DONCASTER LOCAL PLAN
EXAMINATION
MATTER 8 -ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

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 8 Economic Development and responds to questions in the note prepared by the Inspector, which forms the basis of the Examination Hearings.

Response to Matter 8: Economic Development

This section of our response provides comments on the matters and questions raised by the Inspector’s document in connection with Matter 8 Economic Development

Issue – Overall Employment Land Supply

2.1. Our comments in response to these issues specifically relate to Land East of Attero. 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 8.5 Collectively, will the employment allocations and employment policy areas be sufficient to meet anticipated development needs over the Plan period and provide enough flexibility to accommodate needs not anticipated?

2.2. The site is located to the north west of Rossington, 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.
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 a separate session under Matter 12 we have provided evidence of the need and political will to change methods of freight transportation. This is an issue that will clearly continue during the Plan period.

2.8. 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.

2.9. 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 evidence and Statements for Matter 12.

2.10. The opportunity exists to allocate this site for a multi modal freight facility which would allow flexibility and adaptation of transportation strategies for employment uses which seek to address changes in future costs, capacities or environmental considerations.

2.11. In Section 6 “Building a strong, competitive economy” of the NPPF Para 80 states that

“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation40, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.”

2.12 Evidence has been submitted and will be discussed in other sessions that the site has the potential to exploit the fact that it has a direct rail link and planning permission on part of the site for a rail loading facility.
2.13 NPPF Para 80 is clear that each area should build on its strengths. Doncaster has a strong road and rail infrastructure, and this has resulted in the relocation, investment and development of new businesses who are attracted to the area for these reasons. This should be clearly maximised, and Doncaster should seek to build on this strength, to the benefit of existing and future business to encourage investment and cater for future demand. To not allocate this site for a new (expansion of existing) facility is failing to seize that opportunity and not building on the strengths of the location.

2.14 It is frustrating to the rail freight sector that the NPPF does not provide stronger clarity to Local Planning Authorities to promote and encourage such development in planning policy. However, this is not an issue for the future and needs to be addressed now as existing businesses are seeking to reduce their reliance on road freight and improve their green credentials, capacity or cater for new markets.

2.15 These needs should be anticipated, given the thrust of policy around climate change and reducing carbon emissions. As part of the site has permission for a rail loading facility and the wider area is an established employment location for a range of uses and activities it is essential that the Local Plan provides the opportunity to cater for changes in transportation patterns for employment uses.

2.16 The Plan should be seeking to anticipate employment requirements and operations for the Plan period, which is to 2035. It is inconceivable that the shift from road to rail freight will not continue to be a key part of government policy.

2.17 If this site is not allocated for such a facility then an existing business seeking to extend their operations or new business looking to reduce their reliance on road freight will be frustrated by the lack of facility in the area, or face a lengthy planning process to secure permission under Very Special Circumstances for a development in the Green Belt. This is exactly what Para 80 of the NPPF seeks to avoid, by addressing such matters in the policy making process.

2.18 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.

2.19 While the specific merits of rail freight and sustainable transport will be discussed as at separate sessions, it is clear that this site provides a significant opportunity to anticipate and deliver future demand for such a facility, particularly as the demand exists now.

2.20 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 in allocating employment land. This site should be viewed as an allocation that can facilitate existing freight needs and anticipate future changes in freight transportation by providing the necessary infrastructure and facilities to allow businesses to respond swiftly and match anticipated needs as set out in Paragraph 81 of the NPPF.
3 Conclusions

3.1 The Site is not constrained by any environmental considerations and is available and deliverable. The site would meet the requirements of Para’s 80 and 81 of the NPPF which states that policies should create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

3.2 The site is partly being developed for a lorry park and rail loading area, with work due to commence later this year. The Council acknowledges that alternatives to road transport should be provided where possible, including through increased rail movements.

3.3 To provide a Plan and Policy Framework that truly meets anticipated development needs and provide flexibility to accommodate needs not anticipated until 2035 this site should be allocated to provide a Multi Modal Rail Terminal as set out in this Statement and previously submitted evidence.

Appendices

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