



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

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Report of the Chief Planning Officer

PLANS PANEL EAST

Date: 11th March 2010

**Subject: CONSULTATION BY WAKEFIELD COUNCIL ON PLANNING APPLICATION:
10/00225/OUT – Outline Application for Mixed Use Development including 12000 seat
community stadium at Newmarket Lane, Wakefield.**

APPLICANT
Mr S. Leonard

DATE VALID
7.12.2009

TARGET DATE
14.02.2010

Electoral Wards Affected:
Ardsley and Robin Hood/Kippax and
Methley/Rothwell

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION:

Leeds City Council wishes to make the following comments in respect of the proposal. Whilst Leeds City Council does not wish to frustrate regeneration and provision of important community facilities in Wakefield District, and there are no concerns in principle over the stadium itself, there are concerns over the scale and impact of the wider development on the Green Belt and transport network in Leeds District.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Leeds City Council has been consulted by Wakefield Council on a major development proposal close to the Leeds and Wakefield boundary. Whilst the planning application falls to be determined by Wakefield Council the views of Leeds City Council have been sought and any comments raised by the City Council will have to be taken into account in the determination of the planning application. The City Council has been set a deadline for the submission of its comments by 28th May 2010.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

- 2.1 According to the supporting information accompanying the application, the proposal covers a total site area of 86.5 hectares (214 acres) and consists of a community stadium to be occupied by Wakefield Trinity Wildcats Rugby League Club, class B8 warehouse units (146,324 sq m total floorspace), B1 office units (7,024 sq m total floorspace), a 120 bedroom hotel and a class A3 drive-thru restaurant.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 3.1 The application site is located to the south east of Junction 30 of the M62 motorway. The northern boundary of the site runs along the southern side of the M62 which also forms the administrative boundary between Wakefield and Leeds metropolitan districts. The site is located within 2km of three settlements in Leeds district, the Rothwell/Oulton urban area to the north, Methley village to the east and Lofthouse/Robin Hood to the west.

4.0 LEEDS CITY COUNCIL CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES:

Highways.

- 4.1 Concerns are raised (see paragraphs 7.7 to 7.10 below).

5.0 LOCAL RESPONSE:

- 5.1 Local ward members for Ardsley & Robin Hood, Rothwell and Kippax & Methley have been consulted on the proposal.
- 5.2 Members for Ardsley & Robin Hood have received numerous objections from their constituents - mostly in Ouzlewell Green and Lofthouse - although Robin Hood may also be affected if the proposals are approved. The following comments have been submitted:

"The above planning application has been drawn to our attention by a number of our constituents who object not to the Wakefield Wildcats Stadium that is proposed but to the associated business and distribution centres that are submitted alongside it.

Having taken a look at the plans now, we wholeheartedly support our constituents in their objections to the significant and detrimental loss of the green belt between Leeds and Wakefield that has been proposed here and in their objections to the massive increase in traffic (and particularly HGVs) through the lanes of Ouzlewell Green, Lofthouse and Robin Hood that will ensue if this planning application is approved.

We have worked hard to protect the Green Belt in our area from erosion so we cannot sit idly by and watch the green belt that separates the districts of Leeds and Wakefield on our border being raided in this way. There is no need to erode the Green Belt as proposed because there are significant brownfield sites available.

We already have concerns about the number of HGVs using the lanes through Ouzlewell Green (where we secured a HGV ban that is not being adequately

enforced), Lofthouse and Robin Hood. The proposed distribution centres will lead to an unacceptable increase in the volume of such traffic damaging the residential amenity of our constituents and the peaceful enjoyment of their homes.

On the above grounds we object to planning application 10/00225/OUT.”

6.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

- 6.1 The proposal needs to be considered against the relevant parts of the development plan for Wakefield which comprises the Yorkshire and Humber Plan (RSS, adopted May 2008) and the Wakefield Local Development Framework (LDF) including the Core Strategy (April 2009) and saved policies and allocations from the Unitary Development Plan First Alteration (January 2003). Consideration also needs to be given to national planning policy document. Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2) which covers Green Belt issues and Planning Policy Statement 4 which covers economic development are particularly relevant.

