

Planning application no.	23/01228/FUL
Site	Task Consumer Products Ltd including the former Fablink site and land at rear, Citygate Park, Stafford Road, Wolverhampton, WV10 7FG
Proposal	Extension to existing production/warehouse facility and erection of new warehouse facility (Use Class B2General Industrial / B8 Storage or Distribution) with ancillary offices (Class E (g)(i)); formation of new access, car parking, landscaping and all ancillary works
Ward	Bushbury North;
Applicant	Sherborne Paper Ltd and Stoford Properties Ltd Task Consumer Products Citygate Park Stafford Road Wolverhampton WV10 7EJ
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Stephen Simkins, Leader of the Council
Accountable Director	Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration
Originating service	Planning
Accountable employee	Phillip Walker Senior Planning Officer Tel 01902 55 5632 Email phillip.walker@wolverhampton.gov.uk

1.0 Summary recommendation

- 1.1 Delegated authority to grant planning application 23/01228/FUL subject to conditions and a s106 agreement.

2.0 Application site

- 2.1 The application site is located approximately 3.3 miles to the north of Wolverhampton City Centre, on the western side of the A449 Stafford Road, adjoining existing large scale industrial development to the north and south, and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal to the west, beyond which is the i54 Business Park. On the opposite side of the

A449, is two storey detached and semi-detached housing, some of which is set back behind landscaping. The A449 is a dual carriageway, which links with the nearby M54, to the north of the site.

- 2.2 The application site, is an irregular shape, including a landscaped frontage and access off Stafford Road. The eastern part of the site was occupied by an industrial building which was occupied until recently by Fablink. That building has been demolished and site clearance works are being undertaken. To the rear of the former Fablink site is a former landfill site, now comprising natural habitat and vegetation and forming an allocated site of local importance for nature conservation. The north-western part of the site includes a large warehouse/production building, and associated car parking, currently occupied by Task Consumer Products, who manufacture and distribute soft tissue products, including toilet tissue, kitchen towels and hand towels.

3.0 Application details

- 3.1 The application proposals seek permission to extend the existing Task Consumer Product operations. This includes extending their existing building, creating an additional 7,757 sq.m of floor space and the erection of a link detached warehouse building, comprising 11,587 sqm of new floor space, for general industrial use or storage or distribution uses, including ancillary office space.
- 3.2 The proposed extension to the existing Task building, would be on its southern side and within the south-western part of the site. It would have a mono-pitch roof design and its height would be 12.5 metres to the eaves and 14.2 metres to the ridge. Its height compares similarly to the height of the existing building. Servicing for the extended building would predominately continue to be from the rear of and accessed via a new service road, along the southern side of the site.
- 3.3 The new link detached building would be located within the south-eastern part of the site and separated from the proposed extension to the existing Task building by an estate road but connected by a link bridge. The new building would have an eaves height of 14.5 metres, and a ridge height of 16.6 metres, with a barrel roof design. The vehicle parking would be on the eastern side of the building and servicing areas would be on its southern side.
- 3.4 A new access from Stafford Road is proposed, in the south-eastern corner of the site, including a new gatehouse to manage traffic flow in and out of the site. Landscaping is allocated to the full perimeter of the site to soften the transition to the surroundings.
- 3.5 The buildings would be a contemporary, high-quality design, constructed from silver, grey and white pre-formed cladding panels, and large elements of powder coated aluminium curtain walling, including glazing to offices and reception areas. The Design and Access Statement, states that the aim is to achieve an “Excellent” rating under the BREEAM New Construction 2018 scheme.

3.6 The application is supported by a letter from the applicant which states that these proposals, will enable Task to consolidate their operations within this one site, and support growth of the business, representing a £30 million investment to the site. There are currently 128 full-time employees. These proposals are expected to create an additional 50 full-time jobs.

4.0 Relevant planning history

4.1 23/01069/PAOTH. Demolish existing manufacturing warehouse to ground level, removal of foundations, pits and surrounding slabs. Granted 24.10.2023.

5.0 Relevant policy documents

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.2 The Development Plan

Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)

Black Country Air Quality SPD

Stafford Road Corridor Area Action Plan

6.0 Publicity

6.1 One objection received from a local resident. Comments summarised as follows:

- These proposals will exacerbate the existing noise and general disturbance problems relating to this site.

