



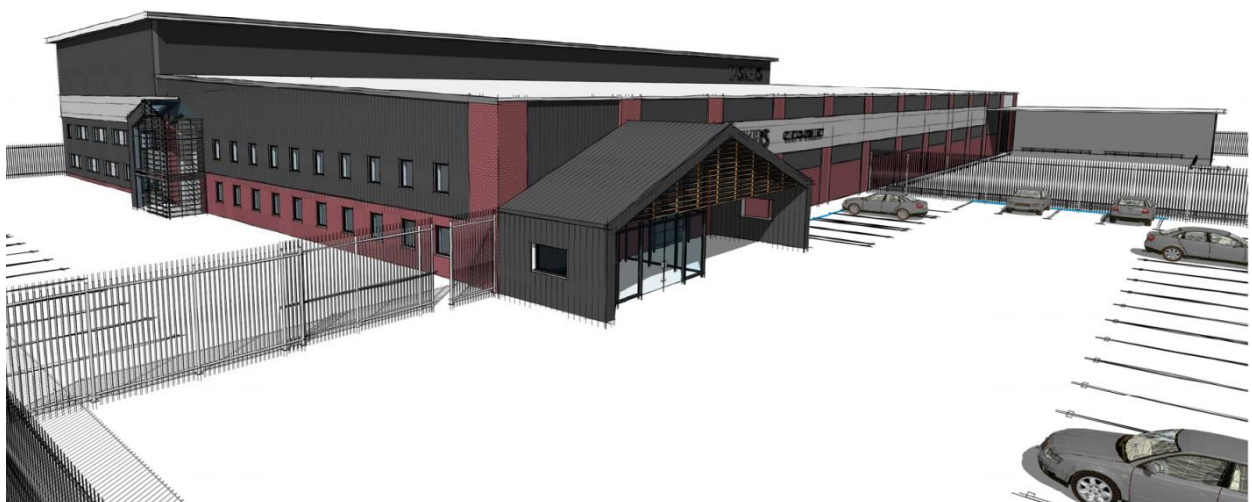
## Planning Statement

Date:

**April 2016**

Client:

**Taskers PLC**



# Planning Statement

## Contents

Section	Page
1.0 Introduction .....	2
2.0 Proposed Development.....	4
3.0 Planning Policy Overview .....	6
4.0 Planning Assessment .....	7
5.0 Conclusions.....	12

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by DPP on behalf of Taskers PLC, in support of a full planning application for the extension to the existing Taskers Storage Hub including the creation of a new ancillary customer collection point and ancillary office space.
- 1.2 In accordance with S.38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, this Statement considers the conformity of the proposed development against policies within the adopted Development Plan for the area, and addresses any other material considerations raised by emerging planning policy documents.

## **Background**

### **Site Location and Use**

- 1.3 The application site is an existing warehouse unit on Liver Industrial Estate south of the B5187. The unit is currently in use as Taskers' storage and distribution warehouse which serves all five Taskers retail store across Merseyside including the existing Aintree store also located on Liver Industrial Estate. The unit is a single storey building of a brick and steel construction, surrounded by hardstanding.
- 1.4 The site is bounded by other industrial units on the estate to the north and west, a previously developed vacant site to the north-east, and a reclamation site associated with a demolition business to the south. The wider industrial estate lies to the north of a residential area, separated by green corridor and cycle path. Access to the site is from Liver Industrial Estate road, a no through road, connecting to the B5187.

### **Taskers PLC**

- 1.5 Taskers is the largest independent DIY and Home Store in the UK selling home related products from DIY to furniture and gardening products. The company currently operates five retail units in the Merseyside area including their most recently opened store at Hunts Cross, Liverpool and employ over 300 staff.

## **Relevant Planning History**

- 1.6 Having reviewed the Council's online planning application search facility no relevant planning history relating to the application or site were identified.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1 The proposed development is for the extension of the existing warehouse building providing an additional of 2,429m<sup>2</sup>. Of this total floorspace to be provided within the extended unit; 84% of it will be used for the storage of products with the remaining floorspace being used for circulation space and storage rooms along with ancillary office/click and collect facilities.

