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**STATEMENT OF 'VERY  
SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES'**

**JUSTIFICATION TO  
SUPPORT PROPOSED  
EXPANSION OF JAGUAR  
LAND ROVER ON LAND AT  
DAMSON PARKWAY,  
SOLIHULL**

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In respect of

**LAND OF DAMSON  
PARKWAY, SOLIHULL**

On behalf of

**JAGUAR LAND ROVER LTD**

CgMs Ref: 14317

March 2014

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Jaguar Land Rover is the largest automotive company in the UK employing over 25,000 people directly and supporting 170,000 jobs in the UK including suppliers, dealers and jobs within the wider economy. Jaguar Land Rover exports over 85% of production to more than 170 countries with export revenue reaching over £11 billion in the last fiscal year. Jaguar Land Rover is experiencing record breaking sales and demand for their premium vehicles and is continuing to invest heavily in the business to support its ambitious plans for growth.
- 1.2 Jaguar Land Rover's manufacturing plant at Solihull is where Range Rover and Land Rover models have been produced since 1948. The existing site occupies 130 hectares and is designated as 'Jaguar Land Rover' within the adopted Solihull Local Plan (December 2013). It is where the Range Rover, Range Rover Sport, Defender and Discovery are produced and it is one of eight UK locations in which members of the public can test their on and off-road driving skills in the Land Rover Experience Centre.
- 1.3 Jaguar Land Rover is investing heavily in the plant at Solihull in response to increased customer demand for Land Rover vehicles. A new visitors' centre has recently been completed and work has started on a new Body Shop and an extended assembly building. The plant currently employs more than 6,000 manufacturing people and in September 2013 the business announced that 1,700 jobs would be created throughout 2014 and early 2015 with recruitment now underway for the first 500 roles.
- 1.4 In 2013 Land Rover sales set another full year record retailing 348,388 vehicles, up 15% in 2013 with increased sales of the Freelander, Range Rover, Range Rover Evoque, Range Rover Sport and Land Rover Discovery models. Over 165,000 of these vehicles were produced in Solihull. The business has ambitious plans for sustainable growth and is predicting that sales will increase significantly by 2020, largely due to increasing demand in emerging markets.
- 1.5 It is critical that Jaguar Land Rover can ensure that the plant remains competitive and can continue to respond to increased demand. The next stage of the site's transformation is to provide an enlarged despatch area as the current facility is being overtaken by the manufacturing expansion processes referred to above.

- 1.6 Opportunities to expand and redevelop the site are severely constrained due to the site's location within the built up urban area of Solihull and the proximity of surrounding residential areas; the presence of Elmdon Park Local Nature Reserve and the Solihull Moors Football Club.

**Figure 1 - Aerial Photograph of Jaguar Land Rover, Lode Lane, Solihull**



- 1.7 The only space available within the existing site boundary is the Sports and Social Club and Billsmore Wood Local Wildlife Site. Development on the Sports and Social Club and Billsmore Wood has been discounted for various reasons including their proximity to neighbouring residential properties; the loss of a well used amenity space; and the problems associated with bringing HGV transporters into and out of this part of the site.
- 1.8 As a result, Jaguar Land Rover has reviewed the availability of land adjacent to or within close proximity to the site including Elmdon Park and the Solihull Moors Football Club site, which is discussed in greater depth in Section 5.

- 1.9 An area of land at Damson Parkway has been identified as the only viable alternative option to meet the operational requirements of the business. Detailed consideration has been given to the best way to link the existing site with the Land at Damson Parkway, and the development includes a bridge link. A technical report detailing the options is submitted as part of the planning application.
- 1.10 The land identified at Damson Parkway is owned by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and forms part of the Green Belt designation. Whilst the Council's local planning policy<sup>1</sup> notes that the reasonable expansion of the site into the Green Belt will be given positive consideration where economic need can be demonstrated and appropriate mitigation can be secured, in accordance with national planning policy, it is necessary to provide 'very special circumstances' to justify the release of the land from the Green Belt and to prove that the exceptional nature of the proposal outweighs the harm that it would cause to the Green Belt.
- 1.11 Jaguar Land Rover remains committed to the local area and continue to be proactive, listening to, and working with its neighbours and stakeholders. Jaguar Land Rover is committed to working with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and wishes to be transparent in their dealings and discussions with both the local Council, Stakeholders and wider community. In 2013, Jaguar Land Rover has been named Responsible Business of the Year by Business in the Community.
- 1.12 Sustainable economic development is important to the future of Jaguar Land Rover and the business is committed to the protection of the environment, enhancing natural resources and protecting wildlife habitats. Jaguar Land Rover seeks to meet or exceed legal and regulatory requirements in all of its activities.
- 1.13 This report sets out why Jaguar Land Rover needs to expand its operations onto the Green Belt land at Damson Parkway. It includes an overview of the existing site, as well as providing an explanation of the despatch process including the operational requirements for Jaguar Land Rover. It also sets out the need for the proposal including a comparison with other motor manufacturers, and clearly sets out the 'very special circumstances' for the development. The detailed design of the proposed despatch area has been driven by the need to

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1 Solihull Local Plan – Shaping a Sustainable Future (adopted December 2013)

minimise the impact of the scheme on the character and openness of the Green Belt, as well as ensuring that appropriate mitigation measures are put in place. The design of the scheme has also been influenced by the requirements of Birmingham Airport, particularly with regards to trees and ecology.