7.0 MAIN ISSUES

- Green Belt
- Highways

8.0 APPRAISAL

Green Belt

- 8.1 From the Wakefield perspective there is a pressing need to maintain the Superleague status of their local rugby league club. This requires a new stadium which in turn necessitates additional development to help meet the costs. The Wakefield position is that they have searched for a suitable site and that this is the most appropriate location for the stadium and the associated development. Most of the supporting development is for freight and distribution use and their LDF Core Strategy adopted in April 2009 identified a need for a further 95 ha of land for such use. Furthermore Policy CS 8 refers to the M62 corridor as an appropriate location for warehousing and distribution. Policy CS 12 refers to a possible strategic review of the Green Belt, one of the purposes of which could be to accommodate strategic employment sites. This must in practice relate to warehousing and distribution as this is the only category of employment land for which the Plan identifies any significant need.
- 8.2 The proposed development is a very significant intrusion into the Green Belt which by definition is inappropriate and harmful to the openness of the Green Belt in this area. It will impact on the integrity of the Green Belt separating settlements in Leeds District from those in North Wakefield. Such development can only be justified by very special circumstances.
- 8.3 The Wakefield Core Strategy whilst identifying a need for more land for warehousing and distribution is also clear that there is a substantial existing supply sufficient to accommodate likely take up to 2021. In looking for additional land the Wakefield Core Strategy indicates that it will look first to brownfield potential, consistent with Policy YH7 of RSS. It is anticipated that any Green Belt use will arise through a proper review undertaken when a relevant LDF document is prepared, with

engagement with stakeholders including neighbouring authorities and local communities.

- 8.4 The office proposals are limited in scale, however, national and local policy is that offices should be located in town centres. In assessing alternative locations offices have been dealt with as part of the total package rather than as a separate use for which a more appropriate alternative site might well have been found. National planning policy requires that developers demonstrate flexibility and address the scope to disaggregate schemes.
- 8.5 The scale and impact of this development on the openness of the Green Belt between Leeds and Wakefield is significant. Such a change to the Green Belt is more appropriately dealt with through the development plan process and the need for this scale of development at this time has not been convincingly demonstrated.
- 8.6 It should be noted that Leeds City Council itself promoted significant employment development around J30 M62 in early versions of the UDP in 1992 and 1993. However, Leeds City Council ultimately accepted the UDP Inspector's recommendation that this was an inappropriate location for employment development.

Highways

- 8.7 In addition to Green Belt issues there are also traffic and highway concerns. The site is not particularly accessible by means other than the car. There is very little existing development within 2km of the site and it is considered that the applicant has substantially overestimated the percentage of employees likely to walk to work. There are limited bus services, other than to Wakefield and again the estimated public transport share is considered to be unrealistically high.
- 8.8 In relation to the stadium there appears to be a significant under-provision of car parking spaces. The applicants Transport Assessment suggests that some element of this under-provision will be accommodated on-street. This could lead to traffic problems and highway safety issues and in the absence of clear proposals could extend to roads within Leeds. There appears to be a similar under-provision of coach parking.
- 8.9 Although a new road is provided within the site there is no assessment of traffic impact on this road beyond the site as it runs through to Methley and via the A639 to Castleford. The road is not suitable for HGVs which will need to be restricted should this scheme proceed.
- 8.10 The Travel Plan proposals are not sufficiently detailed and will need identified funding streams secured by S106 agreement. There would in addition need to be some means to secure improvement should Travel Plan targets be missed.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposed development represents a very significant intrusion into the Green Belt between Leeds and Wakefield. Whilst sympathetic to the need to provide a new stadium for the Wakefield Trinity Wildcats rugby league team the scale and timing of the associated development is not considered to have been adequately justified. In addition, there are concerns that the impact on traffic in Leeds District has not been adequately assessed and that as there is inadequate car parking is proposed, potential overflow parking could also adversely impact on highway conditions.

