



Our Ref: General 40b – Planning Conformity/final responses/planning applications /Doncaster,
Residential Development, Pastures Road, Mexborough, April 09

27 April 2009

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Dear Diane

Planning Application Number: 0702001/OUTM

Outline application on approx. 16.11 ha of land comprising of residential development (approx. 8.5ha), public open space (approx 4.5ha) and B1 office development (approx 3.0ha)

Thank you for consulting the Regional Planning Body on the above.

The Regional Planning Body was originally consulted on this application in May 2008. A number of substantive comments were sent in response. In February 2009 there was a revised application on which we were asked to comment. At this point, we reiterated our previous comments as the proposed changes to the application did not affect the points previously made. In March 2009, it was pointed out that the applicant's Design and Access Statement had changed to make reference to an 'emerging RSS' based on 2009 RSS Update consultation work.

In light of the above, this letter plays two roles. Firstly, it clarifies the status of the recent RSS 2009 Update work and how it should be used in relation to the consideration of planning applications in the region. Secondly, it clarifies and adds to the comments made by the Regional Planning Body in May 2008.

RSS 2009 Update work

The applicant's Planning Design and Access Statement Update of January 2009 makes reference to the work that has been undertaken on the 'RSS Update 2009' and suggests that this amounts to an 'emerging RSS' with policy options that are relevant to consideration of the proposed development. The RSS 2009 Update work was partly based on the need to consider Government population estimates that suggest that

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higher rates of house-building will be necessary over the longer term to meet people's needs and to make homes more affordable. This work considered possible policy options through which such needs could be met and sought responses on these through consultation. It is important to stress that this work did not amount to an 'emerging RSS' or policy options to which any weight could be attached in considering proposed developments. Whilst Government household projections remain a relevant material consideration, the work at regional level on their policy implications will now be taken forward through work on the new Integrated Regional Strategy.

Regional Planning Body comments on application

The following comments on the revised application are different from those forwarded in May 2008 in so far as reference to RSS Policy YH7 is removed (to avoid confusion over its use as a 'DC tool') and comments on the proposed B1 uses are included.

Regional Policy Context

Policies in RSS (2008) seek to focus development on the region's town and city centres. The Core Approach (Policies YH1-YH9) makes it clear that most new development, and high trip generating uses, should be focussed on Regional Cities and Sub-Regional Cities and Towns and that away from these sufficient development should be permitted in Principal Town to enable them to fulfil their role as service centres.

Location of development

The proposed development is located to the east on the edge of the settlement of Mexborough. Mexborough is identified in RSS (2008) as a Principal Town. Policy YH5 of RSS (2008) states that Principal Towns will be the main local focus for housing, employment, shopping, leisure, education, health and cultural activities and facilities. Policy SY1 A of RSS (2008) supports the continued regeneration of Mexborough to help continue its developing role as a Principal Town.

Housing

The application states that the proposed development will provide approximately 425 residential units. RSS (2008) sets a target of 1230 dwellings between 2008-2026. Therefore this proposal will make a significant contribution to delivering housing in the Doncaster District.

The application provides no details of the type of homes that will be constructed, but does state that there will be a mix of dwellings of all sizes. Housing mix will need to be a key consideration in this development. Policy H5 in RSS (2008) emphasises the need for the current mix of housing in the Region to change so that it better supports the creation of more sustainable communities. The Policy recommends that plans, strategies, investment decisions and programmes should ensure the provision of homes for a mix that reflects the needs of the area, including family homes, to create sustainable communities. It will be important for the local authority to ensure that there is an appropriate housing mix.

The applicant does not state how much of the proposed housing will be affordable. RSS (2008) identifies Doncaster as an area of 'lower need' for affordable housing (based on the Regional Housing Strategy, 2005). Policy H4B of the RSS suggests that in areas of 'lower need' (including Doncaster) up to 30% of homes need to be affordable.

Uses

The proposal includes 6000 sqm of B1 office development. We understand that this is in addition to the employment uses on the adjacent site but it is not clear if the proposed B1 uses on this site will be ancillary to these other developments. Policy E2 of RSS provides for plans, strategies, investment decisions and programmes to strengthen the role and performance of existing city and town centres. Policy E2 emphasises that the centres of Regional Cities and Sub Regional Cities and Towns should be the focus for offices, retail, leisure, entertainment, arts, culture, tourism and more intensive sport and recreation across the region. The centres of Principal Towns (of which Mexborough is one) should be the focus for local services and facilities.

Policy E3 of RSS (2008) states that local employment reviews to inform LDFs should take account of the potential job growth set out in Tables 11.1 and 11.2 and more detailed local forecasts and up to date information about land needs. This proposal therefore needs to be assessed in the light of regional policy on location of office developments as well as recent work on Doncaster's Employment Land Review.

Accessibility

Accessibility criteria are set out in RSS (Table 13.8 and 13.9). These tables include acceptable walking and overall journey times for the population that would be travelling to the site. It is not clear from the application whether or not an assessment against the accessibility criteria has been carried out.

Car Parking

Policy T2 of RSS (2008) states that the maximum parking standards for new developments must be in line with Table 13.5. There is not sufficient detail provided with the application to assess whether this be the case.

Renewable Energy

The sustainable use of resources is a key theme in RSS (2008). Policy ENV5 states that in advance of local targets being set in DPDs, new developments of more than 10 dwellings should secure at least 10% of their energy from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources.

Conclusion

In conclusion to the comments made the Regional Planning Body would support the development in principle as it is within the Principal Town of Mexborough, but on the basis that:

- The housing mix reflects a local needs assessment and the need for an appropriate housing mix, including levels of affordable housing.
- An assessment of the local Employment Land Review is carried out to establish if this development is of an appropriate scale, particularly in relation to the proposed B1 office uses.
- It is ensured that there is adequate public transport provision and provision for walking and cycling.
- Parking standards are in line with RSS (2008).
- The development is in line with Policy ENV5 (2008).

If you have any queries about this response, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Jenny Poxon
Head of Service, Planning Delivery and Conformity

Please note: from 1 April 2009 officers supporting the work of the Joint Regional Board, the new Regional Planning Body, will work in LGYH; please amend your contact databases accordingly.