DONCASTER LOCAL PLAN
EXAMINATION
MATTER 4 - GREEN BELT

Bankwood Lane, Rossington

Ref: 043
Eco Power Environmental Ltd
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1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement is prepared by Broadgrove Planning & Development Ltd on behalf of our client Eco Power Environmental Ltd and is submitted as evidence as part of the examination into the Doncaster Local Plan.

1.2 Eco Power has land interests at Bankwood Lane, Rossington and made representations during various consultation stages of the Local Plan in 2018 and 2019, initially as Attero Recycling Ltd.

1.3 This Statement relates to the Matter 4 - Green Belt and responds to questions in the note prepared by the Inspector, which forms the basis of the Examination Hearings.

Response to Matter 4: Green Belt

This section of our response provides comments on the matters and questions raised by the Inspector’s document in connection with Matter 4

Issue – Accommodating development in non-Green Belt locations

2.1. Our comments in response to these issues specifically relate to Land East of Attero, which was referenced as 1016 in the Green Belt Review and the Green Belt Topic Paper 3. This site has been promoted by the landowner as being capable of providing a new rail head to support existing local businesses and encourage new rail freight growth.

Question 4.1 Were all reasonable options for meeting identified development needs in non-Green Belt locations fully examined during the preparation of the plan?

2.2. The site lies within the Green Belt, directly adjacent to an established employment area. Part of the promoted land was subject to a planning application by Attero Recycling Ltd, which was granted permission on 22 November 2018 for;

1. Provision of adoptable new link road and private access road.
2. Change of use of land to waste recycling area and ancillary development (part-retrospective).
4. Provision of rail loading and HGV parking area.

A copy of the site location plan and the approved layout for application reference 18/00548/FULM are appended to this statement, which show the overlap. This shows that the lorry park and rail loading facility fall within the western edge of the promoted site, within the Green Belt.

2.3. This scheme was to meet demand for improved infrastructure for existing employment uses as well as benefits to the wider local community, by amending the road layout and removing large vehicle movements from the local road network.

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2.4. It is considered that the Council approach to development needs (employment) and particularly the level of infrastructure and Green Belt sites was too narrow and simplistic and has not considered the expansion of existing businesses and future infrastructure requirements.

2.5. It is important to reiterate the context of this site, which is directly to the west is the Attero Waste Management Facility, beyond which is the former Rossington Colliery Site. Rossington Colliery forms part of a major mixed-use redevelopment project (Thorne Park) incorporating some 1,200 new houses, schools and service facilities. West of the Colliery Site is the new Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (Inland Port – iPort), which is proving to be a successful scheme due to its location and rail links.

2.6. It is also important to be aware that the site has the benefit of a direct rail link into the site. This was the subject of the recent application referred to above, in connection with the existing Attero site and demonstrates how the approved rail loading area can easily be extended into the wider promoted site.

2.7. In essence, through the approval in 2018, the site will become a part brownfield site. The final pre-commencement conditions are being discharged and work is due to start on site shortly to deliver the lorry park and rail loading facility within the Green Belt.

2.8. The promoted site is the subject of ongoing discussions between the LPA and Railtrack with regards to development of a new multi modal rail terminal. These proposals and the discussions are referenced in more detail in response to Question 4.2 later in this Statement.

2.9. With regards to the site itself, the LPA have been consistent in the Green Belt review documents within the evidence base. The site has been subject to review as part of the wider South 7 review and more recently as an independent site.

