

Planning Statement

Proposed Rabbit Ings Regeneration Scheme
near Royston, Barnsley

On behalf of the City of Wakefield Metropolitan
District Council and Yorkshire Forward

By WYG Planning and Design

WYG PLANNING & DESIGN

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Prepared by: Oliver Freer

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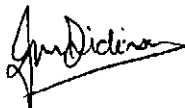
Signed:



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Approved for issue by: John Dickinson

Signed:



WYG Planning & Design
Arndale Court
Headingley
Leeds
LS6 2UJ

Tel: 0113 219 2217
Fax: 0113 219 2317
E-mail: planning.leeds@wyg.com

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 WYG Planning and Design ("WYG") has been instructed by Carillion, on behalf of the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council ("WMDC") and Yorkshire Forward ("YF"), to submit a planning application for the regeneration of the Rabbit Ings Site ("The Site") that covers 65.9 hectares of land, near the village of Royston, Barnsley. The Site includes land formerly used as a colliery spoil heap, former drift mine and disused sports pitches/recreation ground.
- 1.2 The Rabbit Ings Regeneration Scheme ("the Scheme") will primarily involve some importation of soil making materials, regrading including the steep slopes of the spoil heap (particularly on the southern flanks for health and safety reasons) and reclamation works to provide formal and informal recreation uses including sports pitches with two team changing facilities, with ancillary site access, car parks, and informal open space areas with landscape and ecological enhancements.
- 1.3 The detailed planning application will be supported by a range of environmental reports and these are listed in the cover letter enclosed with the planning application package.
- 1.4 Pre-application discussions have been held with representatives of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council ("BMBC"), including the Planning Department, along with a wide range of statutory and non-statutory consultees.
- 1.5 Prior to the submission of a planning application BMBC provided an Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") Screening Opinion dated 3 April 2008 that confirmed an EIA was not required in relation to proposed development.
- 1.6 This planning statement has been structured as follows:
 - Section 2 details the site and its surroundings and relevant planning history;
 - Section 3 describes the application proposals;
 - Section 4 sets out the planning policy context;
 - Section 5 provides a planning analysis; and
 - Section 6 concludes the Planning Statement.

SECTION 2: FACTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Application Site

- 2.1.1 The Site is located to the north east of the village of Royston, east of Lund Hill Lane (B6428), some 4.5 km north east of Barnsley, and covers approximately 65.9 hectares ("ha"). The Site is located within the administrative boundary of BMBC. The majority of the Site is owned by WMDC, with the recreation ground owned by the Royston and Carlton Community Partnership ("RCCP") and a relatively small parcel of land within the south part of the Site under the ownership of BMBC.
- 2.1.2 The Site effectively comprises three distinct areas, namely as follows:
- (i) the former Rabbit Ings spoil heap;
 - (ii) the former Royston Drift Mine site located to the north west of the spoil heap; and
 - (iii) the RCCP recreation ground located to the south west of the spoil heap.
- 2.1.3 The Rabbit Ings spoil heap occupies the majority of the Site covering an area of approximately 50.9 hectares of land. Sandybridge Lane forms the eastern boundary of the spoil heap and Sandybridge Dike is located to the south. A dismantled railway, part of Lund Hill Lane, along with the former Royston Drift Mine and some existing employment land is located to the west of the former spoil heap. Open agricultural fields and a former railway line forms the northern boundary of the spoil heap.
- 2.1.4 The spoil heap comprises a mound of colliery spoil rising approximately 35m to 40m above surrounding land. There are some areas of tree and shrub growth mainly on the southern slopes of the spoil heap, but other parts are sparsely vegetated. The spoil tip appears to be terraced on its northern flank, with steep embankments separating the terrace levels. Parts of the southern flank of the spoil heap are steep sided, leading to a much flatter area of land adjacent to Sandybridge Dike that has more established areas of tree and shrub vegetation. The top of the spoil heap is generally flat with limited vegetation cover. There is evidence of surface erosion from uncontrolled surface water run off on parts of the spoil heap. In addition, there is evidence of unauthorised use by motor bikes and 4x4 vehicles on the spoil heap and adjacent land within the site.
- 2.1.5 A man-made pond is located in the north east corner of the site and a former lagoon is located in the south west corner.
- 2.1.6 The former Royston Drift Mine site occupies an area of land of approximately 6.5 hectares, located to the north west of the spoil heap, east of Lund Hill Lane, and to the north of existing industrial land. It comprises a relatively flat area of land with an area of hardstanding along with the remains of former roadways and footings for former colliery buildings.
- 2.1.7 The RCCP derelict sports pitches/recreation ground is located adjacent to the south west part of the spoil heap and adjoining land covers an area of approximately 8.5 hectares. The recreation ground comprises sports pitches which are in poor condition having been 'ploughed' to prevent unauthorised motor cycle and 4x4 vehicular access and are unused. The eastern boundary of this part of the Site is formed by a disused railway line adjacent to the spoil tip. The western boundary is formed by a public footpath, with Lund Hill Lane to the west, and the southern boundary by a hedgerow.
- 2.1.8 A public footpath runs generally along the northern site boundary, in part within the Site, providing a link between Lund Hill Lane in the west and Sandybridge Lane to the east. In addition, a public footpath runs from Lund Hill Lane in a south east direction, to the north of the recreation ground, leaving the southern boundary of the Site to connect with the wider rights of way network including the Trans Pennine Trail.

