

OAK HOLDINGS

Property Week

14 July 2006

Government says Yes! to £300m Yorks leisure scheme

Oak Holdings and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council have moved a step closer towards the creation of Europe's biggest leisure and entertainment complex in South Yorkshire after the government announced today that it would not call in the scheme.

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The Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber has given the local planning authority full responsibility to grant the planning application for the £300m Yes! scheme.

In its correspondence with the council, the government stated that 'having carefully considered the relevant planning issues raised by this proposal, together with all the representations received, the secretary of state has concluded that her intervention would not be justified'.

Steve Lewis, Oak Holdings chief executive, is confident that the approval will enable construction to begin shortly. An earlier vote on the scheme in May showed that all members of the council's planning team were in favour of the project.

'This approval is a major step forward for us,' said Lewis. 'It is very rare that projects of this size are not called in for government consideration.'

Adam Wilkinson, executive director of Rotherham Council's economic and development services division, said: 'The secretary of state's decision confirms that the council and Oak Holdings were right to have such faith in this project.'

'It has taken us four years of working in true partnership to get to this stage – but that's a relatively short time for a 1m sq ft development.'