- 1.14 Whilst this document provides the most accurate information at the current time, it is important to note that due to the continually evolving nature of the automotive industry, it is very difficult to accurately forecast beyond the next five years, and there are numerous external factors that affect the businesses expansion plans.

## 2.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLANT

2.1 The site at Lode Lane has been used for the production and manufacture of Land Rover vehicles since 1948. It is where the Range Rover, Range Rover Sport, Defender and Discovery are produced. It is also one of eight UK locations in which members of the public can test their on and off-road driving skills in the Land Rover Experience Centre.

### The Site

2.2 The site is located approximately three kilometres to the north east of Solihull town centre, south of the A45 and Birmingham Airport. It is approximately four kilometres from the M42. The site is located within the Solihull urban area with access from Lode Lane for visitors and employees, and access from Damson Parkway for deliveries and vehicle dispatch.

2.3 The site occupies an area of 130 hectares and is designated as Employment land. The site is bound by residential development to the north, south and west, with Damson Wood Estate located to the south, Damson Park to the south east and residential development at Lode Lane to the west and Tanhouse Farm and Chapelfields to the north. Elmdon Park abuts the site to the east.

2.4 The Jaguar Land Rover site is the subject of Solihull Noise Abatement Order No. 2:1980 which forms part of the Control of Pollution Act 1974. Any activity within the site must remain within the control requirements of this Order.

2.5 In simple terms, the vehicle manufacturing process at the plant consists of the following activities.



2.6 The following diagram illustrates where these activities are taking place on site at the moment, as well as where the expanded manufacturing buildings, which have been granted planning permission as outlined below, will be located.

**Figure 2 - Existing and Future (Short to Medium Term) Manufacturing Activities**



### **Planning History**

- 2.7 Whilst this report focuses on the challenges associated with the new despatch area, it is important to consider this development in the context of the other developments at the site, in order to ensure that cumulative impact of all development at the plant is fully understood.
- 2.8 The first planning history records for the Jaguar Land Rover plant date back to 1948. Since this time, there have been numerous planning applications relating to various changes throughout the site up to the present day.
- 2.9 The most major applications in recent time have been for the T5 Body in White extension totalling 48,000 sqm, which received planning permission in November 2001 (Ref – 2001/2074) and in March 2011, planning permission was granted for Deck 92 (a component store) totalling 13,300 sqm (Ref –

2010/2123). Construction of this building was completed at the end of 2012 and also includes a state-of-the-art visitor centre.

- 2.10 Two other major developments are planned to facilitate increased production on the site. In December 2011, planning permission was granted (subject to a Section 106 agreement) for the 'Demolition of existing buildings north and south of **Block 96** and their replacement with extensions; associated changes to the existing internal roadway; and associated landscaping and minor works' (Ref - 2011/1769). The new Block 96 will provide approximately 88,083 sqm of floorspace (a net increase of 47,791 sqm) and will be used as a 'Trim and Final' assembly facility, which is the final part of the vehicle production process. The building works on this project are now completed and the internal process equipment installation is now taking place and is due to be completed towards the third quarter of 2014.
- 2.11 In April 2013 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council granted planning permission subject to a Section 106 agreement (Ref - 2012/673/S) for a new Body in White facility (**Block 2**). This is where pressed metal panels are assembled to form the main frame and metal body of vehicles prior to being painted in the Paint Shop - the body is assembled on automated tracks with robots and presses. Construction of this building has commenced and the building is due to be completed by the first quarter of 2014, with process equipment installation due to be completed towards the third quarter of 2014.
- 2.12 In September 2013, planning permission was granted, subject to a Section 106 agreement, for the replacement of an existing surface level car park (1,900 spaces) with a new car park comprising surface level parking and two decked levels, providing a total of 4,265 spaces (net gain of 2,365 spaces), a new signalised junction at Lode Lane North and associated ancillary works (Ref - 2013/1015). Construction of the car park has begun and the works to the junction are due to commence in mid April 2014. It is envisaged that the junction works will be completed by the end of June 2014 and the car park will be fully operational in July 2014.
- 2.13 The new car park is required to provide on-site car parking for employees, and as manufacturing activity increases, so have the number of employees working at the plant. The car park is also required as a result of a change in shift patterns in May 2012, from a two shift operation to a three shift operation

(06:00 to 13:30; 13:30 to 21:00 and 21:00 to 06:00), resulting in periods where workers for two consecutive shifts are on site at the same time.

- 2.14 It is imperative that adequate access into and out of the site is provided for employees working on site. Although Jaguar Land Rover continues to promote more sustainable methods of travel, a significant number of employees drive to work for various reasons, the majority of which are outside of Jaguar Land Rover's direct control as an employer.
- 2.15 Prior to the construction of the car park and as a temporary solution, Jaguar Land Rover has leased approximately 1,000 additional car parking spaces at Birmingham Airport for employees to park, who are then transferred to site by bus. This has mainly been used by non-core manufacturing employees and visitors.
- 2.16 The remaining sections of this paper consider the expanded despatch area, which is the subject of this planning application on Land at Damson Parkway in more detail.

### 3.0 VEHICLE DESPATCH

3.1 In simple terms, the despatch operation is where new cars are prepared in readiness for when they leave the plant, most commonly they will travel on a transporter to UK Dealerships and UK ports of exit for onward shipping to market. At Solihull all vehicles leave the plant on specialist transporters via the road network. Figure 3 shows which ports vehicles are taken to.

