 106 agreement contained a comprehensive Travel Plan Framework that set out four key objectives:

'Objective 1: to maximise opportunities for staff and visitors to travel to the business park and hotel development by means other than single occupancy car;

Objective 2: to encourage new staff to commute to work by modes of travel other than the single occupant car;

Objective 3: to reduce the carbon footprint of the development by minimising transport contributions;

Objective 4: improve access to the site for all.'

- 4.1 Section 4 of the Framework Travel Plan also used the Transport Assessment prepared for the site to carry forward predicted modal split patterns for the development. These were presented as short, medium and long term targets as reproduced below:

Mode	Estimated modal split (%)	Medium term modal split (%)	Long term modal split (%)
Car	75	70	65
Active travel modes (walking & cycling)	23	25	25
Public transport	2	5	10
Total	100	100	100

- 4.2 Applying these initial predicted splits to the staff numbers working within Plot 2 (see paragraph 3.3) shows that even if all staff (165) were on site at once, applying a 75% modal split means a maximum requirement for 124 spaces. Given the three shift pattern, the highest number of staff on site at the changeover between the two busiest shifts is likely to be in the region of 135 staff. The same modal split generates a need for 101 spaces. This obviously assumes all car drivers will travel as single car occupants, which is unlikely. The 140 spaces are therefore adequate not only for the initial phase 1, but also allows room for business expansion and growth associated with phase 2 (i.e. up to the total 18,037 square metres of floorspace).
- 4.3 A number of strategies were also included in the framework covering car sharing, car park management, permits and parking enforcement. After the grant of any planning permission, the site specific travel plan will be put together and all of these factors will assist in ensuring the day to day management of on-site parking and general travel patterns co-ordinate to further embed the level of parking proposed within this application being acceptable for the type and scale of development.

Summary

- 5.0 To conclude, whilst the proposed level of parking is both below the maximum adopted standard and the minimum future standard, most importantly it is a level of parking wholly appropriate to the type and scale of development proposed. Taking into account the accessibility and characteristics of the site, the working patterns of the end user and the objectives and targets of the Travel Plan Framework for the site, the parking provision proposed is considered to be in full accordance with the objectives of the NPPF.