2.2 Surrounding Land Use

- 2.2.1 Land to the north and east of the Site includes open fields used for agriculture. The village of Shafton is located approximately 0.5km to the south east of the spoil heap with intervening agricultural land. The Sandybridge Dike is located along the southern boundary of the Site with the Trans Pennine Trail, woodland areas and agricultural land to the south.
- 2.2.2 South west of the spoil heap and outside the Site is a restored waste disposal tip (Cudworth Landfill site), forming a prominent mound rising 10m above the surrounding land. West of the RCCP recreation ground is a railway line that runs north-south, passing over Lund Hill Lane, approximately 100m west of the site boundary. In addition, a former landfill site is located outside and to the north of the former drift mine part of the Site.
- 2.2.3 Between Lund Hill Lane and the former spoil heap is an area of land that is currently used for employment purposes, including a pallet yard and a number of other business activities.
- 2.2.4 The Monckton Coke and Chemical Works is located to the west of the Site and Lund Hill Lane. North of this coke works and to the west of Lund Hill Lane is a coal storage yard.
- 2.2.5 Royston village is located to the south west of the Site. Some residential properties and a nursery school on the east side of this village are located to the west of Lund Hill Lane approximately 100m distant from the south west of the Site boundary. There are some residential properties along Lund Hill Lane approximately 250m north of the Site.

2.3 Planning History

- 2.3.1 The planning history of the Site predominantly relates to coal mine activities notably involving the formation of the Rabbit Ings Spoil Heap and the use of part of the Site for the Royston drift mine. In addition, the south west part of the Site has been used as the RCCP recreation ground.
- 2.3.2 BMBC granted planning permission (LPA ref. no. 2008/0244) in July 2008 for the importation and storage of 95,000 cu.m of soil forming materials for a temporary 2 year period on the former drift mine part of the Site. It is proposed that such soil forming materials, once imported to site, will be used for the reclamation works.

2.4 Statutory designations

- 2.4.1 The Site is not located within or adjacent to any Conservation Area or Listed Building. There are no designated Tree Preservation Orders on or in the immediate vicinity of the site.