**Figure 3 – Main UK Ports of Exit (Volume percentage by port) 2013**



- 3.2 The current site despatch location has been operating on the same footprint for over 40 years with minimal change to the current footprint. However, innovations in IT, transporter design and fuel efficiency have moved on tremendously. The site's business transformation/expansion plans now call for a change to the process and its footprint.
- 3.3 The need for a new despatch area is driven by an increase in manufacturing volumes at the site including new models, as well as new model year changes to existing models. This in turn is driven by consumer demand, particularly from markets like China, the UK, the US and Russia. Jaguar Land Rover foresees that demand will continue to increase over the next five to ten years and it is imperative that the business can respond to increased levels of demand, which is anticipated to increase significantly.
- 3.4 In addition, as the site has begun to massively transform its manufacturing capability, this has led to other parts of the business, mainly manufacturing and data system operations<sup>2</sup> encroaching on the existing despatch footprint. It is also envisaged that any spare space at the current despatch area would be used as additional space for WIP (Work in Progress) and Batch and Hold vehicle storage. This will be necessary as increased production volumes result in a corresponding increase in the requirement to accommodate WIP and Batch and Hold vehicle thresholds.
- 3.5 Batch and Hold occurs when a new vehicle is launched, or when a New Model Year change is introduced on an existing model. In order to 'Quality Test' these vehicles and ensure that any teething problems are minimised, Jaguar Land Rover is required to hold a certain quantum of vehicles before they can be released to the customer.
- 3.6 WIP (Work in Progress) is where vehicles are held because they are not completely finished and are not quite ready to leave the plant, there could be various reasons for this. One of the most common reasons is to allow final quality checks to be undertaken, to ensure all vehicles meet stringent quality controls. These vehicles cannot leave the plant and must be stored securely on site until any concerns are resolved.

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<sup>2</sup> Specifically a new multi-million pound Data Centre (one of the UK's most advanced facilities) & Conformity of Production and Homologation testing facility.

3.7 A new despatch area will also ensure that Jaguar Land Rover, and in particular the Solihull plant retains its competitiveness, when compared with other Motor Manufacturers. A recent benchmark exercise of the despatch operations associated with other motor manufacturers has been undertaken. This exercise uses publicly available data sources and is summarised in the table below.

**Figure 4 – 2011/2012 Motor Manufacturer Benchmark – Plant Output versus Distribution Acreage**

<b>Manufacturer</b>	<b>Factory</b>	<b>Production (annual / fiscal volumes)</b>	<b>Distribution Acreage (Despatch Area)</b>
Honda - Swindon	Swindon	97,459	60
MINI - Oxford	Oxford	191,474	24
Nissan - Sunderland	Sunderland	480,485	100
Toyota - Derby	Burnaston	128,146	73
General Motors	Ellesmere Port	137,971	45
<b>JLR</b>	<b>Solihull</b>	<b>151,000</b>	<b>8</b>
JLR	Halewood	171,000	16
BMW	Dingolfing	343,000	42.3
Audi	Ingolstadt	583,824	27.8

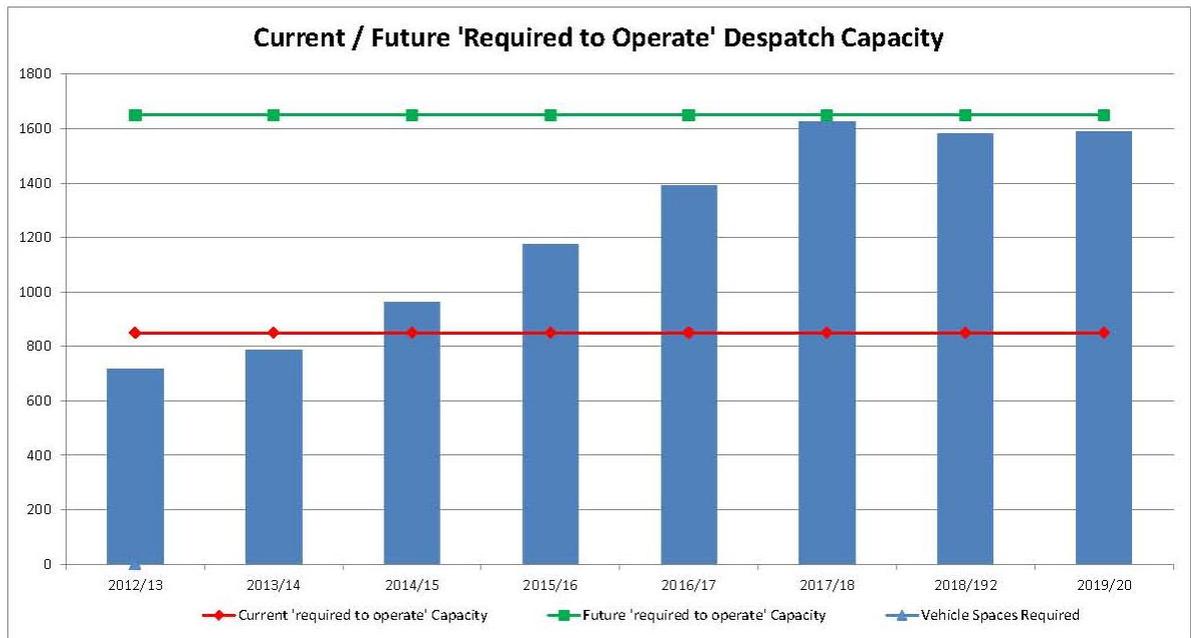
*NB - Based on 2011/2012 data*

3.8 Figure 4 clearly shows that the existing despatch area at Jaguar Land Rover Solihull is extremely small in the context of the number of vehicles produced at the plant. This is particularly apparent when compared with other automotive sites across the UK, such as Nissan in Sunderland which is estimated to have 100 acres of distribution space compared to Jaguar Land Rover’s eight acres. Similarly BMW in Germany distributes 343,000 cars from a site which is nearly double the size of the available Damson Parkway land or more than five times larger than the current Solihull despatch facility. Furthermore, this analysis does not account for the fact that the vehicles produced at Solihull are large 4 x 4 vehicles which command a bigger footprint than some of the other manufacturers’ products.

