

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2013
title: SAMLESBURY ENTERPRISE ZONE PROPOSED MASTERPLAN AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDERS
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: JOHN MACHOLC – HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Planning and Development Committee of the ongoing work in relation to the proposed Masterplan and Local Development Order at Samlesbury and request authorisation for the eventual submission of the final document to the Secretary of State.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – To support economic growth and delivery of employment land throughout the borough.
- Community Objectives – To support a vibrant economy.
- Corporate Priorities – To be a well run and efficient Council.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Committee will be aware that the Lancashire Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Enterprise Zone (Samlesbury) was adopted by Ribble Valley Borough Council on the 27 March 2012. This related to 16.2 hectares of land defined as Parcel A and included land within the boundaries of both South Ribble and Ribble Valley.

2.2 The Local Development Order was the subject of a statutory consultation process and following its adoption is now active for a period of 3 years.

2.3 One of the conditions imposed in the LDO was that the Order should comply with the principles of any adopted Master plan for the site. In this instance it is anticipated that a future LDO relating to whole extent of the Enterprise Zone would revoke the existing Local Development Order.

2.4 A draft masterplan has now been submitted for the Samlesbury Enterprise Zone prepared by Wilson Mason who are the consultants commissioned by BAE systems. The Masterplan provides a strategic context for the preparation of the future Local Development Order as well as establishing a framework for long term strategic objectives for the Enterprise Zone.

2.5 Members will be aware that the Councils core strategy recognises the regional importance of the BAE site for employment purposes. Key statement EC1 of Core Strategy 2008-2028 Regulation 22 Submission Draft states:

“..... The Council considers, in line with neighbouring authorities and other bodies, that the BAE Samlesbury site should be regarded as a regionally significant employment

site with considerable potential to accommodate a variety of advanced knowledge based industries in the future. This has been recognised by the Government's creation of an Enterprise Zone at this location. As such the site is not considered part of the borough's general employment land supply. The Council will therefore support the delivery of the Enterprise Zone and has produced a Local Development Order to achieve this.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The submitted draft Masterplan is a consultation document and it is the intention to carry out a joint consultation process with South Ribble Borough Council. Members may be aware that Ribble Valley took the lead on the first LDO and it has been agreed that South Ribble will act as the lead authority so as to prevent duplicate consultation. However, both the Master Plan and any future LDO's will be reported to Committee and need to be adopted by each authority.

3.2 In order to meet a strict timetable and secure the eventual LDO it is anticipated that formal consultation will take place in mid October 2013 which will be based on the attached Masterplan shown as appendix 1 to this report. However, at the time of preparing this report this is a draft document which may be subject to minor changes.

3.3 The following section of this report highlights some of the main details of the draft masterplan which I hope to make the consultation plan available at the time of the meeting:

3.4 The Vision

3.4.1 The Samlesbury Enterprise Zone site will deliver world class facilities early in the lifetime of the Enterprise Zone ensuring that the Enterprise Zone as a whole is realised as a nationally and internationally critical hub for advanced engineering and manufacturing.

3.4.2 The Samlesbury site and the Enterprise Zone as a whole will act as a driver for building the wider supply chain economy, increasing the overall value of the economy and raising the skills base across Lancashire. It will form a key element in the overall sustainable growth plans for the sub region. The development will be undertaken sustainably and to a high quality respecting its surroundings and befitting its high profile and status.

3.4.3 The Masterplan includes the following key principles which will guide the development and delivery of the Enterprise Zone:

- Encouraging investment, creating jobs and building a sustainable economy by providing a centre of excellence for high technology manufacturing and support services
- Attracting investments and high value end users by meeting facility and service needs in a high quality well designed development, in a high quality setting
- Ensuring sustainable access, travel and connectivity
- Ensuring a phased but integrated development
- Providing a healthy working environment and sustainable development which will both integrate with and enhance existing activities and communities.
- Taking an integrated approach to green infrastructure including Green Belt, landscaping and ecology
- Meeting ecological management needs Land use: site zoning, phasing and Infrastructure.