### Storage

- 2.2 As already highlighted, the building is currently used to store retail stock which is then distributed to the various Taskers stores. The current storage unit is at operational capacity which is impacting upon the management of the storage facility and the ability to serve the existing stores; particularly taking into account the recently opened Hunts Cross store. Given these capacity issues, containers are currently being used as additional storage space to the rear of the unit.
- 2.3 The proposed extension to this storage unit will resolve these issues and remove the need for the use of external storage containers. The storage and distribution use will remain the primary use of the site.

### Click and Collect

- 2.4 An ancillary public 'click and collect' facility will be constructed to the front of the existing building. Of the total floorspace within the extended warehouse unit; 30m<sup>2</sup> will be used for the purposes of the new click and collect facility which represents less than 1% of the total floorspace.
- 2.5 At present Taskers do not provide customers with the option of 'click and collect' of purchases made through their website or direct from stores with larger items products purchased off the Taskers website or instore being delivered to customers addresses. As such, the new click and collect facility will allow Taskers to provide a new offer to customers and help Taskers to continue to compete against other retailers in the area whilst helping to support economic growth.

## **Ancillary Offices**

- 2.6 As part of the proposed extension additional ancillary office space will be provided allow to Taskers' current administration office; located to the north east of the application site on Liver Industrial Estate, to be relocated to the extended unit with all staff to relocate to the new building. Whilst there is currently some ancillary office space within the existing building this is underused and in need of refurbishment.

## **Car Parking**

- 2.7 The proposals also include the addition of 29 public car parking spaces including 5 disabled and family spaces. The public access car park will be separated from the staff parking to the side of the building. The staff car parking will comprise 23 spaces.
- 2.8 The current unit acts as a warehouse to support the five Taskers store located across Merseyside including the existing Aintree Store. This will remain the predominant purpose of the site with the offices and click and collect facility being ancillary to this main use.

## 3.0 Planning Policy Overview

- 3.1 As per Section 38 of the Town and Country Planning Act, development control decisions must be taken in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purpose of this application, the Development Plan is comprised of the Liverpool Unitary Development Plan (2002), with some
- 3.2 The Liverpool Local Plan is currently being prepared to replace the UDP, however it remains at a very early stage with limited progress in terms of draft versions of the Local Plan being prepared following the abandonment of the Core Strategy.
- 3.3 The Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPG (Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 8) is considered relevant to the application.

### **Liverpool Unitary Development Plan (2002)**

- 3.4 The relevant planning policies relating to the site are:
- GEN1 – Economic Regeneration
  - GEN8 – Environmental Protection
  - HD18 – General Design Requirements
  - HD19 – Access for All
  - HD23 – New Trees and Landscaping
  - S11- Retail Warehousing
  - T6 – Cycling
  - T12- Car Parking Provision in New Developments
  - T13- Car Parking for the Disabled

## 4.0 Planning Assessment

4.1 The following considers how the proposed development accords with the provisions of the Development Plan and those policies identified within section 3 of this report.

4.2 Key topics relevant to the application;

- Principle of Development;
- Highways Impact;
- Design.

### Principle of Development

4.3 The site is currently designated as a Retail Warehouse Park, forming part of the wider Liver Retail Warehouse Park (UDP Policy S11). The application site is not used for retail purposes with the site being used for storage and distribution uses associated with Taskers' retail stores (Use Class B8) – the proposed development will not alter this. The continued use and extensions of the B8 use class accords with the sites allocation with part 5 of UDP Policy S11 stating that *'other appropriate non-retail use (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) [in Liver Retail Warehouse Park] will be permitted, provided that amenity issues are satisfactorily addressed'*. As such the principle of the B8 use class and the extension of this is acceptable and supported by UDP Policy S11.

