

STRATEGY CONTEXT

This appendix summarises national, regional and local planning policy and strategies that are relevant to the allocation of employment land and town centre retail use in the Ribble Valley. Their principles guide BE Group's recommendations.

National – Planning Policy Statements (PPS)

PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)

Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of urban and rural development. Appropriate land should be made available to support economic, environmental and social objectives. Development should seek to create sustainable, liveable and mixed communities. Land should be used efficiently through high density, mixed use development where appropriate.

Supplement to PPS 1 – Planning and Climate Change (2007)

Planning policy needs to tackle climate change. Development (existing and new) should be resilient to the impact of climate change in the UK (e.g. extreme weather patterns, flooding). More importantly, planning policy should seek to reduce climate change through the way we live our lives and our actions.

PPS 3 – Housing (2006)

Where appropriate, vacant or under-used industrial and commercial sites should be used for housing. Mixed-use developments should be considered. Housing development needs to be balanced with the provision of employment, services and facilities to minimise commuting distances, and promote as far as is possible, self sufficient communities.

PPG 4 – Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms (1992)

Economic growth and a high quality environment should be pursued together – one supports the other. As such, there is a need to weigh up the benefits of developments that sustain the rural economy against the need to protect the natural environment. Different quality sites should be made available to support a variety of employment uses.

New development in rural areas is needed to generate jobs and services, and so sustain rural communities. Few small businesses can afford to build/convert their own premises and so developers are as important in rural areas as at conventional large employment sites. Developers require greater clarity as to the types of development permitted in rural areas. There are opportunities to support home-working.

PPS 4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Development, Consultation Paper (2007)

PPS4 reinforces the principles of PPG4, and in time will replace it completely. Sustainable economic growth should be achieved by:

- Identifying a range of sites for employment and mixed-use development
- Promoting a range of new jobs, in both large and small businesses, and across different sectors
- Encouraging high quality design and development
- Protecting the natural environment and install mitigation measures where needed
- Providing sustainable travel choices, to minimise commuting.

PPS6 – Planning for Town Centres (2005)

This supports the commercial vitality and viability of town centre uses (defined in Section 9.0). It seeks to increase consumer choice, by providing a range of retail, leisure and employment opportunities. Land use should be efficient, competitive, innovative, accessible and productive and where possible regenerate deprived areas.

Promoting a sense of place, protecting historic heritage balanced with high quality and inclusive design is important. Primarily, growth should be accommodated through a more efficient use of land (high density), but extensions to the town centre could be considered if necessary. Town centres should seek individual roles and functions within a hierarchy of regional centres.

Where possible, office development should be steered towards town centres. Edge-of-town and out-of-town centre sites should only be considered once town centre options have been explored fully.

Rural centres are important and each should provide facilities, shops and services appropriate to its size.

PPS 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)

Commercial development in rural areas should be sympathetic to the natural and built heritage; protect natural resources; encourage employment for local people; reduce commuting; promote tourism and support farming and new enterprise growth. Where possible, existing buildings should be re-used.

PPG13 – Transport (2001)

This promotes more sustainable transport choices and greater accessibility to jobs, services and facilities – particular to reduce the need for car travel. This can be achieved to an extent, through mixed-use development. The rapid development in technology is providing more flexible work patterns and home working and journeys outside of peak hours should be supported.

Regional

RPG13 for the North West 2003 – 2016 (2003)

RPG13 is the interim regional spatial strategy for the North West whilst the new Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is in draft. It is likely that this will remain the case until 2011, when the RSS, Regional Housing Strategy and Regional Economic Strategy will be reviewed as part of the move towards a single integrated strategy.

Policy EC2 ‘Manufacturing Industry’ states the need to provide sites which meet the changing needs of the sector. They should be able to cope with relocations, expansions as well as provide attractive sites to inward investors.

Policy EC3 ‘Knowledge Based Industries’ and Policy EC4 ‘Business Clusters’ identifies the need for sites next to universities, higher education institutes and major hospitals, where possible within main urban areas, and next to transport infrastructure. There is real potential for growth in the region’s creative and cultural sectors.

