

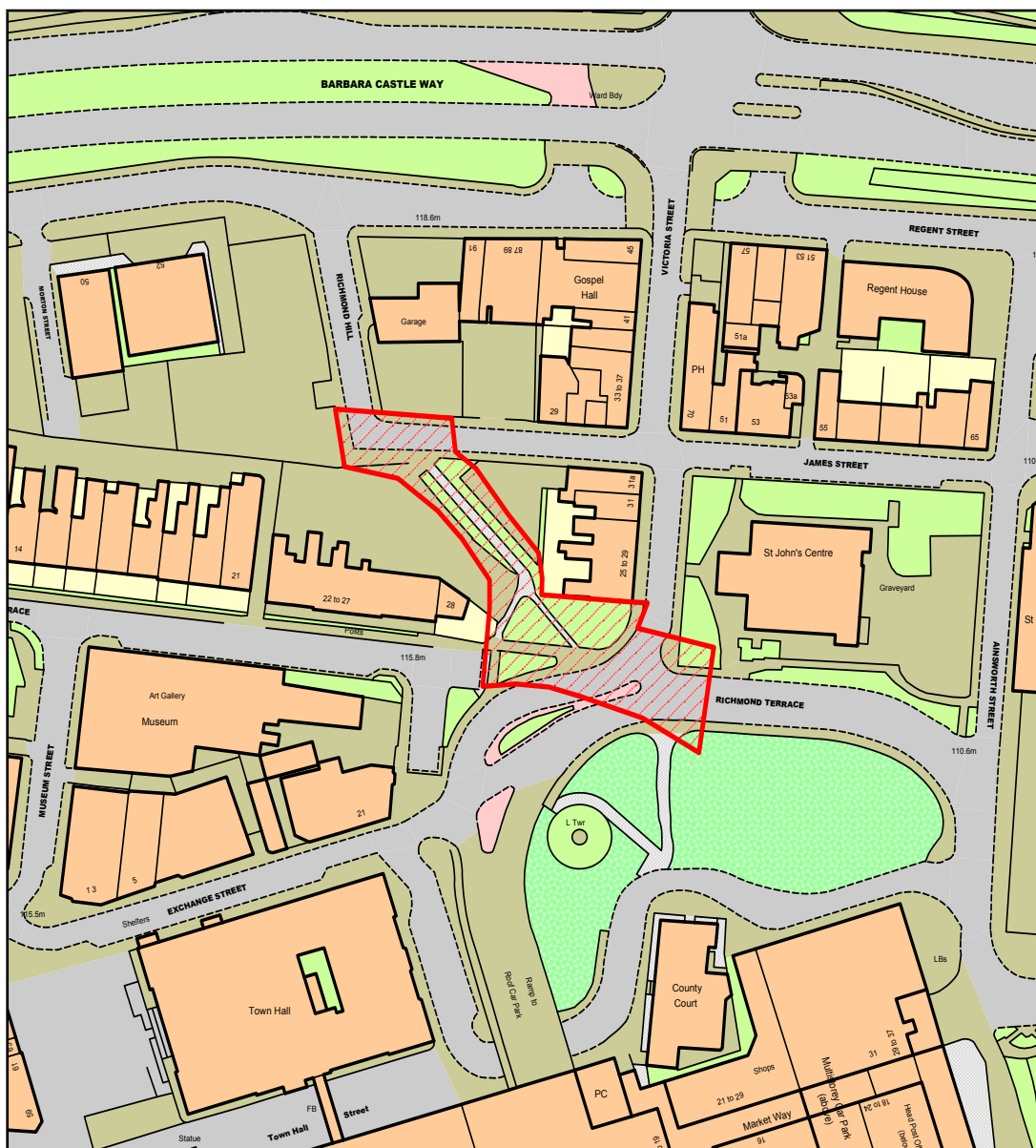
Proposed development: Full Planning Application (Regulation 4) for New link road connecting Richmond Terrace to Barbara Castle Way.

Site address: Land linking Richmond Terrace to Barbara Castle way, Blackburn

Applicant: Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Ward: Blackburn Central

**Councillor Zamir Kahn
Councillor Salma Afzal
Councillor Faryad Hussain**



1.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The proposed development is recommended to be granted planning permission for the reasons as follows:

The proposal is in accordance with the following policies of the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Local Plan Part 2 (December 2015):

- Policies 8 and 9 in securing the amenity of surrounding and future users or existing occupiers and the mitigation of environmental impacts.
- Policy 10 in securing the safe, efficient and convenient movement of vehicles into and through the site
- Policy 39 in ensuring no impact on the setting of the conservation area

These policies are in compliance with the aims and objectives set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

- 1.2 It is recommended that the application be approved subject to the conditions listed in paragraph 4.1.