2.10. The Council Green Belt review for Site 1016 concludes;

“The Proposed Green Belt Site performs in a largely similar way to the General Area. The Proposed Green Belt Site is not considered to have a role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of a large built up area, and the site is considered to fall within and maintain a less essential gap which is of a sufficient scale that development at this location would not result in merging between settlements. Similar to the General Area, the Green Belt is therefore considered to have a low sensitivity to encroachment and no role in role in supporting the setting or special character of a Historic Town”

2.10 While the site lies within the Green Belt, there should have been some recognition of the part brownfield element of the site, and the ability of this site to;

- Meet specific requirements – as set out in the Attero planning application which was approved in November 2018, there is a substantial need for rail loading facilities and emphasised the significant benefits the site brought to the local community with the reduced road vehicle movements;
• Opportunities – the reduced traffic movements could be further reduced with enhanced rail facilities to support existing and new business in this sustainable location. The approved scheme can be easily extended into the promoted site with minimal impact.

• Focus on Regeneration – the ability of the site to provide a multi modal freight facility would support existing brownfield sites in the area, which is a major employment area on the edge of a Main Town, Rossington. While not directly developing a brownfield site, it will assist in focussing and retaining employment in a sustainable location.

Issue – Sustainable Patterns of Development

Question 4.2 Assuming it is necessary to remove land from the Green Belt, did the approach taken in the Plan give first consideration to land which has been previously developed and / or is well served by public transport.

2.11. The question appears to specifically reference the proposed housing allocations. However, we would suggest that the sustainable approach to development should have been taken with Green Belt land and employment opportunities, as set out in response to the previous question.

2.12. NPPF Para 138 states;

“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policymaking authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary.”

2.13 This site borders an established, major employment area and a Main Town, residential settlement of Rossington. By the nature of this there is a sustainable pattern of development. The fact that the land is promoted for rail freight development is a further positive statement of intent with regards to the sustainability of the proposals.

2.14 While the site is designated Green Belt, part of the site will become brownfield shortly, when work starts on the delivery of the approved lorry park and rail loading area.

2.15 Eco Power are in discussions with the LPA and Railtrack to bring forward a Multi Modal Rail Terminal (DMRT). More information will be provided as part of the relevant Examination Sessions, specifically rail freight, however it is important to highlight the sustainability of the proposals and the removal of vehicles from the local highway network.

2.16 None of the two existing Rail Terminals in Doncaster cater for bulk products such as aggregates, waste products such as RDF and SRF (used in energy production), timber or ash. The plan at Rossington is to develop a terminal capable of handling all these “bulk” products and transferring journeys from road to rail.

2.17 While the specific merits of rail freight and sustainable transport will be discussed as at separate sessions, it is important in the context of the Green Belt discussion, and specific questions on approach to considering alternative sites, the principle of sustainability in a wider context.
2.18 It has been concluded that, should the site be removed from the Green Belt, it would have strongly defined boundaries, in line with the requirements set out in NPPF.

2.19 It is also clear that the site should have been considered in the context of an opportunity for a poorly performing Green Belt site, which the Council consider would have strongly defined boundaries, and are aware of the aspirations to bring forward a sustainable freight facility/

2.20 The site is within a sustainable pattern of development, being adjacent to a Main Town and a large employment area. The benefit of the direct rail link, which is scarce, and the awareness of the

2.21 The owners have set out a case in discussions with the LPA and Network Rail that there is the ability to meet the following;

- 100,000 tonnes of aggregates from Doncaster to various rail connected locations;
- The expansion of Rossington to a Multi Modal Rail freight terminal has the potential to remove 26,000 truck movements from Doncaster’s roads as well as 1047 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

2.22 These are matters that the LPA should have considered further in the Green Belt assessment, the unique circumstances and proposals being given significant weight.

3. Conclusions

3.1 The Site is not constrained by any environmental considerations and is available and deliverable. The Council acknowledged within their Green Belt Review document that the general area within which the Site is located weakly contributes to the purposes of the Green Belt. The Nomination Site is a narrow parcel of land which already experiences the effects of urbanisation.

3.2 The site is partly being developed for a lorry park and rail loading area, with work due to commence later this year. This will change the character of part of the site and the Council should have considered this in the Local Plan strategy, as this will further reduce the contribution the site makes to Green Belt purposes.

Appendices

1 Approved rail loading area and lorry park plan
2 Promoted site