

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Executive Board

Date: 6th November 2013

Subject: Deputations to the Council on behalf of residents of Angel Row, Rothwell, and Middleton Lane and Middleton Avenue, Rothwell opposing the potential housing on site 3081A and B, Hope Farm, Wakefield Road, Rothwell by Dr D Freeman, Mr W Jackson and Mr S Plumpton (at Full Council) and Mr L Inglis, Mr S Lunn, Mr S Pritchard, Mr S Plumpton, Dr D Freeman (at South (Outer) Area Committee) respectively.

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Ardsley and Robin Hood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. A Deputation to Full Council on 11th September and to South (Outer) Area Committee on 16th September 2013 raised concerns regarding a potential housing site in Robin Hood, near Rothwell. The site is being considered for potential allocation as part of the Site Allocations Plan. This plan covers the whole of Leeds (except for the Aire Valley Area Action Plan area) and will deliver the strategic planning policies set out in the Core Strategy, once this is adopted, concerning housing, employment, greenspace and retail allocations up to 2028. Executive Board (9th May 2013) approved the Site Allocations Plan Issues and Options Plan to go out for public consultation from 3rd June to 29th July.
2. Objections raised in the deputations include: the effect of new buildings on the properties of Angel Row, development is not appropriate for the area, lack of amenities and infrastructure, loss of Green Belt and productive arable land, of wildlife value and historical importance, possible restrictive covenant on the land ensuring it remains in arable use, the land gives the area its own identity, no reasons for the development have been provided, there are other more suitable brownfield sites available, development would ruin the area and is unsustainable, and traffic concerns.

3. The Council's response, in summary, is that the issues raised are currently being considered as part of the Core Strategy Examination process and preparation of the Site Allocations plan, which will provide a basis to review policy and delivery matters in a comprehensive manner. It would not be prudent to consider individual sites in isolation, in advance of the overall assessment and process of the Site Allocations Plan.

4. Recommendations

Executive Board is asked to note the contents of this report.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To set out the City Council's response to the Deputations to Full Council and South (Outer) Area Committee opposing the potential housing on site 3081A and B, Hope Farm, Wakefield Road, Rothwell.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Dr Diane Freeman submitted a written deputation which was presented to Full Council on 11th September 2013, with Mr W Jackson and Mr S Plumpton also in attendance. The text is set out in full as Appendix 1. South (Outer) Area Committee received a deputation from residents of Middleton Lane and Middleton Avenue, Rothwell on 16th September 2013, with Mr L Inglis (spokesperson) and Mr S Lunn, Mr S Pritchard, Mr S Plumpton and Dr D Freeman in attendance. Appendix 2 provides the minutes of the Area Committee meeting. (Area Committee deputations do not have to provide a copy of the speech ahead of the meeting).

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The deputations raise a number of local concerns:
- the effect of new buildings on the properties of Angel Row on the grounds of loss of value, potential flooding and drainage issues and right of access to the properties. (The issues of potential flooding problems was also raised in the Area Committee deputation, residents of Middleton Lane and Middleton Avenue).
 - development is not appropriate for the area and is excessive in a semi rural area
 - lack of amenities and infrastructure, especially schools, roads, health services (including doctors, dentists)
 - the land is designated Green Belt, productive arable land and supports a variety of wildlife
 - the land is of historical importance and is mentioned in the doomsday book
 - it is understood that there is a restrictive covenant on the land ensuring it remains in arable use – to be verified
 - the land gives the area its own identity. It separates Robin Hood and Middleton, and is the boundary between Leeds and Wakefield in terms of postcodes
 - no reasons for the development have been provided
 - There are other more suitable brownfield sites available
 - The development would ruin the area and is unsustainable
 - Traffic issues on already congested roads with additional traffic of +600 vehicles

- the landscape would be ruined, with loss of views

- In addition, the Area Committee deputation raised concerns over the consultation undertaken.

- 3.2 In response to the Deputations the Council makes the following points:
- 3.3 These are important issues both locally to Robin Hood and District wide, in responding to the strategic challenges faced in the delivery of regeneration and growth in a sustainable way, which respects local character and distinctiveness.
- 3.4 The overall housing requirement and distribution is set out as part of the Core Strategy, which has been subject to public consultation. Issues will be heard at the Examination in Public into the Core Strategy which commenced on 7th October. The Core Strategy is supported by a comprehensive evidence base, which takes into account population and economic forecasts for the plan period.
- 3.5 The Core Strategy acknowledges that sites within the Green Belt will be needed to accommodate the scale of housing and employment growth identified, and to create new Protected Areas of Search (to replace those in the UDP which will be allocated for future development).
- 3.6 A key focus of the Core Strategy (and the Site Allocations plan following on from this) is to deliver housing growth on previously developed land, within existing settlements, as part of the settlement hierarchy, whilst maintaining local character and distinctiveness and for this to be delivered in a sustainable manner.
- 3.7 As part of the Core Strategy and the emerging Site Allocations Plan, site 3081A falls mostly within the Outer South Housing Market Characteristic Area, and partly within the Inner Housing Market Characteristic Area. The Outer South area has an overall target of 2,600 dwellings (4% of the overall district wide total). Site 3081A (capacity of 373 dwellings in total, with approximately 279 of this total within the Outer South area, and 94 in the Inner area) is colour coded green, meaning the site has been assessed as one with the greatest potential to be allocated for housing, the summary reason given being; 'Green Belt site. The site is well connected to the urban area. It is a flat site with a long road frontage providing easy access for residential development. The larger site has been split in two and it is considered that the separation of settlements function of Green Belts is maintained by the adjacent field (site B) and the motorway.'
- 3.8 Part of site 3081A and site 3081B fall within the Inner Area which has an overall target of 10,000 dwellings, (15% of the overall district wide total). Site 3081B (capacity of 210 dwellings) is colour coded red, meaning the site has been assessed and is not considered suitable for allocation for housing the reason given that; 'Green Belt site. Not well related to the urban area and no existing defensible boundary. Development would constitute urban sprawl.'
- 3.9 Representations have been received on sites across Leeds, including this one, during the 8 week public consultation period (3rd June to 29th July 2013) into Issues and Options for the Site Allocations Plan. (See also paragraph 4.1)