3.5 Access arrangements

- 3.5.1 The plan recognises the need to ensure that the existing BAE site and the Enterprise Zone are adjacent to each other and have complimentary activities. However the two sites are needed to remain as separate sites to maintain the security of the existing BAE systems.
- 3.5.2 In order to achieve this, a new security fence will be constructed around the perimeter of the BAE systems site where it borders the Enterprise Zone. This will enable public access to the Enterprise Zone without compromising security for BAE Systems.
- 3.5.3 Secure access points will be provided along the security boundary to maintain interaction between the two sites. In order to avoid potential conflict between the main traffic flows serving BAE systems and the Enterprise Zone it is proposed to create a new Enterprise Zone entrance to the east of the site. It is intended that the BAE Systems access and access to the Enterprise Zone will be kept separate to enable each to respond to their own specific needs. Prior to Phase 1 of the development starting, amendments will be made to some security fencing arrangements in order to enable construction traffic to enter the Enterprise Zone site. This will be subject to an agreed routing plan.
- 3.5.4 The Enterprise Zone lies to the east and south of the existing BAE systems site. It is intended that the site would be opened up at its eastern end via a new entrance off the A59. The new entrance arrangement would include the closure of Myerscough Smithy Road to vehicles. It is then proposed to construct a new spine road with associated smaller link roads which follows the line of the existing east/west orientated runway. The spine road will be adopted by the Local Highway Authority. The first phase of this would run to the approximate point shown on the accompanying drawing.
- 3.5.5 The same route would be used to provide new buried utility services from external network providers to the plots which radiate from the new access road. This would allow early access to the area covered by the existing LDO and would form an early growth pattern focused on the eastern and central parts of the site in close proximity to existing development.
- 3.5.6 This would encourage and maintain interaction between the two sites and ensure that the uses function and form of the development progress in an integrated way. Further phases of development would extend the spine road further along the runway and open up the southern end of the site. A further access to the site onto the A677 will be opened up as appropriate as traffic flows associated with the development increase.
- 3.5.7 The provision of two accesses and the associated internal spine road will allow greater dispersion of traffic onto the strategic and local highway network. It is expected that this proposed road network into and through the Enterprise Zone will also reduce the amount of through traffic within the village of Mellor Brook.

3.6 Proposed uses and location of the buildings

- 3.6.1 The Enterprise Zone site at Samlesbury is to be developed for the purposes of advanced engineering and manufacturing and associated uses. The existing LDO for part of the site authorises development within Class B of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended in so far as it relates to advanced engineering and manufacturing. It also authorises development within Class D1 of the same Order for

non-residential education and training. The non residential education and training centre will be used for the purposes of a Regional Skills Academy.

3.6.2 The grouping of activities within the Enterprise Zone will be arranged to complement existing functions, avoid conflict, promote interaction and minimise development impact on the Enterprise Zone perimeter. The larger and more intrusive Class B activities and the Class D1 activities will be broadly separated. The D1 activities which relate to education and training will be located to the east of the existing BAE Systems site and will focus around the proposed Regional Skills Academy. This will be located close to the new Enterprise Zone entrance off the A59 creating a sense of arrival and celebrating the high quality credentials of the site.

3.6.3 A further key layout principle will be to organise the location of larger Class B buildings toward the centre of the Enterprise Zone where they will be less intrusive and will have less impact on openness and other uses. Smaller buildings will locate closer to the site boundary.

3.7 Phasing

3.7.1 The delivery of the Samlesbury Enterprise Zone site will be done on a phased basis ensuring that at each stage development plots and buildings will be accompanied by the strategic and localized infrastructure required of a high quality well functioning sustainable site. All phases will integrate with each other to ensure that the site will operate as a cohesive whole and form an asset within its surroundings and the wider area.

3.7.2 Prior to Phase 1 of the development starting, amendments will be made to some security fencing arrangements in order to enable construction traffic to enter the Enterprise Zone site. This will be subject to an agreed routing plan.

3.7.3 The initial development phase for the Enterprise Zone at Samlesbury will involve the construction of a new access and site entrance to the east of the site off the A59 and would include the restriction of access from Myerscough Smithy Road to allow only pedestrians and cyclists.

