



Our Ref: General 40b – Planning Conformity/final responses/Harrogate, Erection of Superstore, Tesco, Aug 09.

5 August 2009

G Bell
Chief Planner (Development Control)
Department of Development Services
Harrogate Borough Council
Knapping Mount
West Grove Road
Harrogate
HG1 2AE

Dear G Bell

Planning Application Number: 09/02704/FULMAJ

Erection of Class A1 superstore, car park, revised access and widening to Skipton Road, access to Ripon Road, pedestrian and vehicular bridges across Oak Beck, pedestrian link to Electric Avenue, automatic recycling facility, landscaping and all ancillary facilities to include felling of various trees within Tree Preservation Order at Site of North East Gas Offices And Service Centre Skipton Road, Harrogate.

Thank you for consulting the Regional Planning Body (RPB) on the above application. The nature of the application has not changed significantly from a previous application supported in principle by the RPB in its response dated 17 September 2007.

However since the RPB provided comments on the above application on 17 September 2007 the current RSS - The Yorkshire and Humber Plan has been issued by the Secretary of State in May 2008. Therefore officer comments have been provided below to ensure that current RSS (2008) policies are reflected.

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.

It is worth highlighting that in the RPB's previous response (dated 17 September 2009) reference was made to Policy YH7 of RSS. In the following comments reference to this policy has been removed. Since the adoption of current RSS (2008) the RPB has sought advice on the use of Policy YH7 and has subsequently been advised that it should not be used as a development control tool. Paragraph 2.50 of RSS (2008) states that Policy YH7 is intended to provide a framework for choosing locations within, and if necessary, adjoining a city or town once strategic decisions about how much development should be focussed there have been made (it is not intended to be used as a development control tool).

Regional Policy Context

In principle the RPB 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 planning authority in making their decision.

Sub Regional Town

Harrogate is identified as a Sub Regional Town in RSS (2008). Policy YH4 of RSS (2008) provides for Sub Regional Cities and Towns to be the prime focus for housing, employment, shopping, leisure, education, health and cultural activities and facilities in the region. Policy YH4 of RSS (2008) also states that spatial planning decisions should strengthen the identity and role of such centres as accessible and vibrant focal points for high trip generating uses.

Away from Sub-Regional Cities and Towns the RSS (2008) states in Policy YH5 that Principal Towns should be the main local focus for housing, employment, shopping, leisure, education, health and cultural activities and facilities. Policy YH5 of RSS (2008) identifies Knaresborough as a Principal Town. Furthermore, Policy YH6 of RSS (2008) notes that local services and facilities in local service centres should be retained and improved.

Policy E2 of RSS (2008) highlights the importance of the role and performance of existing town centres. Policy E2 provides for plans, strategies, investment decisions and programmes to strengthen the role and performance of existing town centres. It emphasises that centres of Sub Regional Towns (of which Harrogate is one) should be the focus for offices, retail, leisure, entertainment, arts, culture, tourism, and more intensive sport and recreation across the region.

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 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.

Conclusion

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

- how well related the proposed development is to the Sub-Regional Town 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 Town, but also that of lower order settlements within the catchment of the proposed development, including the Principal Town of Knaresborough and local service 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.

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

