

Weston Business Quarter (Weston Airfield) Food and Drink Enterprise Zone – Local Development Order

Introduction

The Weston Business Quarter Local Development Order (LDO) provides a simplified planning route to support and encourage new business development within the newly formed Food Enterprise Zone.

What is a Local Development Order?

A LDO is a tool to simplify the planning requirements associated with certain types of development on specific identified sites. Although a well-established planning tool, the use of LDOs has been given a recent stimulus in the economic context and is considered a mechanism to support economic growth.

The LDO effectively grants planning permission in principle (outline permission) for the erection of buildings within specific use classes within the designated area as part of an approach to simplify planning requirements.

The Government has made significant changes to the General Permitted Development Order permitting various forms of development and changes of use. The existing LDO for Junction 21 already covers the site and expands these permitted development rights. This new LDO takes things a step further by agreeing the principle of new industrial units on the site, for use by food businesses.

The LDO is considered to be another mechanism to facilitate growth, offering an incentive to businesses and simplifying the planning process.

Background to the preparation of the LDO

The LDO relates to the newly formed Food Enterprise Zone comprising 7.5ha of land, located within Weston Business Quarter.

The LDO is intended to make the planning process simpler and easier for food and drink businesses seeking premises or existing businesses seeking to expand. It grants outline planning permission for new business units in a B1, B2 or B8 use for use by food businesses. It confirms what type and amount of development is acceptable on the site thereby giving certainty for potential developers and businesses and demonstrates that the Council is supportive of such development.

Being in outline form, the permission allows flexibility for development to be tailored to the individual user's needs. It also significantly reduces the costs of submitting a planning application for businesses as a number of the background surveys and assessments required during the planning process have already been carried out.

Planning Policy Background

The site lies within an allocated employment site and constitutes previously developed land. Details of North Somerset Council's current planning policy framework can be found on the Council's website. The following planning policies are particularly relevant and have informed the proposal to prepare the LDO:

North Somerset Core Strategy 2012:

- CS1 Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
- CS2 Delivering sustainable design and construction
- CS3 Environmental impacts and flood risk management
- CS4 Nature Conservation
- CS10 Transportation and movement
- CS11 Parking
- CS12 Achieving high quality design and place making
- CS20 Supporting a successful economy
- CS28 Weston-super-Mare
- CS30 Weston Villages
- CS34 Infrastructure Delivery and Countryside

North Somerset Replacement Local Plan 2007:

- GDP/3 Promoting good design and sustainable construction
- ECH/11 Protected species and their habitats
- E/5 Safeguarded Employment Areas
- T/6 Parking Standards
- T/10 Safety, traffic and the provision of infrastructure associated with development
- T/11 Travel plans

Supplementary planning advice:

- Weston Villages SPD June 2012
- Employment-led delivery at Weston-super-Mare SPD November 2014
- North Somerset Parking Standards November 2013
- Development Contributions SPD November 2014
- Travel Plans SPD November 2010
- Creating Sustainable Buildings and Places March 2015

Emerging Policy: Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies (submitted to the Secretary of State for examination)

- DM1 Flooding and Drainage
- DM24 Safety, traffic and provision of infrastructure, etc. associated with development
- DM26 Travel plans
- DM28 Parking standards
- DM32 High quality design and placemaking
- DM47 Proposals for economic development within towns and defined settlements
- DM70 Development Infrastructure
- DM71 Development contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy and Viability

Supporting Evidence Base

The following surveys and technical studies are relevant to the site and have informed the LDO:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal October 2015 – First Ecology
- Preliminary Breeding Bird Assessment October 2015 – First Ecology
- Bat activity Report October 2015 – First Ecology
- Great Crested Newt Report October 2015 – First Ecology
- Reptile Report October 2015 – First Ecology
- Phase 2 Environmental Assessment (Desktop Study) March 2015 – Cambria Consulting
- Technical Note Weston-Super-Mare- SFS Weston Villages Developer Inflows September 2015 Royal HaskoningDHV

Environmental Impact Assessment – Screening Opinion

The uses permitted by the LDO are classed within Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2011 (as amended) comprising industrial estate development projects. The area covered by the LDO is 7.5ha and it therefore exceeds the threshold for screening which is 5ha as set out in the 2015 amendment to the above regulations.