3.7.4 This phase will also include the completion of the construction of the new security boundary to enclose the BAE Systems site. From this new entrance an access road into the site will be formed followed by the first phase of the central spine road and associated smaller link roads, buried utilities and service feeds. This would follow the line of the existing east/west runway and would run part way along the line to approximately the centre of the site. Development plots along the line of the spine road focused on the east and centre of the site would be formed with the proposed regional Skills Academy being located close to the new entrance.

3.7.5 During this phase development plots would continue to be delivered off the new spine road. A further extension to the spine road would take place extending it both in a westerly direction and south towards the A677. This phase will include the construction of the new southern access with the A677 as traffic flows associated with the Enterprise Zone development increase.

3.7.6 The junction type for this access is indicative and has not been finalised at this time. Further development plots would be formed radiating out from the extended spine road and having regard to development already put in place.

- 3.7.7 A further phase of development at the most northerly and easterly edge of the Enterprise Zone site may take place following a reappraisal of some of BAE Systems current uses of land and buildings in that area. Should this take place it will be undertaken in line with all of the provisions and conditions guiding phases 1 and 2 and will be done so in a manner which integrates with these phases and the site as whole.
- 3.8 Design parameters
- 3.8.1 The site as a whole will be set within its wider landscape and Green Belt context which will be carried through into the landscaping and ecological rationale both on and offsite. Visual integration will be sought across the site referencing the design, materials and colours used in existing adjacent uses. Strong simple forms utilising appropriate cladding materials in a silver/grey colour will provide a visual order to the majority of B Class uses.
- 3.8.2 Bespoke facilities will be provided as appropriate to meet the needs of specific high tech users but will be done so in the context of the overall site design rationale. The form and design of buildings will contribute positively to the visual character of the locality.
- 3.8.3 It is proposed that the Class D teaching and training facilities core be designed using a greater mix of high end materials to express the identity of this particular people oriented interactive area, and to celebrate the status of the site at its initial gateway. Buildings at or facing the perimeter will be designed and positioned to reflect a less industrial feel and to promote the high quality aesthetic of the site.
- 3.8.4 Both hard and soft landscaping will form a key part of the design, function, look and feel of the site incorporating appropriate street furniture, planting water features and signage. Signage and branding will be sensitively applied reflecting the overall aesthetic of the site. The current LDO specifies that development will not exceed the height of existing buildings at the BAE Systems Samlesbury site. Those existing building heights range from 10m to 18m. The proposed height zoning for the Enterprise Zone will complement this existing massing.
- 3.8.5 As a general principle large scale developments will be contained in the heart of the site rather than at the periphery in order to reduce impacts on the surrounding landscape and nearby settlements.
- 3.9 Access and movement issues
- 3.9.1 To assist the Masterplan document a full Transport Assessment was undertaken in line with the draft guidelines for transport assessment document. This includes an assessment of the highway infrastructure that will need to be in place to cater for the volume and distribution of traffic as the EZ phases are complete.
- 3.9.2 Assessments have been undertaken for 2013, 2016 and 2023 for peak hour periods. A review of the layout and operation of the existing local and strategic junctions surrounding the EZ has been undertaken. Junctions will be redesigned where appropriate to accommodate predicted traffic flows.
- 3.9.3 Consideration has been made of the committed developments in the area, in particular the Core Development proposed at BAE Systems.

