

Report of the Director of Planning and Regeneration Service

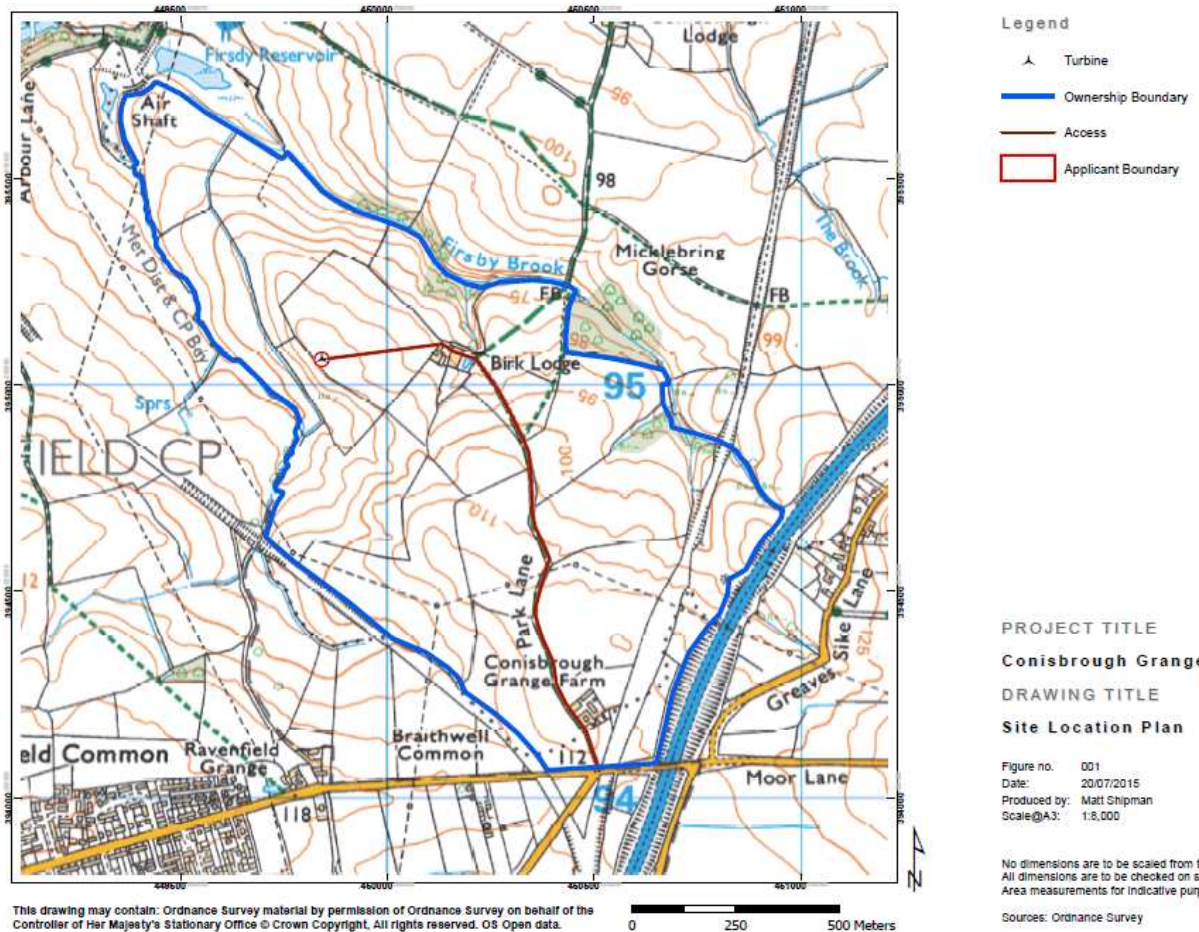
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ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING REGULATORY BOARD

PLANNING AND REGENERATION SERVICE

REPORT TO COMMITTEE
18th February 2016

Item 1	Application Number RB2015/1023
Proposal and Location	Courtesy Consultation in respect of the erection of a 48.01m high wind turbine and associated infrastructure at Conisbrough Grange Farm, Common Lane, Ravenfield
Recommendation	That Doncaster MBC be informed that Rotherham MBC raise objections to the proposals in relation to the lack of information available to clearly demonstrate the impact on the local landscape or on heritage assets within the Rotherham Borough close to the application site.