- 3.10 All representations made, together with the comments on sites from all other infrastructure providers – Education, Environment Agency etc will be taken into account in determining which sites should be allocated for development in the Publication Draft Plan (the next stage in the preparation of the plan).
- 3.11 In determining the allocation of sites, sites will also be phased (ie not all released for development immediately) to ensure sufficiency of overall supply and geographical distribution and achievement of a brownfield land target set in the Core Strategy (65% in the first 5 years).
- 3.12 The issues raised are currently being considered as part of the Core Strategy Examination process and preparation of the Site Allocations plan, which will provide a basis to review policy and delivery matters in a comprehensive manner. It would not be prudent to consider individual sites in isolation, in advance of the overall assessment and process of the Site Allocations Plan.
- 3.13 We are currently inputting the representations made in the consultation period into a database for analysis. Once inputted, a report will be taken to Development Plan Panel outlining what representations have been received and on which sites. Following detailed analysis of responses and comments of infrastructure providers and other statutory consultees a Publication Draft Plan will be produced mid/late 2014 for further public consultation. As with the Core Strategy, the plan has to be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination and there will be an Examination in public (anticipated late 2014/early 2015), with adoption of the plan in 2015. This timetable is dependent on the Core Strategy getting through examination in October, and adoption early in 2014. We cannot go to Publication Draft stage until we know the position with the Core Strategy as the Site Allocations Plan has to be in general conformity with the Core Strategy.
- 3.14 As regards the concerns raised about the public consultation itself, please see paragraph 4.1 below.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 As this report simply provides a response to two Council Deputations, there is nothing to consult upon. Notwithstanding this, there was an 8 week public consultation from 3rd June to 29th July 2013 on Issues and Options for the Site Allocations Plan. Statutory Town & Country Planning Regulations state that the minimum period of consultation is 6 weeks. The consultation period was endorsed at Development Plan Panel on 30th April and at Executive Board on 9th May.
- 4.1.2 The consultation was advertised in articles in both the Yorkshire Evening Post and Yorkshire Post on Thursday 30th May. In addition the Council placed a statutory notice in the Yorkshire Evening Post on the 3rd June. Letters/or emails were sent to everyone on the Council's Local Development Framework database including all local residents who have written in previously. The Council do not have the resources to contact every single resident across Leeds. Information was also sent to the Equalities Team for them to contact and inform all groups and

organisations the Council is aware of. In addition, all libraries and one stop centres across Leeds were sent the documents, and all members and MPs, all current neighbourhood planning groups and Parish and Town councils, community groups, developers, businesses and consultants were contacted and informed.

- 4.1.3 16 drop-in events were held across Leeds. Three of these were held in Leeds Civic Hall. Some councillors also held their own public meetings, or consultation events or spread the word via their networks (including postal and social media). In addition some Parish & Town Councils and in some cases some individuals also ran their own events and communication. There were adverts on buses around Leeds – 13 adverts on the side of buses and 100 adverts inside buses for 4 weeks (from Saturday 8th June). Posters and flyers were sent to various organisations for them to advertise locally – including schools (primary and secondary), care homes, leisure centres, Golden Acre Park, housing offices and neighbourhood networks, children’s centres, adult day centres, museums and art galleries. There were radio adverts on Radio Aire and Magic 808 (A 20 sec advert running for 4 weeks from Friday 7 June – Thursday 28 June). The information was (and still is) available on the web at www.leeds.gov.uk/siteallocations. The consultation was also listed in the Councils “Talking Point” webpage which provides a calendar of consultation events.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 The Deputations essentially challenge the content of the City Council’s Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan. Both these plans have been subject to Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and further EIA screenings will be carried out at the appropriate stages of their development to final documents. An EIA screening of this Executive Board report (attached as an appendix) reaches the conclusion that the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan are the appropriate documents to be subject to EIA because they determine policy and proposals.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 Preparation of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan are key corporate priorities which aim to deliver the Best Council Plan, objective 5 to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 There are no resource/value for money considerations

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

There are no legal considerations.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 Town Planning as a process of managing land use change inevitably generates strong objections from people affected by plans and decisions. Therefore, the Council needs to be responsive to deal with concerns effectively.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The concerns raised in the Deputations have been considered in section 3 above. There are no matters that are considered to generate the need to make changes to policy or practice at this time. However, issues raised in the two Deputations will be fully considered and taken into account in the preparation of the Publications Draft Site Allocations Plan, which will itself be subject to public consultation.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Executive Board is asked to note the contents of this report.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.