SECTION 3: SCHEME PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The Scheme provides for the regeneration of the site that covers 65.9 hectares of land, near the village of Royston, Barnsley.
- 3.2 The Scheme will primarily involve some importation of soil making materials in addition to that previously approved, re-grading and reclamation works to provide formal and informal recreation uses including sports pitches with two team changing facilities, ancillary site access, car parks, and informal open space areas with landscape and ecological enhancements. The Scheme will take approximately 18 months to complete, subject to works being progressed within the appropriate soil handling season.
- 3.3 The planning application for the Scheme is supported by various drawings that provide details of the proposed Site reclamation works. In particular, Drawing No. A039273/L(92)0016 Rev. F provides details of the Hard and Soft Landscaping Proposals for the Site. The method of working the Site along with landscape restoration proposals are also addressed in separate reports that accompany the planning application and it is not proposed to re-iterate such details in full in this Planning Statement but to merely provide an overview as set out below.
- 3.4 The Scheme will involve preliminary operations including the establishment of Site Offices, and plant yard, associated drainage works and fencing areas where existing vegetation is to be retained. In addition, it is proposed that the public footpath (No. 10/11) that runs through the south west part of the site will be temporarily suspended for the duration of site works and then formally diverted around the north-east side of the proposed sports pitches upon completion of the restoration of the Scheme.
- 3.5 The Rabbit Ings Scheme will involve a "hybrid" restoration strategy involving the use of approximately 129,000 cu.m. of soils and soil making materials. Some 17,000 cu.m. of soils are currently stockpiled/available from within the Site. In addition, a temporary 2 year planning permission (BMBC ref. no. 2008/0244) has been granted for the importation of some 95,000 cu.m of soil forming materials under the Advance Soils Scheme. Such imported soil making materials under this permission will be temporarily stored on the former drift mine part of the site for subsequent use as part of the restoration of the main Rabbit Ings Scheme. It is not proposed to export any such soils from the Scheme site for use on third party land elsewhere. As part of this current planning application for the main Rabbit Ings Scheme it is proposed to import the balance of required soils making materials namely some 17,000 cu.m. Details of the proposed use of soils and soils making materials for the Scheme are detailed on Drawing No. A039273/323 Rev.G.
- 3.6 The Scheme provides for the progressive re-grading of parts of the former spoil heap in order to achieve stable slope gradients. The maximum slope following re-profiling will not exceed 1 in 2.5 with the majority of slopes being less than this. In addition, re-grading works are proposed to form the sports pitches and compensatory flood capacity to the south west of the Site. Further details are provided in the Remediation Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment that accompanies the planning application. The Site will be progressively restored using the existing soil resources on site along with the imported soils and soil making materials. There is a history of slope failures to the southern flanks which are very steep. The re-modelling proposed will resolve this problem. There is a small amount of soils stockpiled on site currently to the south. Formal drainage will be employed for the sports pitches.
- 3.7 The Site will be progressively reclaimed, as shown on Drawing No. L(92)0016 Rev F, to provide the formal and informal recreational areas. The Landscape Management Plan with aftercare proposals, which accompany the planning application, will be implemented on the progressively restored areas of the site. Such works include the proposed establishment of the following habitats:-

- Wetland Area (incorporating existing wetland habitats (2.59ha)
 - Woodland Edge Mix (2.90ha)
 - Wet Woodland Mix (0.94ha)
 - Low Woodland Mix (2.38ha)
 - General Woodland Mix (9.54ha)
 - Amenity Grassland (7.03ha)
 - Species Rich Grassland (5.73ha)
 - Neutral Grassland (22.79ha)
 - Enhanced footpath and cycle track route network
- 3.8 The proposed biodiversity enhancement proposals have been carefully considered, in consultation with a number of consultees including Natural England, in order to reinforce and respond positively to the existing habitats to be retained on site along with the wider area. Further details are provided in the ecological assessment reports along with the Hard and Soft Landscaping Proposals Drawing No. A039273/A039273/L(92)0016 Rev. F that accompany the planning application.
- 3.9 The Scheme provides for a comprehensive network of new footpaths and cycle tracks that will connect with the existing and proposed diverted rights of way network on and in the vicinity of the site including the Trans Pennine Trail to the south of the site. The proposals will improve opportunities for views of the surrounding area with a viewpoint centrally positioned at one of the highest points of the Site. The Scheme provides for the temporary suspension of part of a public footpath No. 10/11 in the south west part of the Site during the regeneration works then its subsequent permanent diversion as part of the restoration proposal. In addition, there will be a DDA compliant access track around the base of the reclaimed former spoil heap. Visitors will be able to use the proposed car park (8 spaces including 2 disabled spaces) to be sited in the vicinity of the existing access point off Lund Hill to the north west of the Site, as shown on Drawing No. A039273/A039273/L(92)0016 Rev. F.
- 3.10 The formal recreational area proposals comprise the creation of sports pitches (two mini soccer and two senior playing pitches) along with a two team changing facility and a new gated site access off Lund Hill Lane with 94 space car park to the south west of the Site. Further details are provided on Drawing Nos. A039273/A039273/L(92)0016 Rev. F. It is proposed that this car park will be accessible for users of the formal use of the sports pitches only and the site access will be gated at all other times.

SECTION 4: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.1.2 The development plan that relates to this Site comprises the Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026 (2008) ("RSS") and the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (2000) ("UDP"). Other material planning considerations include Government planning guidance and policy statements along with the emerging development plan. The principal relevant planning policies in relation to the proposals are identified below in relation the development plan and other material considerations.

