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The final piece of the jigsaw!

EXAMINATION INTO THE SOUNDNESS OF THE CITY OF YORK LOCAL PLAN

Inspectors: Simon Berkeley BA MA MRTPI and Paul Griffiths BSc (Hons) BArch IHBC

7 May 2024

Dear Mr Ferris

City of York Local Plan – Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

Following on from the recent Hearing in relation to the above, we have concluded on the matter as follows:

The changes to Policies H5 and H6 suggested by the Council to deal with the revised definition in the PPTS, and other matters, are necessary to bring the Plan into line with national policy and make it sound.

Secondly, we are content that the revised GTAA identifies the need that underpins the provision proposed in a proportionate way. While we appreciate and understand the concerns raised by YTT in relation to the GTAA, we do not believe that a further, revised GTAA is necessary. The production of a GTAA is not an exact science, and it is inevitable that they are 'snapshots in time'. In that context, we are of the view that the revised GTAA employs a methodology that is acceptable and provides a reasonable assessment of need.

The third and most substantive point relates to the proposal to meet future need at the existing, Council-owned sites at Water Lane, Clifton, and Outgang Lane, Osbaldwick.

Dealing with the former site first, there is no underlying difficulty with the site, or the proposal to expand the number of plots upon it. However, the existing plots, and other facilities on the site, will need to be rearranged in order to increase plot density. We are keen to ensure that this takes place in a manner that is well-designed.

On the basis of what we saw at the site visit, we have significant misgivings about the proposed expansion of the site at Outgang Lane, Osbaldwick. The access to the existing site, an unmade road, with a potholed surface, and no pavements, or lighting, is not safe. Moreover, the relationship of the existing accommodation with the adjoining waste processing site is such that living conditions for residents leave a lot to be desired. Adding more accommodation, without meaningful mitigation, would simply serve to increase the number of people who have to suffer these unsatisfactory conditions. The suggested forward funding of improvements to the access to, and facilities at, the existing site would go some way towards addressing these problems, but we are of the firm view that there need to be more safeguards in Policy H5 to ensure that the expansion of the site offers reasonable living conditions for residents.

Taking the two sites together, our conclusion is that further Main Modifications are necessary to make Policy H5, and the Plan as a whole, sound. While we appreciate that part c) of Policy H5 already deals with planning applications, we require a MM to part a) Within Existing Local Authority Sites to ensure that:

1. The provision of further accommodation at Water Lane, Clifton, and Outgang Lane, Osbaldwick is subject to an approved Masterplan for each site;

2. No further accommodation can be occupied at either site until such a Masterplan has been submitted and approved and that provision at the sites has been carried out in accordance with the approved Masterplan; and
3. In relation to the Outgang Lane, Osbaldwick site, no further accommodation can be occupied until the access to the site has been brought up to an acceptable standard (which should involve a link to the nearby Strategic Site ST7), with the road properly surfaced, and pavements and street-lighting provided, and improvements have been made to the boundary between the existing and expanded site, and the adjacent waste processing site, in the form of a significant landscaping belt and/or other measures, to lessen the environmental impact of the relationship.

In the first instance, we would like the Council to come up with precise wording for this MM to Policy H5 for our approval before the MM is consulted upon in the normal way.

Yours sincerely

Simon Berkely and Paul Griffiths

INSPECTORS