2.0 KEY ISSUES/SUMMARY OF PLANNING BALANCE

- 2.1 The proposed link road forms part of a wider Fabric Borders Blackburn scheme, which has recently (in 2017) received funding from the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) from the Department for Transport (DfT). The Fabric Borders Blackburn scheme involves reconfiguration of vehicular and pedestrian routes in Blackburn town centre to remove vehicular congestion and conflicts, which are currently restricting economic activity and local productivity in the inner urban area of Blackburn and its town centre. In addition, the scheme aims to unlock economic growth and create job opportunities in the town centre.
- 2.2 The application is before the Committee as the application has been submitted by the Local Authority's Highways Department.
- 2.3 The proposal is considered satisfactory from a technical point of view, with all issues having been addressed through the application, or capable of being controlled or mitigated through the recommended planning conditions.
- 2.4 The key issues to be addressed are as follows:
- Principle of development
 - Site layout and design issues
 - Impact on amenity
 - Highways & transportation
 - Heritage.

3.0 RATIONALE

3.1 Site and Surroundings

3.1.2 The application site is located within the defined town centre boundary of Blackburn and within the Northgate and Richmond Terrace Conservation Areas. The site area of the proposed link road is predominantly used for car parking with some landscaped areas and a footpath link from Richmond Terrace to James Street.

3.1.3 The surrounding area is predominantly characterised by retail and office uses along Richmond Terrace and Victoria Street to more industrial uses on Richmond Hill and Tontine Street. A number of public and private car parks surround the proposed link road along James Street and Richmond Hill.

3.2 Proposed Development

3.2.1 The proposed general arrangement for the link road will see traffic flow in a northerly direction only through the short length of new one-way link road between Richmond Terrace at the Mall entrance to Tontine Street in the north. This new road will cross the existing Tontine Street to form a new signalised junction with Barbara Castle Way.

3.2.2 The new link road's purpose is to allow the free movement of traffic from the Richmond Terrace section and the Mall Car Park. The route is more direct than existing allowing traffic to pass more efficiently through to Barbara Castle Way than the current configuration. The additional length of carriageway will allow greater capacity for the storage of peak traffic movements and a more efficient gyratory system with the existing Victoria Street. Victoria Street flows are reversed from Barbara Castle Way to Richmond Terrace. This allows the inclusion of wider footpath areas at key pedestrian crossing points.

3.2.3 The scheme will see the introduction of both soft and hard landscaping with pockets of landscaping to the east and west of the new link road at its junction with Richmond Terrace and to the west of the new puncture through onto Barbara Castle Way. The proposals include for areas of, amenity grass, seating and Seasonal Planting areas. The existing raised planter area to the west of the new link road will remain and be incorporated into the new scheme layout with the introduction of the new grassed areas.

3.2.4 Hard landscaping will include concrete kerbs and edgings together with asphalt surfacing to the footway and carriageways. Lighting columns will be steel to match those already in place. Resin bound areas will be introduced to create hardstanding areas to contrast the asphalt footways.

3.3 Development Plan

3.3.1 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Core Strategy (Local Plan Part 1 Jan 2011):

Policy CS1: A Targeted Growth Strategy

3.3.2 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Local Plan Part 2 (Dec 2015):

- Policy 8: Development and People
- Policy 9: Development and the Environment
- Policy 10: Accessibility and Transport
- Policy 26: Town Centre
- Policy 39: Heritage

3.4 Other Material Planning Considerations

3.4.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF):

- 3.4.2 Achieving Sustainable Development, the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 3.4.3 Ensuring the vitality of town centres, planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.
- 3.4.4 Promoting sustainable development, development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