Background

Rotherham MBC has been consulted on the above planning application submitted to Doncaster Council. This is a 'courtesy' consultation as required due to the close proximity of Rotherham Borough to the application site which

is across the boundary in Doncaster. RMBC are invited to provide DMBC with comments on the application and the impact of the proposal on Rotherham.

Site Description & Location

The site of application is an area of farmland used for mixed arable and livestock farming, the site is within the land holding of Conisbrough Grange Farm. The closest settlement to the site is Ravenfield which falls within Rotherham Borough Council which is approximately 1.2 km to the west of the site. The immediately surrounding area is entirely rural.

The nearest sensitive properties within the Rotherham Borough would be Ravenfield Grange and Silverthorpe (Common Lane) which are situated approximately 1 km to the south of the proposed turbine location, and Church Farm (off Main Street at Ravenfield) which is approximately 1km to the west of the site. A number of other properties are situated slightly further from the site to the west. The village of Ravenfield itself is approximately 1.2 km away from the turbine to the west.

Proposal

The application is for the erection of a single wind turbine 48.01m to the blade tip, it is indicated to be located in an isolated location approximately 1.2 km to the west of Ravenfield village.

The type of turbine has not been stipulated and the applicant is proposing a condition that would require the exact details of the turbine to be considered after the application has been determined to provide the most efficient turbine at the time. As the type of turbine has not been stipulated no information has been submitted about the exact colour of the turbine or the hub height. As such, no details have been provided of the exact appearance of the wind turbine or its operational electricity generating capacity.

The proposal also includes a turbine foundation and a hardstanding area for erecting a crane, access tracks and a small external turbine transformer meter housing.

Delivery of the turbine and access to the proposed site would be from Junction 1 of M18 Motorway, A631 Bawtry Road (west), Church Lane, Main Street, Brook Lane, Lidget Lane then across Common Lane and up Park Lane (which is within Doncaster) to the site.

Supporting documents submitted by the applicant refer to the guidance contained within the NPPF which states at paragraph 98 that "When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

- not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
- approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should also expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.”

Publicity

It is incumbent upon Doncaster MBC to carry out appropriate consultations in the processing of this application to ensure any affected residents are aware of the issues involved. Doncaster MBC have been provided with contact details for the adjacent Parish Councils and a request has been made to the planning officer to consult the nearest residents in the Ravenfield area.

Consultations

Streetpride (Landscape Design): Notes that given that the area has already been assessed as having low capacity to accommodate this type of development, (under the Doncaster MBC Landscape Capacity Assessment 2007), it is important that any likely negative effects are fully and properly assessed. It is considered that the applicant has done this with regard to landscape and visual effects and therefore objections are raised to the proposal as it stands in terms of lack of information.

Streetpride (Transportation and Highways Unit): Note that the owing to the size of the turbine no abnormal loads will be involved. They state that whilst they have no objections to the intended route they would recommend an alternative route which avoids residential areas of Bramley and the two mini roundabouts at Church Lane/Main Street and Main Street/Brook Lane. The alternative involves vehicles travelling along Bawtry Road eastbound from Junction 1 M18, then along Denby Way, Hellaby Lane and across Common Lane before travelling up Park Lane to the site.

Appraisal

The main considerations relating to Rotherham are:

- The impact on the landscape.
- The impact on the residential amenities of sensitive properties within the Borough.
- The impact on highway safety.
- Impact on the setting of Ravenfield Conservation Area and the Grade II* Listed Ravenfield Church

The impact on the landscape.

The Council’s Landscape Architects have assessed the proposal. The site is located in an area of Doncaster with Low to No landscape Capacity to accommodate Wind development (DMBC Landscape Capacity Assessment 2007).

Given that the area has already been assessed as having low capacity to accommodate this type of development, it is important that any likely negative effects are fully and properly assessed. It is not considered that the applicant has done this with regard to landscape and visual effects.