4.2 RSS

4.2.1 The RSS was approved in May 2008 and sets out the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government's policies to guide development in the Yorkshire and Humber Region to 2026.

4.2.2 Policy YH1 'Overall Approach and Key Spatial Priorities' promote managed growth and change across the region in order to achieve sustainable development and the Spatial Vision of the RSS. Relevant considerations to the proposals include transforming environmental conditions in the Regeneration Priority Areas including the older industrialised parts of South Yorkshire, the protection and enhancement of the region's environmental resources, avoid increasing flood risk, biodiversity enhancement and increased tree cover.

4.2.3 Policy YH3 encourages 'Working Together' within the Region including the regeneration of rural areas and achieving effective environmental management and enhancement.

4.2.4 Policy YH6 seeks, *inter alia*, to protect and enhance 'Rural Areas' including landscape diversity and character.

4.2.5 Policy YH9 deals with 'Green Belts' and their role in supporting urban renaissance and conserving the countryside.

4.2.6 Policy SY1 specifically deals with the South Yorkshire sub area policy and, amongst other matters, promotes environmental improvement in terms of green infrastructure including increased and enhanced woodland planting and helping to alleviate flood risk.

4.2.7 Policy ENV1 deals with development and the pro-active management of flood risk and seeks to avoid development in high flood risk areas where possible.

4.2.8 Policy ENV3 seeks to prevent development that could pollute surface and underground water resources.

4.2.9 Policy ENV6 seeks to safeguard and enhance its existing tree and woodland resource in line with the Regional Forest Strategy. This policy also promotes improved public access to and within woodland in or near towns.

4.2.10 Policy ENV8 promotes the safeguarding and enhancement of biodiversity and geological heritage including the aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to distinctive elements of the natural environment in line with international, national, regional, sub regional and local importance.

4.2.11 Policy ENV9 seeks to safeguard and enhance the historic environment including former industrial landscapes in South Yorkshire.

- 4.2.12 Policy ENV10 encourages the safeguarding and enhancement of landscapes that contribute to the distinctive character of the region including derelict and despoiled urban fringe landscapes especially in the former coalfield parts of South Yorkshire.
- 4.2.13 Policy ENV11 'Health and Recreation' aims to help improve the health of residents by providing, safeguarding, and enhancing facilities for sport and recreation and maximising opportunities to develop walking and cycling routes and other green infrastructure.
- 4.2.14 Policy E5 advises that Local Development Frameworks ("LDFs") should define criteria or areas where it is necessary to offer special protection to designated employment sites.

4.3 UDP

- 4.3.1 The UDP was adopted in 2000 to cover the period 1986 to 2001. In this respect, the UDP is somewhat dated notably in terms of employment allocations although a number of policies have been saved and remain pertinent to the Scheme.
- 4.3.2 The Proposals Map for the Royston Community Area shows the majority of the Site located within the Green Belt. The RCCP recreation ground is shown as urban greenspace within the Green Belt. A multi-user recreational routeway is shown to run through the south east part of the Site. Part of the former drift mine land is allocated as employment proposal land. The UDP policies in relation to these allocations are addressed below followed by other policies that are relevant to the Scheme.

Green Belt Policies RO5, GS7, GS8 and GS9

- 4.3.2 The majority of the Site is located within the Green Belt (Policy RO5). The primary purpose of Green Belt is to keep land open and one of its objectives is to prevent the built up areas of the Borough merging with neighbouring settlements. UDP Volume 6 for the Royston Community Area notes at paragraph 4.5 that the application of Green Belt policy in the Royston Community Area relates to maintaining the physical separation of the settlements of Royston, Staincross and Athersley, and seeks to assist in encouraging the regeneration of central and eastern Royston by restricting urban sprawl.
- 4.3.3 Policy GS7 'Development within Green Belt' states that, subject to some other relevant policies (as referred to below) development in the Green Belt will not be permitted unless it maintains the openness of land and does not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Policy GS8 advises that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances, unless it is for, *inter alia*, essential facilities for outdoor sport or recreation or for other uses of the land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Policy GS9 advises that development within the Green Belt should not by reason of its siting, materials or design result in significant harm to the visual amenity of the Green Belt.

