

Our ref: 40b – Planning Conformity/final responses/Leeds B1 employment use Morley Aug 07

14 August 2007

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Dear David

Planning Application Number: P/07/02438/OT/S

Outline application to erect b1 employment use with woodland at Bruntcliffe Road/Scott Lane, Morley, Leeds.

Thank you for consulting the Assembly on the above. 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 summer. 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 in early 2008.

Both the existing and draft regional spatial strategies aim to achieve a more sustainable pattern and form of development, investment and activity across the region, putting a greater emphasis on matching needs across the region with opportunities and managing the environment as a key resource. There is a particular emphasis on achieving the regeneration and renaissance of the region's city and town centres by making them the focus for housing, employment, shopping, leisure, education, health and cultural activities and facilities in the region (for example Policy P1, existing RSS, December 2004 and Policy YH5, Draft RSS, December 2005).

In seeking the implementation of these policies across the region, the Assembly therefore offers the following comments on the proposed erection of B1 employment use with woodland.

The proposed development does raise a number of serious issues for the implementation of the RSS that need to be considered. The most significant of these are in relation to the proposed location of the development given its scale and nature.

Regional Policy context

Policies in the current RSS (December 2004) seek to focus development on the region's town and city centres, reduce the need to travel, ensure that development is accessible by a range of transport modes and support the renaissance and regeneration of the region's urban centres by promoting high quality developments that reflect the scale and character of the centres to which they relate (see, for example, policies P1, S4, E1, SOC3, T1, T2).

Policies in draft RSS (December 2005) build on these principles. The Core Approach (Policies YH1 – YH9) makes it clear that most new development, and high trip generating uses, should be focused on Regional and Sub-Regional Centres and that away from these sufficient development should be permitted in Principal Service Centres to enable them to fulfil their role as service centres (Policy YH8 building on policies YH5, YH6 and YH7 and Policies E2 and T1). The Panel Report (May 2007) does not challenge this Core Approach.

Scale and nature – location in Morley

Morley is identified in the Regional Settlement Study (2004) as a Local Service Centre. Morley is a freestanding settlement in the conurbation of Leeds. Policy YH8 of draft RSS (2005) states that limited development should take place in Local

Service Centres with a focus on meeting local needs for affordable housing and economic diversification.

The proposed development is on the edge of the urban area of Morley, outside of its centre. Policies P1 and E4 of current RSS and YH8 of draft RSS provide for an urban-focussed, transport-orientated approach to development. Policies P1 (b) and E4 (a) of current RSS state that, wherever possible, in considering development proposals preference should be given to land within urban areas that support urban concentration.

Policy P1 in current RSS (2004) requires a sequential approach to site selection. YH8B of draft RSS (2005) also makes it clear that a sequential approach should be taken in determining applications to ensure that developments are either reusing land or buildings within centres, infilling sites within centres or are sites that are well connected on public transport routes and that can maximise accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling. Policy YH8C requires a transport-orientated approach to ensure that development makes the best use of transport infrastructure is focussed along existing or planned public transport corridors and maximises accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling. The Panel Report (May 2007) supports this sequential approach. The nature of the proposed development (B1 office floorspace) is a use that the RSS seeks to promote within city and town centres.

Office Use

The development proposes a high level of office use, Policy E4 of current RSS (2004) specifically states that "offices should be located in town and city centres" and Policy E2 of draft RSS (December 2005) reinforces these principles by stating, "city and town centres will be the main focus for office...and other uses which generate a high level of people movements" (for example B1 uses). These uses should not be located out side these centres if they would undermine the delivery of the Plan's Core Approach (YH1-YH8)". Policy E3 of draft RSS (2005) further reinforces that office use should mainly be located in or adjacent to town or city centres.

It should be noted that the Panel Report (May 2007) considers 'that Policy E2 represents the most appropriate strategy for guiding new town centre type development' (paragraph 4.49, page 44).

The nature of the proposed development (B1 office floorspace) is a use that the RSS seeks to promote within city and town centres. Policy YH5 A provides for Regional Centres and Sub Regional Centres to be the prime focus for housing, employment, shopping, leisure, education, health and cultural activities and facilities in the region. Policy YH5 B also provides for Regional and Sub Regional Centres to strengthen the identity and roles of city/town centres as accessible and vibrant focal points for high trip generating uses.

Leeds is identified as a Regional Centre in the draft RSS (2005). Policy LCR1 of draft RSS (2005) seeks to develop the role of Leeds as a Regional Centre and supports the role of Leeds as a major engine of the regional economy. This scale of B1 development would therefore be more appropriately accommodated within the city centre of Leeds (or the city/town centre of a sub regional centre).

Accessibility

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. It should be noted that the Panel Report (March 2007) makes no recommendations with regard to these criteria.

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

Parking Standards

Policy T2 of the draft RSS states that maximum parking standards for new developments must be in line with Table 16.5. There is not sufficient detail provided with the application to assess whether this will be the case.

It should be noted that the Panel Report (May 2007) recommends changes to Policy T2 (see pages 142 – 143 and recommendation 8.6

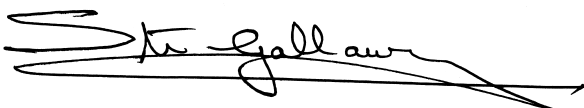
Conclusion

Given the comments set out above, it has been concluded that:

- that the Assembly OBJECTS to the application on the basis that it is not in line with the locational principles of current or draft RSS.

If you have any queries about these points, please do not hesitate to contact Jenny Poxon on 01924 331555.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Galloway
Chair, Regional Planning Board
Yorkshire and Humber Assembly