7.0 Consultees

7.1 Transportation – No objections subject to conditions requiring a construction management plan, the provision and retention of vehicle and HGV parking and manoeuvring areas, , cycle/motorcycle parking, bin storage facilities, electric vehicle charging points and implementation of recommendations of the submitted Travel Plan.

7.2 Public Protection – No objection subject to conditions requiring the implementation of the recommendations of the contaminated land remediation report, noise and air quality reports.

7.3 Canal and River Trusts – Comments raised about the impact of the development proposals on the land West of Stafford Road Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) which is contiguous with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC); the reduction in the SLINC area on the site; and request that sufficient, robust information be provided to address any detrimental impacts on ecological values of the wider SINC/SLINC network including the canal corridor. Request that an acceptable drainage scheme and boundary treatments should be secured.

- 7.4 Environment Agency – No objection subject to conditions to secure satisfactory drainage, contamination remediation and piling proposals.
- 7.5 Active Travel England – Issue standing advice note, to promote sustainable travel.
- 7.6 South Staffordshire District Council – No comments received at the time of writing this report.

8.0 Legal implications

- 8.1 Any decision of the planning committee must be carried out in accordance with the relevant legislative, internal, external and Constitutional requirements/procedures as appropriate, taking into account the relevant provisions of the Relevant Policy Documents as set out above. Further implications and considerations of the objections and proposed conditions as to the grant of the permission are set out below (CS/02012024/2)

9.0 Appraisal

- 9.1 The main issues in this case are:
- The principle of the development proposal including development resulting in the loss of part of a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC)
 - Design
 - Resident Amenity
 - Access and Parking
 - Flood Risk Assessment

The principle of the development proposal including development resulting in the loss of part of a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC)

- 9.2 The application site is located within “Junction 2” Character Area, as defined by the Stafford Road Corridor Area Action Plan (AAP). The aspiration for this area, is that it becomes the premier high quality employment location.
- 9.3 The application site includes two allocated employment opportunity sites, which are referenced as EDO6 Citygate Park (the existing Task site) and EDO7 Bettles Site (the former Fablink site). It also includes a site of local importance for nature conservation (SLINC) and referenced NAT 1. It is adjacent to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).
- 9.4 AAP policy SRC1 states, within Employment Development Opportunity Areas, more extensive redevelopment of sites for employment purposes will be supported, where this is comprehensive, in order to avoid piecemeal development. In respect of the application site, approval of any redevelopment proposal is subject to the inclusion of compensatory provision for loss of the SLINC.
- 9.5 BCCS Policy ENV1 states that development within SLINC’s will be protected from development proposals which would negatively impact upon them. Where, exceptionally,

the strategic benefits of a development clearly outweigh the importance of a local nature conservation site, species, habitat or geological feature, damage must be minimised. Any remaining impacts, including any reduction in area, must be fully mitigated. Compensation will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. A mitigation strategy must accompany relevant planning applications.

- 9.6 These development proposals seek permission to redevelop the two employment development opportunity areas, and in doing so are in accordance with AAP policy SRC1. However, the proposals, do result in the loss of a large part of the SLINC, and would be harmful to the habitat and biodiversity value of the site. The application is supported by a mitigation strategy and detailed landscape scheme which seek to minimise the damage. The application would also have strategic benefits, particularly in terms of job creation and investment, which outweigh to an extent the harm. The loss in SLINC area, will also be mitigated by a compensatory payment of £200,000 for off-site improvement to Pendeford Mill Nature Reserve, or in the event that, upon receipt of the compensatory payment, the project of improvement works at Pendeford Mill Nature Reserve have already been completed, to such other offsite open space or spaces nearby to the application site and for such purposes as may be determined by the Council. This can be secured by a planning obligation. Therefore, whilst these proposals result in the loss of a large part of a SLINC, which would be contrary to the development plan allocation, the application has satisfactorily demonstrated that the proposal is in compliance with provisions of BCCS policy ENV1, which allow for redevelopment of SLINC sites such as this in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, these proposals can be accepted in principle.