In accordance with the best practice guidelines they set out in their report (Scottish National Heritage - SNH guidance 2002 and GLVIA 2013 third edition) both the magnitude of landscape and visual effects to be described and quantified (high – low) against prescribed categories should be set out clearly in their methodology. This has not been done and the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors is not discussed or assessed either.

Visual assessment:

The viewpoint selection has been informed by mapping a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) which shows the theoretical visibility without any intervening screening. From the ZTV 6 viewpoints are identified. Of these six, viewpoints 2, 3 4 & 5 are within or close to RMBC boundary. RMBC were not consulted to agree the location of viewpoints prior to the planning submission being made. The visual assessment of these viewpoints is accompanied by photographs, wireframes and photomontages. But no assessment of the magnitude of change has been given.

It is considered that the visualisations show that there is potential for moderate adverse visual effects from viewpoint 4 & 5. Viewpoints 3, 4, and 5 are located within Hooton Roberts Area of High Landscape Value and as such, depending upon the assessment of sensitivity of these viewpoints, may result in notable visual effects which would be a material consideration in the planning process.

Landscape Assessment:

The predicted effects on the landscape fabric within RMBC are nil due the development site sitting wholly within DMBC borough boundary. There may well be potential adverse effects on the local Landscape designation (Hooton Roberts AHLV) and on the Landscape Character Area of 5a Coalfield Tributary Valley – Thrybergh. The predicted effects on Landscape Character within Doncaster or Rotherham have not been fully assessed.

The applicant has also not assessed the potential for cumulative landscape and visual effects which is a requirement of NPPF. There have been a number of planning submissions in the last few years which we have been consulted on such as Fordoles Farm, which is on Marsh Hill, south of Micklebring.

As such, additional information in regards to landscape impact is required from the applicants and without this objections are raised to the application from potential landscape impacts.

The impact on the residential amenities of sensitive properties within the Rotherham Borough.

The nearest residential properties within the Rotherham Borough would be Ravenfield Grange and Silverthorpe (Common Lane) which are situated approximately 1 km to the south of the proposed turbine location, and Church Farm (off Main Street at Ravenfield) which is approximately 1km to the west of the site. A number of other properties are situated slightly further from the site to the west. The village of Ravenfield itself is approximately 1.2 km away from the turbine to the west.

The erection of a single turbine on this site, due to its height and its distance from the residential properties within the Rotherham area, is not considered to result in any unacceptable adverse effect on the visual amenities of the occupiers of the nearest sensitive receptors, by way of an overbearing impact or in respect of shadow flicker or noise impact.

Impact on highway safety

The Council's Transportation and Highways Unit note that the owing to the size of the turbine no abnormal loads will be involved. They state that whilst no objections are raised to the intended route ie. from J1, M18 Motorway, A631 Bawtry Road (west), Church Lane, Main Street, Brook Lane, Lidget Lane then Common Lane to the site, it is recommended that an alternative route be taken which avoids residential areas of Bramley and the two mini roundabouts at Church Lane/Main Street and Main Street/Brook Lane. The alternative involves vehicles travelling along Bawtry Road eastbound from J1, M18, then along Denby Way, Hellaby Lane and Common Lane to the site. It is considered that these comments be passed to Doncaster Council for consideration.

Therefore it is not considered that the turbine would impact on highway safety.

Impact on the setting of Ravenfield Conservation Area and the Grade II* Listed Ravenfield Church

The two main designated heritage assets affected by the proposed wind turbine is the Grade II* Listed Church of St James which is located to the north of the village of Ravenfield and the Ravenfield Conservation Area.

It is considered unlikely that the proposed turbine would not harm the setting of either the Grade II* Listed Church or the setting of the Ravenfield Conservation Area, due to the height and location of the turbine and its distance from these designated heritage assets. However, no clear analysis of this impact has been provided by the applicant.

