

Pendle Core Strategy Examination
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To:

John Halton
Planning and Building Control
Town Hall
Market Street
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Sent via e-mail

21 January 2015

Dear Mr. Halton

Pendle Core Strategy (CS) Examination

I have begun my initial assessment of the CS, the evidence you have submitted in support and the representations made. At this stage I have some initial questions. The Council's response will help me determine the best way to proceed with the Examination. In responding it is likely that, in many cases, you will refer me to the evidence base. Please feel free to do so rather than repeat information which I already have before me.

Separate Documents

The Government's preference is for a single Local Plan to be prepared for an area. The preparation of a series of development plan documents (DPDs) needs to be clearly justified. Please could you point to the justification for having separate CS, Site Allocations/Development Management Policies (SADMP) document and Area Action Plans? In particular I note that a SADMP ran in parallel with the CS between 2008 and 2010 and, thus, it would have appeared to be feasible to combine the DPDs into a single document post 2010.

Duty to Cooperate (DTC)

I have read the 'Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate'. I note the examples of joint working contained within the document, in particular the Burnley and Pendle Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the Burnley and Pendle Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). However, I have a few questions about the DTC arising from my initial appraisal of the evidence.

Housing Needs

Burnley Borough Council indicates in its representation that it has not yet 'approved' the Housing Needs Study 2012-based SNPP Update of September 2014. Is this still the case? I note that Figure 2.1 of the DTC Statement indicates alternative growth scenarios of between 900 and 2,250 dwellings for Burnley. Is this based on the SHMA and September 2014 update? How does it fit with the significantly larger Pendle housing requirement of 5,966 dwellings?

Strategic Employment Site

Paragraph 3.62 of the DTC Statement indicates that strategic employment sites should be provided alongside the M65 between junctions 3 and 9. But then Policy WRK3 allocates a strategic employment site in the Green Belt near junction 12. What evidence is there that alternative non-Green Belt sites for strategic employment to meet the needs of the Borough have been investigated with adjoining authorities? Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the Local Plan.

Period of the CS

The CS has a timeframe between 2011 and 2030 with 2011 being the baseline for much of the evidence base. Whilst this is reflected in policies such as LIV1, it should be made more explicit within the CS e.g. on the front cover and in Chapter 2.

Spatial Strategy

Policy SDP1

Paragraph 7.6 should form part of the policy, not its explanation.

Policy SDP2

As the policy deals with the settlement hierarchy and roles it would be appropriate to include the anticipated growth levels from paragraph 7.22 within the policy itself. In terms of site selection has consideration been given to a target for the % of previously developed land that should be brought forward?

Policy SDP5

There is no reference to the capacity for retail floor space in the Borough or how this should be distributed either within this policy or within Policy WRK4. I note that the retail studies show limited expenditure capacity for convenience provision but more capacity for comparison goods floor space during the plan period. Has any provision since 2012, for example convenience floor space in Barnoldswick, made a difference to capacity and needs?

Housing

There is no reference within Policy LIV1 as to how the housing requirement will be met. For example what proportion of provision will need to come from new allocations or existing allocations/permissions? What contribution will be made from empty homes? How will demolitions be taken into account? It is understood that specific windfall sites are incorporated into the 5 year land supply so an allowance within the policy would not be appropriate as they are not a dependable source of supply. The housing requirement within Policy LIV1 should be expressed as a minimum.

In terms of delivery of housing there will be a need to set out a housing implementation strategy, including how a 5 year supply of housing will be maintained. Where is this provided?

The affordable housing target for the Borough is 40% but most developments will not make a significant contribution to provision (Policy LIV4 refers). I appreciate this is because of viability issues but there is an unassailable gap between the target and likely provision so the target does not seem to be deliverable. The threshold of 5 dwellings for Rural Pendle is below that recommended in the latest iteration of the PPG, unless a designated rural area.

Has any consideration been given to the need for self-build housing?

Does the % split in terms of property type and size in Policy LIV5 reflect the large supply of existing affordable terraced housing, the requirements for lower density in certain areas and the objective of providing aspirational/higher value housing?

Employment

There is a shortfall in supply of employment sites of 25 ha. It may be helpful to make this explicit in Policy WRK2 and that new allocations will seek to provide at least this figure based on the typology set out in the policy. That said if the strategic site comes forward this would be equivalent to the 25 ha so other allocations may not be required. Is this a correct reading of the position?

Exceptional circumstances need to be demonstrated to support the strategic employment site allocation under Policy WRK3. The justification that it is essential for the economic regeneration of the Borough needs to be substantiated within the Plan. See also the earlier reference to the DTC. On the basis that a large green field site in the M65 corridor will be needed is Green Belt land the only option? I assume that the site is capable of being accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

Health and Well Being

There is reference to a poor open space provision in some parts of the Borough, particularly some of the densely built up areas along the M65 corridor. Although Policy LIV5 refers to provision for open space being made in new developments there is no mechanism within the CS as to how much is to be sought. In addition consideration should be given to what provision is required in specific areas to make up deficits be this through developer contributions or public sector intervention.

Evidence Base

The document 'How Pennine Lancashire can contribute to the Economic Objectives of the Lancs LEP' (January 2014) needs to be included in the Core Document List/Evidence Base (CD/05/12).

Minor Typos etc.

I have spotted a few typos in my reading of the CS. These are attached in a separate document and clearly do not go to the soundness of the CS so I do not require a response on them.

Conclusion

Many of these issues will be explored at the hearings but I thought it would be useful to provide some initial thoughts and questions arising from my early examination of the CS. Please could I have your response to these points by **Friday 6 February 2015**.

Yours sincerely

Mark Dakeyne

INSPECTOR

Enc: List of Minor Typos etc.

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http://www.pendle.gov.uk/info/200074/planning/1246/development_plan_documents/5

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LIST OF TYPOS ETC (by paragraph no)

3.1 'represents/highlights' – don't need both.

3.15 'extreme wealth/extreme poverty' – is this an objective statement?

3.19 'On the western edge....'

3.37 and 3.39 there appears to be inconsistency in relation to the % of private rented sector and the numbers owner occupied.

3.28 and 3.51 repetition re birth rates.

3.60 'lower'

3.67 'the town is a net exporter of wealth'

3.69 inconsistency/repetition of figures – 80.6% and 77.3%.

3.93 and 3.94 repetition about the daily coach service

8.49 Incorrect policy references

8.162 The second sentence does not appear to relate to the sub-heading – relates to strategy

Chapter 10 and Header to Chapter – Living : Creating a Vibrant Housing Market
(insert colon after 'Living')

10.5 'Pennine'

10.75 'suitability' not 'suitable'

10.86 delete 'the' in 6th line