

## **Question 84**

My question 53 has already sought the Council's observations on the representations concerning employment land provision made by Tim Burden of Turley on behalf of SEGRO PLC and Matthew Dauber of Savills on behalf of the Berryfields Consortium.

To that, I would like to add the following representations; 1995 Mrs Rebecca McAllister of Savills Reading on behalf of Aylesbury Vale Estates, 708 Julia Riddle of Castle Planning on behalf of Rockspring Hanover Property Unit Trust and 630 John Shephard of J&J Design on behalf of the Brackley Fox lane Gospel Hall Trust making general arguments and 1671 David Maxwell of G L Hearn on behalf of Aviva Life and Pensions and 1124 Richard Purser of DPP Planning on behalf of FI Real Estate Management concerning the soundness of the particular designation of the Gatehouse Industrial Estate.

### **Representation**

General arguments on employment policies e.g. too restrictive

Summary Representation 1995 Mrs Rebecca McAllister of Savills Reading on behalf of Aylesbury Vale Estates

Objections to Policy E1 - restricting development in the Key Employment Areas to only B1, B2 and B8, and other employment generating uses (where appropriate).

Rep 1995 argues that policy E1 is insufficiently flexible to respond to market changes or specific circumstances of sites, overall restrictive and they are seeking an amendment, stating that it does not accord to paragraph 22 of the NPPF, that "planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose" and "where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different uses to support sustainable communities".

The Council confirm that they currently have an oversupply of 100ha of employment land (paragraph 1.14 of the Local Plan).

Policy E2 – rep 1995 agrees with the Plan's analysis in paragraphs 6.7 – 6.8 insofar as it accepts the prospect of employment land being used for alternative uses e.g. housing, retail etc.

### **Response**

- The question over flexibility to react to market conditions and demand has been addressed in the answer to Q53

However the rep suggests there is an error in the wording of policy E2 – was the intention to say: "Outside key employment sites, the redevelopment of other existing employment sites to an alternative employment use will normally be permitted: ..."

### **Response**

- Noted and omission of 'employment ' in this context will be made

Criteria within Policy E2 is overly onerous and prescriptive - makes several unjustified requirements which have the potential to undermine its delivery – criteria a, b. & c are overly restrictive and prescriptive. No logic in this instance to refer to a 'suitable price' for the site and is open to interpretation so its removal is requested and requirement to market the site for 'at least two years' is not justified and onerous.

Recommend re-wording 'Clear and robust marketing evidence will be required to demonstrate that there is no viable demand for employment uses'

### **Response**

- The rationale behind this criteria is to ensure that only suitable alternatives to employment and indeed the type of employment that relates and doesn't prejudice other neighbouring employment uses, will be considered
- AVDC feel that a 2 year window reflects the local employment markets activity trends enough to make a considered position into the future uses of a particular site.
- Suitable oversupply will only refer to the immediate local market and not necessarily the other side of a town.

Unclear what is meant by substantial over-supply in criteria c. and what available evidence there is to demonstrate an over-supply in a particular 'local area'. Recommend the deletion of this criteria and replaced with the following wording: 'The most up-to-date evidence of employment need demonstrates that there is no shortfall in available employment land across the whole of the District'.

### **Response**

- Refer to answer above regarding immediate local market not district-wide. Different areas of the district have different demands on different types of employment so this proposed questioning is unjustified

### Summary representation 708 Julia Riddle of Castle Planning on behalf of Rockspring Hanover Property Unit Trust

Although ancillary uses might first be sought on the employment sites themselves, where it can be demonstrated that the benefits might or could be more widely experienced by placing these facilities on the edge or immediately outside of the employment site, this same provision and policy support should be considered in this context.

In terms of the policy, it is suggested that policy E3 could be amended to the effect that the support for ancillary uses associated with the employment use could/ may be extended to cover adjoining land where this could better deliver an accessible range of supporting facilities.

### **Response**

- By including sites adjacent or immediately outside an employment site may prejudice or undermine other businesses that operate there or place too much restriction on uses proposals that would have to be ancillary to the employment uses within the employment area. It may also conflict with existing adjacent uses such as housing.

By limiting the geographical area to within the employment site limits potential opportunity of ambiguity or impact on businesses outside employment sites.

Summary representation 630 John Shephard of J&J Design on behalf of Brackley Fox Lane Gospel Hall Trust.

Policy E5 appears to be written with secondary retail development in mind.

