

Kirklees Local Plan Examination

Stage 4 – Matter 27 – Cooper Bridge (E1832c)

Response to the Inspectors request for the Council and site promoter to define the wider implications of the public benefits likely to be achieved through the delivery of strategic employment site E1832c

30 April 2018

1. Introduction

Purpose of the note

- 1.1 During the Stage 4 (strategic employment sites) examination hearings the Council and the site promoter discussed the public benefits of site E1832c. It was acknowledged that the benefits derived from this scheme – as set out in the Public Benefits Statement (M27.1, Appendix 2) - were predominantly economic but more recognition also needed to be afforded to the social and environmental aspects.
- 1.2 This note has been prepared in response to this request and outlines the additional public benefits that can be realised through the delivery of strategic employment site E1832c.

Context

- 1.3 The Council, through its response to the Matters, Issues and Questions (M27.1), appended a public benefits statement to evidence the benefits of the Cooper Bridge Scheme and how these benefits positively contribute at a scale which can be considered to weigh in favour of the allocation of the site when considered in relation to the limited harm to the green belt and any changes to the setting of the designated heritage assets. In summary the benefits presented were:
 - Economic Outputs: Gross Value Added of £45.5 million over the construction period, and £102.1 million per annum once operational (within Kirklees)
 - Job Growth: 2,905 (full time equivalent) jobs will be supported by the development
 - Need: Meets employment land requirements established within the Local Plan
 - Alternatives: Addresses a lack of suitable alternative sites
 - Support: Enables expansion of niche industries and the local cluster of automotive / precision engineering businesses
 - Optimum Viable Use: E1832c will help to create a more viable Kirklees Estate, which will provide the land owner with more opportunities to invest resources in other historic assets at the Estate.

- Infrastructure: Delivery of new public infrastructure in the form of major road improvements which will address long standing congestion and delay issues in Kirklees.
- Recognition that the landowner is in a unique position due to having control of critical areas of land which can be made available to assist in the delivery of major road schemes and deliver the required level of mitigation to address impacts brought about through the delivery of the site.

1.4 These benefits cut across economic, social and environmental aspects, however, further benefits would be realised through the delivery of site E1832c that were not articulated in the original public benefits statement. The following sections of this note introduces each of these benefits.

2. Public Benefits of Allocation

2.1 The development of circa 162,187 sq.m of employment floorspace at Cooper Bridge (E1832c) will give rise to substantial economic, social and environmental public benefits. Discussions around the economic benefits are set out in the public benefits statement appended to the Council's MIQ response to Matter 27 (M27.1) and summarised at paragraph 1.3 above. Benefits in relation to the social and environmental issues (although partially covered at bullets 6-8) have been expanded upon and are set out below.

2.2 The NPPF sets out that every effort should be made to meet the business and other development needs of an area. The allocation of sufficient employment land is a prerequisite for a sound Local Plan in this case. The benefits of having an adopted Plan include provision of a clear planning framework and therefore certainty to developers, enabling the delivery of the Council's strategic vision for Kirklees. Having an adopted Local Plan can help Council's to make the case, directly and indirectly, for infrastructure funding and, in this case, will also enable the progression of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Social

2.3 The Kirklees Local Plan allocates significant land for housing within and around the settlements of Huddersfield, Liversedge and Gomersal and Mirfield. The allocation – whose catchment although wider reaching would immediately serve these areas - will deliver local jobs to retain the new working population and create a balanced and sustainable community. Taking account of the workforce skills in these settlements (see Appendix 1) where the number of residents in the manufacturing sector is approaching double that of the national average (LE14, page 21, paragraph 4.12) then site E1832c would present a significant opportunity to meet jobs needs and sustainable patterns of travel in this area.

- 2.4 It should also be recognised that site E1832c provides an opportunity to support the Local Plan spatial strategy which not only seeks to develop a strong and thriving economy but importantly looks to combine a great quality of life and a strong and sustainable economy to deliver thriving communities, growing businesses, high prosperity and low inequality. These are key components to help strengthen people's opportunities to enjoy better health throughout their lives. This allocation would make a significant contribution towards delivering on these objectives and are integral to the main priorities identified in the Leeds City Region (LCR) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), the Kirklees Economic Strategy (KES) and the Kirklees Joint Health and Well-being Strategy (KJHWS).
- 2.5 The landscape masterplan (SS4, Cooper Bridge – Heritage Overview Report, Appendix 2) proposes the retention of existing regional footpaths (Brighouse Boundary Walk and the Luddite Trail) and enhancements of the existing Public Rights of Way through the inclusion of new footpath routes. This will maintain and help to enhance people's opportunity to seek and undertake recreation in this location thus supporting objectives set out in the KJHWS.