- 3.9.4 The Transport Assessment has included a review of the sustainable transport measures that are required for the development. These include public transport, cycle and pedestrian networks.
- 3.9.5 A review of the highway network operation through the village of Mellor Brook has also been undertaken. Options to improve the highway conditions for all transport modes within the village may include traffic calming, improvements to public realm and signage. Lancashire County Council has undertaken a transport assessment of the impacts of the Enterprise Zone. An assessment of the future operation of all the junctions in the vicinity of the Enterprise Zone has been undertaken, considering the permitted development of BAE Systems and the complete build out of the Enterprise Zone. This assessment has included consultation with the Highways Agency regarding the impacts on the A59/M6 Junction 31, and the impacts at the A59/A677 'Swallow' junction. Any required changes will be made to the highway network to ensure its safe and efficient operation for all modes of transport.
- 3.9.6 Prior to Phase 1 of the development starting, amendments will be made to some security fencing arrangements in order to enable construction traffic to enter the Enterprise Zone site. This will be subject to an agreed routing plan. The proposed Phase 1 works will comprise the following:
- Signalised access to the Enterprise Zone from the A59 leading to an internal roundabout within the Enterprise Zone and internal road network.
 - Access to incorporate cycle and pedestrian crossing facilities
 - The existing access from Myerscough Smithy Road will be restricted to pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Formation of the first part of the internal access roads. These will comprise a main spine road following the line of the former main runway and associated access off this to development plots. It is intended that the internal spine road through the site will be adopted by the Local Highway Authority
- 3.9.7 The proposed Phase 2 works will comprise the following:
- Access to the Enterprise Zone from the A677 leading to the internal road network. The type and precise location of this access has not been finalised at this time.
 - The access will incorporate cycle and pedestrian facilities
 - Subject to the confirmation of bus routes within and around the Enterprise Zone, bus stops designed to LCC Quality Bus Standard will be located close to the access.
 - The continuation of the main internal spine road and associated access to development plots along the run way and south towards the proposed new A677 access.
- 3.10 Landscape, Green belt and Habitat issues
- 3.10.1 The Samlesbury Enterprise Zone site is located adjacent to BAE existing operations at Samlesbury.
- 3.10.2 The A59 runs along the northern edge of the site with the A677 at the southern end. To the east lies the village of Mellor Brook. The northern end of the site is adjacent to existing industrial activities however the majority of the site extends across former aerodrome lands which are largely characterised by open grassland. A proportion of the site within the boundary of South Ribble lies within Green Belt land. This is currently

being rolled back through the Development Plan process. The required Green Belt release totals 37.4 hectares and relates to land including and south of the runway located within South Ribble Borough. Policy C5 of the South Ribble Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document Publication Version supports the delivery of the Enterprise Zone at Samesbury and provides for the amendment of the Green Belt boundary. Policy C5 sets out that as part of the Green Belt roll back process the loss of Green Belt and the associated impacts on the landscape and wider environment will need to be mitigated and compensated using land surrounding the site that is in the ownership of BAE Systems.

- 3.10.3 The Greenbelt, Landscape and Ecology diagram on page 25 shows Green Belt immediately adjacent to the Enterprise Zone site and identifies areas proposed for release together with areas to be retained which are in BAE Systems ownership and other retained Green Belt. The remaining Green Belt in BAE Systems ownership will be managed to mitigate the impacts of the loss of Green Belt, and in line with the National Planning Policy Framework will be enhanced as appropriate in terms of landscaping and biodiversity. These retained areas of Green Belt in BAE Systems ownership are already subject to an existing BAE ecological management plan and any mitigation measures would need to have regard to this and to up to date independent ecological assessments and revisions.
- 3.10.4 An integrated approach to mitigation will be taken. This will address landscape and Green Belt losses alongside ecological and habitat requirements. This will ensure that all measures are compatible with each other and that mitigation and enhancement measures are as effective as possible.
- 3.10.5 In addition to these wider mitigation measures, on site measures will seek to reduce the impact of Green belt loss as appropriate. The general layout principles for the Enterprise Zone intend that larger scale developments will be contained in the heart of the site where their scale will have less impact on the surrounding landscape and settlements. Those areas closest to the site boundary adjacent to the A677 will host lower smaller scale buildings. Particular attention will be given to appropriate screening measures where development impacts on residential properties and openness.
- 3.10.6 Appropriate landscaping measures will form a key part of the mitigation and enhancements required in landscape and Green Belt terms. The retained Green Belt will form part of the landscape setting and green aesthetic for the Enterprise Zone. As part of this and as a general principle, existing key landscape features will be identified and maintained where possible and appropriate. Soft landscaping and bunding will be used as appropriate to reduce visual impacts on residential properties, to enhance and enclose smaller scale less industrial areas of the site and to reinforce the high quality setting and character of the Enterprise Zone. Appropriate advanced landscaping will be delivered early in the development process to limit any impacts on the surrounding area.
- 3.10.7 Running through the master plan strategy is an underlying green infrastructure for the development areas which aims to build on the green setting around the recently completed Bowland Centre. An ecologically appropriate combination of soft landscaping, trees and SUDS ponds will be used to create linkages between the developments and to provide appropriate wildlife corridors and linkages.
- 3.10.8 Hard landscaping including car parking and pedestrian walkways will be interspersed with soft landscaping and trees to soften their impact. Street furniture and signage will be complementary to the building envelopes and built and soft landscape.

