



meeting **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

date **17 FEBRUARY 2004**

agenda item number

5

from: **Director of Environment**

**RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL 8/03/01675/CTY
EXTENSION TO TEMPORARY OFFICES AND REVISED CAR
PARKING
GAMSTON HIGHWAYS DEPOT, RADCLIFFE ROAD, GAMSTON,
NOTTINGHAM
APPLICANT: NOTTS COUNTY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT
DEPARTMENT**

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a planning application for an extension to temporary offices at the Gamston Highways Depot, Radcliffe Road, Gamston. The proposal relates to development within the Green Belt and has therefore been treated as a departure from the Development Plan. The recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to conditions.

The Site and Surroundings

2. Gamston Highways Depot lies on the eastern side of Nottingham on the south side of Radcliffe Road (A52) and to the east of Gamston Lings Bar Road (A52). To the east and south of the site lies open agricultural land, which is the subject of a separate application for a Park and Ride site. A public footpath runs adjacent to the site's southern boundary before cutting diagonally across the field to the north-east. Residential development lies to the west of the site albeit separated by the Gamston Lings Bar Road. Holme Farm and a small number of other isolated properties lie to the south-east on Bassingfield Lane at a distance of some 260m (see plan).
3. The site serves as a Highways Depot and contains a mix of associated uses. At the northern end of the site is a brick built office building and a bungalow also used as office accommodation. The central part of the site contains various storage buildings and workshops, plant and areas of open storage. The southern part of the site lies on slightly higher ground accessed by a concrete ramp. This area contains various plant, building materials and a substantial stockpile of road salt. Various lighting columns are positioned around the depot.
4. The site is secured by a mix of chainlink and palisade fencing against which planting is present along some stretches, notably a tall Leylandii hedge screen to the northern and western boundaries. A grassed bund

with some shrub planting forms the western boundary to the southern part of the site. The eastern boundary has no screening vegetation although there are some poplar trees towards the northern end which have been topped and lopped.

5. Car parking within the depot comprises a mix of formally laid out spaces and further unmarked areas adjacent to many of the buildings. The site operates a one way vehicular system with access from Gamston Lings Bar Road and egress from the northern boundary directly onto the A52.

Background

6. Members will recall that an earlier planning application (Ref. No. 8/03/01135/CTY) for the provision of temporary office accommodation with car parking was reported to Planning Committee on 30 September 2003. That scheme sought permission for the siting of temporary offices at the southern end of the Depot to accommodate engineering and operations staff previously based within several remote sites.
7. A further report was presented to Planning Committee on 28 October 2003 in respect of that same application on account of a need to rotate the original layout. That revision was based on the fact that two District Councils had decided not to participate in proposed highway arrangements to manage and operate the network leading to a need for additional office accommodation. Further modular units could not, however, have been attached to the original layout and thus the rotated layout was proposed in order to accommodate such an arrangement. Planning permission for that revised layout was subsequently granted. The current application relates to the additional accommodation anticipated earlier.

Proposed Development

8. The application seeks planning permission for an extension to the temporary offices previously permitted together with additional car parking. The scheme would provide an additional 5 modular units extending further along the site's southern boundary. The extension would measure approximately 18.3m x 12.2m (223 sq.m). The units would match those previously permitted i.e. a single storey, flat roofed modular construction finished in a moss green. A ramp would facilitate access to the offices whilst the originally permitted offices include necessary ancillary facilities.
9. As part of the proposals the car parking scheme would be revamped to provide a total of forty spaces including provision for drivers with disabilities and visitors. As part of the earlier permission the road salt storage area is to be relocated from the southern area of the depot thus releasing land to facilitate the necessary car parking scheme.

Planning Policies

10. Central Government advice in respect of Green Belts is set out in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 2. Policy 3/2 of the Nottinghamshire Structure

Plan Review (SPR) refers to Green Belt and confirms that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development.

11. Policy 5/5 confirms that measures will be taken to increase safety, convenience and enjoyment for cyclists, pedestrians and those with limited mobility. Policy 5/12 states that outside the city centre new development will be expected to provide appropriate off-street parking whilst not contributing to generating unnecessary traffic.
12. Policy ENV1 of the Rushcliffe Borough Local Plan confirms that planning permission will normally be granted for new development provided various criteria are met. These include there being no significant adverse effect upon the amenity of adjoining properties; compliance with car parking standards; sufficient amenity/circulation space; and the scale, height, design and materials of the proposal are neither unsympathetic to the character of its surroundings nor overbearing on neighbouring properties.
13. Policy ENV16 refers to Green Belts and echoes SPR Policy 3/2. Policy ENV18 states that proposals for appropriate in the Green Belt must demonstrate that the site and proposals have been chosen to minimise impact upon the countryside; the scheme is not significantly intrusive and new buildings respect the general character of the area. Similar policies are contained within the Rushcliffe Borough Replacement Local Plan Deposit Draft.