As drafted the policy will require all potential out-of-town retail development will be required to consider the sequential test set out in national policy (NPPF paragraphs 24-27). The policy criteria are all retail related, with the exception of criteria h) and i).

It is considered to be unreasonable and unjustified for all forms of development outside town centres to undergo sequential testing.

A change of title for the policy E5 is requested to 'Retail Development outside Town Centres'

Concerns around the designation of Gatehouse Industrial Estate

**Response**

- The suggestion to reword the title to 'Retail development outside town centre' is not appropriate as the policy refers to main town centre uses which covers many uses besides retail. The NPPF is not specific about when out of centre ceases to apply to main town centre uses so there is no justification to limit the extent of the sequential test.
- Glossary amended to include 'Existing centre' definition
- Gatehouse Industrial Estate contributes significantly to employment land supply for B uses. The Employment Land Review (ELR) has made recommendations in accordance with NPPF paragraph 22 that over time, there is a potential for further rationalisation of employment uses at Gatehouse Industrial Estate to introduce a greater mix of uses and this has been addressed with retail and housing developments being permitted..

Representation 1671 David Maxwell of G L Hearn on behalf of Aviva Life and Pensions

Aviva object to the retention of site AYL078 as part of the Gatehouse Industrial Estate key employment site. Paragraph 1.14 is supported in terms of the policy approach of new employment need being met by new allocations to meet forecast need.

**Response**

- I refer to the above answer regarding the importance of retaining Gatehouse Industrial Estate and the flexibility that the ELR recommends over time.

AVDC is retaining historic employment land that is no longer suitable, or viable for current and future employment needs. The Council is failing to provide an effective planning policy framework by retaining areas of previous employment land at the Gatehouse Industrial Estate which are no longer suitable, viable or deliverable for employment purposes.

The character and form of development at the Gatehouse Industrial Estate has already changed such that land between Alton House and Brook Mews should be released for

residential and mixed use development. The Council's approach in retaining the Gatehouse Close Industrial Estate as a key employment site is inconsistent with the NPPF paragraph 22

In these circumstances Planning Authorities should review the potential for allocation the land for alternative land uses, including for residential.

The Council's evidence base relating to the Gatehouse Industrial Estate is out-of-date and should be reviewed to take account of existing and permitted residential development locally.

### **Response**

- I refer to the above answer regarding the importance of retaining Gatehouse Industrial Estate and the flexibility that the ELR recommends over time.

Representation 1124 FI Real Estate Management represented by DPP Planning (Richard Purser)

The site of Verney House has been incorrectly allocated and outdates as an 'Existing Employment Site' and within the 'Gatehouse Industrial Area' - as of September 2017, benefits from prior approval consent for residential development. Given the approved land use and that the owner of the site intends to bring the site forward as such the site should be reallocated for residential development.

The Gatehouse Industrial Area is considered a key strategic employment site as set out within Table 9 at the explanatory text to Policy E1. This policy restricts developments in the allocated area to main employment uses and prevents the loss of employment buildings within this area for other uses. As such the building, having been vacant for some time now, is no longer in employment use and should be considered as a residential land use.

The proposals will make use of previously developed land that has been vacant since its last use as offices in 2013. This change in land use is also reflective of the ongoing regeneration and introduction of greater diversity of uses that was noted in the 2012 Employment Land Review Update which highlighted that the buildings in Gatehouse Industrial Area North, such as the then occupied Verney House, was older stock and coming to the end of its economic life.

The retention of the site as an Existing Employment Site allocation is inconsistent with NPPF Paragraph 22

Given the last employment use vacated the site in 2013 and the owner is now bringing forward residential development on the site, for which has prior approval consent has been obtained, it cannot be considered reasonable, or consistent with NPPF, for the site to be retained as an employment allocation.

The site should be updated to be allocated for future residential development. This land use is already agreed in principle through the prior approval process.

### **Response**

- The site is currently within the existing employment site of Gatehouse Industrial Estate and its current use is still within the B1 use class category. Once Prior Approval is implemented the site can be removed from the 'existing employment site'

and not be accountable to the policy restrictions effecting the employment site, however, until such time it is important to retain the 'Verney House' within the Gatehouse Industrial Estate to ensure protection of its existing B1 use. The council considers that it is justified in the longer term protection of key employment sites to ensure that a reservoir of premises in suitable locations across the district is retained to meet future needs and avoid the need for replacement allocations.