4.4 In terms of the amenity issues referenced in UDP Policy S11 it is notable that the site is bounded by existing industrial units within the defined Retail Warehouse Park with the sites to the east and south, which fall outside of the defined Retail Warehouse Park, being allocated or in use for industrial and/or business uses as set out in UDP Policy E1. The closest noise sensitive properties to the application site are the residential properties on Blackthorne Road which are located approximately 175m to the south west of the application site, beyond other industrial units fronting onto Liver Industrial Estate road. Given that the majority of the additional floorspace will be provided on the opposite elevation to the nearest residential properties and that there will be no change in the use of the site; the proposed development will not have a negative impact on the residential amenity of those residents on Blackthorne Road or any other adjoining site.

4.5 As already highlighted, the proposed customer click and collect facility and office floorspace will



be purely ancillary to the main use of the building as a storage and distribution warehouse (Use Class B8).

- 4.6 In addition to the sites designation as a Retail Warehouse Park, the site also falls within the Gillmoss/Fazakerley/Aintree Economic Regeneration Area as identified by UDP Policy GEN 1. The proposed extension to the existing facility and investment by a local company will help to meet the aims and objectives of this Economic Regeneration Area by promoting economic growth and supporting local jobs.
- 4.7 The proposed development will make best use of an existing previously developed site, reducing the largely unused yard area in accordance with UDP policy GEN 8.
- 4.8 In addition to this and in accordance with paragraph 7 of the NPPF, the following sets out how the proposals represent sustainable development in accordance with the three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental.
- 4.9 The proposals will provide an **economic** benefit through the delivery of an additional 2,199m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace within a traditional employment generating use class. The extended storage building along with the ancillary offices and click and collect facility will help to support local jobs in an area where there is a need for economic growth as demonstrated by the identification of the wider area as an Economic Regeneration Area within the UDP. In addition to this, the proposed extension will help to support the ongoing success of an important local retailer whilst the additional floorspace proposed will be liable to business rates which will see a further direct economic benefit to the city.
- 4.10 The proposed development will play a **social** role, by delivering a high quality of design in terms of the extension and amendments to the existing building which will significantly improve the built environment within this part of the Liver Industrial Estate. As highlighted later within this report and within the submitted Design and Access Statement; the current building offers little to the street scene in an area dominated by dated industrial warehouse buildings. The proposed extension and alterations to the existing building will significantly improve the quality of design in the area and will help to act as a catalyst for further improvements in the area.
- 4.11 The proposals will also play an **environmental** role by delivering a more efficient use of this previously developed site which is located in an existing industrial estate. This is of further benefit given the industrial estate is in a sustainable location which is within walking distance of a number of high frequency bus services and also accessible from Rice Lane railway station

providing links to Kirkby and Liverpool Central. The extension of the existing building ensures that Taskers will be able to continue to operate from the site and will not have to relocate their current storage facility to an existing unit in a different location or to a new industrial unit removing the need for additional development elsewhere.

## Highways

- 4.12 All highways matters are dealt with in detail within the submitted Highways Statement however the following summarises the conclusions of the submitted statement and how the proposals accord with the relevant saved UDP policies.
- 4.13 The Highways Statement highlights that all proposed additional operations within the site will replace existing operations within Liver Industrial Estate and therefore the proposed expansion will not result in any additional trips outside on the local highway network. The Highways Statement also confirms that service and HGV access can be accommodated both within the proposed layout and existing junction geometries and that there are no transport issues that would pose a barrier to the proposed development.
- 4.14 The proposals include provision for 20 staff car parking spaces and 25 customer car parking spaces including a total of 9 disabled spaces. This is considered sufficient to accommodate the needs of staff and the public who are picking up products from the click and collect facility in accordance with UDP Policy T12 and T13.
- 4.15 Based on the Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPG Note 8 and the proposed floorspace; the level of car parking which should be provided as a minimum is slightly higher than the proposed. However, given that the occupier for the unit is known as is the level of staff on site at any one time, it is considered appropriate to provide slightly lower than the minimum thresholds set out in the SPG Note. As highlighted with this submitted Transport Statement of the existing 32 staff which work on this a site and the head office which is to relocate to the site; only 16 drive to work and would require a car parking spaces with 12 using public transport and 4 cycling to work. This highlights that the number of parking spaces proposed is entirely appropriate.
- 4.16 As highlighted within the submitted Design and Access Statement; cycle parking for staff will be provided in accordance with UDP policy T6.

