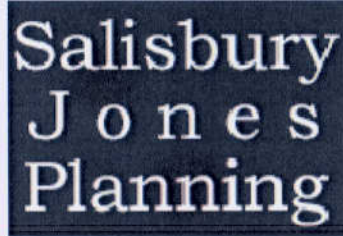


Page | 1 **PLANNING STATEMENT**

SITE: LAND BETWEEN THE ATHENAEUM HEALTH CLUB AND CHERRY ORCHARD WAY, ROCHFORD ESSEX

DETAILS: CONSTRUCTION OF TWO STOREY BUILDING TO PROVIDE JAGUAR LAND ROVER DEALERSHIP COMPRISING SHOWROOM, WORKSHOP, OFFICE SPACE, PARTS STORAGE MOT TESTING STATION AND ANCILLARY SPACE PLUS EXTERNAL CAR PARKING, USED VEHICLE SALES DISPLAYS, ACCESS AND MANOEUVRING AREAS.





INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STATEMENT

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This Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the Construction of a two storey motor dealership (GFA – 4086m²) comprising showroom, workshop, MOT Testing Station and ancillary space plus external car parking, used vehicle sales displays, access and manoeuvring areas

The following specialist reports have been commissioned and are included in the submission.

Design and Access Statement

Transport Statement and Travel Plan

Flood Risk Assessment

Site Contamination Report

Tree Survey & Arboricultural Report

Landscaping Statement

Ecological Statement

Building Regulation Part L2 Energy Statement Report

Archaeology Statement

The Planning Statement provides a description of the Site and surrounding Area and relevant planning history.

It then evaluates the proposed development, in the context of established National and Local Planning Policies and concludes that the scheme offers many advantages which, in our submission, cumulatively present a compelling case for the grant of planning permission.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Beadles Group Ltd is a long-established and reputable car dealer operating for nearly a century and providing quality used vehicles to customers throughout Kent and Essex.

In recent years the business has expanded from its original location at Dartford, and now has nine major locations in Kent, South-East London and Essex, making the Company one of the largest retailers in the area.

Beadles represent the Kia, Land Rover, Jaguar, Nissan, Skoda, Toyota, Vauxhall and Volkswagen marques in the region, selling an extensive range of new and used cars and vans as well as providing a variety of highly professional aftersales services.

The company employs over 400 staff dedicated to providing exceptional customer service.

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Beadles were asked by Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) to establish a full dealership facility in the Southend area as this territory has not been represented by these Brands since 2008 when the last operator left making a large number of staff redundant. Their existing facility near Southend Airport is temporary.

Beadles response was to open a temporary facility, start their recruitment drive and establish a presence in the area while the Company sought to find a site and build a full territory Motor Dealership.

The current business is located on the A127 Southend Arterial Road at the junction with Bell Road SS9 5NG, where 25 people are employed. This building is leased and the business started operating in July 2015 with an exit break at two years (July 2017) when, subject to planning permission being granted, the Company will relocate to their new purpose built dealership.

Beadles in consultation with JLR decided to search for a larger than usual site, to ensure that

- it would offer more space;
- deliver an enhancement of the customer experience; and
- allow for future growth for many years to come.

The intention is to create a feeling of space and calm, for their employees, customers and neighbours.

Beadles instructed Robert Stephens & Co (a firm of Chartered Surveyors with considerable experience in the automotive industry) to search for a new site, within the franchise area. The specific criteria were as follows:

- A minimum of 2.5 acres in a reasonably affluent area
- Easy access for customers and suppliers
- Access to an employment pool of automotive trained staff

This search revealed 3 other sites namely:

- The Toomey site (too small)
- A brown field opportunity on the A127 (wrong side of the very busy dual carriageway)
- Land owned by the Southend Hospital trust located near the new Waitrose site but adjacent to an ancient monument - a location too sensitive in planning terms

Finding a site in excess of 3 acres in such a developed area was not easy and Beadles consider themselves fortunate to have persuaded Charter Projects to embrace their vision.

An additional attraction is the proximity to the Volkswagen Retailer in Comet Way and the Toomey development across Cherry Orchard Way which accommodates 5 other Motor Retail Operations.