3.5 Assessment

- 3.5.1 Principle: The proposed link road forms part of the Fabric Borders Blackburn scheme, which has received funding from the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) of the Department for Transport (DfT). The Fabric Borders Blackburn scheme involves reconfiguration of vehicular and pedestrian routes in Blackburn town centre to remove vehicular congestion and conflicts, which are currently restricting economic activity and local productivity in the inner urban area of Blackburn and its town centre.
- 3.5.2 The principle of the proposal is not supported directly by one policy but can be considered against the overall aims of the Council's Development Plan with particular relevance to Policy 26 (Town Centres) of the Local Plan Part 2 which seeks to support development that makes a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- 3.5.3 The NPPF 2018, at Chapters 2, 7 and 9, is committed to securing and supporting sustainable development alongside economic growth, the vitality of town centres and the promotion of sustainable transport. The NPPF advocates decisions that help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

- 3.5.4 The principle of the development is, therefore, accepted and encouraged, in accordance with Local Plan Policies and The Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development, subject to application being acceptable in all other respects.
- 3.5.5 Route and Impact on the highway network:
- 3.5.6 Local Plan Part 2, Policy 10, sets out that development will be permitted provided it has been demonstrated that road safety and the safe, efficient and convenient movement of all highway users is not prejudiced; that appropriate provision is made for vehicular access, off street servicing and parking in accordance with the Council's adopted standards and that the needs of disabled people should be fully provided for, including those reliant on community transport services. The policy also requires submission of a supporting Transport Statement (TS) for proposed development that has the potential to significantly affect existing transport systems.
- 3.5.7 A Transport Statement (TS) and drawings accompanied the submitted application and have been reviewed by the Local Highway Authority. The assessment evaluates the existing transport and highways context of the site, access, parking and servicing conditions and trip generation. This allows an assessment to be made as to whether the highways network has the capacity to accommodate the potential increases in traffic as a result of the proposed development.
- 3.5.8 The applicant's report concludes that the proposed link road and a wider Fabric Borders Blackburn scheme would resolve the existing and future capacity issues, with all three junctions operating within capacity in the future years following the implementation of the proposed highway interventions. These findings are not disputed by the Highway Engineer who is in agreement with the report noting, the addition of a new link and changes to traffic priorities presents a betterment and improvement to the movement of vehicles through the town centre.
- 3.5.9 The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the accompanying documents and drawings and offers no objection in principle to the scheme subject to minor technical points of clarification and the details of wheel wash facilities being provided. The applicant is seeking to address these points by way of an update as they are seeking to avoid pre-commencement conditions. As such, the proposal is considered to comply Local Plan Part 2, Policy 10 subject to requested details being provided or through the use of suitably worded conditions requiring the requested details prior to implementation of the link road.

Design and Layout

- 3.5.10 Policy 11 of the Local Plan requires development to present a good standard of design, demonstrating an understanding of the wider context and make a positive contribution to the local area. The policy sets out a list of detailed design requirements relating to character, townscape, public realm, movement, sustainability, diversity, materials, colour and viability. This

underpins the main principles of sustainable development contained in the NPPF which seeks to secure high quality design.

3.5.11 A detailed Design and Access Statement accompanies the application, and sets out the key design principles which are taken forward in the application proposals design response, reflecting not only the policy requirements but the comments given by officers as part of informal discussions. These design driver considerations include:

- Layout and Scale
- Landscaping and Appearance
- Vehicular and Transport Links

3.5.12 High quality landscaping is an important feature of this proposal and the applicant has submitted a landscaping scheme covering both hard and soft surfacing and planting areas which includes areas of, amenity grass, seating , Seasonal Planting areas, concrete kerbs and edgings together with asphalt surfacing to the footway and carriageways. Lighting columns will be steel to match those already in place. Resin bound areas will be introduced to create hardstanding areas to contrast the asphalt footways.

3.5.13 In summary, the comprehensive details submitted relating to the design and layout of the proposal are considered to demonstrate that the landscaping and infrastructure accords with the provisions of the relevant policies of the development plan.

3.5.14 Amenity

Local Plan Part Two Policy 8 sets out that development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would secure a satisfactory level of amenity and safety for surrounding uses and for occupants or users of the development itself, with reference to noise, vibration, odour, other pollution or nuisance.

3.5.15 Given the town centre location, the consideration that the surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character and there are no known nearby receptors that would suffer any unacceptable amenity impacts from the introduction of the proposed link road. The proposal is considered to be compliant with the development plan and can be adequately controlled by the recommended hours of operation conditions during the construction period.

3.5.16 Heritage

Local Plan Part Two Policy 39 set out how the council will deal with development affecting heritage assets noting, development with the potential to affect any designated or non-designated heritage asset, either directly or indirectly including by reference to their setting, will be required to sustain or enhance the significance of the asset.