3.9 The graph below shows the current and estimated future ‘required to operate’ despatch capacity at Jaguar Land Rover Solihull. This essentially shows the number of vehicle spaces required to hold vehicles in the despatch area. It does not include the additional requirements for loading lanes, transporter

manoeuvring area and all of the other ancillary facilities required to make the despatch facility operational (explained in Section 4 in detail). It also excludes the need to ensure that there is a 'buffer' to deal with extraordinary circumstances, such as when there is an accident on the road network or if a Motorway is closed.

**Figure 5 – Current / Future 'Required to Operate' Despatch Capacity**



3.10 The analysis clearly demonstrates that Jaguar Land Rover's existing despatch area is under immense pressure, which will cause operational inefficiencies if an alternative compound location is not identified. Ultimately without investment and expansion the Solihull site will not be able to compete with other manufacturing sites in the UK and Europe which will jeopardise Jaguar Land Rover's ability to compete with its nearest motor manufacturing rivals.

## 4.0 TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DESPATCH

### Despatch and Distribution Process

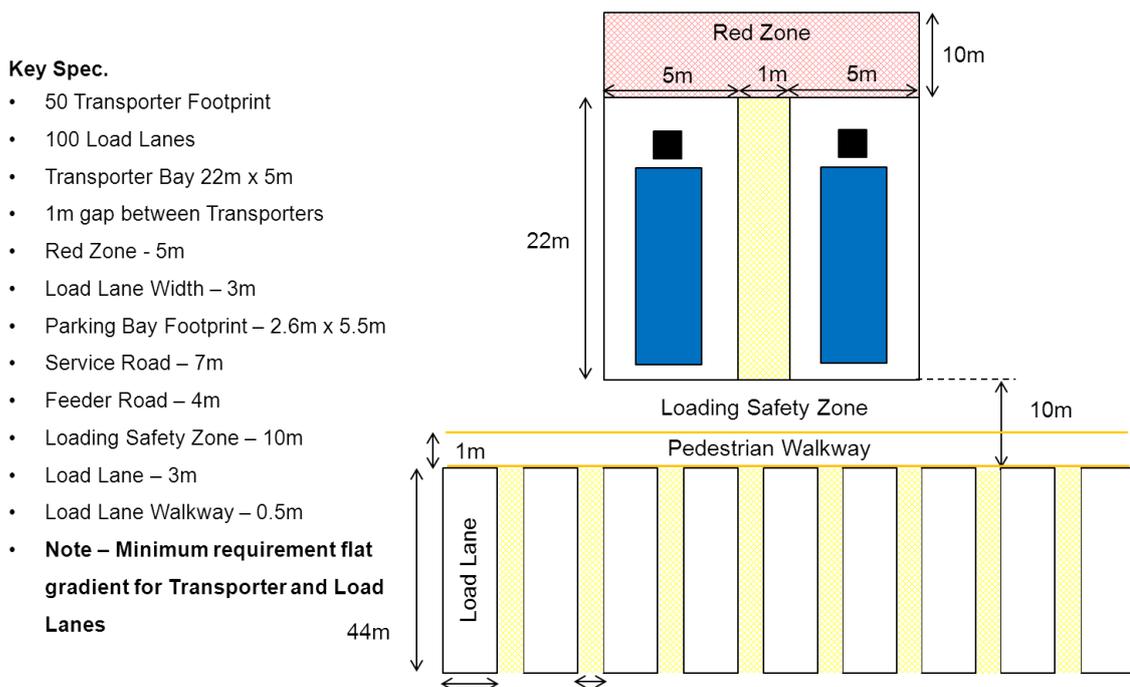
4.1 The despatch area is part of the distribution process and is an integral part of the factory. Some of the key components of the despatch operation are described in more detail below.

- **Vehicle Inspection / Manufacturing Handover Facility** – this is an area where a final quality control check is carried out on all vehicles to ensure they are in pristine customer condition before leaving the plant. It is at this point that Jaguar Land Rover hands over the vehicle to the contracted handling/logistics service provider. This area needs to be well lit (c. 1,000 lux) to minimise damage to vehicles and reduce the risk of accidents.
- **Accepted by Sales (ABS)** – once the vehicle has been inspected and is ready for sales, it is handed over from manufacturing and the vehicle gets 'ABS'd', which is the formal (internal) exchange from manufacturing to sales and marketing, and the vehicle is ready for customer delivery.
- **Transport Load Assignment** – this is where finished sales vehicles are assembled and pre-selected for destination, transporter resource is organised and driver assigned, ready for imminent plant evacuation i.e. for transport to a UK port or UK dealer.
- **Transporter Loading Lanes** – this is where finished vehicles are directly loaded onto the transporters. It is proposed that the loading area is located at the furthest distance away from the nearest residential properties to minimise any disturbance to residential amenity. The loading area must be well lit so that safety is never compromised and it needs to have a concrete base because of the heavy loads being transported. The business has a requirement for 50 transporter loading lanes. This is to ensure that vehicles are evacuated from the despatch compound in line with customer delivery timescales, and is influenced by the fact that vehicles transporters do not arrive at the site at regular intervals throughout the day, and up to 25% of vehicles awaiting despatch may be loaded onto vehicle transporters concurrently. It is also important to understand that the average loading

time for each transporter is approximately one hour and 15 minutes including documentation processing.