Environment

- 2.6 Allowance has been provided for planting within and outside the allocation boundary to assist not only with screening but to also put in place new strategic landscaping which has the potential to provide new habitats connecting into existing boundary features and corridors to the benefit of the site's ecological biodiversity
- 2.7 The allocation of land for employment at this location has also played an integral role in securing the necessary funding from the West Yorkshire Transport Fund (WYTF) to bring forward the implementation of the Cooper Bridge transport scheme. The potential of the employment site to deliver sustainable jobs growth and accelerate economic growth has been identified as being of priority significance to the Leeds City Region and is captured as 'Employment Growth Area' 25 in the LCRs 'Spatial Priority Areas (CR9, LCR SEP, Page 77). Because of this recognition, the potential economic growth at both a local and regional level that can be secured from site E1832c has enabled a scheme at Cooper Bridge to be identified as a core project in the Transport Fund. (Leeds City Region, Local Enterprise Partnership: Strategic Economic Plan 2014, Part B, pp 101 to 104).
- 2.8 Notwithstanding the delivery of the LCR Spatial Priority Area and the identification of the Cooper Bridge transport scheme as a core project in the Transport Fund, Kirklees Council has identified the need to alleviate existing congestion at Cooper Bridge as a requirement to bring forward development, not just in this area, but across the district as a whole (Transport Technical

Paper, Kirklees Council 2014 p23). The finance identified through the Transport Fund is therefore essential to help deliver these objectives.

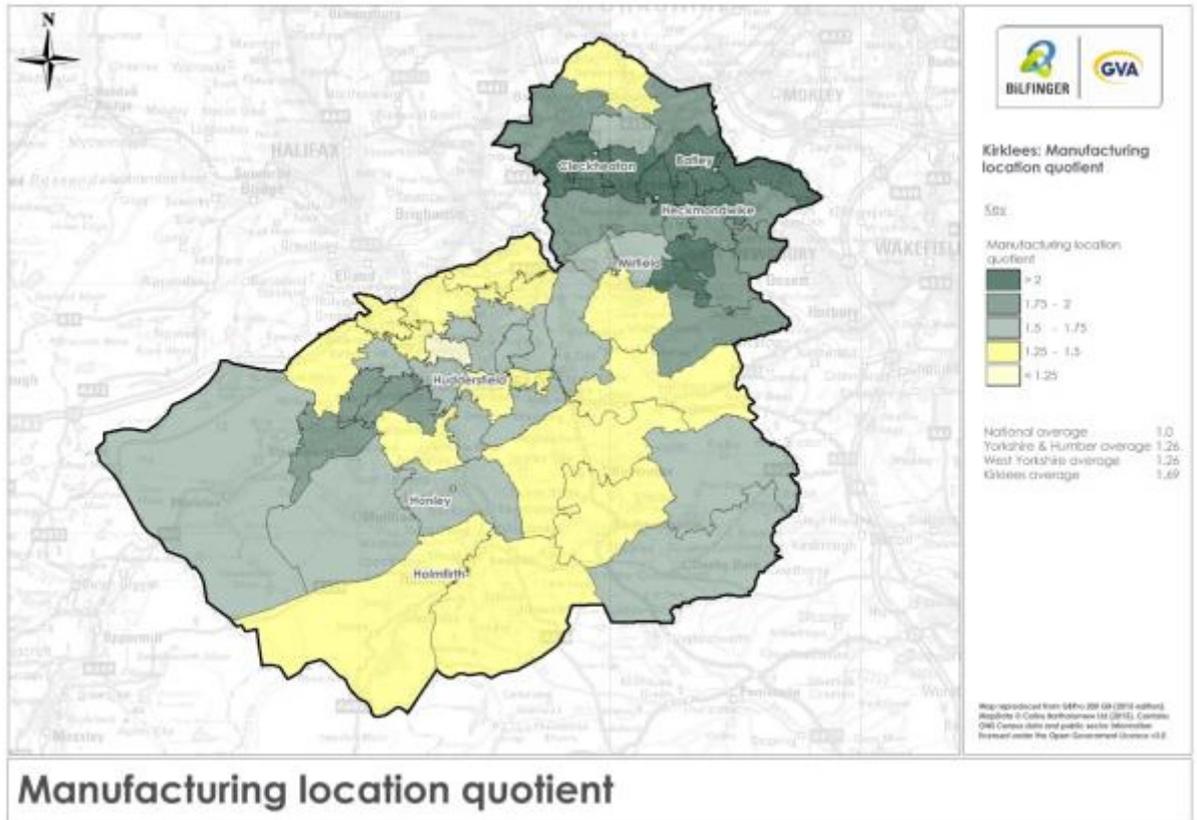
- 2.9 The location of site E1832c is also in close proximity to an AQMA for the Bradley Road/Leeds Road area – one of only two declared for the Kirklees District (SD1, para. 18.9, page 177). Through the delivery of the Cooper Bridge transport scheme, the ability to relieve congestion will assist in the Council’s action plan – set out in the Kirklees Air Quality Strategy (LE116) - to reduce levels of pollution in this area.
- 2.10 The benefits identified above – and as set out in the public benefits statement appended to the Council’s MIQ response to Matter 27 (M27.1) - align with paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) where it is recognised that economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards, and well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities.
- 2.11 NPPF paragraph 9 also recognises that - in the pursuit of sustainable development – positive improvements should be sought in people’s quality of life through (but not limited to):
- making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages; and
 - improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 In conclusion it can be demonstrated that the delivery of an employment development of strategic significance at site E1832c will bring about significant economic, social and environmental benefits and supports the overarching objectives of the Leeds City Region SEP, the Kirklees Economic Strategy and the Kirklees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 3.2 These benefits should weigh in favour of the allocation of the site when considered in relation to the limited harm to the green belt and any changes to the setting of the designated heritage assets.

Appendix 1

Manufacturing location quotient



(LE14, Fig. 4.3, Page 21)