



Richard Raper Planning,  
Town Planning & Development Consultants,  
82A Otley Road, Leeds, LS6 4BA  
Tel: 0113 275 4555  
Fax: 0113 275 3355  
www.raperplan.co.uk  
planning@raperplan.co.uk

Our ref: RAR/gw/M071/22.11.10

22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2010

Michael Reap,  
Planning Policy Manager,  
Development and Environment.  
North Somerset Council,  
Somerset House,  
Oxford Street,  
Weston-super-Mare,  
BS23 1 TG

Dear Mr Reap,

**Consultation on Proposed Changes to Key Elements of the Core Strategy – Marshalls site, Bleadon**

I have read with interest your proposed changes to the emerging Core Strategy and have also discussed them with my clients, Marshalls Plc. As you know Marshalls have the 8 acre Manufacturing/Employment site situated within the confines of the former quarry within the village of Bleadon.

Whereas I have no particular comments to make on the proposed revised numbers of dwellings for the period of the LDF nor on your wider approach to growth patterns (which is why we have not completed the on-line questionnaire), I do wish to comment on the changes to the settlement strategy as regards the list of 12 infilling-only villages.

First of all we welcome your decision to retain the settlement boundaries for these villages. This in turn promotes the possibility of some limited residential development in the form of infilling. However we then note from the Settlement Category tables that such infilling is to be limited to up to two dwellings. I am sure that you will understand our immediate concern in that, whereas it is of course right that in probably all of the other 11 instances restricted infilling of this magnitude is appropriate, Bleadon is unique in that the large Marshalls site is included within the settlement boundary and as such needs to be addressed as a particular case.

As you know, in February this year we provided you with a report setting out the case for a site specific allocation for the Marshalls site. This report described the need for either a bespoke policy for the site or alternatively a site allocation, presumably via the site allocations document which is the

domain of your Mr Philip Anelay. The point is that although the Marshalls Bleadon concrete products factory and distribution activities continue at present, the difficult economic climate and more particularly the length of the LDF period necessitate that we have to make contingency plans for the future of the site.

Whilst we have not formulated any plans to ensure the long term economic use of the site in the event that my client's existing production operations cease, we clearly need to take the appropriate steps at this time to ensure that the legacy of such a closure is one that ultimately has a positive outcome for the community and my client. Subject to clarification at the appropriate time, it is assumed that there would be a requirement for such redevelopment to be employment-led but necessarily underpinned with a significant amount of new housing to ensure the viability of any such scheme and its attractiveness to the market. As such, any associated housing would inevitably be incapable of being defined as infilling, hence my recommendation that this site should properly be dealt with as a specific policy.

This scenario is well known both to yourselves through our previous meetings and also to the local residents through our continued meetings and involvement with Bleadon Parish Council. Consequently we now make two requests as our formal response to your Key Changes, either:

- 1) *For the village of Bleadon only*, you include the Category 7 description. This would reflect a proper assessment that the site is no longer economically viable in its present form. Further, it would continue to recognise that the proposal be community-led which in the case of Bleadon is certainly the case because of our close and continued links with the Parish. We should perhaps add here that we would also use reasonable endeavours, working with all appropriate stakeholders, to respect the employment-led approach as set out in paragraph 3.6 of your Key Changes document.
- 2) That you adopt the approach we previously advocated in our February 2010 Report of either including a bespoke policy statement for Bleadon and the Marshalls site. You will recall that we previously advised you that Falkirk Council have agreed in principle that the following wording should be carried forward from the existing Local Plan to the emerging Local Development Plan to address a similar situation with my Client's Falkirk Works. FAL 6.3 states *"Within the industrial areas identified for improvement on the Policies, Proposals and Opportunities Map, the Council will support upgrading, rationalisation and redevelopment to improve their environment, utilisation and economic potential. Changes of use as part of comprehensive redevelopment proposals for these areas may be considered favourably subject to economic development, amenity, environmental and traffic considerations."* Alternatively, or possibly additionally, I would suggest that the site is allocated for mixed employment/residential use in the Site Allocations Document, which we understand is due to be published in draft form in the Spring.

Please note, as ever we intend to continue to promote this pragmatic approach with Bleadon Parish Council and will of course keep you advised of the progress made.

I shall contact you shortly as to your views on this matter and will also provide Phil Anelay with a copy of our February Report for his files and possible action.

In the event that you are of the opinion that a meeting to discuss our representations and recommendations would be of assistance, I can confirm that my Client and I would be happy to attend your offices at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

**RICHARD RAPER**

c.c. Phillip Anelay