Conclusions:

It is considered that objections are raised to the application from potential landscape impacts and potential impacts on heritage assets within Rotherham (being the Ravenfield Conservation Area and Grade II* Listed Church of St

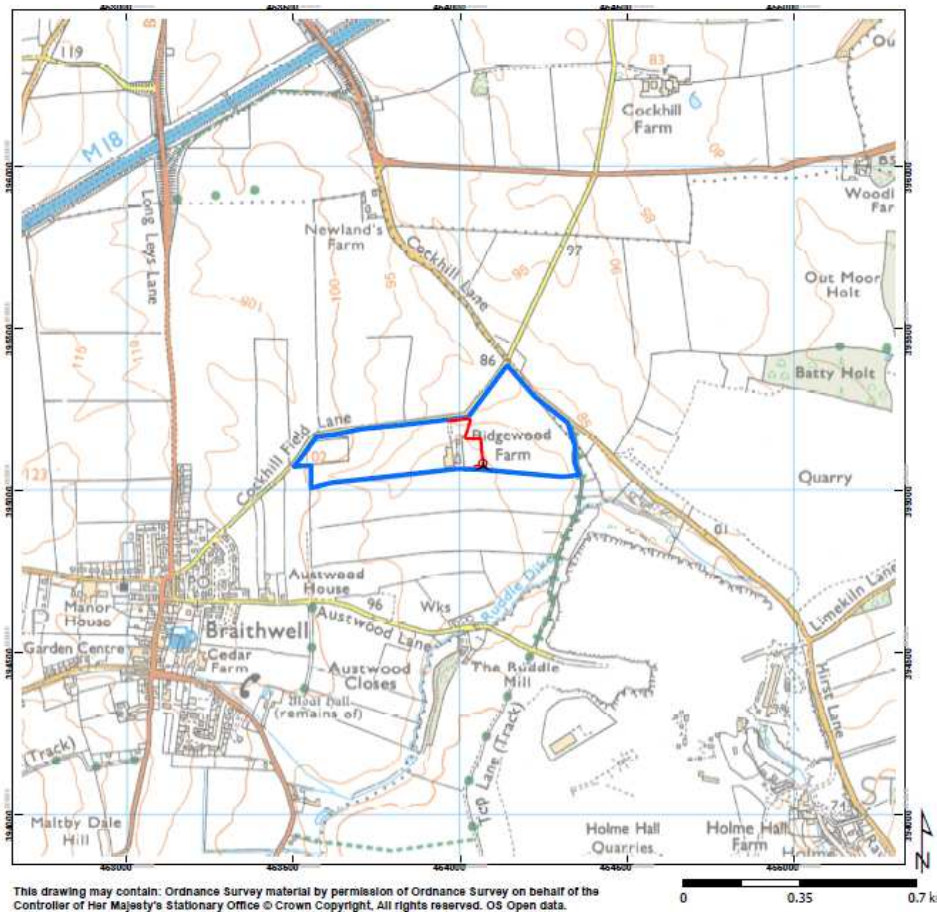
James in Ravenfield) and that Doncaster Council be advised to request additional information in regards to these impacts from the applicants.

In terms of highways impact no specific objections are raised to the proposal though an alternative route is proposed which will be relayed to Doncaster Council.

It is not considered that there would be any notable impact on the residential amenity of residents within Rotherham Borough Council as a result of the proposed development.

It is therefore recommended that Doncaster Borough Council be informed that Rotherham Borough Council raises objections to the proposals in terms of the lack of information available to clearly demonstrate the impact on the local landscape or on heritage assets within the Rotherham Borough close to the application site.

Item 2		Application Number RB2015/1092
Proposal Location	and	Courtesy Consultation in respect of the erection of one wind turbine (maximum height 36.6m) to replace existing at land adjacent to Ridgewood Farm, Cockhill Field Lane, Braithwell, Doncaster
Recommendation		That Doncaster MBC be informed that Rotherham MBC has no objections to the proposals, however, details of the route of the components for the wind turbine to the site should be given to RMBC for further consideration



Background

Rotherham MBC has been consulted on the above planning application submitted to Doncaster Council. This is a 'courtesy' consultation as required due to the close proximity of Rotherham Borough to the application site which is across the boundary in Doncaster. RMBC are invited to provide DMBC with comments on the application and the impact of the proposal on Rotherham.

Site Description & Location

The site of application is to the south eastern corner of the complex of agricultural buildings that constitute Ridgewood Farm on Cockhill Field Lane,

to the north east of Braithwell. A wind turbine was approved at the same site approved under a 2009 planning permission. The previous turbine is in situ on the site, though is currently broken.