## Design

- 4.17 Details of the proposed design in terms of the pallet of materials and scale is provided in the submitted Design and Access Statement. Nevertheless, the following considers how the proposals accord with relevant design related UDP Policies.
- 4.18 UDP Policy HD18 sets out the general design requirements for all new development within the city. For ease, the following considers how the proposed extension accords with each criterion set out within the policy:
- i. Although the proposed extension is taller than the existing building, given the sites location, within the middle of the Liver Industrial Estate, the height of the proposed extension still relates well to other industrial buildings in the locality including the adjacent Nelson Business Park to the north. In terms of the massing and density of the proposed extension this also fits well within the site context with large warehouse buildings dominating the local area.
  - ii. Given the nature of the area, which is dominated by a variety of styles of warehouse buildings there is no local distinctiveness to include within the proposed design. Instead the proposed design and use of materials are based on Taskers' branding principles which ensure the design is identifiable to each Taskers Store. This will ensure the design relates well to the nearby Taskers Store.
  - iii. Given that the main extension is to be to the rear of the existing warehouse there will be limited changes to the building lines. Whilst there are some minor extensions to the front of the store, through the new click and collect entrance, the building will remain well set back from the internal access road.
  - iv. The existing concrete hard standing will largely be retained with new paved areas being provided along the public and staff edges as highlighted in the Design and Access Statement. Existing boundary fencing will be largely retained with additional palisade fencing provided where necessary.
  - v. No additional plant machinery and equipment is proposed as part of this application.
  - vi. This matter is not relevant as there is no green space adjoining the site.
  - vii. There will be no impact on the city's skyline as a result of the proposed extension.
  - viii. The proposed extension is not a scale or use which would prejudice the development of any adjacent site or land, particularly given that the adjacent land allocations/designations are for industrial development.

- ix. There are no residential dwellings adjacent to the site that would result in a loss of amenity or privacy.
  - x. The proposals are not for a temporary building.
  - xi. There will be no change to the arrangements to the storage and collection of waste as a result of the proposed extension. This will continue to be managed within the serving areas of the storage hub.
  - xii. Given that the proposed extension will be located away from any site boundary and the site will be secured there is no requirement to incorporate materials to discourage graffiti.
  - xiii. As highlighted earlier this section; the proposals include sufficient car parking to meet the required need and ensure that safe staff and customer access is provided into and within the site.
- 4.19 The proposals ensure that there is safe and level access into the proposed extension with a total of 9 disabled car parking spaces provided within the application site in accordance with UDP policy H19.
- 4.20 Given the current layout of the site, extent of hardstanding and need to provide a service yard and car parking there are limited opportunities to improve the landscaping within the site. The grass verges to the front of the site will be retained and corner areas within the site will be used to showcase planting and garden related products which Taskers sell which will provide some landscape interest within the site in accordance with UDP Policy HD23.

## 5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The proposed development is for an extension to the Taskers Storage Hub on Liver Industrial Estate, with ancillary offices and 'click and collect' service and associated public and staff parking. The current storage facility is at capacity and is responsible for serving all of Taskers stores across Merseyside.
- 5.2 This Statement has considered how the proposals accord with relevant planning policy and highlights how the proposed extension accords with the sites designation within the UDP. The proposed development represents sustainable development and will have a positive economic, social and environmental impact on the local area by supporting economic development, promoting high quality design and making better use of an existing developed site.
- 5.3 Taking these conclusions into account; the proposals accord with the development plan, and in accordance with NPPF paragraph 14 should be approved without delay.