

03 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 In this section the nature, location and scale of the development is described including an historical perspective of the area, a description of its context and the characteristics of the area and the existing environment. It also explains the design principles guiding the scheme and a consideration of the evolution of the proposals.

3.2 NATURE AND PURPOSE OF DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1 The application is for the redevelopment land at the junction of Old Mill Lane and Twibell Street to create a new food store and community park. The application is made in outline and is accompanied by supporting statements of appropriate detail to illustrate how the site is to be developed. The outline application identifies a comprehensive approach to the reuse and redevelopment of the site and shows how the site is intended to be accessed. The proposals aim to provide a new food store and community park for the benefit of local residents whilst also improving views at this key gateway into Barnsley Town Centre.

3.2.2 The proposals provide a development that is in accordance with the Core Strategies Vision for Barnsley as “a uniquely distinctive 21st Century Market Town at the centre of a prosperous borough”. In order to achieve this, the proposed development meets the key aims and objectives of a number of key documents that underpin the Core Strategy.

3.2.3 The proposed development delivers the following Ambitions of the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- **Ambition 1 – Our communities are attractive, clean sustainable places to live.** The proposed cleans up an existing brownfield site, removing contamination and comprehensively redeveloping this site to provide a new food store and green space with access for all.
- **Ambition 2 – Barnsley is one of the safest towns in Yorkshire.** The site is currently prone to anti-social behaviour, an issue which will be tackled through appropriate security measures and design.
- **Ambition 3 – Barnsley offers varied and exciting cultural opportunities to all.** The proposed Harborough Hill Park will increase access to high quality green space and encourage access to the River Dearne and associated water based activities.
- **Ambition 9 – Building a prosperous and sustainable local economy.** During construction phases the proposed will create employment and training opportunities for local construction workers as well as supporting services in the area indirectly. Further, through providing over 300 (FTE) jobs the proposed will bring long term employment to the area and opportunities for training and development.

3.2.4 In addition, the proposals support the achievement of cross cutting aims and objectives covered by the LDF and other Council plans and Strategies as well as those of key partners. These include:

- Delivering efficient use of land and infrastructure, particularly by utilising previously developed ‘brownfield’ land, achieving housing density targets to minimise the use of ‘greenfield’ sites and promoting appropriate mixed land uses integrated with the existing built form
- Promoting economic and social well-being including health and safety of the population reductions in social inequalities and disadvantages within the community particularly in relation to the location of employment, housing, shopping and other community facilities
- Ensuring protection or enhancement of the quality of natural assets including water, air, soil, minerals and biodiversity
- Delivering high quality well designed development taking into account local distinctiveness improved quality of local landscapes and protection of the character of the wider countryside.
- Improving health through tackling obesity and reducing deprivation.
- Providing employment opportunities and training to enable locals to up-skill and access higher paid work.

3.2.5 The scheme design has evolved following the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy and delivers Policy **CSP8** delivering growth in Urban Barnsley, as well as Policies **CSP5**, **CSP29** and **CSP33** through:

- Redeveloping an existing brownfield site and utilising high quality design (**CSP 29**) to maximise the efficient use of the site, ensuring maximum investment to support growth whilst improving this views along this key gateway into Barnsley (**Objective 4**).
- Providing a sustainable building which meets the criteria of Policy **CSP 5** regarding renewables and decontaminating an existing contaminated site to provide Harbrough Hill Park and improve access to the River Dearne (**Objective 6**).
- The provision of Harbrough Hill Park in this key location, linking two existing green corridors will open up access to the River Dearne and the wider greenbelt complying with **CSP 33 (Objective 8)**.

3.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONS

3.3.1 The 6 ha site is located north east of Barnsley Town Centre. The site comprises 3 retail warehouses, a gas storage facility and the former council depot (now a cleared site).

3.3.2 The predominant surrounding land use is retail with residential uses and green belt also bordering the site and surrounding area. The site is bound by a small number of residential properties to the south along Twibel Street. Old Mill Lane (A635) runs along the western boundary and junctions with Harbrough Hill Road (A61) to the south west of the site. The Peel Centre and Asda make up the majority of retail development surrounding the site.

3.3.3 The sites location, along the corridor of Old Mill Lane (A635), Wakefield Road (A61) and Harbrough Hill Road (A61), is on a strategic gateway into Barnsley and has an important role to play in creating positive impressions of the town.

General

3.3.4 The site is currently accessible from Twibell Street. A new access is proposed off the Strategic Bus Corridor creating a new link off Burton Road with Old Mill Lane and running along the northern boundary of the site.

3.3.5 The site is an underutilised brownfield site with the former depot already cleared and plans to decommission the gas storage facility. The site is in need of decontamination and is currently susceptible to antisocial behaviour.

3.3.6 Part of the site is allocated as greenbelt. The proposal includes modifications and sensitive landscaping to this area to improve the quality of the green space and accessibility.

Existing Development

3.3.7 The site comprises three retail warehouses, a former depot, gas storage facility, car parking and areas of green space.

The Proposed Development

3.3.8 The proposal for the site has evolved following the consideration of the following key factors:

- The aspirations of BMBC to create a unique and prosperous town and borough.
- To provide a carefully thought out layout and building design to minimise impact on Twibell Street residents.
- Careful consideration of the physical constraints of the site, including access, flood risk and service utilities.
- To maximise the potential of the greenspace on site and links with the surrounding countryside.
- The opportunity to create a sustainable development.
- The gateway location and opportunity to maximise first impressions of Barnsley.

