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Our Ref: 40-b/Planning Delivery/Wakefield/Mixed Use Development, Rothwell, Mar 10

15 March 2010

Becky Eades
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Newton Bar
Leeds Road
Wakefield
WF1 2TX

Dear Becky

Planning Application No: 10/00225/OUT

Outline planning permission for a mixed use development comprising a community stadium (with details of access, landscaping, layout and scale of stadium submitted for approval; multi use games area, B8 warehousing and distribution units, B1 business units, hotel A3 unit, roads, infrastructure and landscaping.

The Regional Planning Body (RPB) is grateful for the opportunity to comment on this proposed development. The RPB 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 - The Yorkshire and Humber Plan was issued by the Secretary of State in May 2008. 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.

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 focused on Regional Cities and Sub-Regional Cities and Towns and that away from these sufficient development should be permitted in Principal Towns to enable them to fulfil their role as service centres.

Location of development

The proposed development is located approximately 5 miles north-east of Wakefield City Centre near Junction 30 of the M62. Wakefield is identified in RSS (2008) as a Regional City. Policy YH4 of RSS (2008) states that Regional Cities should be the prime focus for housing, employment, shopping, leisure, education, health and cultural activities and facilities in the region.

Policy LCR1A provides for Wakefield to develop its role as a Sub Regional City and to capitalise on its particular strengths and potential. Policy LCR1B also supports the indigenous growth of the economies of Sub Regional Cities.

Town Centre Uses

Policy E2 of RSS (2008) 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 proposal includes 7,024 sq m of B1 Office Use, a 120 bedroomed hotel and a community stadium with a capacity of 12,000. 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 the guidance on employment land in Table 11.3 along with more detailed sub regional or local forecasts or more up-to-date information about land needs. Table 11.1 states that the potential annual job growth from 2006 in Wakefield is 1,140. Table 11.2 in RSS (2008) suggests the potential annual job growth from 2006 for B1 office uses is 320 and 682 for retail and leisure uses in Wakefield.

The applicant states that the proposed development has the potential to create approximately 2,122 jobs. Clearly, this is likely to have a significant impact on the level of jobs within the City and it will be up to the local authority to decide in the context of the local Employment Land Review if this development is of an appropriate scale.

It is recognised that the proposed development of the community stadium, due to its scale and location, may not be able to be located within the town centre of Wakefield. Paragraph 3.8 of RSS (2008) states that proposals for further sports related development in the Leeds City Region will need to be coordinated and planned in a strategic manner, taking account of proposals likely to come forward for rugby stadia in Wakefield. However, the Council should be satisfied that the office and hotel development are ancillary to the development and essential in order for the operation of the community stadium.

Other Uses

The proposal also includes 146,324 sq m of B8 Use. Table 11.2 in RSS (2008) suggests the potential annual job growth from 2006 for B8 uses is 90 in Wakefield. Policy T4 of RSS (2008) states that plans, strategies, investment decisions and programmes should locate storage/distribution development with high levels of freight and commercial traffic close to intermodal freight facilities, airports, ports and wharfs or roads designed and managed as traffic distributors.

Therefore the local authority should ensure that the proposed development is in line with Policy T4 of RSS (2008).

Accessibility

Ensuring accessibility of development by non-car modes is a key principle of regional planning policy. The proposal is for 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

Given the comments set above, it has been concluded that the proposed development of the community stadium, due to its scale, may not be able to be located within the town centre of Wakefield. However, the Council should be satisfied that its location will help to deliver the outcomes of the Regional Spatial Strategy and that the office and hotel element of the development are truly ancillary.

If you have any queries about this response, please contact Martin Elliot on 01924 331 594.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mart - Elliot". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Martin Elliot
Planning Manager
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.