The surrounding area is rural and the site is positioned approximately 1.6 km north of the Rotherham boundary.

The nearest sensitive properties within the Rotherham Borough are situated on Holliwell Close and Malwood Way, Maltby. These properties are situated approximately 2.1 km to the south of the turbine.

Proposal

The application is for a substitution of the existing broken wind turbine on the site that Doncaster Council previously approved under a 2009 planning permission.

The existing turbine has a hub height of 18m and a rotor tip height of 25.5m. The proposed turbine would increase the hub height to 25.5m with a rotor tip height of 36.6m. This would represent roughly a 40% increase in height on the existing turbine.

The turbine will be of a horizontal-axis design with a three blade rotor mounted to a tapered steel tower. The blades and the tower are expected to be coloured an off white / pale grey.

The submitted details indicate that the turbine will have a generating capacity of 95 kilowatts and is predicted to generate enough renewable electricity per year to supply the equivalent of approximately 58 homes in the Doncaster Borough.

The application also includes the erection of a temporary construction compound within the crane hardstanding area, which will be removed once the construction of the turbine is complete. The proposal would also include the erection of a small external box housing the turbine transformer meter.

Supporting documents submitted by the applicant refer to the guidance contained within the NPPF which states at paragraph 98 that “When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

- not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
- approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should also expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.”

Publicity

It is incumbent upon Doncaster Council to carry out appropriate consultations in the processing of this application to ensure any affected residents are aware of the issues involved.

Consultations

Streetpride (Landscape Design): Raise no objections to the proposed replacement turbine in terms of visual impact on Rotherham Borough Council.

Streetpride (Transportation and Highways Unit): Note that from the submitted information that the delivery details of the turbine are incorrect. It is assumed that the components will not be abnormal loads and would arrive via J1 M18 at Hellaby, then A631 Bawtry Road into Maltby then Braithwell Road to Braithwell, and that if on a typical articulated lorry there should not be an issue from a highways point of view. Whilst they have no objections in principle to the proposal, they have requested that the correct route of the turbine to the site should be submitted for the Council's consideration.

Appraisal

The main considerations relating to Rotherham are:

- The impact on the landscape.
- The impact on the residential amenities of sensitive properties within the borough.
- The impact on highway safety.

The impact on the landscape.

It is noted that as this is an application for a replacement turbine, the principle of development in this location has already been accepted. It is not known whether the location is within an area of Doncaster with good landscape Capacity to accommodate Wind development (DMBC Landscape Capacity Assessment 2007).

Visual assessment:

The viewpoint selection has been informed by mapping a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) which shows the theoretical visibility without any intervening screening. From the ZTV 8 viewpoints are identified. Of these viewpoints 4 & 5 are within or close to RMBC boundary. RMBC were not consulted to agree the location of viewpoints prior to the planning submission being made. The visual assessment of these viewpoints is accompanied by photographs, wireframes and photomontages. But no assessment of the magnitude of change has been given.

Viewpoint 4 – indicates that no views are possible due to intervening vegetation and landform. At a distance of 2.1km from the turbine, any views are not likely to result in notable adverse visual effects.

Viewpoint 5 - whilst outside of the Borough boundary is representative of the magnitude of change in view that is likely from within the Sandbeck- Harthill Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) and at a distance of 5.6km away is not likely to result in notable adverse visual effects.

Landscape assessment:

The predicted effects on the landscape fabric within RMBC are nil due the development site sitting wholly within DMBC borough boundary. Given the limited visual effects from these locations, and the distance to the development, the likely effects on the aesthetic and perceptual quality of the landscape within Sandbeck-Harthill AHLV and local landscape character areas are not likely to be notable.

The Council's Landscape Architects raise no objections to this development on landscape or visual amenity impact for the aforementioned reasons.

The impact on the residential amenities of sensitive properties within the Borough.

It is considered that the erection of a single replacement turbine on this site would not harm the residential amenity of Rotherham residents in terms of noise pollution or shadow flicker, owing to the distance from the nearest properties of approximately 2.1km.

