

Comments

Local Plan Submission Draft (09/05/22 to 25/07/22)

Comment by Hoylake Vision Community Planning Forum (Mr Thomas Hutchinson - 1323700)

Comment ID LPSD-432

Response Date 25/07/22 16:32

Consultation Point Policy WS 11.2 Hierarchy of Retail Centres ([View](#))

Status Submitted

Submission Type Web

Version 0.1

Question 3

To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate? Policy

Question 3b

Please state which Policy Number this representation relates to. WS 11.2

Question 4a

Legally compliant Yes

Question 4b

Sound No

Question 4b(2)

If you consider that the Local Plan is not sound, please indicate the reason(s) why:

- . Not Positively Prepared
- . Not Justified
- . Not Effective
- . Not Consistent with National Policy

Question 4b(3)

Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is unsound. Please be as precise as possible.

The wording is not precise enough and likely to inhibit investment in Hoylake compared to West Kirby. Referring to a an undefined 'district' level of shops, services and community facilities 'at a level above

local centres' is not helpful. Instead wording based on the recently adopted Liverpool Local Plan should be used.

There needs to be recognition of Hoylake's tourism function so leisure can be appropriate in its centre in accordance with para 3.236 that some centres have an important function to serve visitors as well as the permanently resident population. Paragraphs 5.45 and 5.49 of the Plan recognise their coastal resort function close to facilities and open spaces of strategic importance, so this should influence the policy for centres.

West Kirby is focus for larger comparison stores and anchor supermarkets and a leisure centre. But health, community and leisure is just as appropriate in a District Centre as in a Town Centre, if of the right scale and type.

Hoylake Vision's local engagement exercise in 2020 found that local people considered it paramount to have a vibrant, distinctive and diverse offer, including independent shops, hospitality offers and services.

The implications of the Covid-19 pandemic needs to be factored into the analysis on achieving sustainable communities, taking into account wider trends relating to new technology, changing lifestyles and how society respond to climate change. We believe this should be the starting point of any vision to 2037, rather than assuming an extrapolation of past trends.

Covid-19 has accelerated an existing trend for office workers seeking to avoid travelling to and from a central location at peak hours. Jobs are increasingly based around information and many people have now set themselves up with a home office and are routinely relying on ICT tools such as video conferencing. This is already impacting the vibrancy and 'buzz' of larger centres.

Covid-19 has also accelerated an existing trend away from shopping in person on a high street to online retail. At the same time there is a shift away from buying physical products to downloading and streaming entertainment. For people to want to take the trouble to come into a regional or sub-regional centre, the quality of the experience and the opportunities to socialise are going to be increasingly important. The advantage of higher order centres will be the range of places to eat and drink, the quality of the environment and the leisure facilities. Those places that cannot provide the excitement and level of entertainment that tourists would expect could suffer.

We suggest that the focus of the vision for Birkenhead should be on creating the range of leisure facilities that will draw people in, which should include major attractions. But also there needs to be a focus on supporting independent businesses to flourish rather than squeezing these out in favour of predictable corporate operators in standard formats. There also needs to be a strategy focuses on creating the conditions for the businesses to want to invest in Birkenhead which tackles the ownerships, rents, rates and range of premises. Coupled with that, there should be a complementary focus on public realm and urban design that provides something special and unique.

Beyond Birkenhead we believe there should be a similar focus on creating the conditions for independent businesses to thrive and how these can best serve the surrounding settlements. So again, a focus on food and drink and quality of environment but also retail that is locally sources and produced.

The focus of masterplanning should be on walkable, accessible neighbourhoods and Covid-19 has reinforced this. New housing needs to be within a walkable distances of a centre with a public transport node, which in most cases is about 800m.

For the new Plan there needs to be a recognition that people are not going to want to commute into higher order centres as much, as outlined above. We believe people will want to spend more times in their neighbourhoods and these should be able to respond to this by becoming more vibrant and offering more opportunities to meet, based around food and drink.

At the neighbourhood scale we believe we are on the cusp of a wave of decentralisation of employment that will enable people to live close to where they work. They will then be able to take advantage of the relatively peaceful neighbourhood environment, save on commuting time and achieve a better

work/life balance. A big part of this shift will be underpinned by advances in renewable energy technology enabling people to work and travel without the CO2 impacts that is currently the case. We suggest that will have a number of implications for the way we plan new development.

Firstly, home workspace provision should become standard in new housing schemes, with an office space with a good outlook increasingly valuable. This trend should be seen in conjunction with an inevitable reduction in private car ownership as on-demand and autonomous vehicles transform the way we move about. As vehicular movement becomes app-driven and responsive to individual needs then there will be much less need to store private vehicles on-plot or even on-street. There will be dividend in terms of the development footprint that can be redirected away from vehicle storage towards stimulating economic activity such as working from home.

Secondly we would expect 'work hubs' to be demanded at the neighbourhood level for those with offices can share infrastructure and meeting spaces and have opportunities to socialise. Some businesses don't mix with home life easily and it often makes sense to share costs like administration, printing and meeting space.

Thirdly, we would expect manufacturing and storage to be increasingly integrated into neighbourhood and district centres. There will still be a role for the large sheds on dedicated employment sites but there will also be a need for smaller family and community businesses to make the products that they sell direct to local people. These places can become more vibrant and interesting by allowing affordable workshop space to co-exist with other uses. Linked to this will be the ability of green strategic infrastructure in and around communities to play a bigger role in providing economic benefits such as raw materials for food and manufacturing processes.

So, in relation to all these trends, we would expect a culture shift in terms of planning over the next 30 years, away from a sequential approach trying to direct most office uses into town centres and away from strict use class zoning. Employment co-existing with houses will become the norm. Instead of trying to micro-manage where businesses can locate, we would expect a liberalisation of development management, to focus on the big picture in relation to trends in technology and lifestyles. One of the key strands in this shift will be genuine localism, with communities being able to choose the planning framework that meets their needs rather than everything being squeezed into a one-size-fits-all top-down approach.

Question 4c

Complies with the Duty to co-operate Yes

Question 6

Please note Your representation should be as succinct as possible. You should provide all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies for examination.

Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5, 5a or 5b above. (Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan, Sustainability Appraisal or Habitat Regulations Assessment legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Proposed new wording for District and Local Centres.

District Centres will be the primary focus for development and investment in shops, services, leisure and community uses outside town centres. A mix of uses will be supported to ensure vibrant and vital

centres which meet the needs of the local communities that they serve, including visitors to tourist destinations where appropriate.

Local Centres will be the focus for small scale shops and services appropriate to their role and function which is to serve the everyday needs of local communities.

Question 7

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)? Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Question 8

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Hoylake Vision Community Planning Forum is an active Neighbourhood Planning qualifying body that has prepared the Hoylake Neighbourhood Development Plan and is currently reviewing it. It can provide a valuable perspective on Local Plan matters and wishes to engage positively with the examination.

Notification of Next Stages in Wirral's Local Plan Preparation

Would you like to be kept updated of future stages of the Wirral Local Plan 2021-2037? (namely submission of the Plan for examination, publication of the Inspector's recommendations and adoption of the Plan). Yes