The Council has carried out a screening opinion, which confirms that the development is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore does not require a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

Statement of Reasons

The Council is required to provide a Statement of Reasons for making the Order. These are provided below.

The LDO is intended to encourage new business development connected to the food and drink manufacturing, processing and distribution industry to the area and to help small and medium size enterprises in this industry to expand. The site in question has been recognised by the Government and West of England Local Enterprise Partnership as a part of a major growth area to support the delivery of the Bristol and West of England City Deal. It is easily accessible being located within 5 minutes of the M5 motorway, 30 minutes from Bristol Port (deep water) and 30 minutes from Bristol Airport and having nearby rail access in Worle and Weston-super-Mare.

The key focus of the LDO is to support the improvement of the food supply chain in the South West; linking farmers and producers at the very start of the food chain to food development and manufacturing, but also encouraging links to distributors and retailers. North Somerset already has a strong food and drink sector, but the LDO is intended, in particular, to support small and medium size enterprises looking to grow and develop. The Council is also seeking to facilitate the development of a South West Food and Drink Innovation Centre on part of the site, together with food-grade incubator units, development kitchens, specialist piloting and testing facilities and a business development learning centre to support the industry.

Planning Incentives

The LDO offers the following planning incentives to developers:

- Grants outline planning consent for the erection of buildings and/or the use of land for Class B1, B2 and B8 use by food businesses.
- Allows flexibility for development to be tailored to individual user's needs through reserved matters applications.
- Reduces the amount of information that developers would normally have to provide with a planning application. This therefore reduces risk and saves developers both time and money.

It is expected that along with the Council's employment-led Core Strategy for Weston-super-Mare and other initiatives to stimulate development, this will encourage investment from both existing and new businesses.

Description of the development the order would permit

The LDO grants outline planning permission within the LDO area (outlined in red on Plan 1) for the erection of buildings and/or the use of land for Class B1, B2 and B8 use by food businesses.

Developers are still required to submit planning applications for details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. The outline permission is also subject to conditions. The reserved matters applications will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible and normally under officer delegated powers.

Area covered by the Local Development Order

The "designated area" for the LDO is shown below and is outlined in red on Plan 1 (attached to the LDO).



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The area comprises 7.5ha of land within the Weston Business Quarter (Weston Airfield) which is part of the Junction 21 Enterprise Area. The site also lies within the “designated area” for the Junction 21 LDO which allows for the alteration of non-residential buildings and specified changes of use.

Adoption of the LDO and its time period

The LDO will be active for 5 years from the date of adoption, upon which time the LDO will cease to apply. Provided reserved matters approval has been obtained, development which has commenced under the provisions of the LDO can be completed following the expiry of the LDO.

At the end of the temporary period, the Council will review the LDO and decide whether to renew the LDO, revise the LDO or revoke the LDO.

Reserved Matters Application requirements

For guidance on what you need submit with a reserved matters application, please see the Council’s website and the North Somerset Local List of Planning Application requirements.

Plan 2 attached to the LDO provides an indicative masterplan for the site. Reserved matters applications should broadly accord with this masterplan.

Depending on the scale of development proposed (for B1 buildings over 1500sqm, for B2 Buildings over 2500sqm and for B8 buildings over 3000sqm), a transport statement or transport assessment as well as a travel plan may be required.

In terms of flood risk and drainage, it is very important that the amount of impermeable surfacing on the LDO site does not exceed 75% of the total site area. Any reserved matters application will need to demonstrate that this requirement would be met. The Council is likely to impose conditions to retain the amount of permeable surfacing on any reserved matters application.

CIL and S106 requirements

At present, the Council does not have a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in place, so no CIL contributions would be required from this site. It is possible that a CIL may be introduced in future, however initial work suggests that a nil rate would apply to B-class employment in this area.

Section 106 contributions are based on a site-specific assessment of any infrastructure required to allow the development to go forward. In relation to this site, it is anticipated that contributions might be required (if necessary) towards highway works and towards the Strategic Flood Solution (the Super Pond to the south of the site).

The LDO and other consent regimes

The LDO does not overrule the requirements associated with any other legislation including, but not limited to: The Highways Act, Environmental Protection Legislation,

the Equality Act and Building Regulations. Consents obtained through other such legislation will still be required.