- Transporter Manoeuvring and parking area** – This is where transporters enter the site, manoeuvre and park up temporarily in readiness for allocation of a transporter bay for vehicle loading. The business has a requirement for this area to allow continuous feed of the 50 transporter loading lanes and various space standards must be adhered to in order to comply with Health and Safety legislation (refer to Figure 6 below). This area must also have a concrete base to ensure that it can cope with the heavy loads of the transporters.

**Figure 6 – Layout Specifications for the Despatch Operation**



- Special Moves Area** – This is a small but high profile part of the despatch operation, and it requires a dedicated area. This part of the business prepares deliveries of 'special' vehicles, such as the police, Royal Family, celebrities and dignitaries, modified vehicles i.e. 'Cherry Pickers' and naturally all Jaguar Land Rover's worldwide press events i.e. international motor shows.

- **Administrative Facilities** – Accommodation for all personnel involved in the co-ordination and planning of all these vehicle despatch activities.
- **Transporter-Driver Facilities** – Typically the average transporter driver leaves his home on a Monday morning at 6am and does not get back home until 6pm on a Friday night. The existing despatch area provides limited facilities for drivers coming to the site. Jaguar Land Rover is responsible for providing adequate facilities and a comfortable environment for the drivers including a reception area, seating area, rest area wash facilities and tea/coffee areas. This must be provided within the despatch area.
- **Visitor Car Parking, Dealer and VIP Self Collects Reception Area** - a small part of the site will be needed for these activities, which needs to be separated from the main despatch area.
- **Other Functional Requirements** – space is also required for other functional requirements which are critical to the despatch process, such as a vehicle wash facility to remove surface debris and dust, and storage for maintenance equipment such as gritters / snow ploughs for the winter conditions.

4.2 Based on Jaguar Land Rover’s business expansion programme, the future requirement calls for a new despatch area to provide circa 100 loads for incoming transporters each accommodating approximately eight vehicles per load.

4.3 The requirement for 100 load lanes is driven by the need to ensure that there is sufficient space to accommodate peak production volumes and to ensure that the transported loading operation is as efficient as possible and to prevent any delays occurring. The loading lanes need to have a bonded tarmac type surface and sufficient lighting to enable staff to perform the basic process, i.e. manifest creation, reading the unique destination labelling codes and performing Vehicle Identification Number (a riveted stamped plate under the windscreen) to destination label checks, all of which are assigned to each and every vehicle produced.

## **Key Requirements for Despatch**

- 4.4 A number of factors have also been taken into account when considering the location and siting of a new despatch facility which are explained in more detail below.

### **Location**

- 4.5 The despatch area needs to be as close to the existing plant as possible to minimise freight on the public road. Damson Parkway is a compromise in this respect because the Damson Parkway road runs between the existing plant and the site. Alternative sites have also been considered and this is discussed further in the next Section.

### **Security**

- 4.6 The despatch area must be secure and away from public view to minimise the risk of theft and damage to vehicles. The need for maximum security is a direct result of the characteristics of the 4 x 4 Land Rover vehicles which are specifically designed to cover all terrains and to overcome most obstacles in their way.

### **Safety**

- 4.7 The safety of people working in the despatch area is key, as well as ensuring that the risk of any damage occurring to customer finished vehicles is minimised. Vehicle despatch is currently a 24/7 hour operation and it will be necessary to load cars onto the transporters throughout the day and night. As a result, the despatch area needs to be well lit and the design of the area has to adhere to various space standards, such as providing an area, known as 'the red zone'. This is a pedestrian no-go zone situated directly in front of the loading transporter which is designed to minimise risk and is a key health and safety requirement.

### **Sterile and Clean Environment**

- 4.8 The despatch area must be a clean and sterile area, free from anything which could damage, contaminate or generally cause any delay to customer delivery.

Leaves from trees, general foliage and debris and any airborne contaminants are known to cause customer warranty issues.

### **Drainage**

- 4.9 It is important to ensure that there is no standing water at any time in the despatch area as this can damage the products. There is a need for a vehicle wash facility which will require drainage. Occasionally chemical solutions are used to remove airborne iron oxide contamination from vehicles and it will be important to ensure that this does not result in any water-course contamination.

### **Gradient**

- 4.10 It is a minimum requirement for the transporter loading area and load lanes to have a relatively flat gradient for safe loading processes.

### **Lighting**

- 4.11 There are a number of reasons that dictate why the site must be well lit. Firstly, this is needed to ensure that staff can drive both the transporters and Jaguar Land Rover vehicles (the products) safely. Jaguar Land Rover employees also need to be able to read the unique vehicle destination labelling that is given to each vehicle to ensure that the correct vehicle is taken to the correct load lane and loaded onto the correct transporter and ultimately taken to the correct delivery address worldwide.

### **General Ground Surface Material**

- 4.12 It is essential that the ground surface does not have any loose shale which could damage the vehicles.

## **5.0 ALTERNATIVE SITES**

5.1 A number of options and alternative sites to provide a new despatch facility have been explored. These are discussed further below.

