

SOUTH HOLLAND LOCAL PLAN

Public Local Inquiry

Economy Round Table Session

Combined Position Statement and Responses
of
South Holland District Council



ECONOMY

Topic 1. Does the Plan allocate sufficient land for employment development? Is there an adequate supply of employment sites in terms of distribution, location, size and quality?

1.0 Summary of Other Participants' Position Statements

1.1 Stansgate Planning on behalf of Michael Parker and Sons (PS/589/E)

There is an over-supply of employment land. This needs to be addressed by de-allocation at Spalding in the Enterprise Park/ Warentree Lane area, which has a poor relationship to the strategic road network.

1.2 Robert Doughty Consultancy on behalf of Ashley King Developments (PS/662/E/H)

Note the Council's recognition of need to allocate land for a high quality business park development. Agree with this approach to assist the expansion and diversification of the District's economy.

1.3 Paul Walls (PS/654/CS/H/E)

Existing and proposed employment sites are constrained, for example in terms of flood risk considerations and infrastructure availability. There is a need for more good quality sites. Land adjacent to the B1175 at Spalding Common may provide an alternative. Policies need to be flexible in order that smaller firms can realise their assets in order to finance modernisation and expansion. There is a need to promote inward migration of younger families.

2.0 Position Statement and Response of the Council

2.1 The Council has proposed Pre-Inquiry Changes to Policy EC1 and its allocations in PICs 46, 91 and 93 (CD/SH/21). These have the effect of reducing the extent of the allocation at Wingland, Sutton Bridge and identifying a new site for a

business park at Barrier Bank, Spalding. Subject to these changes, the Plan allocates sufficient land for employment development. This is explained in section 5 of the Economy Topic Paper (CD/SH/31).

- 2.2 With these PICs, there is an adequate supply of employment sites in terms of distribution, location, size and quality. This is explained in section 6 of the Topic Paper.
- 2.3 Specific objections to the employment allocations will be dealt with in the Council's evidence in response to those objections.
- 2.4 Overall, whilst the Council acknowledges the apparent large amount of employment land identified in the Plan, it is concerned that in Spalding the amount and range of land actually available to businesses seeking a new site is limited. With the exception of the extensive Wingland site at Sutton Bridge we have sought to maintain the full extent of the allocations and at Spalding have added the Barrier Bank site. We do not consider that any further de-allocation is appropriate. Much of the land, especially at Spalding, is already in the control of those with an active interest in their employment development.
- 2.5 We are also mindful of the need to maintain options for the future growth of the Enterprise Park/ Wardentree Lane and West Marsh Road employment area in Spalding, which is the principal employment site in the District. This has influenced our decision not to de-allocate any of the land, not to reallocate any of it for other types of development and to avoid allocating other development in close proximity which could unduly constrain employment development. Whilst not all of the land has a 'high profile' location, the area does benefit from good access to the A16 (at the north-eastern end of the employment area) which is part of the strategic road network.
- 2.6 There are a great many employment premises which do not fall within an allocated employment area. Policy EC3, second paragraph, provides for the exceptional redevelopment and/or change of use to non employment uses where the existing use is unsatisfactory or where the benefit of the proposed use outweighs the need to retain the existing use. This provides a degree of flexibility and balance between protecting employment sites, in order to maintain range

and supply, and enabling firms to realise their assets where redevelopment or change of use is proposed which would comply with the policies of the Plan.

- 2.7 As has been explained in our response statement for the Core Strategy Round Table Session, the Government has just published Draft Planning Policy Statement 25 “Development and Flood Risk” for consultation. Annex D of Draft PPS25 sets out the proposed Sequential Test and Exception Test. This would appear to provide a basis for assessing plan proposals as part of preparation of the Local Development Framework (and in the interim a means of assessing planning application proposals) where they could be vulnerable to flooding. It is however the Council’s view that for that purpose it is appropriate for us to refer to the flood risk zones in our SFRA, which take into account existing flood defences. The Council’s response to objections on this issue in respect of specific sites will be made in our individual response proofs of evidence.
- 2.8 The Council is placing a high priority on affordable housing provision, through Policies HS8 and HS9 and as referred to in our Housing Topic Paper (CD/SH/32). This will play a part in seeking to retain and attract young families to the District, which could help contribute to the economic robustness of the District.

Topic 2. Is the issue of the rural economy adequately dealt with in the Plan? Do the policies provide for sufficient and appropriate employment development in the rural areas?

3.0 Summary of Other Participants' Position Statements

3.1 Stansgate Planning on behalf of Michael Parker and Sons (see WR/589/005)

The Plan insufficiently reflects national, regional and sub-regional policy for the rural economy and fails to provide for employment beyond Spalding and the Area Centres except for farm diversification.

3.2 Robert Doughty Consultancy on behalf of Ashley King Developments (PS/662/E/H)

Current policies only address farm diversification and preclude re-use of a number of redundant agricultural buildings in the countryside for employment uses. This could encourage commuting from the rural area. The Plan should allow conversion to small-scale commercial uses.

4.0 Position Statement and Response of the Council

4.1 It is the Council's view that the issue of the rural economy is adequately dealt with in the Plan and that the policies do provide for sufficient and appropriate employment development in the rural areas. This is explained in section 7 of the Economy Topic Paper.

4.2 Policy EC1, although relating to the Main Town and Area Centres, provides a spread of major employment allocated sites throughout the District, well related to the strategic road network. This distribution is such that the District is well provided for by them.

4.3 Policy EC2 provides for employment development within or immediately adjacent to defined settlement limits. Therefore whilst the Plan does not allocate specific sites for employment development beyond those in EC1, Policy EC2 provides for

such development not only at those settlements referred to in EC1 but also at the Group Centres. This is a flexible approach.

- 4.4 Policy EC3 provides for further employment development within existing employment curtilages and is not location specific. It also seeks to protect such sites for employment use in all but exceptional circumstances.
 - 4.5 Policy EC4 provides for farm diversification projects.
 - 4.6 There are policies elsewhere in the Plan which provide for other types of development which can contribute to the economy, for example Policies EC8 (Small Scale Retail Development), EC11 (Farm Shops), LT1 (Leisure, Recreation and Tourism) and LT7 (Caravan Sites).
 - 4.7 In South Holland a great many agricultural buildings are large structures which, if reused for other employment development, could result in a large floorspace in use and significant traffic generation and change in character. The Topic Paper at paragraph 7.3 highlights the challenge of balancing the rural location of economic development with sustainability considerations.
 - 4.8 The Council's position is therefore that these policies taken together provide adequately for the rural economy.
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