The Company considered a vacant plot on the Toomey development (as mentioned above) but this site was only 2.1 acres in area and did not support their vision of a prestigious building set within its own space.

Beadle's specific policy aims are to recruit locally and offer apprenticeships. This is even more the case as the Company did not buy an existing business and therefore had no staff at the outset.

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This is their first business venture in Essex and of the 25 people currently employed 3 are existing employees, one of which lives in Essex and the other 22 are all local to the area.

Beadle's anticipate significant growth over the next 5 years. To put this into context, this year they are likely to sell approximately 380 new and 200 pre-owned cars from their temporary facility and by year 3 at Aviation Way this will rise to 900 new retail and 650 pre-owned cars plus 200 business to business transactions. For Aftersales they will sell approximately 12,000 retail labour hours this year and 33,000 by 2020.

THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The proposal relates to a site having an area of some 1.28ha comprising land forming part of the car parking area to the Athenaeum Health Club and a parcel of land immediately west of the Club building up to the alignment of the single track section of Cherry Orchard Way.

This land parcel is overgrown with weeds and has no direct access onto Cherry Orchard Way but adjoins the roundabout where the dual carriageway begins, which gives access to the "Rochford Business Park" opposite.

Service access to the site is proposed via Aviation Way. The main access to the club and new dealership would be from an arm that would be made onto the existing roundabout in Cherry Orchard Way.

The business park opposite the application and fronting Cherry Orchard Way has been developed with a number other motor dealerships.

The site is flat, located approximately 2 km south west of Rochford TC and lies within the Aviation Way Employment Area. It is zoned for B1, B2 and B8 uses and forms part of the area covered by the Joint Action Area Plan for London Southend Airport & Environs.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and is a core element of the Government's reforms to the planning system, with the intention of making it less complex and promoting sustainable growth.

Page 2 refers to the definition of sustainable development by Resolution 24/187 of the United Nations General Assembly, i.e. development "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Paragraph 7 provides the three dimensions to sustainable development in the planning system. These dimensions allow the planning system to execute various roles:

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive, and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

The document reaffirms the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14) and places the presumption at the heart of the planning system describing it as a "golden thread" running through plan making and decision taking (para 14). Para 14 further advises planning authorities (and thus decision makers) to:

Positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;

Meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless;

Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or

Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

Para 14 further confirms the Governments advice that decision takers should take account of:

Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted

Paragraph 22 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of adopting a flexible and market sensitive approach in the consideration of applications for commercial development – it states:

Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits

having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.

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Paragraph 186, considering Development Management confirms that Local Planning Authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development.

Whilst the whole of the document takes a positive approach to development paragraph 187 adds to this in a way previously absent under the historic presumption in favour of development.

It advises that Local Planning Authorities should approach development management decisions positively; looking for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved where possible. The encouragement of local authorities to become positively involved is very welcome.

Paragraphs 18 to 22 consider planning for prosperity, predominantly for business and economic development. Para 71 sets the first objective:

*The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. **Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.*** (our emphasis)

It is also noted that paragraphs 196-197 state in relation to the determination of planning applications:

"196. The planning system is plan-led. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions.

197. In assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development."

The NPPF sets out 12 Core Planning Principles which should underpin both plan making and decision taking. Of particular relevance to the present application are the following:

- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs.....Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;

The NPPF places considerable emphasis on the need to build a strong and competitive economy and paragraphs 18 and 19 state:

"18. The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future.

19. *The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.*"

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In Annex 1 In paragraph 212 it is confirmed that the policies contained in the NPPF are material considerations which local planning authorities should take into account from the day of its publication.

In essence, an overriding presumption in favour of sustainable development is threaded throughout the document and should be considered at the heart of National Planning Policy

DEVELOPMENT PLAN STATUS AND POLICIES

Rochford District Council — Local Development Framework Core Strategy Adopted December 2011.

The Core Strategy is the overarching document for the Rochford District setting the broad strategy beneath which more detailed plans are prepared. It is part of the development plan for the Rochford District. The relevant policies are referred to below.

Policy ED1 — Employment Growth, lists the enhancement of Southend Airport as part of a broad strategy to diversify and modernise the local economy which has a stronger industrial rather than office use location.