*(i) Sports & Social Club (including Billsmore Wood)*

5.2 This land falls within Jaguar Land Rover's ownership and forms part of the existing site. However, this land is taken up by the Sports & Social Club, which is a well used local amenity space, and Billsmore Wood which is an area of protected woodland. Other problems associated with this land are its proximity to the surrounding residential areas, and also the need for transporters to travel through these residential areas to access the site. In addition, this area of land is not considered to be of a sufficient size to meet Jaguar Land Rover's requirements.

*(ii) Elmdon Park*

5.3 Elmdon Park lies within the Green Belt, and is partly designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and Local Nature Reserve. Elmdon Parish Church, a Grade II Listed Building also lies on the site boundary. The park comprises grassland, meadows, mature woodland and ponds there is a high probability of the presence of protected wildlife species such as nesting birds, great crested newts, toads and other amphibians. The park is open to the public and an important recreational asset for the local community.

5.4 Expansion onto land at Elmdon Park is likely to be highly problematic given the constraints that exist in respect of nature conservation, biodiversity, landscape and amenity value.

*(iii) Land at Birmingham Airport*

5.5 Land at Birmingham Airport has also been considered, although it has been discounted because it is too far from the main plant. The economic inefficiencies associated with taking large volumes of unregistered vehicles to a site away from the plant renders this and other off site options unviable for the business. A cost analysis has been undertaken which demonstrates that the cost of the despatch operation increases by approximately three times, if the

despatch operation is moved ten miles away from the site. Moving the operation further away from the site, increases this cost even more.

(iv) Multi-storey storage facility on site

- 5.6 The option of providing a multi-storey despatch facility on the site has been explored. This option presents various challenges that can not easily be overcome. For example, the risk of damage to vehicles increases and there is insufficient space within the existing site boundary to provide a despatch facility.

(v) Solihull Moors Football Club

- 5.7 Solihull Moors Football Club occupy a site adjacent to the D1 and D2 entrances to the Jaguar Land Rover plant in Solihull. Both of these entrances are primarily used by the majority of HGVs (directly associated with the production of vehicles), as well as some employees.

- 5.8 To the north and north east of the football club, between the club and the A45 Coventry Road lies a portion of agricultural land which is currently a mixture of agricultural farm land and shrub land.

- 5.9 The football club site itself comprises a club house, car park and sports fields. It is used for a range of football related activities and the function rooms are available for members of the public to hire for parties and events. The area of the site occupied by the Football Club is approximately three hectares (compared to the Damson Parkway site which is approximately 13 hectares).

- 5.10 The football club and the adjacent fields are located within the Green Belt. It is important to note that a designated Local Nature Reserve lies to the north at Elmdon Park, which Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council seek to protect and manage in the interests of nature conservation (Policy P10 – Natural Environment of the adopted Local Plan).

- 5.11 It is also considered that the football club site and surrounding fields are less visually contained than the proposed site on Land at Damson Parkway, and their use as a despatch area for Damson Parkway would cause significant harm to the visual amenity of the area.

- 5.12 Playing fields, sports and recreational facilities are also protected by both national and local planning policy. Policy P20 (Provision for Open Space, Children's Play, Sport, Recreation and Leisure) of the adopted Local Plan states that the loss of existing facilities through development will not be permitted where they are of value to the local community for recreation, visual amenity, nature conservation or make an important contribution to the quality of the environment or network of green infrastructure unless it can be demonstrated that the open space is surplus to requirements or the need or benefit of the development clearly outweigh the loss. Policy P18 (Health and Wellbeing) also states that the loss of community and social infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that it can no longer continue for commercial or operational reasons, there are identified benefits of the use being discontinued and adequate alternative provision can be made.
- 5.13 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council has a Playing Pitch Strategy published in October 2012. This report notes that the playing fields at Solihull Moors are 'overplayed' (page 28) and notes that there are several clubs that currently express latent demand, which they cannot meet due to lack of access to pitches (page 47). Overall, it also notes that there is a deficit of football pitches within the Borough, particularly within the central and north areas.
- 5.14 Sport England would be a statutory consultee and generally object to any planning application, which will result in the loss of a playing field, unless it meets one of five exceptions. If a local authority is minded to grant planning permission against Sport England's advice, then the application is 'referable' for possible 'Call-in'.
- 5.15 It would only be possible to use this land if an alternative and acceptable site could be found, on which to relocate the football club. Notwithstanding this, JLR's most recent discussions with the football club have confirmed that the football club do not wish to move or relocate at the current time.
- 5.16 Solihull Borough Football and Athletic Club are the freehold owners of the football club site with a lease to Solihull Moors Football Club Limited. Information from the Land Registry reveals that Stoford Developments Ltd have a ten year option agreement on this land, dated 12th July 2012. Whilst, it is recognised that this agreement is in place, the football club have expressed to Jaguar Land Rover that they are happy with their existing site and want to consolidate their activities and build a stronger operation around their 27 teams.

At the current time, they believe that a move to an alternative site would threaten this plan.