Consultations

14. **Rushcliffe Borough Council** raises no objection subject to the permission expiring on 15 September 2008 after which, unless a further planning permission has been granted, the use shall cease the structure shall be removed and the site be restored to its former condition by 15 October 2008.
15. **Holme Pierrepont & Gamston Parish Council** have not responded.
16. **The Highways Agency** raises no objection.
17. **Transco** raise no objection but confirm the presence of apparatus in the vicinity. A copy of their advice note is to be passed onto the applicant.
18. **East Midlands Electricity** raises no objection.
19. **Severn Trent Water** have not responded.

Publicity

20. The application has been publicised by means of a site notice, press notice and neighbour notification letters sent to the nearest occupiers. No letters of representation have been received.

Highway Observations

21. No highway objections although it is pointed out that the existing pedestrian connections to the site are extremely poor.

Observations

22. The site lies within the Green Belt and the provision of offices does not constitute “appropriate development” as defined by planning policy. On this basis the application has been advertised as a departure from the Development Plan.
23. PPG2 confirms that it is a matter for the applicant to demonstrate very special circumstances to justify why the harm caused to the Green Belt by inappropriate development is outweighed by other considerations. The previous planning application was supported on the basis that the proposals were not considered to detrimentally affect the openness of the Green Belt and, secondly, such arrangements would allow existing operations to be rationalised enabling improvements in public service delivery to be achieved.
24. The need for the additional accommodation, subject of the current application, is for a similar reason given that two Councils no longer wish to participate in highway management operations. In assessing the original application the ensuing improvements in the delivery of highway services were accepted for the temporary period of 5 years and it would be logical, therefore, to also accept the need to accommodate the additional staff for a similar temporary period providing no unacceptable impacts would arise.
25. The proposed offices would be wholly contained within the existing depot site and represent a relatively small extension contained within the site’s south-western corner. Consequently it is considered that the proposals would have an insignificant impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed design, scale and materials are considered acceptable matching the previously approved scheme. The temporary period sought allows sufficient time for a long-term site solution to be investigated, particularly in the light of future outcomes of the A52 Multi Modal Study.
26. The nearest residential properties would only have partial views of the development at some distance and, in any event, the previous permission requires the planting of a hedge to reduce the visual impact.
27. The revised car parking layout provides adequate circulation and parking facilities including provision for drivers with disabilities. The original car park layout included secure bicycle storage and the revised scheme retains this element.
28. It is recognised that the site is not well served by safe pedestrian/cycle access. The bulk of the additional staff to be accommodated would, being field based, need access to cars to enable them to carry out their functions. Consequently it is felt that the poor pedestrian/cycle access may not be as critical as could otherwise be the case, particularly for a

temporary period. This issue will need to be taken into account in considering a permanent accommodation solution. In the meantime the earlier permission requires the implementation of a green travel plan to introduce measures to improve access for modes other than the private motor-car. Such opportunities could potentially be further enhanced should the Park and Ride site be granted planning permission.

29. Whilst this application has been advertised as a departure from the Development Plan, it is not considered necessary on this occasion to refer the proposal to the Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM). The application for the original offices was referred to GOEM and the need for the additional offices now proposed was made known at that stage. GOEM did not intervene. The proposals are for a limited period and no objections have been received. Bearing in mind that it is for the Planning Authority to take a reasonable view as to whether proposals require referral it is considered, in light of the above, that such a procedure is not necessary in this instance.
30. It is considered appropriate to specify a temporary period expiring on 7 November 2008 since this would then match the time limit imposed in respect of the previously granted offices.

Human Rights Act Implications

31. The relevant issues arising out of consideration of the Human Rights Act have been assessed in accordance with the Council's adopted protocol. Rights under Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol may be affected. The proposals have the potential to introduce a slight impact of visual intrusion. However, this consideration needs to be balanced against the benefits the proposals would bring, the distance involved and the scope for additional planting to minimise such impact.

