Examination of the Local Plan for Bolsover District Publication Draft (May 2018)

Agent: Q+A Planning Ltd [11832]
Respondent: Limes Developments Ltd [11833]

Issue 8 – Position Statement – January 2019

ISSUE 8: Is the retail development strategy positively prepared, justified and effective?

In this Statement we provide brief responses to specific questions raised by the Inspector in relation to Issue 8. This Statement should be considered alongside our previous duly made representations to draft Local Plan Policy WC5, its supporting paragraphs and the evidence base (Representation IDs 8322 and 8323).

Q162. Does the Local Plan accurately reflect the position in respect of retail commitments across the District? [paragraphs 6.40, 6.51 and 6.55]

As set out in our duly made representations, the Council’s evidence base and therefore the Local Plan treat the retail component of our client’s proposals at Wincobank Farm (policy WC1) as a commitment to retail development within its calculations on quantitative need. At the time of writing, no permission has been received and therefore the quantitative need figures as expressed in the Council’s evidence are inconsistent with the situation at Wincobank Farm.

Q163. Is the Council’s approach to the assessment of quantitative and qualitative need for retail floorspace sound? [Policy WC5]

The Council’s approach to quantitative and qualitative need is set out in the Retail and Centres Study (RCS) published in April 2018. The overall approach and methodology to the assessment of quantitative and qualitative need is a reasonable one, subject to adjustments to commitments as outlined above. Our concern, as expressed within the duly made representations concerned the soundless of paragraphs 6.35 and 6.36 in respect of the potential quantitative need for additional retail floorspace.

As we have explained in our duly made representations, applying minor changes to the technical inputs to the evidence base, together with the removal of Wincobank Farm as a commitment, would result in very different outputs. Indeed, we do consider that the RCS has been conservative in its approach to quantitative need for Bolsover and if a more fine-grained assessment of need were considered locally, then the quantitative outputs are likely to be different.

In our view, the most straightforward approach to resolve this concern would be to remove the explicit references to quantitative need from the Plan.
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Q165. Is Policy WC5 positively prepared and consistent with national policy in respect of the requirement that retail development must demonstrate that it is appropriate in scale and function to its location and the thresholds for Retail Impact Assessments for edge of centre or out of centre developments?

The inclusion of a requirement to assess the scale and function of a retail development through a development management exercise inconsistent with national policy on the principle of retail uses. The acceptability or otherwise of the scale and function of a retail development would be considered through a retail impact assessment exercise, which is also a requirement for edge or out of centre developments in policy WC5.

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