Policy ED2 — London Southend Airport, states the council will support the airport as a catalyst for growth. Policy ED2 refers to the Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) and considered below.

Policy CP1 - Design, seeks a high standard of design.

Policy ENV 3 — Flood Risk, seeks to direct development to low risk zones such as zone 1 in which the application site is situated. A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared and submitted in compliance with this Policy.

Policy ENV 7 and 8 deal with small scale renewable energy projects and encourages design to include renewable energy facilities in development proposals as well as setting out other matters to be taken into account.

Policy ENV 10 deals with BREEAM and requires the design of the buildings achieve an appropriate rating

Policy ENV 11 deals with contaminated land and requires consideration as to whether the site may be contaminated and developers should undertake a preliminary survey of the site to investigate the possible presence of contamination on the site and any mitigation that may be required.

Policy T5 requires where necessary that applications for major development should incorporate provision for Travel plans.

London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) Adopted December 2014

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The above document, prepared jointly by Southend-on-Sea BC and Rochford DC, is a subject plan for the airport within which the application site is located. This document is the second part of the relevant development plan which contains further policies against which the proposed development needs to be assessed.

The JAAP Vision is set within the context of the regeneration and growth of Southend and Rochford as part of the Essex Thames Gateway South Essex.

The shared vision for the future development of London Southend Airport and its environs is:

“An area that realises its potential as a driver for the sub-regional economy, providing significant employment opportunities and ensuring a good quality of life for its residents and workers. To achieve this, the area’s assets and opportunities for employment need to be supported and developed”

Development of the Airport and wider JAAP area will provide employment growth and regeneration contributing to the delivery of both authorities’ job requirements. The vision is supported in the current and emerging policy frameworks for the area.

The Rochford Core Strategy vision is to “make Rochford the place of choice in the county to live, work and visit”. Supporting this, the vision sees a flourishing new employment area underpinned by the growth on London Southend Airport that attracts high technology businesses and high value employment to the area.

The JAAP sets out a number of objectives developed within the planning context in conformity with current national, and existing and emerging local policy. They comprise the guiding principles underpinning the policies and proposals in the JAAP.

The objectives are:

- Creation of sustainable, high quality and high value employment and other land uses within the JAAP area;
- Maximising the economic benefits of a thriving airport and related activity;
- Ensuring good connectivity to the development area by all modes of transport, with appropriate improvements to sustainable transport and the highway network;
- Ensuring a high quality public realm and environment for residents and workers;
- Seeking maximum return on public investment through attracting inward investment; and
- Developing efficient use and upgrading of existing employment land resources.

The site is within an area allocated by the JAAP for Use Class B1 (Business) and Use Class B2 (General Industry) which would be encouraged by the Council.

Policy E1 - General Development Considerations

"The JAAP area will be developed as a strategic employment area to support the delivery of additional jobs in the period to 2021, including employment directly related to the Airport. (our emphasis) These jobs will contribute to the delivery of the jobs totals for Rochford District Council and Southend-on-Sea

Page | 10 Borough Council.....

The JAAP area will support the delivery of additional jobs in the period post 2021 through further development of the Saxon Business Park and the development of the Nestuda Business Park."

The JAAP makes specific reference to Aviation Way Industrial Estate as follows:

"Aviation Way is a 22 hectare employment area located to the west of the Airport and offers a range of office, industrial, and leisure-type premises with current provision amounting to approximately 80,000m2.

Aviation Way Industrial Estate offers a variety of employment stock ranging from small 'lock-up' establishments to purpose built office accommodation. Generally over 75% of the employment stock is in a good or very good condition. Large parts of the Estate are in non B-class use, most notably the Athenaeum Club and spa, whilst there are a number of areas of vacant or underutilised land. This offers the opportunity to increase employment space through a combination of restructuring and intensification.

Aviation Way runs through the employment area and is generally regarded by users to be below standard for this type of access road with some poor surfacing, a lack of street lighting and limited facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. To support these proposals to intensify and enhance the existing employment area, the road has been identified as being in need of upgrading to adoptable highway standards, together with designated routes for pedestrian and cyclists and improvements to the southern road junction at Eastwoodbury Lane.