Employment Proposal Area Policy RO3/1

- 4.3.4 Employment Proposal Area allocation RO3/1 involves a parcel of land that straddles the west site boundary and covers some 7.9 hectares. This allocation includes approximately 4 hectares of land involving the former drift mine within the north west part of the Site. The remainder involves the existing industrial land that is located outside but adjacent to the western boundary of the Site. Allocation RO3/1 refers to the need to reclaim the former drift mine area prior to bringing forward this area for employment use. The works necessary to reclaim this parcel of land within the Site for employment use would be extensive and not financially attractive when taking into account the likely residual value of any such potential employment land in this part of Barnsley borough. In this respect, the Scheme provides this part of the Site to be reclaimed for informal recreational use with ecological and public access enhancement. Such an afteruse should not preclude this part of the Site being brought forward for employment use in due course where considered appropriate in the longer term.

Multi-User Recreational Routeway Area Policies RO8 and GS26

- 4.3.5 The Proposals Map shows a multi-user recreational routeway that encroaches within the south east part of the site, in part linking with Sandybridge Lane, and Policy RO8 seeks to protect and develop this route as part of the wider recreational network. Strategic Policy GS26, deals with 'Recreational Routeways and Networks' and seeks to develop and promote a network of safe multi-user recreational routeways including the re-use of disused railways and links between settlements and into rural areas.

Urban Greenspace Policies RO9 and GS34

- 4.3.6 Land in the south west corner of the site (incorporating the RCCP recreation ground) is identified as urban greenspace on the UDP Proposals Map under Policy RO9. This policy seeks to retain areas of urban greenspace as open and undeveloped land. Policy GS34 'Urban Greenspace' sets out criteria against which development proposals will be assessed that affect such land on the present and potential formal and informal function the area has as a facility for recreation; an area of amenity value; an area of nature conservation value; and as a link between adjacent areas.

Other Relevant UDP Policies

- 4.3.7 There are also a range of other saved UDP policies that are relevant to the proposals and these are addressed below.
- 4.3.8 Policy GS1 'Regeneration Area' promotes environmental improvements throughout the Borough, with priority given to schemes within Barnsley's regeneration area within which the Site is located.
- 4.3.9 Policy GS15 seeks to safeguard important habitats and species from any activities which would cause disturbance, pollution or other damage and development proposals should, where appropriate, include measures to conserve and enhance existing features of nature conservation interest and to create new nature conservation areas.
- 4.3.10 Policy GS16 confirms that where development is likely to have an adverse effect on the conservation value of, amongst other matters, habitats or species protected by law such schemes will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that other material considerations outweigh the special interest of the site.
- 4.3.11 Policy GS20 advises that development will not normally be permitted which may destroy or adversely affect the integrity of wildlife corridors.
- 4.3.12 Policy GS21 'Enhancing Areas of Nature Conservation Interest' promotes an increase in the number and quality of areas of nature conservation interest available for educational and general public enjoyment, whilst minimising detrimental effects and protecting sites from any potential damage.
- 4.3.13 Policy GS22 promotes the retention and management of existing hedgerows, woodlands and trees. Policy GS23 supports the development of extensive new woodland and hedgerow planting.
- 4.3.14 Policy GS28 seeks to preserve, protect and enhance the existing public rights of way network and where a diversion is necessary that a satisfactory alternative is provided.
- 4.3.15 Policy GS33 'Countryside Recreation' states that proposals for the use of land or other development for other forms of countryside recreation will be considered having regard to the policies of the UDP, including those concerned with improving the environment, Green Belt, landscape, nature conservation, countryside recreation activities, agriculture, rural economy and residential amenity.

- 4.3.16 Policy GS37 'New Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation Space' seeks to secure an improvement of formal and casual recreation provision by the creation of new areas and upgrading of existing sites.
- 4.3.17 Policy ES1 seeks to resist proposals for development that are likely to result in harm to the environment through excessive levels of pollution.
- 4.3.18 Policy ES3 seeks to prevent the pollution of surface and ground water along with seeking to improve their quality where possible.
- 4.3.19 Policy ES6 deals with 'Unstable Land' and confirms that where appropriate development proposals should be accompanied by reports on site stability and remedial measures.
- 4.3.20 Policies ES7 and ES8 set out the approach to the consideration of development proposals that involve land that is known or suspected to be contaminated and outlines the requirements in terms of investigation and mitigation where appropriate.
- 4.3.21 Policy T2 advises that development will only be allowed if the additional demand for travel generated can be accommodated on the highways network without significant detriment to the environment or the safety and ease of movement of vehicles and pedestrians using the network or through measures to assist public transport, cycling or walking.
- 4.3.22 Policy T17 sets out the approach to the provision and management of car parking.
- 4.3.23 Policy T25 promotes the development of a network of cycle routes.
- 4.3.24 Policy T27 encourages walking as a mode of transport.