3.10.9 The Samlesbury site has known and recognised biological interest particularly for ground nesting birds including Species of Principal Importance (NERC Act 2006) such as skylark and lapwing and to a lesser degree meadow pipit and redshank. These birds are attracted to the site by the presence of the areas of open grassland of the former aerodrome. Great Crested Newts are also present on part of the site. Development of the site will take into account the provisions of draft policy G16 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation in the South Ribble Main Modifications to the Publication Version of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD. Historically as the existing BAE Systems site has developed there has been a reduction in the area of open grassland, and to mitigate the effects of habitat loss a series of habitat creation projects and a Habitat Management Plan have been implemented which includes land on which the Enterprise Zone is designated.

3.10.10 Assessments of key species and habitats on the BAE Systems site and land on which the Enterprise Zone is designated have taken place at regular intervals since 2008 with some data going back further than this. These have informed the creation and implementation of the existing Habitat Management Plan. All relevant assessments and surveys will continue to be undertaken by independent ecological experts as the Enterprise Zone is delivered. These will inform development and will guide the incorporation of measures to avoid, mitigate and compensate for any adverse ecological impacts. These measures will be managed through a further habitat management plan approach. This will consider a range of appropriate measures including:

- Long term on and off site habitat management
- Creating and maintaining habitats within the developed area of the Enterprise Zone where appropriate
- Incorporating appropriate design and landscape measures within the development scheme such as lower lighting levels near to areas of interest to birds
- Any other proportionate and appropriate measures.

3.10.11 All ecological assessments and works and all development will be done in accordance with the requirements and regulations of the Habitats Directive and shall address potential impacts on protected species and their habitats. Species of Principal Importance (NERC Act, 2006) and their habitats, statutory and non statutory designated sites and Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC Act 2006). The ecological assessment as well as avoidance, mitigation and compensation proposals will require approval by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Lancashire County Council.

3.11 Other matters.

The Masterplan also includes details relating sustainable transport and utility infrastructure provision.

3.12 The contents of this Masterplan is in line with the aims and objectives of the Council. I am satisfied that sufficient evidence and information has been submitted with the Masterplan to offer a detailed analysis and justification for the plan. On the basis that there are adequate safeguards contained within the document to allow the promotion of significant economic growth I consider that the strategic principles guiding the document should be accepted.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – The Department is working jointly with South Ribble on the consultation exercise and although there will be a need to attend some public meetings I consider that the work can be adequately resourced from within the department. Although there is no financial implications as the result of the Masterplan it should be noted that any subsequent LDO's would result in a loss of planning fees.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – No implications identified
- Political – The Enterprise Zone is an important designation which has already been supported by the Council and the economic growth of the borough is a key issue.
- Reputation – It is important to meet the timetable in relation to the Government deadline and failure to meet such a timetable could be seen as a poor service.
- Equality and Diversity – No implications identified.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Endorse the consultation procedure in relation to the proposed Masterplan and accept the strategic principles of the document.
- 5.2 If it is unable to report any changes resulting from the consultation exercise to the Planning and Development Committee that the agreement of the final version of the Masterplan be deferred and delegated to the Director of Community Services and the Head of Planning Services in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Planning and Development Committee.

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Background paper:
LDO No.1 (2012) Samlesbury.

For further information please ask for John Macholc, extension 4502.

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