

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

MATTER 5

REPRESENTATIONS BY WHS PLASTICS LTD AND COPPICE GARDEN CENTRE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 These submissions are made in response to Question 5.7 Matter 5 which states:

'Are policies LP11 and LP13 Rural Employment justified and consistent with national policy which seeks to support a prosperous economy'.

The short response is, 'no'.

1.2 Both representors have existing businesses located in the rural area beyond the confines of existing built-up areas. Both businesses are located within the Green Belt, and hence subject to the provisions of Policy LP3 Green Belt in addition to the NPPF.

1.3 Coppice Garden Centre is a modern garden centre. The garden centre employs some 101 persons. WHS Plastics employs 630 persons and produces plastic mouldings for the automobile industry, especially within the West Midlands. In the ordinary meaning of the words 'small scale rural businesses', neither are small scale. If the words 'rural business' are to be interpreted as a business which has a spatial or economic affinity to the local rural area, e.g. a blacksmith, both businesses could be construed as not being rural 'businesses'.

2.0 Representations

- 2.1 The Framework 2012 (and its replacement) does not make a distinction between ‘urban’ and ‘rural businesses’. The underlying thrust of the Framework is to support economic growth.
- 2.2 The Framework sets an imperative (28 ‘should’) for local plans to ‘support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses and enterprise in rural areas’.
- 2.3 In a land use spatial planning context, the expression ‘types of businesses’ encompasses categories of activity (Use Classes) and scale of business. There are no special local circumstances in North Warwickshire District to support a restrictive planning policy which supports and encourage small scale rural businesses only.
- 2.4 It is submitted that Policy LP11, would become ‘sound’ i.e. consistent with national planning policy if it reads as follows:

‘The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise will be supported where this does not impact detrimentally on the character of the surrounding countryside’.

- 2.5 Policy LP11 thereafter states that:

‘Proposals for limited infilling and partial or complete redevelopment of existing employment land outside of development boundaries will be considered against Policy LP1 and LP2 in order to retain the rural character, appearance and openness of the countryside throughout the Borough’.

- 2.6 Policy LP2 Settlement Hierarchy states under Category 5. ‘Outside of the above settlements’, that only development for agricultural and forestry purposes or for other uses requiring a rural location will be permitted, subject to need being justified’.

2.7 So the operation of Policy LP11 – requires a business, or other form of enterprise to demonstrate it requires a ‘rural location’ and a ‘need’ for the development. Such policy requirements are inconsistent with National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (18,19,28).