4.4 Other Material Considerations

- 4.4.1 Other material considerations include national planning policy guidance and statements along with BMBC's emerging LDF. The principal pertinent national policy documents along with the emerging LDF.

i. National Planning Policy

- 4.4.2 Planning Policy Statement 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (2005) ("PPS1") sets out the overarching planning policies for the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system and explains that planning has a key role in the creation of sustainable communities.
- 4.4.3 Key principles which underpin policy in PPS1 are as follows:
- Social cohesion and inclusion;
 - Protection and enhancement of the environment;
 - Prudent use of natural resources; and
 - Sustainable economic development.
- 4.4.4 Paragraph 27 of PPS1 sets out the general approach for delivering sustainable development and lists several criteria, including:
- Promoting rural regeneration to improve the well being of communities, improve facilities, promote high quality and safe development and create new opportunities for the people living in those communities;
 - Providing improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car; and

- Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character.
- 4.4.5 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 'Green Belts' (1995) ("PPG2") sets out the Government's approach to Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and identifies the most important attribute of the Green Belts as its openness (paragraph 1.4).
- 4.4.6 The five purposes of including land in Green Belt is set out at paragraph 1.5 and comprise:
- Check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
 - Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 4.4.7 Allied to the five purposes of including land in Green Belt, paragraph 1.6 states that once defined Green Belt land has a positive role in fulfilling the following objectives:
- Secure nature conservation interest;
 - Improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
 - Provide opportunities for access to open countryside;
 - Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and sport near urban areas;
 - Retain attractive landscapes and enhance landscapes near to where people live; and
 - Retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.
- 4.4.8 PPG2 advises that the construction of new buildings in Green Belt locations is normally considered 'inappropriate development' and as such is resisted. However, there are exceptions and these are listed at paragraph 3.4 of PPG2 and include new buildings that are essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.
- 4.4.9 Planning Policy Statement 7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' (2004) ("PPS7") sets out key objectives for rural areas. These include:
- Raise the quality of life and the environment through the promotion of:
 - sustainable economic growth and diversification;
 - thriving, inclusive, and sustainable rural communities, ensuring people have decent places to live by improving the quality and sustainability of local environments and neighbourhoods.
 - Promote more sustainable patterns of development, including:
 - a range of uses to maximise the potential benefits of the countryside fringing urban areas;
 - appropriate leisure opportunities to enable urban and rural dwellers to enjoy the wider countryside.
 - Promote the development of the English Regions by improving their economic performance, so that all are able to reach their full potential.
- 4.4.10 PPS7, paragraph 26, advises that local authorities should aim to secure environmental improvements and maximise the range of beneficial uses of land around urban areas whilst reducing potential conflicts between neighbouring land uses. PPS7 states that this should include improvement of public access and facilitate the provision of appropriate sport and recreation facilities.
- 4.4.11 Planning Policy Statement 9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' (2005) ("PPS9") contains a number of key principles and these include:
- Maintain and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests;

- Take a strategic approach to conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology and recognise the contributions that sites, areas and features, both individually and in combination, make to the conserving these resources;
 - Development proposals where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity and geological conservation interests should be permitted.
- 4.4.12 Planning Policy Guidance 13 'Transport' (2001) ("PPG13") promotes more sustainable transport choices, by maximising accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, cycling, and walking, and reduce the need to travel, especially by car.
- 4.4.13 Planning Policy Guidance 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (1994) ("PPG15") and Planning Policy Guidance 16 'Archaeology and Planning' (1990) ("PPG16") provide Government advice for the consideration of development proposals in relation to the historic environment and archaeology.
- 4.4.14 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' (2002) ("PPG17") contends that open spaces, sport and recreation all underpin people's quality of life and are therefore fundamental to delivering broader government objectives, including:
- Supporting an urban renaissance;
 - Supporting a rural renewal;
 - Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion;
 - Health and well being; and
 - Promoting more sustainable development.
- 4.4.15 Planning Policy Statement 23 'Planning and Pollution Control' (2004) ("PPS23") provides advice in relation to the consideration of development proposals in relation to pollution control, air, water quality and land affected by contamination.
- 4.4.16 Planning Policy Statement 25 'Development and Flood Risk' (2005) ("PPG23") provides advice on the material considerations to be taken into account notably where proposals may affect flood risk.

