

# STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

## Agenda

Session 6 - 13.30 Thursday 11 October 2018

### Matter 6

#### Employment Policies (including town centres and tourism)

This matter considers policies relating to employment, town centres and tourism (Sections 8.2 and 8.4 of the LP).

The Council proposes to modify Policies E1, E2, E3, E4, TCR1 and TCR3 in response to the Inspector's Preliminary Questions (MM17-20 & MM26-27).

#### Issues

##### 1. Existing Employment Land and Sites

*1.1 Will Policies SS4, E1 and E3 (as modified) provide sufficient flexibility to provide a range of employment uses on employment sites?*

The Council references the split in employment uses in Policy SS4 derived from the Employment Studies (SD.17.5 in particular) and the scope provided by Policies E1 and E3 for a range of employment uses.

*1.2 Is Policy E3 consistent with paragraph 22 of the Framework and the long term protection of sites allocated or safeguarded for employment use?*

The Council points out that the policy allows for alternative uses with a preference for mixed use schemes.

*1.3 Are the criteria within Policy E3 relating to loss of employment land too onerous?*

The Council notes that viability (market conditions) is a consideration within the policy.

Supplementary Question – *Should Clause C) be followed by 'and' rather than 'or'?*

##### 2. Employment Development

*2.1 Do the policies of the LP provide sufficient support for employment development within the District, specifically the rural areas (Policies E1 and the Area Strategy Policies in particular)?*

The Council refers to the policy (and SS10) supporting a number of locations for employment development, including rural areas, albeit with emphasis on sustainable locations.

##### 3. Main Town Centre Uses

*3.1 Taking into account the above is the allocation of a site for a discount foodstore in Biddulph justified on qualitative grounds and will it be on the most sequentially preferable site?*

The Council refers to the limited food offer, loss of expenditure in Biddulph and the

# STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

---

Town Centre Area Action Plan in justifying the allocation of a site for a foodstore on Wharf Road.

*3.2 Does the extent of the town centre boundaries for Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle reflect primary shopping frontages and the location of other town centre uses within and close to the town centres?*

The Council confirms that the town centre boundaries encompass the primary shopping frontages and other town centre uses.

*3.3 Is the proposal to draw the town centre boundaries more tightly than shown in the Retail Study (ED25.1) justified?*

The Council refers to its officers' consideration of the boundaries which are explained in the Site Allocations Topic Papers (ED13.1, 13.2 and 13.3).

*3.4 Is Policy TCR2 clear as how uses other than retail will be considered within primary frontages?*

The Council considers that allowing for flexibility would be more appropriate as being too rigid will not be reasonable in all circumstances. The criteria are explained in the supporting text (para. 8.72) as a guide to be used on a case-by-case basis.

*3.5 Is the impact threshold of 200 m<sup>2</sup> within Policy TCR3 for town centre uses outside town centres justified?*

The Council points to Section 6 of the Retail Impact Thresholds Review (SD.25.3) in support of the threshold.

*3.6 Would the threshold restrict the development of sustainably located local convenience stores?*

The Council suggests that convenience stores over 200 sq m which do not have a significant impact on town centres will be supported. 200 sq m is an appropriate 'tipping point' between stores with a localised function and those which would draw from a wider catchment.

## **4. Tourism**

*4.1 Taking into account proposed modifications (MM20) is Policy E4 justified and consistent with national policy?*

The Council refers to the scope that the policy allows for rural tourism.

*4.2 Is Policy E4 too restrictive in favouring tourism development in locations with good connectivity or close to settlements?*

The Council points out that other rural locations could be supported by the policy where justified.

*4.3 Does Policy SS11 (the Churnet Valley Strategy) provide sufficient support for:*

# STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

---

- *Tourism related developments close to Churnet Valley; and,*
- *Sustainable transport modes?*

The Council reference the provisions of Policies SS11 and E4 which provide sufficient scope for development with an emphasis on sustainable tourism.

## **Main Evidence Base**

ED13 – Site Allocations Topic Papers

ED17 – Employment Land Studies

ED25 - Retail and Town Centre Studies

ED32.1 – Biddulph Town Centre Action Plan

EL1.001b - Council response to Inspector's Preliminary questions

Schedule of Modifications

## **Participants**

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) EL2.051

Cheadle Unite LPS429 EL2.030

Mr J Steele LPS141 EL2.074

WW Planning LPS331 EL2.021

## **Statements**

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC)

Cheadle Unite LPS429

Mr J Steele LPS143

WW Planning LPS331