

Fylde Local Plan Examination

Stage 2 Hearings

Matter 7 The Economy - Site Allocations and Delivery

Policy EC1 (Existing Employment Sites) - Mythop Lodge

Hearing Statement on behalf of James Hall & Co Ltd

Representor No. 25

June 2017

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement is submitted on behalf of James Hall & Co Ltd in connection with the proposed allocation of its property at Mythop Lodge, Mythop Road, Weeton with Preese.
- 1.2 It responds to relevant questions set out in Matter 7 of the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions for the Stage 2 Hearings dated the 15th May 2017, and should be read in conjunction with the representations submitted to the Publication version of the Local Plan on behalf of James Hall & Co Ltd in September 2016.

2 Matter 7: The Economy - Site Allocations and Delivery

Issue Does the Plan set out a positively prepared strategy for the delivery of economic development (Employment, Retail Centres, Leisure Culture and Tourism Development) within Fylde that is justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

Site Allocations - Policies SL1 - SL4 and EC1

Q48 - Q52

- 2.1 No comment

Q53 Where Policy EC1 refers to alternative uses for allocated and existing sites should cross reference be made to other Plan policies such as Policies GD7 and GD8?

- 2.2 Policy EC1 should cross reference other Plan policies such as Policy GD5 'Large Development Sites in the Countryside' so as to allow the redevelopment of such sites where continued employment use of allocated and protected sites is no longer suitable, viable or realistic.

Q54 Is it effective to list existing employment sites in Policy EC1? Is the list justified, based on up-to-date evidence and in accordance with paragraph 22 of the Framework? Are all sites still active employment sites or is there justification for some sites to be removed from the list (such as Mythop Lodge)? Is the list consistent with Appendix 6 as referred to in paragraph 9.17?

- 2.3 It is effective to list sites for employment protection under Policy EC1. However, for the reasons referred to below Mythop Lodge should not be afforded employment protection as to do so is contrary to paragraph 22 of the NPPF which makes it clear that planning policies should avoid the unnecessary protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. An out-of-date evidence base has been used

and current market signals show that Mythop Lodge has no long term future for employment use.

- 2.4 The former employment site at Mythop Lodge extends to 2.5 acres (5.7 acres gross) and comprises former agricultural buildings. The farm buildings were converted into Class B1 and B8 units in 2001 and the areas of hard standing were used for open/ caravan storage. The site was occupied by GAP Convenience Distribution Ltd between 2001 and 2013. GAP co-located with James Hall & Co. SPAR to its new distribution depot in Preston in 2013.
- 2.5 Appendix 1 contains a Marketing Overview Report. James Hall & Co. advertised the site for sale in March 2014 on a freehold basis at £2 million (Appendix 1 contains a copy of the sales details). The site has been actively marketed for over 3 years with limited interest. It shows that the site's rural location, the poor quality of the former agricultural buildings and location, away from strategic transport routes, has resulted in limited interest for on-going employment use. Notably, there has been no interest for employment uses in the past 18 months. The only interest generated has been from residential developers.
- 2.6 Appendix 1 shows that the supply of employment floorspace in Blackpool at June 2017 was 192,992sqft. There are other more commercially attractive premises and locations in the Blackpool area, and indeed elsewhere in Fylde, that appeal to prospective tenants and landowners such as Whitehills Business Park (Junction 4, M55) and Blackpool Business Park (Squires Gate). The removal of Mythop Lodge from Policy EC1 would not adversely affect the supply of employment land in the Borough.
- 2.7 In August 2012 Fylde Borough Council issued its Employment Land and Premises study. At this time the site was in active employment use and as a result the Council sought to protect the site for employment purposes. This evidence is now almost 5 years old and is considered to be out of date and therefore unsound, in so far as it relates to Mythop Lodge. Throughout this time the site has been vacant despite efforts to market it. The owner's evidence demonstrates that it is unrealistic to continue to afford this redundant employment site protection and reference to its continued protection should be removed from Policy EC1 and the Proposals Map in accordance with paragraph 22 of the NPPF.

Appendix

- Appendix 1 Employment land appraisal prepared by Hitchcock Wright & Partners on behalf of James Hall & Co Ltd

Appendix 1

**Employment land appraisal prepared by Hitchcock Wright & Partners
on behalf of James Hall & Co Ltd**