

Memo

From: COLIN HIRST
To: JOHN MACHOLC
Ext: 4503
Date: 12 MARCH 2021
Re: STANLEY HOUSE, FURTHER LANE, MELLOR
APPLICATION 3/2020/1059



Ribble Valley
Borough Council
www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

New development (to replace approved but unbuilt development from 2008 planning consent) including: New Spa and Leisure Complex, Banquet Hall, Extensions to Existing Hotel Entrance and Restaurant, New Bedroom Block, Extended Car Park, Amendment of Internal Access Road, Rerouting of Park Public Right of Way and Enhancement of Existing Section of Right of Way, New Hard and Soft Landscaping and Tree Planting

Further to my earlier notes and our discussions, happy to provide confirmation of the Economic Development and Policy position. I consider the key issue in relation to the proposal as submitted remains the “very special circumstances” in relation to Green Belt Policy that need to be satisfied. I have reviewed the Economic Statement and Planning Statement Submitted with the scheme and have visited the application site to assess it in the context of the Green Belt.

My earlier principle concern was essentially the extent to which the actual impact upon the local economy, especially in terms of Ribble Valley was demonstrated so that in balancing those factors the Council could be sufficiently satisfied that very special circumstances exist and set it apart enough from simply being a significant development in the green belt and that we are satisfied that the integrity of green belt policy is protected.

The evidence submitted with the application does in my view help satisfy the position that enables it to be considered economically significant and sets it apart from simply development with some economic benefits that do not really outweigh the protection of the green belt. This is down to the nature of the proposal and that we have support from the two principle sub-regional economic bodies, the LEP and Marketing Lancashire that identify that the scheme is of sub-regional and regional significance. Their supporting correspondence is key as it highlights not a simple expression of support for the scheme, or a localised scheme, but a context to demonstrate the wider scale and importance of the development to economic interests.

Whilst the Economic Study submitted with the scheme demonstrates a limited, direct economic impact to Ribble Valley in my view, I would acknowledge that there is a stronger relationship between neighbouring conurbations and the location of the site and also the market offer. Nevertheless, the site is within Ribble Valley and there will be benefits to the borough, but more significantly I think we do need to take into account the demonstrated wider sub- regional and regional economic benefit of the scheme.

Ultimately it will be for Ribble Valley business to make the most of the supply-chain opportunities for goods and support services the development will present. In terms of employment there are strong skills within Ribble Valley hospitality sector which has seen a direct impact of the current pandemic and opportunities to support recovery are to be encouraged especially where they are coupled with wider significant economic growth.

I note that the application has sought to address issues around the layout of the scheme, and its design and a judgment can be made on the extent of other benefits in relation to nature conservation and heritage.

Given the additional information provided with the application and the steps to reduce physical impacts upon the Green Belt, accepting the scheme has sub-regional and wider economic benefit I am happy to support the principle of the development and would recommend approval, subject to your usual Development Management considerations.

Let me know if you want to discuss any aspects further.

CjH.

Colin Hirst
Head of Regeneration and Housing
End.