- 3.5.17 The proposed link road straddles the Northgate and Richmond Terrace Conservation Areas which are areas of considerable townscape significance.
- 3.5.18 The Northgate Conservation Area was originally designated in 1994 and is the largest of five Conservation Areas within Blackburn Town Centre, containing copious examples of nineteenth and early twentieth century civic architecture, such as the Town Hall, King Georges Hall and the College of Technology and Design. The College of Technology and Design is located directly to the north of the development site and is a Grade II listed building completed in 1894 in a Northern Renaissance style.
- 3.5.19 Richmond Terrace Conservation Area is the most northerly of the five within Blackburn's town centre. Originally designated in 1975 and further extended in 1992, it is therefore also the oldest conservation area within the town centre. Located to the immediate north of Northgate Conservation Area, the conservation area's southern boundary is defined by the principal façade of the buildings on the southern side of Richmond Terrace and hence also by the northern boundary of Northgate Conservation Area. The western boundary follows the centre of Limbrick and the northern boundary is defined by the rear of 1 – 21 Richmond Terrace and by Morton and Regent streets, whilst the eastern boundary is defined by the centre of Ainsworth Street, but fluctuates to incorporate the New Refuge Buildings on its eastern side.
- 3.5.20 The proposed scale and footprint of the link road positively responds to the shape of the site with the inclusion of appropriate hard and soft landscaping. The design has evolved as part of ongoing discussions with the Council's Heritage and Conservation Officer to negate potential visual impacts on key vistas within the conservation areas, with particular reference to Richmond Terrace given its proximity to the application site. The development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy 39 of the Local Plan Part 2.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Approve subject to conditions which relate to the following matters:

- Commence within 3 years.
- Hours of construction limited to 8am to 6pm Mon-Sat, and not on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- Construction Method Statement.
- Hard and soft landscaping scheme.
- Drainage consent from United Utilities.
- Unexpected contamination.
- Approved details and drawings

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 No relevant planning history exists.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 45 neighbours were consulted, 3 site notices erected, and a press notice was published in the Lancashire Telegraph. 1 objection has been received.

The objection received was in relation to an existing parking space to the front of a property on Richmond Terrace. Officers attended the site and explained the scheme noting the parking would be remain available following the completion of the link road.

- 6.2 Public Protection: No objection subject to conditions on unexpected contamination on site.
- 6.3 Highways: The scheme involves new sections of road, additional parking and alterations to the traffic layout. There are some apprehensions with the scheme, and we would ask further considerations are given to the following when delivering the scheme;
- Pedestrians route from Victoria Street towards the entrance into The Mall suffer for safe crossing points on the west side as they approach Richmond Terrace along the west side suffer, this should be provided to ensure pedestrians are safe
 - Clarity is required on how the two existing car parks which access off the new link road, are accessed, the plans do not depict the access point clearly
 - The echelon parking situated adjacent to St John Church, which is positioned along the edge of the carriageway, would not give adequate support to the driver after exiting the car. There is currently an embankment at the rear of the spaces – however it is not clear whether this would be regraded to support pedestrians. My thoughts would be remove these spaces, as either manoeuvre whether its reversing in or reversing out would prejudice the safety of moving vehicles, especially on such a busy through route
 - The exit approach from north of Victoria street, indicates a left and right manoeuvre only, will this allow drivers to move directly south towards the town centre? please seek clarification
 - We would request all streets should be auto tracked, as the changes to some radii may affect bus manoeuvres especially at the un named street adjacent to St Johns Court

A construction method statement has been received, and reviewed, the document makes no reference to a wheel wash proposal, evidence of this and also how the site will be laid out is to be received for approval – or conditioned accordingly.

Transport Assessment

This has been reviewed and analysed. The report considers the changes proposed, the addition of a new link and changes to traffic priorities presents a betterment and improvement to the movement of vehicles through the town centre.

6.4 Drainage: No objection subject to conditions.

6.0 **CONTACT OFFICER: Alec Hickey, Senior Planner**

8.0 **DATE PREPARED: 5th December, 2018**

9.0 Summary of Representations

Objection Rashid Iqbal, 28 Richmond Terrace, Blackburn

Hello

I am the owner of 28 Richmond Terrace and I am concerned that this connection will have a detrimental effect on the parking space on land that i own.
my tenants have brought this to my attention.
