

Planning Statement

1. The economic background to the application

The unemployment figure for the Yorkshire Region to the end of June rose by 25,000 to 266,000 meaning almost 10% of Yorkshire's available workforce is classified as unemployed. Currently 16 – 24 year olds not in work, education or training in Yorkshire stood at 19.9% at the end of the second quarter of the year. This represents a 200% rise since March last year. In Barnsley Central Ward alone, unemployment is now at 3, 098 representing 8.1% of the Ward's working population. One in seven young people in Barnsley are on job seeker's allowance with youth unemployment at more than 30% (the highest in the region) Barnsley has a low employment rate of 68%, it has 136,000 residents of working age and only 94,000 residents in employment (not all of whom work in Barnsley) (source – The Growth Plan for Barnsley 2007)

Recently Lord Haskins highlighted IT and advanced manufacturing and engineering as key areas where businesses struggle to recruit. They are also the key areas for growth and employment prospects in the region.

2. Planning issues

The Government is expecting "Proactive Planning, from pre-application to delivery" and the new BMBC Development Management is promoted as having a "Positive, proactive approach to shaping, considering, determining and delivering development proposals."

The site, the subject of the proposal has only three residential properties within 250 metres of the site and has land available for new green technology, particularly ground source heat pumps and photovoltaic technology. The site is sustainable in transport terms and local services. The existing UDP - (eg – ED13) supports rural diversification.

Core Strategy

The approved core strategy recognises the need for new employment land and RSS Policy YH9 states that "Localised review of Green Belt boundaries may be necessary in some places to deliver the core approach and sub area policies" The spatial strategy includes Penistone which is identified as an area for economic development and growth. Under core policy 7 – Providing strategic employment locations (7.64) the need for 350 hectares of employment land allows for localised review of current Green Belt sites and particular importance is attached to new and emerging sectors (7.66)

Development sites and places consultation draft 2012.

Since the core strategy was adopted in 2011 an Economic Strategy for the Borough has been agreed. The key element is to create the conditions for economic growth and greater prosperity “through the provision of quality employment sites” Barnsley has an undersized economy and is still reliant on the Public Sector. The Council recognises “the need to do more in supporting the transition to a more private sector led economy” The economic strategy envisages “working closely with existing businesses to maximize opportunities for them to grow, ensure Barnsley is the best place to start a new business, ensure we have the infrastructure in place to attract external investment and raise educational attainment”

The current draft document carries little weight at the current time as it has not completed the required consultation and approval process. The criteria for site selection have been examined (9 economy) and the site now put forward as a development opportunity will score highly under the draft criteria. The site also can be justified under 9.28 as the investment can only be attracted to this location. Alterations to the Green Belt (14) provide for review of Green Belt sites to provide for identifiable employment needs. The site meets the criteria set out in 14.3.

NPPF

The new National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government Planning Policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a *presumption in favour of sustainable development*. Core planning principles (17) include; “to be not simply about scrutiny but, instead, be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives”

“Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the Country needs”

The NPPF still contains Green Belt policies to protect the most valuable Green Belt areas but does allow the demonstration of exceptional circumstances to be considered in any development proposal. It is considered that exceptional circumstances can be justified in the case of the CTS Industrial proposals in physical, social and economic terms in line with the NPPF.

3. The Site and Development Platform.

The site lies immediately north of the main group of farm buildings. One of the major stone barns has planning approved and partly occupied for B1 uses (2007/1275) in total 720 sq m of commercial space exists on site. To the north of the site is a further existing commercial development retailing farm products to the general public with dedicated

parking areas. Hazelhead House lies to the immediate east of the site with access linking to Lee Lane. The site is also dominated by the newly erected wind turbines, the Hazelhead Wind Farm (Banks development) effectively industrialises the area.

The development site is set deep into the ground with a well compacted and drained surface. It was constructed to recover material for agricultural purposes but originally intended for commercial storage purposes, in particular, composted materials. It is adjacent to a further concreted site area developed for commercial use in the processing and screening of compost.

To the immediate south of the site is a full range of steel framed barns which currently are used in connection with the farm's cattle rearing activities. These buildings are mainly accessed from the Whams Road entrance and operate in a self contained part of the site away from offices and the proposed industrial activity.

The quality of the land at Hazelhead is graded at 3-5 (the worst). As agricultural land it is, at best, marginal with moorland edge classification. It is not suitable for arable use with only 3-4 inches of top soil. It contains high levels of millstone grit and carboniferous clay content. High levels of rainfall (40" each year) restrict working days and the soil holds water to surface. The existing historic stone drainage system is ineffective. The site is naturally acidic with a high peat content. The high stone content (1" upwards) means the land is difficult to plough. It is naturally low in potash and phosphates and other necessary minerals for arable land. It can barely support grass for cattle and, in farming terms, it is a very difficult location.

The site is generally more suitable for economic activities other than traditional farming activities. The proposed site exists and is ready for investment surrounded by existing structures and with commercial activities already in place. As farm land it is no loss to the area. The site in question is already hidden from view and, when landscaped, will contain the commercial elements of the farm leaving the surrounding higher level land untouched. There is no affect on the openness of the Green Belt from the logical use of the building platform.

4. CTS site requirements

CTS are specialists in the design, build and installation of footbridges, boardwalks, lock gates and landscape structures. It is a Quality Assured Company and approved by the Highways Agency on the Register of Qualified Steelwork Contractors. The enclosed brochure illustrates the scope of their business which is nationwide.

CTS require a site development which optimises its manufacturing capability and addresses its staff location needs. After several years, including site investigations in cooperation with the Barnsley Development Agency, they have agreed that the Hazelhead site meets their strict criteria needs in terms of staff location and access to their clients and service providers.

The firm wants a Barnsley site because of their immediate recruitment needs for skilled engineering staff (welders and fabricators) they believe South Yorkshire and Barnsley have an engineering culture which does not exist in Kirklees. The design staff consists of highly skilled engineers and the Company sponsor training of new staff. The Company also needs joiners for shuttering and timber work, current workers are nearing retirement in many cases so new posts will be available.

CTS are on the verge of introducing new engineering techniques into Britain involving the construction of GRP (Glass reinforced plastic) bridge construction, used in Germany and Russia but not developed in England. This would be a ground breaking venture for Barnsley with new employment growth potential.

The Company also outsources work to local Companies including transport functions and elements of smaller fabrications. Penistone and Barugh Green are two locations which would benefit together with suppliers and painting contractors in the area.

The development of the Hazelhead site would help support the local farm shop and Penistone town centre for local shopping by the staff, which is accessible by public transport.

The site is essentially ideal for the purposes of CTS and, as it is very secure in boundary terms, the valuable equipment and raw materials would not be placed at the risk of theft or damage.

5. Summary

The proposal represents a golden opportunity to bring manufacturing into the Penistone area. A well established Company will invest in new buildings and technologies on a site which is ideal for its purpose. The exceptional circumstances which can support this venture are documented. There is no effect on the openness of the Green Belt from the scheme on a site which exists within an existing farming and office complex. There is no loss in agricultural terms and the site has no outstanding landscape qualities and is dominated by industrial structures. The Government is determined to see economic growth and jobs created as is the stated objective of Barnsley MBC. The Planning Services of the Authority are commended to support this initiative.

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