ii. LDF

- 4.4.17 The emerging Barnsley LDF is still in its early stages and carries very limited weight. The BMBC LDF will cover a period up to 2021.
- 4.4.18 Three Preferred Options Development Plan Documents (DPDs) were published in October 2005. These are: Core Strategy Preferred Options, Policies Preferred Options and Employment Sites Preferred Options. A Preferred Options Proposals Map was also published in October 2005.
- 4.4.19 All three draft DPDs have not progressed beyond the Preferred Options stage and BMBC are considering progressing Revised Preferred Options in due course.
- 4.4.20 The settlement of Royston is identified in the draft Core Strategy Preferred Options settlement hierarchy as a third tier settlement and is defined as a small town and service centre. The draft Core Strategy Preferred Options states that the aim is to support Royston's role as an attractive place to live.
- 4.4.21 The Preferred Options Proposals Map DPD designates the site as Green Belt apart from land to the north of the existing employment area east of Lund Hill Lane, which is shown as safeguarded land.

- 4.4.22 Draft Policy GB1 identifies a list of uses which are considered acceptable in the Green Belt as long as they do not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt and do not have a negative effect on the openness or appearance of the Green Belt. This list includes essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation.
- 4.4.23 Draft Policy GB8 resists the development of safeguarded land unless the development is needed in connection with existing uses or alternative uses where the development will protect the open nature of the land and will not affect the potential for future development of the site.

SECTION 5: PLANNING ANALYSIS

- 5.1.1 This section provides a planning analysis of the Scheme in the context of the development plan and other material considerations. The principal planning policy considerations are addressed below in this respect.

Sustainable Development

- 5.1.2 The Scheme provides for the regeneration of the Site that is largely derelict due to previous deep and drift mining activities and has a history of vandalism and misuse. The Scheme includes the reclamation of the Site to provide beneficial after-uses including formal and informal recreation enhancement along with biodiversity and landscape improvements. In this context it is considered that the proposals accord with relevant policies in the RSS (YH1, YH3, YH6, SY1), UDP (GS1), PPS1 and PPS7.

Green Belt

- 5.1.3 The majority of the site falls within Green Belt. In this respect the Scheme provides for the regeneration of the Site primarily for formal and informal recreation purposes with landscape and ecological enhancement. It is considered that the Scheme is compatible with the aim of the Green Belt in terms of maintaining its openness, along with being consistent with relevant purposes including the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment. In addition, the Scheme is compatible with the objectives of the Green Belt including securing nature conservation interest, improving derelict and damaged land, providing opportunities for access to open countryside including outdoor recreation and sport near urban areas and enhancing the landscape. In this respect, it is considered that the proposals accord with PPG2 notably paragraphs 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6, RSS Policy YH9 and UDP Policies RO5 and GS7.
- 5.1.4 The Scheme provides for changing facilities for users of the sports pitches that have been appropriately sited, designed and set within the wider landscape enhancement proposals. Such facilities are considered to be essential for outdoor sport or recreation consistent with PPG2 paragraph 3.5 and UDP Policy GS8.
- 5.1.5 In addition, it is considered that the Scheme will not result in significant harm and indeed will enhance the visual amenity of the Green Belt consistent with PPG2 and UDP Policy GS9.

Recreation and Green Space

- 5.1.6 The Scheme provides for the temporary suspension of part of a public footpath No. 10/11 in the south west part of the Site during the regeneration works then its subsequent permanent diversion as part of the restoration proposal. The Scheme also provides for formal sports pitch provision with associated new site access and car parking to the south west, along with informal recreation footpath and cycle routes on site that connect with the wider rights of way network. In this respect, the proposals accord with a range of policies in the RSS (ENV6, ENV11), UDP (RO8, RO9, GS26, GS28, GS33, GS34, GS37, T25, T27), PPS7, PPG13 and PPG17.

