LAING O ROURKE CONSTRUCTION NORTH

LAND AT SHAFTON ALC

PLANNING STATEMENT SUPPORTING APPLCIATION FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL LAND TO PLAYING FIELD

JANUARY 2010

TURLEY ASSOCIATES

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Appendices:

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1. Introduction

1.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of a full planning application by Laing o Rourke for the change of use of agricultural land to playing fields. This is to form an extension to the existing/proposed playing fields at the new Advanced Learning Centre (ALC) at Shafton, Barnsley which was granted outline planning permission under decision reference 2007/0822, and for which reserved matters approval was granted under application reference 2009/1361. Whilst this application is a stand-alone consideration in the legal sense, this proposal should also be considered within the context of the above approvals.

1.2 This planning statement sets out the relevant planning policy and material considerations associated with the change of use. The proposed changes to the site are also outlined and justification given as to why the proposals are acceptable and planning permission should be granted.

2. Site Description and Context

2.1 The application site boundary for the proposals is shown outlined in red on plan reference BP4L_SHA_AWP_DR_94_BW_LL_16. However it should be noted that this is a component part of a wider site where construction for a new ALC has been approved.

2.2 The site is presently in agricultural use and designated as being within the Green Belt under saved UDP Policy PE5.

2.3 In addition, the Education Sites DPD identifies new sites for schools, including the site at Shafton. In accordance with the Outline and Reserved Matters Approval, the school buildings should be located towards the north of the site with playing fields and open space being situated in the southern portion of the site.

Shafton ALC - The Wider Site

2.4 The wider school site lies to the south of the main urban area of Shafton and is wholly within the Green Belt, as defined by saved UDP Policy PE5.

2.5 The application site is currently farmland but land adjacent to it to the north has Outline Planning (reference 2007/0822) and Reserved Matters Approval (reference 2009/1361) for a new Advanced Learning Centre. Development has not yet commenced on site.

2.6 The wider school site extends to 11.17 hectares, 2.5 hectares of which is for the buildings and access, and the remaining 8.67 hectares is for playing fields and open space.

2.7 The parcel of land that is the subject of this application lies to the south of the site and covers an area of approximately 0.96 hectares.

Surroundings

2.8 The application site is bound by agricultural land to the east, south and west. To the north is also agricultural land but it is this site which benefits from approvals for a new school referred to above.

3. The Proposals

3.1 This planning application seeks the change of use of the site from agricultural land to recreation space / sports field. The site will be used for educational and sporting activities.

3.2 Following the approval of Reserved Matters for the Shafton ALC in January 2010, a requirement for additional land to accommodate playing fields was established. Therefore, the proposals are for the change of use of a 0.96 hectare parcel of land from agricultural uses to playing fields and this will form part of the overall playing field provision associated with Shafton ALC.

4. Policy Context

4.1 Planning policies that are relevant to the consideration of the application are set out in national planning policy, together with the adopted development plan.

National Planning Policy

PPS1: Creating Sustainable Communities (2005)

4.2 PPS1 outlines the Government's vision for the planning system and the key policy principles which should underpin it. These key policy principles include sustainable development and a spatial planning approach.

4.3 Key policies contained in the Guidance include support for sustainable economic growth, regeneration and creating linkages between places, greater accessibility to local facilities and services and the re-use of previously developed land.

4.4 A key feature of PPS1 is the promotion of the importance of good design in new development. It affirms that good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development.

Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts (January 1995; Amended March 2001)

4.5 PPG2 outlines the fundamental aims of the Government's Green Belt policy as the prevention of urban sprawl and safeguarding greenfield land. Green Belts shape the pattern of urban growth, ensuring that development occurs in locations allocated in development plans.

4.6 PPG2 outlines there as being give purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve setting and special character of historic towns;
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.7 Paragraph 1.6 of PPG2 sets out appropriate and positive uses of land identified within the Green Belt as follows:

- To provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- To provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- To retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- To improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- To secure nature conservation interest; and
- To retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

4.8 PPG2 imposes a strict presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt. PPG2 states that:

> *'Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances'*[1].

