

MATTER 31 – HUDDERSFIELD EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING ALLOCATIONS: URBAN SITES (NON-GREEN BELT)

Site H623 – land east of Weatherhill Road, Birchencliffe

Issue - Are the proposed employment and housing allocations in the urban area of Huddersfield justified, effective, developable/deliverable and in line with national policy?

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The allocation of Site H623 for residential development as currently proposed is not sound as it is neither justified nor is it consistent with either the emerging Policies in the Local Plan or with national policy guidance.
- 1.2 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF sets out a requirement for Local Plans to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. When considering the impact of a proposed development upon the significance of a designated heritage asset, Paragraph 132 of the NPPF makes it clear that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and explains that significance can be harmed by development within its setting. 12 and 13 Warren House Lane and the adjacent barn which lie to the west of this area are Grade II Listed Buildings. The loss of this site and its subsequent development could harm elements which contribute to their significance.
- 1.3 Although a Heritage Impact Assessment has been produced to ascertain whether or not this site could be developed in a manner consistent with the conservation of this Listed Building, the measures it suggests to reduce the potential harm which the development of this site might cause to this heritage asset do not seem likely to be effective.
- 1.4 Consequently, the allocation of Site H623 for residential development, as proposed in the Submission Local Plan, would be in conflict with the following aspects of the emerging Local Plan:-

- The Spatial Vision – in that it conflicts with the intention that development will take place in a sustainable way (balancing economic, social and environmental priorities), that the local character and distinctiveness of Kirklees and its places will be retained, or that the natural, built and historic environment will be maintained and enhanced through high quality, inclusive design
- Spatial Objective 8 - in that it will not protect or enhance the characteristics of the historic environment
- Policy PLP35 – in that it will not conserve elements which contribute to the significance of a designated heritage asset.

1.5 It would also be contrary to national policy guidance as set out in the NPPF insofar as it would not:-

- Help to deliver a “*positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment*” as is required by NPPF Paragraph 126.
- Contribute to protecting or enhancing the historic environment. Therefore, it will not deliver sustainable development in terms of the conservation of the historic environment [NPPF Paragraph 7].
- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Therefore it will runs contrary to one of the Government’s Core Planning Principles [NPPF Paragraph 17].
- Give great weight to the conservation of the area’s designated heritage assets [NPPF, Paragraph 132].
- Provide clear and convincing justification for the harm that it would cause to the historic environment [NPPF, Paragraph 134].

2 Response to the Inspector’s questions

Question i) Has the impact of the proposal on heritage assets been adequately assessed and addressed? Should protection and mitigation measures linked to the Heritage Impact Assessment (LE77) be specified in the Plan?

2.1 On the whole, we would broadly support the methodology that has been used for the Heritage Impact Assessment of this site. The Heritage Impact Assessment has provided an excellent summary of the historic development of this area, it has identified the elements which contribute to the significance of this group of buildings and has set out a good evaluation of the contribution which this site makes to their setting. However, it is unclear how the proposed mitigation

measures could effectively reduce the harm which the development of this site would cause to the significance of this group of Listed Buildings.

- 2.2 This landscape has witnessed considerable change since these Listed Buildings were built. With the more recent developments which have taken place in their vicinity, the field immediately to the south of this group, therefore, remains the last vestige of what was, once, their rural setting. The loss of this area and its subsequent development, therefore, would, effectively, sever the connectivity between these former farm buildings and their agricultural hinterland and harming their immediate setting. Consequently, we would concur with the evaluation in the Heritage Impact Assessment of the contribution which the area coloured blue on Figure 5 makes to their setting. Given, that the loss of this area would harm the significance of these Listed Buildings, it is unclear how any development on the area identified as being of ‘Moderate Significance’ could be achieved in a manner consistent with the conservation of these assets and are not convinced that the form of development being proposed in Paragraph 6.3 would effectively reduce the harm to an acceptable level.

3 Conclusions

- 3.1 The Heritage Impact Assessment has identified that part of Site H623 contribute to the rural setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings to the north of this site. The loss of this area, therefore, would be likely to result in harm to the setting of this building. However, it is unclear how any development on the area identified as being of ‘Moderate Significance’ could be achieved in a manner consistent with the conservation of these assets and are not convinced that the form of development being proposed in Paragraph 6.3 would effectively reduce the harm to an acceptable level. In terms of NPPF Paragraph 134, this is likely to constitute less than substantial harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets. Whilst the degree of harm may be less than substantial, nevertheless, it would still be causing harm to a number of designated heritage assets. As such, therefore, it would not be delivering sustainable development in terms of protecting and enhancing the historic environment, it would conflict with one of the Government’s Core Planning Principles (that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance), nor would it be likely to provide the positive strategy for the conservation of the historic environment that is required for Local Plans.

4 Suggested Change

4.1 It is recommended that:-

- (a) The developable area of Site H623 is amended to exclude the area identified on Figure 5 of the Heritage Impact Assessment as being of 'Moderate Significance' the south of the Listed Buildings
- (b) The amount of housing specified in Part 2 of the Local Plan for Site H623 is amended accordingly