Aviation Way provides the closest access to Eastwoodbury Lane, existing bus services and cycle routes. There is an opportunity to link the new business park with Aviation Way for bus access, walking and cycle routes....."

Policy E2 - Aviation Way Industrial Estate

"Within Aviation Way Industrial Estate, shown as existing employment on the Proposals Map, applications for development within use classes B1 and B2 will be supported. It is expected that redevelopment and intensification within this area will accommodate additional jobs....."

PLANNING ANALYSIS

It is axiomatic that decisions on planning applications should be based on up to date Development Plan Policies (DPPs) unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

We have set out in an earlier section to his Statement the National Policy Guidance in the recently published National Planning Policy Framework which reflects both the General Economic Situation and the Government's considered approach towards Development Management.



The advice contained therein is an important material consideration to be accorded weight in the decision making process.

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Proposed Use

This proposal, although in planning terms classified as a sui-generis use, is essentially an employment generating use, and therefore in our submission an appropriate use within the context of relevant Local Plan Policies referred to above.

There are many examples countrywide where Motor Dealerships have been accepted as appropriate uses, in principle, within Business and Industrial Parks. In these examples, the local planning authority was persuaded that Motor Dealerships constitute an appropriate use, in terms of the broad principle of employment generation, as well as providing an attractive building which would respect and contribute to the overall Business Park setting.

Such Developments have been delivered to a high quality, contributing to an increased profile for the Business Park and often acting as a catalyst for further development.

The proposed GFA would be approximately 4,084 m². The DAS provides a detailed breakdown of the floor space schedule. The Showroom element of the development comprises approximately 617 m² and 23% of the total floor space.

The remainder of the floor space comprises B1 Offices (677 m²) and B2 Workshop including ancillary Parts Storage (circa 1900m²) and plant and ancillary space.

The office space comprises approximately 21% of the proposed floor area and the B2 element approximately 58% thereby resulting in approximately 80% of the proposed floor space comprising B1 and B2 use.

In planning policy terms it is considered that the majority of the proposed floor space accords with the uses considered appropriate for the approved Business Park.

It is important to point out that the jobs created will be of a B1 and B2 nature. It is simply the specific use as a car showroom and motor repair facility (a sui generis use) that means this proposal does not fall within the B1 and B2 uses specified in the relevant policy.

The DAS provides a detailed description and comprehensive assessment of the proposed scheme including the factors/constraints which influenced the Design solution. The buildings are important workplaces and the working environment has been at the forefront of the design and quality of these facilities.

Decisions on planning applications should be based on up to date Development Plan Policies (DPPs) unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. We have set out in an earlier section to this Statement the relevant DPPs and it is noted that the

The proposed development is designed to be of high quality and if approved the development and associated investment will come forward quickly.

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We have set out in an earlier section to this Statement the relevant policies of the NPPF as well as those in the extant and emerging Development Plan.

The policy thrust of the NPPF and the detailed guidance relating to how LPAs should be dealing with Planning Applications which contribute toward economic growth and job creation reflect both the General Economic Situation and the Government's considered approach towards Development Management.

In summary, the NPPF Advice is that Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

The notional calculations of employment density (which in any event take no account of the qualitative aspects of new employment) do not comprise reasonable grounds for resisting this proposal which must be viewed in a broader context including:

- Accessibility by a choice of transport including walking, cycling, public transport and by car
- A high quality and inclusive design as demonstrated in detail by the DAS accompanying the application
- A positive economic impact on the local economy in terms of investment and job creation

Design Quality

The DAS deals with the design and materials to be used to deliver a high quality building. It states inter alia:

The proposed Jaguar Land Rover layout maximizes the views and relationship to Cherry Orchard Way as well as making the site legible to customers.

There are three new site entrances proposed, one from Cherry Orchard Way primarily for customers, the other two are at the rear of the site leading to Aviation Way. Customer parking is located next to the building and the primary site entrance for clarity.

The proposed building will predominantly be seen by drivers using Cherry Orchard way and pedestrians using the pavements, or indeed bridle path.

The proposal therefore seeks to provide an active frontage at ground floor level, which in conjunction with the used car display allows for the building to engage with the activity along the road.

Care has been taken to address the prominent position of the site to the surrounding roads and maximize the used car display in these areas.