Policy EC7 ‘Warehousing and Distribution’ calls for such developments to be located by road and rail to avoid unnecessary movement of goods. Brownfield sites are preferred, and proximity to labour supply and transport infrastructure is also important.

Policy EC8 ‘Town Centres – Retail, Leisure and Office Development’ identifies the need to balance retail, leisure and office uses within town centres to create viable and sustained growth. Mixed-use developments in particular are favoured.

Policy UR5 ‘Existing Commitments in Development Plans’ sets out key considerations regarding employment land considerations. These include the need to:

- Balance inward investment and local business growth
- Consider the market attractiveness of sites
- Consider whether the regeneration of sites for other uses is consistent with demand for and mix of other uses

- Provide brownfield sites for development
- Provide land to satisfy need only
- Review reasons for unimplemented planning permissions.

Draft RSS for the North West of England 2006-2021, NWRA (2006)

The Secretary of State has now published his proposed changes to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West. The changes are the subject of current public consultation. The following elements of the draft RSS are relevant to the Ribble Valley Employment Land study. Where this involves proposed changes by the Secretary of State, these are incorporated.

Policy W1 states that the region will require a range of sites to influence the growth potential of the North West. Three categories are identified: Regionally significant, Sub-regional and Local.

Policy W2 refers specifically to regionally significant employment land and identifies the Central Lancashire City Region (of which Ribble Valley is a part) and Lancaster as key locations for investment. The EiP advises that this should pinpoint sites adjacent to cities and town centres or key transport hubs for investment. There is thought to be an over-supply of land at County level and sites not suitable for employment purposes should be considered for other uses. The RSS does not apportion a specific employment land allocation to the Ribble Valley, unlike the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (JLSP) below.

Policy W3 directly relates to Employment Land studies. It states that provision should be made for a supply of employment land and that local planning authorities should undertake a comprehensive review of commitments, to secure a portfolio of sites that complies with the Spatial development principles outlined in Policies DP1-9; RDF1 and Central Lancashire City Region subregional policies. This is to ensure:

- The most appropriate range of sites is safeguarded for employment use (this relates to market attractiveness; social, economic and environmental sustainability)
- These sites can meet the full range of needs, and are actively marketed
- At least 30 percent of sites are available (i.e. fully serviced and actively marketed, or likely to be in three years)
- The amount of brownfield land used is maximised
- Full consideration is given to the scope for mixed use development
- Appropriate provision is made – Key Service Centres, and full consideration give to the innovative re-use of agricultural buildings to facilitate the growth and

- diversification of the rural economy
- Implications of home working on the scale and location of future employment land requirements are considered

The Policy also requires that office development should, as far as possible, be focused in Key Service Centres, consistent with RDF2 and the sequential approach in PPS6.

Draft RSS states that local authorities should review their employment land portfolio every three years. It also observes that as the region's economy continues to restructure, the demand for different land uses will change significantly. This is likely to see a decline in need for B2 uses and increased demand for land suitable for B1 uses. This should be reflected within local authorities' portfolio of sites.

It is acknowledged that in rural areas employment opportunities are not necessarily associated with the allocation of new development land. Scope is provided by the use of land and buildings previously used for farming purposes. Para 6.10 of draft RSS states that priority should be given to economic activity that has strong links with the area in question (e.g. food and drink processing, business ancillary to farming and forestry).

Table 6.1 of draft RSS indicates that Lancashire requires a total of 1349 ha of employment land for the period 2005-2021. This represents a required extra allocation of 280 ha. How the employment land is disaggregated to local authority area level is to be left to the authorities 'and other partners' within the sub region. Where possible, figures should be distributed in accordance with local labour market areas, broadly indicated by the 2001 Census identified Travel to Work areas. Draft RSS suggests the NWRA will facilitate this approach.

Policy W4 advises that prior to any release of employment sites, there should be an appropriate supply of sites available for employment both quantitatively and qualitatively against the demand requirements of the local economy. If required, replacement sites should be available, of equal or better quality, or that alternative means of incorporating needs have been identified e.g. mixed use developments; greater intensity of land uses; site availability in adjacent authorities.