- To maximise the potential of the site as an employment investment bringing over 300 (FTE) jobs and training opportunities to the site.

3.3.9 The development concept seeks to:

- Fund the removal of the gas holder and remediation of the surrounding land.
- Deliver a high quality development in a strategic gateway location.
- Deliver permeable, accessible, greenspace linked to the wider countryside / green corridor along Dearne Valley.
- Provide high quality, sustainable retail buildings allowing the provision of increased competition and ensuring greater choice for shoppers.
- Provide new roads and bridges to take delivery vehicles off Twibell Street.
- Create an environment that is vibrant and accessible to all.

3.3.10 Physical connections will be strengthened to the site by:

- Improving pedestrian and cycle access points, improving permeability across the site and providing a quality public realm;
- Improving public transport accessibility through linking with the Strategic Bus Corridor.

3.3.11 The principle uses on the site and maximum quantum of floor space is provided in the Summary of Quantum Table:

Unit	Use Class	Floorspace (Maximum)
1 - Foodstore	A1	13,967 m ²
2 – Retail warehouse	A1	1297m ²
3 – Community Kiosk	A1/A3/A5/B1/D2	274 m ²
3 – Petrol Filling Station	Sui Generis	73 m ²

3.3.12 This information should be read in conjunction with the Parameters Plan. It identifies maximum heights, scale and massing and proposed phasing of development.

3.3.13 The scale of individual uses on the site allows the development to be completed in a single phase.

3.3.14 A parking and highway strategy forms part of the proposals and is included within the accompanying TA, Travel Plan and also in the relevant chapter of this ES.

3.4 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

3.4.1 The site is physically well contained and presents an opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment and re-use. An evaluation of the site has been undertaken to identify the most appropriate type and mix of development. The evaluation of alternative proposals has been made in the context of the following considerations:

- The aspirations of the BMBC Core Strategy.
- To attract investment and ensure improvements to the site including remediation, access improvements and landscaping can be delivered.
- Specific requirements of future occupiers including.
- To retain and enhance areas of greenbelt.

- To improve residential amenity and minimise any negative impact of the proposed on surrounding residential properties.
- To produce socially, environmentally and economically sustainable development.
- To ensure that the site is accessible and will not materially harm highway safety.
- To create a high quality, contemporary, positive gateway to Barnsley.

Starting Point

3.4.2 The overall vision for the development of the site is to create a retail and recreational 'hub' for Barnsley, centred upon the River Dearne. This will complement and link to the existing Barnsley Town Hub and Oakwell Stadium and Metrodome Hub.

3.4.3 Based on the analysis of the existing site, its history and context, and the principles of good urban design, the over-arching design principles are to:

- Concentrate development on previously developed land, minimising the impact on greenfield sites.
- Establish a development which sits well in its setting, minimising effects on neighbouring properties and users.
- Provide a sensitively designed layout to create an interesting and varied townscape and encourage natural surveillance of the public spaces.
- Create high quality open space and improve access to the River Dearne and surrounding countryside.
- Ensure that the development is integrated with surrounding communities and is easily accessible for pedestrians and cyclists, creating an inclusive environment for all.

Design Development

3.4.4 Building on the overarching objectives for the site, the design evolved into four key components, these are:

- The Store: the principal anchor of the site, this 160,000 sqft store is raised of the ground to accommodate car parking allowing the maximum proportion of the site to be used for parkland;
- The Riverside Community Park; this secondary anchor creates a safe, secure, well managed, animated 'stepping stone' providing a new access point connecting Barnsley Town Centre to the wider River Dearne.
- A new Gateway for Harbrough Hill Road and Barnsley: the proposed retail stores and riverside park will create a positive, contemporary, prominent gateway for Barnsley along the Wakefield Road, Old Mill Lane, Harbrough Hill Road corridor.
- Twibell Street – a quieter residential neighbourhood: removing access to the site from Twibell Street to benefit residents through reducing car trips and service vehicle traffic along this residential street.

Option Development

3.4.5 The layout of the proposals evolved over the design period, with the testing and refinement of initial concepts and building configurations. In developing the outline design proposals for which planning permission is sought, a number of design proposals were considered.

Option 1 – service access was retained along Twibell Street.

3.4.6 This option was discounted for the following reasons:

- Noise and pollution from service vehicles would impact on residents of Twibell Street.
- Potential for queuing traffic on the link road to spill onto Old Mill Lane.

Option 2 – service access moved to enter the development from the new link road, across a new bridge and behind the store.

3.4.7 This option was discounted for the following reasons:

- Noise and pollution from service vehicles would impact on residents of Twibell Street.
- Potential for queuing traffic on the link road to spill onto Old Mill Lane.

Option 3 – move the service access to the east of the site and away from Twibell Street (preferred option).

3.4.8 This option was progressed for the following reasons:

- Fewer roundabouts reduce the potential for queuing traffic.
- Potential noise impacts from the service yard can be easily mitigated.
- Service vehicles are not routed past residential properties.
- Twibell Street is improved for residents.
- The potential of the riverside park can be maximised.

3.4.9 For further information on design evolution please see the Design and Access Statement accompanying the application.