Statutory and Policy Implications

32. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, Crime and Disorder and users. Where such implications are material, they have been brought to out in the text of the report. Attention is, however, drawn to specifics as follows:-

Crime and Disorder Implications

33. The development would be located within the existing depot which benefits from security fencing and CCTV.

Statement of reasons for approval

34. The proposals would allow for the accommodation of staff necessary to undertake the highway management functions no longer to be pursued by two local councils. The arrangement would enable such staff to operate from the same base as other colleagues with highway management responsibilities and contribute to improvements in public service delivery

for a temporary period. The development is for a temporary period and can be satisfactorily accommodated within the site without causing significant harm to the Green Belt.

RECOMMENDATION

35. It is RECOMMENDED that planning permission be granted for the purposes of Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1.

Members need to consider the issues, including the Human Rights Act issues, set out in the report and resolve accordingly.

PETER WEBSTER
Director of Environment

Head of Legal Services' Comments

Planning Committee has power to decide the Recommendation. [SHB.9.01.04]

Director of Resources' Financial Comments

As this report only concerns the planning permission, there are no direct financial implications arising. [DJK 5.2.04]

Background Papers Available for Inspection

1. Letter from East Midlands Electricity dated 12.12.03
2. Letter from Transco dated 12.12.03
3. Letter from Highways Agency dated 17.12.03
4. Letter from Rushcliffe Borough Council dated 21.01.04

Electoral Division(s) Affected

West Bridgford East

EPD.JS/EP4488
30 January 2004

Please note. Copies of plans and appendices referred to but not included in this report may be obtained from: John Sheffield, Environment, Trent Bridge House, Fox Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6BJ, tel 0115 977 4499, email john.sheffield@nottsc.gov.uk or from Peter Barker at the same address, tel 0115 977 4416, email peter.barker@nottsc.gov.uk.

SUGGESTED PLANNING CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall expire on 7 November 2008 after which, unless a further planning permission has been granted, the use shall cease, the offices shall be removed from the site and the site shall be restored to its former condition. The date of commencement of the development hereby permitted shall be notified to the County Planning Authority (CPA) in writing at least seven days in advance.
2. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the CPA the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on Drawing No.AL (0)051 received by the CPA on 18 November 2003.
3. No development shall take place until details of the proposed facing materials and finishes have been submitted to the CPA for its written approval. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless any variation is subsequently agreed in writing by the CPA.
4. Prior to the occupation of the offices the car parking shall be metalled with a suitable bound material, marked out and drained in accordance with a scheme that shall have previously been approved in writing by the CPA.
5. Prior to the occupation of the offices the applicants shall prepare a Green Travel Plan, to be agreed in writing by the CPA, to include the following:
 - i) measures to improve access to the site by pedestrians, cyclists and bus users;
 - ii) measures to improve safety within the site by segregating pedestrians and cyclists from motorised traffic.

The measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
6. Within 1 month of the commencement of the development hereby permitted a scheme for hedgerow shrub planting along the site's eastern and southern boundaries shall be submitted to the CPA for its written approval.
7. The planting of the hedgerow shrubs shall take place in accordance with the scheme approved under Condition 6 above in the first available planting season following approval of that scheme. The planting scheme shall be maintained in accordance with good arboricultural practice for the duration of the development hereby permitted following its implementation and any plants or trees which become damaged, diseased, die or are removed within that period shall be replaced in the following planting season with similar specimens to those originally planted.

Reasons

1. The proposals are considered unsuitable for permanent retention and for the avoidance of doubt.
- 2,3,6,7 To ensure a satisfactory visual appearance for the development.
4. In the interests of the safe working of the site and to prevent discharge of surface water onto the public highway.
1. To ensure that the scheme satisfactorily addresses potential access and traffic impacts and to accord with Policy 5/5 of the Nottinghamshire Structure Plan Review.

Notes to Applicant:

1. The applicant's attention is drawn to the content of Transco's letter dated 12 December 2003, a copy of which is attached to the decision letter.
2. The applicant is advised to note that, should planning permission be forthcoming for the Park and Ride site on the adjacent land to the east, it would be necessary to close the existing depot egress onto the A52 and incorporate a replacement within the Park and Ride layout. The applicant's attention is drawn to the comments of NCC Transport Planning dated 28 January 2004, a copy of which is attached to the decision letter.

EPD.JS/EP4488
30 January 2004