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Dean Clapworthy
Senior Planning Officer
Bury Council
3 Knowsley Place
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Sent via email

Dear Dean,

Land at Pyramid Park, Bury

Application 70903: Full planning application for land remediation, construction of a vehicular access road and footway from Market Street, along with associated infrastructure and structural works.

This planning application seeks to deliver new access along with associated infrastructure, and remediation of a contaminated site. Approval of this application is an essential step which needs to be taken to facilitate future housing development on a site which has long been allocated for development (since the Bury Unitary Development Plan was adopted in 1997).

Following previous unsuccessful attempts to bring forward development at this site, Bury Council has secured £1.73 million of Brownfield Land Regeneration Funding (BLRF), which was specifically granted to deliver the remediation and infrastructure works. As part of the bidding process, Bury Council put forward a business case to GMEU which included a viability appraisal, a masterplan to determine capacity for residential development, and soft market testing to evidence deliverability. A necessary outcome when the BLRF funding was granted was to deliver c.148 residential units and so Bury Council are currently seeking to secure a development partner who will be able to bring the subsequent residential scheme forward.

Given the physical challenges associated with the site, including contamination and access constraints, without this funding, the site would not come forward for residential development in the future due to viability issues. This planning application seeks to specifically address these constraints to provide a deliverable site within the context of the wider aspirations of the Bury Town Centre Masterplan.

It is acknowledged that the residential scheme does not form part of this planning application and so the associated benefits cannot carry material weight in decision making. However, the BLRF grant should offer comfort that, unlike past attempts to develop the site, the viability constraints have been overcome and the Council is obligated to deliver the necessary housing numbers and so, therefore, this application in itself represents a unique opportunity to unlock the site yielding wider housing and regeneration benefits, which should be considered as part of the overall planning balance.

If permission is granted, the potential benefits that would include:

- The general weight of policy support for the regeneration of Bury Town Centre. Residential development on the site is supported by policies aimed at regenerating Bury Town Centre, particularly through the Places for Everyone Joint DPD (PfE) and the Bury Town Centre masterplan. This support underscores the importance of revitalising the town centre through the delivery of new housing projects.
- Work being done at Bury Interchange and the opportunity to create linkages: Bury Council is working closely with colleagues at Transport for Greater Manchester, as the Pyramid Park site represents a significant opportunity to create linkages with Bury Interchange that would enhance connectivity within the town centre and its surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Remediation of contaminated land: The project includes plans for the remediation of contaminated land, which is crucial for environmental health and safety.
- Supporting the wider Active Travel network: The project aims to reinforce east-west links to and from the interchange, thereby supporting the wider Active Travel network. This would promote sustainable transportation options and improve accessibility for residents.
- Improve betterment of a degrading Site of Biological Importance; mitigations and enhancements expanded upon via the accompanying TEP technical note submission dated 5/12/24 and further ecology evidence that the swamp/marshy grassland (which was the rationale behind the original SBI designation) has seen successional scrub encroaching into this area. This therefore has the effect of downgrading the quality of the SBI.
- Loss of ecological enhancement: the proposed mitigation for the site includes the translocation of the SBI from the west of Market Street to land within the red line boundary to the east of Market Street. This enhanced area will include higher quality fenland, which goes above and beyond what is now present on site. This will be managed for 30 years, with options for further upgrades and this represents a material benefit associated with the mitigation of the SBI.

These points highlight the broader benefits of the project. Any potential adverse impacts arising from the development are limited to environmental considerations, however, mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposals to ensure that any associated harm carries only limited weight. Overall, it is our opinion as advisers to the council as landowners that planning balance weighs firmly in favour of the proposed development and therefore conforms with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in Paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely

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