Policy CLCR2 recognises that outside Preston, Blackburn, Blackpool and Burnley, development in the City region will be largely confined to Key Service and Local Service Centres, in line with Policy RDF2.

The Secretary of State proposed substantial revision and amalgamation of policies RDF2 and 3 into this new Rural Areas policy. This new RDF2 incorporates Regional Rural Delivery Framework objectives and criteria for the definition of key service centres, together with additional text on local service centres. The Secretary of State now considers that the definition of key service centres is not a function of the RSS, and has therefore recommended deletion of the previously included Table 7.1, which identified Key Service Centre locations.

Policy RDF2 now states that Plans and Strategies should identify a sub-set of towns and villages as Key Services Centres which:

- Act as service centres for surrounding areas, providing a range of services (retail, leisure, community, civic, health, education, financial and professional services)
- Have good public transport links to surrounding towns and villages, or the potential for their development and enhancement.

Rural areas' development should be concentrated in these Key Service Centres. It should be of a scale and nature appropriate to fulfil the needs of local communities for housing, employment and services

Policy RDF2 also refers to Local Service Centres. It states that small scale development to help sustain local services, meet local needs or support local businesses will be permitted in settlements defined as Local Service Centres in Local Development Documents which already provide a range of services to the local community.

Draft RSS comments that for rural areas adjacent to towns and cities, the latter will play a role in providing access to employment and services for their surrounding rural areas. Comment is also made that proposals that seek to diversify and expand existing rural businesses in areas that are lagging economically should be regarded positively, as long as they demonstrate the potential to help build and maintain sustainable communities and are sensitive to the local environment.

Regional Economic Strategy, NWDA (2006)

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) sets out three major drivers to develop the Northwest's economy:

- Improve productivity and market growth
Increasing the number of higher added value jobs in the region, as well as retaining existing high-value jobs through investment in innovation, research and leadership.
- Increase the size and capability of the workforce
Getting more people into work, especially in the region's most deprived areas, among its most disadvantaged communities and areas remote from growth.
- Create the right conditions for sustainable growth and private sector investment
Through investing in the region's environment, culture, infrastructure and communities.

Progress is measured by 122 targets categorised under five themes: Business, Skills and Education, People and Jobs, Infrastructure and Quality of Life. 45 of these have been designated 'transformational actions' that the region must prioritise to deliver growth.

Ribble Valley is included in the Central Lancashire City Region which contributes circa £15bn to the regional economy. Key opportunities are listed below, accompanied by key challenges to overcome.

Key Assets and Opportunities
A world class concentration of aerospace and defence manufacturing (most important outside of south east)
Strong concentrations in advanced manufacturing in chemicals, rubber and plastics, electronics and optical equipment, food and drink, paper and printing and recorded media
Opportunity for growth in environmental technologies and bio-technologies
Key Challenges
Increase economic activity rates in areas such as East Lancashire and Blackpool
Improve skill and qualification levels
Stimulate and secure enterprise growth
Accelerate transition to higher value advanced manufacturing
Improve productivity of service sector businesses
Improve intra and inter city region connections
Develop regionally significant and high quality locations for business
Expand the role of higher education in the City region.

Employment Land Study, NWRA (2005)

The report details the quantity and quality of employment land across the north west, but only looks at sites larger than 5 ha. It relates to committed sites only i.e. those in adopted/draft Local Development Plans, and unimplemented but with consent for development.

The report identified 1068.58 ha in Lancashire. Most of the sites are in private ownership, and concentrated in southern and western (coastal) areas. Most higher ranking, better quality sites are in central-southern Lancashire.

Only one site is in the Ribble Valley – Barrow Brook Business Park. This was assessed as middle third in market ranking, planning policy and sustainability (at regional level), but top third (market) and lower third (at Lancashire level).

The 1068.58 ha represents a 15.7 year supply at current take-up rates (68.2 ha/year). Thus for the RSS period to 2021, 1023 ha would be needed. However, this makes no allowance for a buffer of ongoing provision (to provide a choice of range, type and location).