Employment

- 5.1.7 The north west part of the Site (approximately 4 hectares) is shown as an Employment Proposal Area allocation on the UDP Proposals Map. Policy RO3/1 confirms that there is a need to reclaim this parcel of land for employment use. However, the works necessary to achieve such remediation including excavation and compaction of the former drift mine part of the site would be extensive and not financially attractive bearing in mind the likely residual value of any such potential employment land in this part of Barnsley. In this respect, the Scheme provides this part of the Site to be reclaimed for informal recreational use with ecological and public access enhancement. Such an afteruse

should not preclude this part of the Site being brought forward for employment use in due course where considered appropriate in the longer term. In this respect, it is considered that the proposals are compatible with the RSS(E5) and UDP RO3/1 in this respect.

- 5.1.8 Carillion advise that the Scheme will provide temporary employment for 7 full time staff and approximately 150 part time workers during site operations. In addition, the Site will be subject to longer term management by a third party body.

Biodiversity

- 5.1.9 The Scheme has been developed taking into account a wide range of ecological surveys and provides for some habitat retention, mitigation and biodiversity enhancement measures. Details of the relevant supporting ecological reports that accompany the planning application. In this respect, it is considered that the Scheme will not result in an unacceptable adverse environmental effect during site operations and indeed in the longer term will provide for ecological improvements including extensive areas of new woodland planting, species rich, neutral and amenity grassland, wetland and open water. In this respect, the Scheme is compatible with relevant policies in the RSS (SY1, ENV6, ENV8), UDP (GS15, GS16, GS20, GS21, GS22) and PPS9.

Landscape Enhancement

- 5.1.10 The Scheme provides for the regeneration of a long standing degraded urban fringe landform predominantly formed as a result of previous deep and drift mine activities including the spoil heap. The Scheme includes re-grading, some habitat retention and enhancement, along with biodiversity and landscape enhancement works and accords with the RSS (Policy E5) and PPS7.

Remediation, Pollution Control and Flood Risk

- 5.1.11 The Site has been subject to comprehensive Site Investigation and the results have informed the Remediation Strategy for the Scheme. In addition, the proposals have been developed in order to ensure that there are no unacceptable adverse effects in terms of flood risk, drainage, noise along with air quality and supporting technical reports accompany the planning application in this respect. In the respect, it is concluded that the Scheme accords with the RSS (ENV1, ENV3), UDP (ES1, ES3, ES6, ES7, ES8), PPS7, PPS23, PPS25 and MPS2.

Historic Environment

- 5.1.12 A Cultural Heritage Assessment has been progressed in relation to the Scheme. In this respect, the Scheme will not result in an unacceptable adverse effect in this respect subject to some watching brief requirements during works in the vicinity of the sports pitches and the former drift mine. The Scheme accords with the RSS (ENV9), UDP, PPG15 and PPG16 in this respect.

Transport

- 5.1.13 The transport merits of the Scheme have been addressed in the Transport Assessment. In this respect, it is considered that the Scheme will not result in an unacceptable adverse effect in terms of highways impact during site operations or the subsequent informal and formal recreational use of the Site in the longer term. In this respect, it is considered that the Scheme is compatible with the UDP (Policies T2, T17) and PPG13.

SECTION 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 The Scheme will bring considerable environmental and social benefits through the regeneration of the former drift mine, spoil heap and largely disused recreation ground. The Scheme provides for significant biodiversity, landscape and recreation enhancement including the formal sports pitch provision along with an extended footpath and cycle track networks.
- 6.1.2 The Scheme has been developed further to extensive community consultation and liaison with a wide range of key stakeholders including Yorkshire Forward, English Partnerships, BMBC, WMDC, Groundwork Dearne Valley and other consultees. The scheme represents a considerable financial investment and it will complement other regeneration initiatives within Barnsley and the adjoining Wakefield District.
- 6.1.3 The retention and enhancement of some existing habitats on site, along with the proposed landscape planting measures and ecological mitigation will provide considerable scope for biodiversity enhancement in the longer term.
- 6.1.4 The proposals for the sports pitches with associated changing facilities, new access and car parking will provide enhanced recreational opportunities for the local community. Remodelling of the steeper slopes on the former colliery spoil tips will provide stability and address the current health and safety implications of the very steep slopes. In addition, the footpath and cycle track proposals for the informal recreation part of the site will provide enhanced opportunities for increase local community access to the Site and the wider rights of way network including the Trans Pennine Trail adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site.
- 6.1.5 In this context, it is considered that the Scheme accords with the Development Plan and other material planning considerations.