Workshop parking has been rationalised which increases the capacity on site and by adding landscaping strips a clear divide is created. The customer parking has been separated to improve the arrival sequence to the site.

Access Parking and Circulation Arrangements

The Transport Statement submitted confirms that the access, parking and circulation arrangements will comply with the requirements of the relevant policies. It concludes as follows:

7.2 The site is in a relatively sustainable location with links to public transport available within the local area. The site was subject to a previously permitted planning application for a 150 room hotel and 4,570m² B1 office use, submitted in August 2008.

7.3. The development will provide 140 on-site car parking spaces, in line with ECC maximum parking standards. 5% of the proposed parking provision will be assigned for disabled use. The site will provide a minimum of 25 cycle parking spaces and a minimum of 7 powered two-wheeler spaces in line with the relevant ECC vehicle parking policies.

7.4. The main site access is to be taken via a proposed forth arm on the existing Cherry Orchard Way roundabout junction. The service vehicles for the site would use the proposed Aviation Way access arrangement located to the rear of the site on the eastern boundary.

7.5. The predicted Car Showroom and Service Centre vehicle movements, although an increase compared to the existing situation, is significantly lower than the potential trips generated by the previously permitted Hotel and B1 Office development and is therefore unlikely to significantly affect highways safety or traffic capacity.

7.6. In summary, it is concluded that the proposed development can be accommodated without detriment to vehicular flows and road safety on the surrounding highway network and should therefore be supported for permission on transport grounds.

Employment Opportunities

The Proposed staffing levels are summarised as follows:

Management And Sales	Accounts	Service and After Sales	Parts	Facilities	Total No
36	6	42	11	3	98

Total staff numbers would be 98 of which 25 are existing jobs, and would transfer from the current temporary operation nearby.



The scheme would result in a net increase of 73 jobs, a considerable and most welcome increase in our submission and as a whole provide 13% of projected employment requirements for Aviation Way Estate (750) utilising some of the non-employment land currently forming part of a car park for the Athenaeum Club.

Beadles expect the majority of new staff to be recruited locally. These jobs will require a range of skills and offer flexible working arrangements and different shift patterns

The proposed development will provide a wide range of opportunities requiring varying levels of skills, expertise and experience. The proposal responds to a specific requirement for a car dealership and a lack of supply of suitable alternative sites with planning permission for this particular use.

In particular, these proposals represent an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the economic and social regeneration of this part of Essex.

This is not a speculative application/proposal. It is a scheme backed by a major motor manufacturer and would be operated by a respected and well established Automotive Group.

PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

The submitted scheme has evolved following formal pre-application consultations with Rochford DC Planning Department. The advice and guidance received has been taken into careful account to and every effort made to meet the Council's information and validation requirements.

CONCLUSIONS

The current scheme, in our submission, constitutes appropriate development for the Aviation Way Industrial Estate and it has been demonstrated that the proposal would be in compliance with the relevant policies of both the Development Plan and the NPPF.

In terms of built form the provision of a modern high quality building within the context of an attractive layout will enhance the overall appearance of the site at this important location. The proposal incorporates a detailed landscaping scheme which will ensure that the character and appearance of the Aviation Industrial Estate will be safeguarded.

The access arrangements proposed are satisfactory and the car parking and servicing layout meet the Council's general requirements.

The proposed buildings will be energy efficient and meet the Council's Renewable Energy requirements as well as both safeguarding and creating a large number of new jobs, of significant benefit to the Local Economy.

The Beadles Group expect to employ people at this site, the majority of whom will be recruited locally. The proposed development will provide a wide range of opportunities requiring varying levels of skills, expertise and experience.

The proposed development with a Construction Cost of circa £10million represents significant inward investment into this part of Rochford DC and will have beneficial spin-offs for local businesses including construction and other employment opportunities.

The proposal responds to a specific requirement for a car dealership and a lack of supply of suitable alternative sites with planning permission for this particular use.

In view of the above we conclude that the present proposal accords with the Council's relevant Development Plan Policies and its general objectives in relation to Economic Regeneration and the creation of a variety of employment opportunities as well as current and emerging National Policy Guidance.

Accordingly we conclude that the present scheme merits support and the grant of conditional planning permission.

SJP/22/04/2016