Design

- 9.7 The proposed extension, new build link attached building and associated infrastructure, would be a modern, contemporary design, with buildings constructed from attractive cladding and glazing within a landscaped setting, which would amongst other things, improve the Stafford Road frontage. The scale and layout of the buildings and car parking areas respect the character and appearance of the surroundings including the adjacent Staffordshire / Worcestershire and Shropshire Union Canal Conservation Area and Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. Overall, the proposals are appropriate for this location. The proposals comply with UDP policies D9 Appearance, HE4 Proposals Affecting a Conservation Area, HE13 Development Affecting a Listed Building, BCCS policies ENV2 Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness and ENV3 Design Quality

Resident Amenity

- 9.8 The application site is approximately fifty metres away from the nearest houses on the opposite side of A449, to the east. The proposals include the removal of some existing trees from the site frontage to facilitate the creation of a new site access. Although, there would be new replacement tree planting provided to the frontage, the proposals will

create a more open aspect of the site when viewed from A449, and also the houses on the opposite side of the A449. However, the design of the new buildings and car parking would not be incongruous but appropriate for this setting, and as such the visual impact, would be acceptable. The proposals are therefore in accordance with development plan policy including UDP policy D9 Appearance, HE4 Proposals Affecting a Conservation Area, HE13 Development Affecting a Listed Building, BCCS policies ENV2 Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness and ENV3 Design Quality.

- 9.9 There is potential for noise and other forms of general disturbance from the new facilities. However, the application is supported by noise and air quality reports, which satisfactorily demonstrates that the impact of the proposals in terms of noise and air quality would be acceptable subject to conditions including requirement for noise attenuation to external plant and equipment, and implementation of travel plan recommendation and provision of electric vehicle charging points. The proposals are therefore in accordance with development plan policy including EP5 Noise Pollution, EP11 Development on Contaminated or Unstable Land and BCCS policy ENV8 Air Quality and the Black Country Air Quality SPD.

Access and Parking

- 9.10 The proposals include acceptable access and vehicle parking facilities, including cycle parking and electric vehicle charging points, which would be satisfactory to meet likely demand. The application includes an acceptable Travel Plan. The proposals are therefore in accordance with development plan policy including BCCS policy TRAN 2 Managing Transport Impacts of New Development.

Flood Risk Assessment

- 9.11 The submitted flood risk assessment is acceptable subject to receiving amendments relating to matters of detail. The proposals are therefore in accordance with saved UDP policy EP9 Sustainable Drainage Arrangements for Development.

10.0 Conclusion

- 10.1 The principle of redeveloping the employment development opportunity sites is acceptable. The application has also demonstrated that although the proposals would result in harm to an allocated SLINC, including loss of SLINC area, there would be acceptable mitigation proposals and compensatory provision, in the form of a financial payment to secure off-site improvements to Pendeford Mill Nature Reserve, such that these proposals can be supported.
- 10.2 The proposals demonstrate a high-quality design approach to the redevelopment of this site, which would enable the growth of an existing business within this one site, resulting in significant financial investment and job creation.
- 10.3 The proposals have demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impacts in terms of surrounding residential or environmental amenity.

10.4 Subject to conditions and a planning obligation to secure an off-site financial contribution to improve Pendeford Mill Nature Reserve, and receipt of acceptable amendments to the submitted flood risk assessment, the proposals are acceptable.

11.0 Detail recommendation

11.1 Delegated authority to grant application 23/01228/FUL subject to:

- i. A Planning obligation to secure:
Compensatory payment of £200,000 for the loss of part of the SLINC, to be spent on improvements to Pendeford Mill Nature Reserve, or in the event that, upon receipt of the compensatory payment, the project of improvement works at Pendeford Mill Nature Reserve have already been completed, to such other offsite open space or spaces nearby to the application site and for such purposes as may be determined by the Council.
- ii. Amended details to resolve the drainage objection;
- iii. Any necessary conditions to include:
 - Phasing
 - Demolition and Construction
 - External lighting specification
 - Landscaping and tree protection measures
 - Boundary treatments
 - External storage
 - External materials
 - Targeted recruitment and training
 - Levels
 - Drainage
 - Piling
 - Parking to be provided and retained as shown
 - Electric vehicle charging points
 - Gatehouse proposals to be implemented as shown on submitted details
 - Cycle and motorcycle parking to be implemented as shown on submitted details
 - Bin stores to be implemented as shown on submitted details
 - Car parking management plan to be submitted and approved
 - 10% renewable energy – provision in accordance with submitted energy report
 - Ecology mitigation as detailed in submitted ecology appraisal
 - Full details of (including noise emissions and external appearance) of any external plant and equipment or plant openings within the new buildings be designed and installed to achieve the noise limit criteria as required by the submitted noise report
 - Site investigation and implementation of any necessary remediation works and submission of validation reports
 - Implementation of Travel Plan