- 5.17 In addition, Jaguar Land Rover currently use part of the football club's car park for contractor car parking. This provides a valuable income stream for the football club and they wish to see this continue.
- 5.18 From a highways perspective, theoretically, the use of the Solihull Moors Football Club site could negate the need to build a bridge or tunnel, and the likely impacts on junctions may be marginally less than the current proposal as the current access to the football club site could be utilised, negating the need to upgrade the D1 junction. However, there are still many highways constraints. Finished vehicles would have to 'cross' the lane adjacent to the plant which leads to Elmdon Park, which represents a potential security risk for Jaguar Land Rover, and would cause disruption to users of this lane. Whilst a bridge or tunnel over this road would not be required for capacity reasons, one may be considered for security and safety reasons.
- 5.19 Furthermore, finished vehicles would have to be driven back from the inspection area in the south of the site through the plant and across to the football club site via the north east of the site, which would be much more time-consuming and present significant challenges for the operation. In addition, arriving transporters would have to cross over Damson Parkway to access the football club area in the north. This would necessitate a deceleration lane on the right hand side of the outside lane of the southbound carriageway, but there would still be a risk that transporters would begin their deceleration in the outside lane (i.e. the fast lane).
- 5.20 The football club site alone is not big enough to accommodate the requirement for a new despatch area. A larger parcel of land would be required, which would mean extending into the neighbouring fields.
- 5.21 As noted above, the freehold owners of the football club site is Solihull Borough Football and Athletic Club with a lease to Solihull Moors Football Club Limited. Stoford Developments Ltd have a ten year option agreement on the land dated 12th July 2012. The freeholder of the area of land adjacent to the football club is Silkplan Limited and WPD Midlands Holdings is the leaseholder (lease granted in 1999). It is understood that as of October 2012, Stoford Developments Ltd had a three month exclusivity arrangement with Silkplan pursuant to a three

year option agreement to purchase the land. It is not known whether this exclusivity arrangement has been extended or if the option agreement for Stoford to purchase the land has been agreed, however, it is known that all of the agreements were subject to planning and personal to Stoford.

- 5.22 With regards to availability, the Solihull Moors Football Club is a well established and well used facility serving Solihull and the surrounding area. Whilst the freeholders of the football club site have clearly had discussions with Stoford Developments Ltd regarding the possibility of purchasing the land within the next ten years, Jaguar Land Rover understand that there is no intention from the current occupiers and leaseholders of the site (Solihull Moors Football Club Limited) to relocate to an alternative facility.
- 5.23 In terms of deliverability, the football club site alone is not big enough to accommodate the size of despatch area required by Jaguar Land Rover. A large enough site could only be delivered if it was possible to incorporate the adjacent agricultural fields. The adjacent fields are owned by Silkplan Limited, who have entered into a three year option agreement with a Stoford Developments Ltd. It is understood that there was an exclusivity arrangement in place between Stoford Developments Ltd and Silkplan, and Jaguar Land Rover can not purchase the land.
- 5.24 It is important to note that Jaguar Land Rover want to develop a new despatch area for the sole use of Jaguar Land Rover, and do not wish to enter into an agreement with an external development partner, such as Stoford Developments Ltd. There is a critical business-led need for the new despatch area and Jaguar Land Rover must have a certain level of control over the development to ensure that it meets the requirements of the business and can be brought into use on time. Development with a third party developer, such as Stoford creates risks and a level of uncertainty for Jaguar Land Rover.
- 5.25 Jaguar Land Rover's requirement for a new despatch area is driven by the operational requirements of the business and in particular, the product cycle, which dictates that there is a need to deliver a new despatch facility by Spring 2015. It would be extremely challenging to enter into a land agreement to use the land at Solihull Moors Football Club and adjacent land. As highlighted above, this would require the agreement of at least two landowners, as well as finding an alternative site for the Football Club, before any design work or technical

studies could be completed and this would clearly not meet the operational time constraints of the business.

5.26 Jaguar Land Rover is committed to minimising the impact of the development at Damson Parkway. Jaguar Land Rover will ensure that all necessary mitigation is in place and will have full control over the operation of the despatch area and its future management. This would not be the case if Jaguar Land Rover entered into an agreement with Stoford.

5.27 Jaguar Land Rover will accept a personal planning permission, which would limit the occupation and use of the land at Damson Parkway to Jaguar Land Rover only, and the business would revert the land back to its previous use (agricultural fields) should the land become surplus to Jaguar Land Rover's requirements in the future. A development led by Stoford on the football club site and adjacent fields would create a permanent change in the landscape.

## 6.0 PREFERRED OPTION

- 6.1 The most suitable area of land identified to expand the factory to provide a new despatch area is on Land at Damson Parkway, which is the subject of this planning application.
- 6.2 The land falls within the Green Belt and is owned by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. Further information is provided in the accompanying Planning Statement.
- 6.3 Jaguar Land Rover has engaged with the Council to discuss the various issues associated with developing this land and a detailed design process has taken place.
- 6.4 The detailed design and technical issues associated with developing this site are addressed in the reports which accompany the planning application.

**Figure 7 – Proposed Site Area for new Despatch**



- 6.5 It is proposed that the site at Damson Parkway will primarily be used for despatch, however in order to ensure the optimal use of space at the plant, it

may also be used for short periods of WIP holding and occasional new model year Batch and Hold activity. It is envisaged that the existing despatch footprint and process will need to be displaced in order to allow the future needs for WIP and Batch and Hold site programmes.

6.6 As the new despatch facility will be located on the eastern side of Damson Parkway and it is necessary for Jaguar Land Rover products to cross Damson Parkway. With regards to the movement of Jaguar Land Rover products across Damson Parkway, a detailed analysis has been undertaken to review three options; an at-grade crossing, a tunnel and a bridge.

6.7 A detailed technical report is submitted with the planning application, but in summary it has been determined that the most suitable solution is a bridge crossing due to the following reasons:

- Less environmental impact; removal of existing woodland is minimised, less pollution as less materials to be removed from site.
- Impact on the surrounding road network is reduced as much as possible.
- Smaller ramp for access limits the impact/restrictions on future use of the eastern end of the Jaguar Land Rover plant.
- To minimise the risks involved with working in proximity to the strategic water main in Damson Parkway.

