



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE NORTH WEST

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Its Our City

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Our Ref: PNW/5063/21/133
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Dear Mr Pye

Thank you for your e-mail of 7 April 2009, with enclosures, and of your letter of 8 April, concerning planning applications 08/00864/OUT, 08/00865/OUT and 07/00602/OUT for residential and other development in Lancaster.

Whilst I can understand your concerns, I would like to explain first that for propriety reasons I cannot comment on any aspect of the proposals relating to those planning applications. Lancaster City Council are responsible for the day to day planning control in their area and this really remains a matter for them. In determining planning matters the local planning authority are required to have regard to all material considerations including the development plan, national policies and views expressed by third parties, such as yourself.

The Government's policy is not to interfere with the jurisdiction of a local planning authority unless it is necessary to do so. There will be occasions, however, when the Secretary of State may consider it necessary to call in a planning application to determine it herself instead of leaving it to the local planning authority. Her policy is to be very selective about calling in planning applications. She will, in general, only take this step if planning issues of more than local importance are involved and if those issues need to be decided by the Secretary of State rather than at a local level. Each case is, however, considered on its own facts. Furthermore, a decision whether or not a planning application should be referred to the Secretary of State as a departure rests with the local planning authority

In this case Lancaster City Council formally referred the application 08/00866/OUT on 21 October 2008 to this office under the Departure/Shopping Directions, which after careful considerations of all the information available, was called in. However, the Council decided not to refer to us the other three applications, referred above. In respect of those applications the Council, however, did point out that they can be determined separately from the main application because they can theoretically be

implemented irrespective of whether the main application proceeds or does not. Therefore, the Council considered that those applications did not require referral to us and, as 'stand-alone' applications, and granted outline planning permission in October 2008. In the circumstances we take the view that no issues appear to arise on those applications as to justify our intervention. I should add that it is not our role to weigh up one application against the other which is a matter for the local planning authority. However, on this matter if you consider that Lancaster City Council has not carried out its duties in a proper manner, you can approach the Local Ombudsman.

I am sorry I cannot be of further help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Syed', with a horizontal line underneath.

A Syed
(Planning Casework
Team)