

TSA Reference: TS/2846-DPS/L001

Council Reference:

11th December 2019

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council  
Local Development Plan Team  
Planning Office  
County Hall  
182 Galgorm Road  
Ballymena  
BT42 1QF

Dear Sirs,

**RE: REPRESENTATION TO THE MID AND EAST ANTRIM DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY (2017-2030) – FORMER MICHELIN SITE, SOCIAL CLUB AND ASSOCIATED LANDS, RACEVIEW ROAD, BALLYMENA.**

We write to the Council on behalf of our client, **Silverwood Business Park Ltd**, to make representation on the recently published Draft Plan Strategy (DPS), and as part of the wider Local Development Plan (LDP) 2030 process.

#### *Background*

By way of a background, our client is the owner of the Michelin premises (and associated lands see **Annex 1**) and the development company behind the successful redevelopment of the former Goodyear Factory in Lurgan known as the "Silverwood Business Park", which sustains over 1,240 jobs via a variety of occupants including Terex, Vista Therm, Tracco Logistics Ltd and Express Distribution Services. This experience is being utilised to transform the former Michelin Tyre Factory, by proactively attracting compatible business uses to bring the factory back into active employment use, following its closure in June 2018 that resulted in significant job losses for the surrounding area. Several new tenants have already been accommodated as part of the Michelin regeneration initiative, with Planning Permission either granted or being sought for the following: -

- **Ref: LA02/2018/0817/F** - *Change of use from office space ancillary to previous production facility to separate individual Class B1 office accommodation – Permission Granted – November 2018 (to accommodate Mid and East Antrim Borough Council;*
- **Ref: LA02/2019/0537/F** - *Retrospective change of use from general industrial (use class B3) to storage and distribution (use class B4) new HGV washing bay and all associated works – Pending Decision following approval at Planning Committee in December 2019 (retention of part of the site to continue operations by TST Storage and Distribution); and*
- **Ref: LA02/2019/0786/F** - *Proposed change of use with associated site works from General Industrial use to a proposed materials recovery and waste transfer facility for medical waste with the erection of plant equipment and single storey office – Pending Decision (to accommodate Stericycle Ltd, a Materials Recovery and Waste Transfer operator).*

In addition to submitting for planning permission as part of the Development Management Process, our client makes representation to the LDP process; which is of critical importance to ensure that the

expected growth and expansion of employment land can be accommodated for the Borough, and delivered in the most sustainable and efficient manner, following the adoption of the new LDP.

*Local Development Plan – Draft Plan Strategy (2030)*

Section 7.1.6 of the Draft Plan Strategy (DPS) has identified the Councils strategic approach to economic development in the Borough over the plan period. It states that in line with the regional direction, the LDP will retain previously developed land within settlements which have been or last used for economic development purposes. Our client is wholly supportive of the above referenced approach, and the Strategic Economic Policy aims set out at para. 7.1.7 of the DPS; both of which recognise the importance of the retention of sites which have been previously used for economic development purposes, extracts of which can be found below at **TSA 1**.

716 In line with the regional direction, our LDP will specify the type or range of economic development uses<sup>24</sup> that will be acceptable within zoned sites or broader areas of economic activity such as land currently or last used for economic development uses. In accordance with the SPPS, previously developed land within settlements last used for economic development will normally be identified and protected for such use, where it remains suitable.

**Policy Aims**

- 717 The LDP strategic approach to economic development is set out in our policy aims below. These fully embrace the above-mentioned regional strategic objectives and guidelines for LDPs set out in the SPPS.
- To facilitate the economic development needs of the Borough in ways consistent with protection of the environment and the principles of sustainable development;
  - To safeguard land required for economic development use;
  - To support the re-use of previously developed industrial/business sites and buildings for economic development use; and
  - To protect established/approved economic development uses from incompatible development.

**TSA 1 – Strategic Economic Policy Aims of the DPS**

Our client is therefore delighted to see that Michelin Site has been recognised within the supporting evidence base of the DPS as playing a large part in achieving the aforementioned aims and objectives for the Borough over the plan period.

*Site Location and Accessibility*

The Michelin Tyre Factory is located within the Settlement Development Limit on the periphery of Ballymena, as identified within the Ballymena Area Plan (BAP) 1986-2001. The site was a Class B3 General Industrial premises, left unzoned by the BAP. The site is in a highly accessible location approximately two miles east of Ballymena Town Centre, and benefits from a strong strategic regional location in close proximity to the M2 motorway network, and less than one mile from Junction 11 of M2 which bypasses Ballymena. This provides relatively easy access to the rest of the province, and its location 30 miles north west of Belfast and 55 miles south east of Derry. The premises are bound by Raceview Road to the north, and Ballymena Livestock Market to the south east, with Woodside Road East Industrial Estate located further to the south as shown overleaf at **TSA 2**.



**TSA 2 – Former Michelin Factory Site Context**

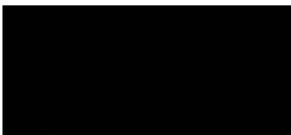
It may already be the intention of the Council to zone the former Michelin Site for employment uses at Local Plan Policies Stage, therefore we consider it beneficial to set out the merits of doing so, and how this will positively contribute to fulfilling the employment land allocation at Table 5.5 of Strategic Growth Strategy 6 (SGS6) of the DPS; and the varying needs of economic activity throughout the Borough over the lifetime of the plan.

In light of the above, the site is considered to fulfil the site criteria set out at para. 6.92 of the SPPS, which Councils are required to take into consideration when zoning economic development sites.

*Conclusions*

Taking into account the strategic economic objectives and aims for the Borough, and the location, characteristics and importance of the Former Michelin Site to provide necessary employment floorspace over the plan period; we would respectfully request the Former Michelin Factory, and associated lands are considered as a key employment zoning for Ballymena at Local Plan Policies Stage, and we reserve the right to make further representation at that stage regarding possible key site requirements.

Yours faithfully,



TS  
**Tom Stokes** MRTPI IoD  
 Director  
**TSA Planning**

## ANNEX 1 SITE LOCATION PLAN