6.8 A tunnel under Damson Parkway has been discounted for the following reasons:

- Risk of damage to Severn Trent Water strategic water main under Damson Parkway – risking cutting off water from hundreds of houses, the airport and the NIA.
- Impact on the existing woodland within the proposed site as a significant area would need to be cleared to provide adequate room for construction of the access ramp.
- Impact on local road network. Significant earthworks are required for the tunnel resulting in between 500 to 1,000 lorry movements to dispose of the

material offsite. This would have an impact on air quality, noise and disruption to the road network and potential delays.

- Need for partial road closure to support the water main in Damson Parkway resulting in disruption to the road network and potential delays.
- Creation of significant restraints on the future use and flexibility of the eastern end of the Jaguar Land Rover plant.

6.9 There are also a number of challenges associated with an 'at-grade' crossing including the administrative costs and challenges associated with temporarily taxing vehicles so that they can cross a public highway. It would also not be possible to move products across Damson Parkway during shift change-over periods due to volumes of traffic, which results in the loss of six hours operational time. Modifications required to the road along Damson Parkway would also lead to significant delays during the construction period, due to the need to widen carriageways and modify existing traffic islands.

6.10 The design of the new despatch area is considered further in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and a policy analysis is provided in the Planning Statement. Detailed consideration has been given to the need to minimise the impact of the development on the Green Belt, on ecology and on local communities, whilst ensuring that the despatch area meets the requirements of Jaguar Land Rover.

6.11 The scheme provides a number of benefits to local communities. The transporter loading area has been located as far away as possible from the residential properties located to the south of Damson Parkway and the transporter access has been designed to ensure transporters route via the A45, thus preventing transporters from driving through surrounding residential areas. The scheme also includes various mitigation measures to minimise the impact of the development, which are discussed fully in the accompanying reports.

## 7.0 SUMMARY

- 7.1 Jaguar Land Rover has produced Land Rover vehicles in Solihull since 1948 and the business is investing heavily in the plant in response to increased customer demand, and to ensure that the plant remains competitive and efficient in a global marketplace.
- 7.2 Jaguar Land Rover foresees that demand will continue to increase over the next five to ten years and it is imperative that the business can respond to increased levels of demand and it is anticipated that production will increase significantly at the site.
- 7.3 A number of new manufacturing buildings have been granted planning permission in the last five years and several more developments are planned including the development of a decked employee car park (under construction), a new office building and the demolition of Block 1 and South Works to provide 'Batch & Hold' and 'WIP' (Work in Progress) vehicle parking. There is also an over-riding need to provide a new despatch area to cope with the increased volumes of vehicles being manufactured at the plant, which this report has considered in detail.
- 7.4 Opportunities to expand and redevelop the site are severely constrained due to the proximity of neighbouring residential areas and the presence of Elmdon Park Local Nature Reserve. The only available land within the existing site boundary is the Sports and Social Club and Billsmore Wood, which is considered unsuitable for a new despatch area. Land at Solihull Moors Football Club has also been considered as part of an alternative site assessment.
- 7.5 Land at Damson Parkway has been identified and it is considered to be the only real viable option to meet the operational requirements of the business. The land identified at Damson Parkway is owned by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and forms part of the Green Belt designation.
- 7.6 Whilst local planning policy provides positive support for the '*reasonable expansion of the site into the Green Belt where economic need can be demonstrated and appropriate mitigation secured*', in accordance with planning policy, this report provides the 'Very Special Circumstances' to justify the release of the land from the Green Belt and to demonstrate that the exceptional

nature of the proposal outweighs the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt.

- 7.7 The despatch operation is where new cars are prepared in readiness to leave the plant. At Solihull all vehicles leave the plant on specialist transporters to travel to UK Dealerships and ports. The existing despatch area has been operating on the same footprint for over 40 years with minimal change to its footprint. Innovations in IT, transporter design and fuel efficiency have moved on tremendously and the plant's growth now calls for a change to the process and its footprint. Furthermore, the existing despatch area is extremely small in the context of the number of vehicles produced at the plant and when compared with other automotive sites across the UK and in Europe.
- 7.8 The despatch area comprises a compound area to store finished vehicles, as well as loading lanes, a manoeuvring area for transporters and a host of ancillary facilities, which are required to make the despatch facility fully operational. There are also a number of health and safety requirements that have to be met.
- 7.9 The despatch area needs to be as close to the existing plant as possible to minimise freight on the public road. Damson Parkway is a compromise in this respect because the Damson Parkway road runs between the existing plant and the site and the most significant challenge for the business is how to get the finished vehicles across Damson Parkway from the existing site to the new despatch area. Various options have been considered but it has been determined that the most suitable option to provide a physical link between the existing plant and the Land at Damson Parkway is a bridge.
- 7.10 Jaguar Land Rover wish to locate the vehicle loading area as far away from the residential properties located to the south of Damson Parkway as possible, and in order to ensure that transporters use the route via the A45, access to the loading area will be located towards the northern end of the site, which would also help to prevent transporters from driving through surrounding residential areas).
- 7.11 In conclusion, an expanded despatch operation is absolutely critical to the future of Jaguar Land Rover's operation in Solihull. Ultimately without investment the site will not be able to compete with other manufacturing sites in the UK and Europe which will jeopardise Jaguar Land Rover's ability to compete with its

nearest motor manufacturing rivals. Land at Damson Parkway is considered to be the best available option for a new facility.

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