Impact on highway safety

Streetpride (Transportation and Highways Unit) note that from the submitted details that the delivery details of the turbine are incorrect. Whilst they have no objections in principle to the proposal, they have requested that the correct route of the turbine to the site should be submitted for consideration.

It is therefore considered that the correct route of the wind turbine to the site should be submitted to the Council for further consideration.

Conclusions:

It is considered that there would be no material unacceptable adverse impacts on the visual and residential amenities of residents within Rotherham arising from this proposal, or that it would create any highway safety issues.

However, it is considered that the actual route for delivering the components to the site should be submitted to RMBC for further consideration.

Item 3

Development Management Performance Report 2015-2016

Recommendation

That the contents of the report be noted.

Background

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the current performance of the Development Management team following the health check that was recently undertaken on behalf of the Local Government Association as required by the Commissioners.

Facts and Figures

Performance statistics for Development Management (DM) are measured around the speed of decision making for the three different types of application categories (Major, Minor and Other). Nationally the Government has set minimum standards for the time allowed to deal with these types of applications. These are currently set at:

Government Targets

Major	60% of applications to be determined within 13 weeks
Minor	65% of applications to be determined within 8 weeks
Other	80% of applications to be determined within 8 weeks

As part of our continued improvement programme, DM has consistently surpassed these figures and continues to set itself high standard targets to ensure that the service is efficient, accountable and reflects our desire to achieve top quartile performance.

Type	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 – 2016 (to date)	Gov't Target
Major	91%	98%	100%	60%
Minor	85%	91%	99%	65%
Other	93%	98%	99%	80%

Performance on all three application types has exceeded targets for this year and has achieved top quartile performance based on last year's statistics. This represents a significant achievement across all three application types and demonstrates that the improvement measures incorporated into the daily workflow and the benefits of a fully electronic document management system have begun to have a positive effect.

In addition to this, the Planning Advisory Service have analysed all the information on statistics submitted by various authorities across the country

and Rotherham has been identified as being 'top ten'. This assessment is based on the councils that have submitted data to their planning quality framework and is based on an average 'end-to-end' service (date of receipt to decision, not date valid to decision) and which is deemed to be a much truer representation of the customer experience. Quality measures assessed relate to efficient use of time and resources. Others in the top ten include Wolverhampton, Bournemouth, Bolton, Nottingham City, Hastings, Tamworth, Havant, Bury and Tameside.

To further this work PAS invited a representative from Rotherham's Development Management team and representatives from the other 'top ten' Councils to help develop a new suite of support for development management services by sharing experience and expertise to build a picture of what happens within a good local authority planning service, including processes, behaviours/culture, enabling structures and customer focus. The idea is to enable PAS to build a comprehensive suite of support – possibly via a 'health-check' approach that leads to more targeted help especially directed to failing Councils that have been, or are likely to be, designated as part of the Government's continued drive to improve the quality and speed in which planning decisions are made.

This is necessary as part of further planning reforms the Government has introduced, including a 26 week planning fee refund should applications not be determined within this period. They have also confirmed the introduction of the Planning Performance Guarantee and 'Special Measures designation' enabling developers to bypass a Council and apply directly to the Planning Inspectorate for a planning permission for a Major Development, where that local authority has a track record of either poor performance in decision making or not acting positively to promote economic growth within its area.

In addition, the new Housing and Planning Bill that is currently being considered within the House of Lords includes the provision for the processing of planning applications to be undertaken within a competitive environment. This will potentially open up the opportunity for private individuals, local firms and neighbouring Local Planning Authorities to compete to process planning applications within Rotherham which could significantly reduce the level of income that is collected through planning application fees. It is therefore vitally important that the Development Management service is as efficient and customer focussed as it can be.

Conclusion

Development Management has, like all other services within the Council, had to save money year on year and is now at a resource level that would struggle to maintain performance if it was cut further.

A considerable amount of work has been done to ensure that we are as efficient as possible and this has recently been recognised by the Planning Advisory Service in naming Rotherham as one of the 10 ten performing Local Planning Authorities but it is important that we continue to perform at this level

due to the Government's apparent desire to open up the processing of planning applications to a competitive market. We need to make sure that if this does happen we are competitive and that given the choice of where to submit a planning application all of our customers would choose Rotherham.