

Email from Nick Hollands on behalf of Westfield to Programme Officer in response to suggested track changes put forward by NJL Consulting on behalf of Peel Holdings

Matter 11 – Centres / Retail

Sent: Mon 19/07/2010 12:17

Melanie

At the Centres/Retail session AM Thursday 15 July, NJL on behalf of Peel Holdings presented some further suggested tracked-changes to the Core Strategy (CS) text, concerning Policies CEN 1-8. The Inspectors invited participants to make any comments by today, 19 July. Please bring the following comments on behalf of Westfield to the Inspectors' attention:-

Table 14 Comparison Shopping Provision (page 8 of NJL supplementary sheets)

NJL suggest removal of table. Whilst we have made clear at relevant stages of the examination that the retail provision policies of the CS need to be applied with appropriate flexibility, we do not favour removal of Table 14. This provides developers and other users of the plan, at the relevant place in the document, with some certainty as to the scale of the comparison retail floorspace for which planned provision is to be made. This has benefit in planning investment and also gives relevant context for other development plan documents covering more specific locations in the Black Country.

New suggested 2nd paragraph on page 9 of NJL supplementary sheets relating to Policy CEN 3 - "The above.....be considered"

We do not regard the meaning of the suggested text as sufficiently clear, particularly in relation to proposals being considered on their own merits and the scale of floorspace being regularly reconsidered. Again, whilst appropriate flexibility is favoured, a developer of a major comparison retail scheme in one of the strategic town centres requires stability and confidence in the quantity of provision over a sufficiently long period. It is also essential that the developer has the full confidence that provision identified in the policy will consistently have the force and certainty of being part of the adopted development plan, in accordance with s38 of the 2004 Act. The textual changes put forward by NJL could be taken to suggest there is a degree of uncertainty in this respect.

Convenience Shopping provision (page 9 of NJL supplementary sheets)

NJL suggest upward revision of the floorspace figures for Wolverhampton 'and potentially other areas'. We understand the reasoning behind NJL's suggested change relates to the general methodology for calculating the convenience floorspace provision figures in Table 15. If NJL's reasoning was to be accepted, then it would be wholly logical for any upward revision to the figures to be applied consistently to the other strategic town centres as well as Wolverhampton. To say 'and potentially other areas' suggests inappropriately that this might not be the case.

We would of course be pleased to discuss or clarify these comments further if it would assist the Inspectors.

Regards
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