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Our ref: General/40b – Planning Conformity/Final Response/A1 Tesco at Ripon Road

17 September 2007

JP Fitzgerald  
Director of Development Services  
Harrogate Borough Council  
Knapping Mount  
West Grove Road  
Harrogate  
HG1 2AE

Dear Pat,

**Application reference: 07/04411/FULMAJ**

**Erection of supermarket (use class A1) with associated car parking, link walkway from upper car park, recycling unit, revised road layout including formation of new vehicular access onto Skipton Road and Ripon Road, pedestrian access onto Electric Avenue and soft landscaping at Skipton Road, Harrogate, HG1 3EX.**

Thank you for consulting the Assembly on the above. I am pleased to forward the following officer comments to you, based on the current and draft RSS.

### **Status of the Assembly and the Regional Spatial Strategy**

The Assembly, as the Regional Planning Body, has been asked to comment on this development as its nature and location mean that it could have an effect on the implementation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The current RSS for Yorkshire and Humber (based on the Selective Review of RPG12) was issued by the Secretary of State in December 2004. The RSS has the status of a Development Plan Document and forms part of the framework for decisions taken under section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), which means that decisions on all applications have to be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and Circular 08/2005 make it clear that a draft RSS submitted to the Secretary of State is a relevant regional policy against which strategic applications can be considered. This Assembly response therefore also highlights relevant issues that arise from the Yorkshire and Humber Plan (draft RSS) December 2005 – the RSS submitted to the Secretary of State.

The Panel Report of the Examination in Public of the Yorkshire and Humber Plan has now been published (May 2007). This contains recommendations to Government that may or may not be reflected in the Proposed Changes to the Plan that are due to be published for consultation in the autumn. The Panel Report backs the Plan's overall approach and strategy. It also includes recommendations for changes or additions to policies. Any points from the Panel Report that are particularly relevant to the Assembly's comments on this application are noted in this response. The Yorkshire and Humber Plan should be published at the beginning of 2008.

### **Observations on the Proposed Development**

In principle the Assembly welcomes the redevelopment of this previously developed site. Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development there are some RSS-related matters that need to be taken into account by the local authority in making their decision.

#### *Sub-Regional Centre*

Current and draft RSS support an urban focus for comparison retail development. Harrogate was identified as a Sub-Regional Centre in the Regional Settlement Strategy that fed into the preparation of the draft RSS. Policy YH5 of draft RSS states that spatial planning decisions should strengthen the identity and role of such centres as accessible and vibrant focal points for trip generating uses.

#### *Sequential Approach*

Policy YH8 of draft RSS states that Sub-Regional Centres should provide for the majority of new development and redevelopment and that it should be subject to a sequential approach which favours firstly, previously developed land within Sub-Regional Centres; secondly, other infill opportunities in-centre and lastly, sites on the periphery or well related in public transport route terms to the Sub-Regional Centre. This approach emerges from Government guidance contained within PPS6: Planning for Town Centres.

It should be noted that the Panel Report (May 2007) recommends changes to Policy YH5 (see pages 26 – 27 and recommendation 3.15) and Policy YH8 (see page 29 and recommendation 3.18) but that the overall policy approach was supported by the Panel.

## *Town Centres*

Away from the Sub-Regional Centres the draft RSS states in Policy YH6 that Principal Service Centres should be the main focus for shopping. Furthermore, Policy YH7 notes that the local services and facilities in local service centres should be retained and improved.

Policy E2A of draft RSS states that city and town centres will be the main focus for comparison shopping and that development should not be located outside of town centres if it would undermine the Plan's Core Approach (Policies YH1 – YH8).

The Panel Report considers that "Policy E2 represents the most appropriate strategy for guiding new town centre type development" (para 4.49, p.44).

## *Accessibility Criteria*

In addition to Policies YH5 and YH8 above, Policy YH1 notes that people's accessibility to shopping should be improved and that fewer and shorter journeys should be facilitated with less reliance on the car and increased opportunities for using public transport, cycling and walking.

It should be noted that the Panel Report (May 2007) recommends changes to the Core Approach (see pages 12 and 13 and recommendation 3.4), but supports its overall strategy.

Ensuring the accessibility of development by non-car modes is a key principle of regional planning policy. The proposal is a high-trip generating development and it is essential that access by non-car modes to the site is a reality. Accessibility criteria are set out in both the current and draft RSS (Table 7.1 and 7.2 of current RSS and Table 16.8 and 16.9 of draft RSS). These tables include acceptable walking and overall journey times for the population that would be travelling to the site. The Panel Report (May 2007) does not suggest changes to these criteria.

It is not clear from the application whether or not an assessment against the accessibility criteria has been carried out.

## *Conclusions*

In the light of the above, we would wish to see the Local Authority considering the following when determining the application:

- how the applicant has demonstrated that a sequential approach to site selection has been followed,
- how well related the proposed development is to the Sub-Regional Centre in terms of public transport and whether there is a high likelihood that such links will be formed,
- how the proposed development impacts upon the vitality and viability of not only the Sub-Regional Centre, but also that of lower order settlements within

the catchment of the proposed development, including the Principal Service Centre of Knaresborough and local centres,

- how well the proposed development relates to the RSS Accessibility Criteria, and
- how less reliance on the car and increased opportunities for walking and cycling have been addressed in the proposed development.

I hope that you find these comments useful. If you have any further queries about our response, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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