4.9 PPG2 outlines that the construction of new development in the Green Belt is inappropriate in principle, unless it is for the following purposes:

- Agriculture and forestry;
- Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt;
- Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;
- Limited infilling in existing villages and limited affordable housing for community needs under development plan policies according to PPG3;
- Limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites.

4.10 Of these exceptional circumstances, PPG2 requires that 'essential facilities' should be genuinely required for uses of land that preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

[1] PPG2, Paragraph 2.6

Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (July 2002)

4.11 PPG17 emphasises the importance of well designed, open spaces, sport and recreational facilities for improving quality of life and wellbeing. The guidance states that outdoor recreational facilities can: be a focal point for community activities; support an urban renaissance or rural renewal; promote health, wellbeing and community cohesion and promote sustainable development.

4.12 PPG17 states the importance of understanding the needs of local communities in order to ensure effective planning for open space, sport and recreational facilities. Local authorities should recognise opportunities for the development of open space, sports or recreational facilities to remedy deficiencies in provision.

4.13 PPG17 requires that local authorities ensure that sufficient and appropriate provision is made for local sports and recreational facilities where planning permission is granted for new developments. This should either be through an increase in the number of facilities or by improvements to existing facilities.

4.14 PPG17 states that Local Authorities should consider several criterion where identifying where to locate new areas of open space, sports and recreational facilities. The most applicable of these to the proposed development of the site includes:

- Ensuring that facilities are accessible;
- Avoiding any significant loss of amenity to residents, neighbouring uses or biodiversity;
- Adding to and enhance the range and quality of existing facilities;
- Meeting the regeneration needs of areas, using brownfield in preference to greenfield sites;
- Considering the scope for using any surplus land for open space, sport or recreational use, weighing this against alternative uses.

The Development Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber (May 2008)

4.15 The RSS for Yorkshire and the Humber was published in May 2008 and replaces the 'Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire & Humber to 2016' which was issued in December 2004.

4.16 Policy YH9 states that the Green Belts in North, South and West Yorkshire have a valuable role in supporting urban renaissance, as well as conserving countryside. Policy YH9 requires that the general extent of the Green Belt should not be changed, but recognises that there may be a '*localised need*' to reconsider its extent and use in certain locations.

Saved Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (December 2000)

4.17 The Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2000) constitutes the Council's statutory development plan whilst the Local Development Framework (LDF) is under preparation. Only the Local Plan policies which were 'saved' by the Secretary of State in September 2007 have been considered as part of this appraisal.

4.18 The site is allocated under Policy PE5 as Green Belt land and under Policy PE20 as an existing community facility.

4.19 Policy PE5 defines the extent of the Green Belt around the settlement of Penistone. Policy GS7 seeks to safeguard against inappropriate development in this locality and specifies that development will not be permitted within the Green Belt unless it maintains openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

4.20 Policy GS8 is aligned with PPG2, stating that the construction of new buildings will not be permitted within the Green Belt except in very special circumstances, unless it is for the following purposes:

- Agriculture or forestry
- Essential facilities for outdoor sport or outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, or for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it

- The replacement of existing dwellings in compliance with policy GS8e. The UDP states that 'positive' development of the Green Belt includes the provision of opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation and the improvement of damaged and derelict land around settlements.

4.21 The UDP sets out a number of 'greenspace objectives'. Those that are most applicable to the proposed site include:

- Reclaiming derelict land for new development wherever possible and feasible;
- Comprehensively improving major tracts of derelict, despoiled and neglected land in the urban areas, and provide open space and recreational facilities;
- Protecting the open character of land around and between settlements;
- Improving the quality and provision of open space within the urban areas;
- Protecting and enhancing the provision of both indoor and outdoor sport and leisure uses;
- Maximising opportunities for community and individual environmental involvement and action;
- Maximising public access to, and awareness of, recreational open space.

Barnsley Local Development Framework

4.22 In accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the Council is currently preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF).

4.23 The Core Strategy will constitute the key Development Plan Document, which will sets out the proposed policies, spatial options and strategic objectives for the future development of the Barnsley Borough to 2026.

4.24 The Core Strategy Preferred Options document was published in October 2005. This was updated by the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options, published in June 2009.

4.25 In terms of Green Belt policy, Draft Policy CSP41 requires that the extent of the Green Belt is retained. New development should not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt or have a negative effect upon its openness or appearance.

Acceptable uses for development in the Green Belt are aligned with PPG2 and UDP Policy GS8.

Barnsley Education Sites DPD

4.26 The Council adopted the Education Sites DPD in January 2009. The DPD sets out the planned sites for secondary schools across the borough in accordance with the Government's Building Schools for the Future development programme.

4.27 The DPD sets out the Council's intention to create nine advanced learning centres in the borough, to replace the thirteen existing secondary schools.

4.28 The DPD outlines that for each advanced-learning centre which requires a new site a number of options for new sites were identified and consulted upon throughout the Barnsley Education Sites Issues and Options document. The sites were then selected following the preferred options consultation.

4.29 Policy EDS1 relates to the Council's intention to build three of the replacement schools on new sites. This includes reference to *'11.17 hectares of land west of Engine Lane in Shafton'.*

Sport England: Playing Fields Policy

4.30 Sport England was appointed as a statutory consultee under the General Development Procedure Order (1995) for development proposals which affect playing fields and sports facilities. Sport England should be informed by both the Local Planning Authority and the applicant as to proposals to develop on land which is, or has been recently used as playing fields[2].

A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England (1997) - Planning Policy Statement

4.31 Sport England has established a series of policies that aim to ensure that there is no reduction in the supply of conveniently located, quality playing fields for current and future demand.

4.32 Policy P1 states that Sport England will oppose planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field. Sport England will only alter its stance if, in the judgement of Sport England, specific circumstances apply, which are outlined in Policies E1 to E5.

4.33 Policy E1 states that:

> *'A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated to Sport England that there is an excess of playing provision in the catchment and the site has no special significance to the interest of sport'.*

4.34 Policy E2 states:

> *'The proposed development is ancillary to the principle use of the site as a playing field or playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use.'*

4.35 Policy E3 states:

> *'The propose development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not resul in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of the playing areas of any playing pitch or the loss of any other sporting / ancillary facilities on the site.'*

4.36 Policy E4 states that:

> *'The playing field or playing fields, which would be lost as a result of the proposed development, would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of an equivalent or better quantity, in a suitable location … prior to the commencement of development.*

4.37 Policy E5 states that:

> *'The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.'*

5. Planning Justification

5.1 The Preceding sections of this statement set out the planning policy context that is relevant to this site. In this respect the key considerations are as follows:

- Whether the change of use is considered to be appropriate development within the Green Belt and;
- Whether the proposal will make a positive contribution to the aims and objectives of Sport England as statutory consultee.

Green Belt Considerations

5.2 The purposes of the Green Belt are set out in paragraph 1.5 of Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts, published in January 1995 (amended March 2001) and this is supported by paragraph 1.6 which sets out associated land use objectives. The approach in the UDP is also reflective of this approach.

5.3 The proposal is for the change of use from agricultural land to sports pitch and associated open space with recreational uses.

5.4 The site is well contained and its change of use forms a logical extension to the boundary to the school playing fields. Fundamentally, Paragraph 1.6 of PPG2 outdoor sports and recreational facilities are appropriate uses within the Green Belt. UDP policy also reflects that approach and at paragraph 3.30 of that document identifies that outdoor sport and recreation uses are appropriate and positive within the Green Belt. The principle of the proposed use is appropriate within the Green Belt and is acceptable.

Sport England Considerations

5.5 The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure Order) 1995 defines Sport England was appointed as a Statutory Consultee for development proposals which affect playing fields and sports facilities.

5.6 Sport England were consulted on the outline planning application and application for Reserved Matters approval and no objections were raised.

5.7 This application proposal represents a gain in the overall level of playing pitch provision over and above what was approved under the wider Reserved Matters approval. As this is the case there is no loss of playing pitch provision and therefore is acceptable.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The proposed use of the site will provide additional sports and recreation facilities to the proposed new school. The proposals will extend to the existing school boundary into area currently identified as Green Belt within the saved UDP.

6.2 When assessed against the objective of Green Belt set out within PPG2 and Saved UDP policy, the proposals represents appropriate development and consequently is acceptable.

6.3 When taken with the wider reserved matters application, the proposals will enhance sports facilities and provision at the school

6.4 In conclusion, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in planning policy and environmental terms and request that planning permission be granted.

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