The report refers to the uplift in the commercial property market in parts of East Lancashire towns (including Shuttleworth Mead), but no mention is made of the Ribble Valley. General trends in Lancashire are noted to be:

- Increasing pressure for alternative uses on employment sites, particularly for housing
- Landowners are allowing sites to become derelict to support aspirations for non-employment uses
- Relatively low take-up of employment sites, including sites with full consent
- Poor quality of sites in comparison to the rest of the North West.

The report concludes that there needs to be an 18 year forward supply of employment land to meet likely gross take-up rates. This represents a 20 percent uplift to allow for flexibility and choice. It may be appropriate for districts to increase their amount of employment land, to reflect those sites with significant inward investment potential. Where sites have significant inward investment potential, only the portion likely to be used within the LDF period should be allocated.

The Northern Way Growth Strategy

Started in 2004, the Northern Way consists of eight City Regions that are working together to secure investment and economic growth in order to bridge the gap between the north and the rest of the UK economy. Central Lancashire (which includes the Ribble Valley) is one of these. The key aim is to increase the proportion of businesses utilising knowledge as their basis for competitive advantage. The agenda is based on ten key priorities which include (and are of relevance to this study): bringing more people into work, strengthen the knowledge base to promote innovation, build upon entrepreneurialism, capture a greater share of global trade, invest in the skills needed by employers, integrate public transport

within and between the City Regions. The aim is to create 55,000 additional jobs and generate £16.bn additional GVA.

Sub-Regional

Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (JSLP), LCC (2005)

The JLSLP covers the period 2001-16. Its policies have been saved until its replacement by the new RSS. Policy 5 recommends that development outside of the principal urban area is of a scale and nature appropriate to its location. Development should support job opportunities and the local economy.

Policy 14 specifically states that 25 ha is needed in the Ribble Valley to support economic development between 2001 and 2016. This accounts for expected housing growth and historic take-up rates in the borough (0.56 ha/year 1991-1998, this has increased to 1.07 ha/year in last ten years). Aspirations for the whole of Lancashire are to increase take-up rates and to reduce the amount of employment land available (evidence that too much has lead to under-used sites, uncoordinated urban extensions and unsustainable commuting levels). Surplus land should be considered for other uses.

Policy 16 identifies Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley to be Key Service Centres (Tier 3) in the Ribble Valley. These are defined as centres supporting the wider rural areas of Lancashire.

Policy 17 states that new office development should be located within or adjoining town centres in principal urban areas where possible.

Lancashire Economic Strategy and Sub-Regional Action Plan (LES), LEP (2006)

The strategy is about growing the North West economy through four economic drivers: higher value and investment, investing in people, employment generation and entrepreneurship, and investment in quality of place. The growth of the knowledge-based economy is a key aim, particularly those industries in globally competitive sectors.

Lancashire is divided into five sub areas, each with distinct economies. Ribble Valley is in the East Lancashire sub area, the largest of the Lancashire economies (contributing 228,000 jobs and £6.1 billion a year to the economy). There has however, been a significant reduction in both growth and employment in the 1990-2005 period. East Lancashire has been losing its share of GVA and employment to Central Lancashire since 1990. This is

largely due to the decline in manufacturing, as well as a lack of product development and inflexible economy.

Key growth industries in East Lancashire comprise advanced manufacturing and creative industries, particularly in aerospace, transport, finance, energy and communications.

The Sub-Regional Action Plan aims to create 51,000 new jobs in Lancashire, over the plan period (2006-2009), increasing GVA by an additional £1.7 billion. 16,000 of these jobs will be in retail, leisure and tourism, with equivalent growth in the office economy. However, much of this will be concentrated in principle urban areas, such as Preston. No figures are available specific to the Ribble Valley, but key investment projects in East Lancashire include:

- A commercial park at Whitebirk (Blackburn) for knowledge industries and advanced manufacturing – 100 new jobs
- Gateway to Colne site (J14, M65) for retail and office development – 1000 new jobs
- Barrowford Business Park (10ha adjacent to J13, M65) for offices – 1600 new jobs
- Michelin Technology Park for advanced manufacturing – 100 new jobs
- Samesbury Aerospace Business Park for advanced engineering, extension to BAe Systems site – 1000 new jobs (in the Ribble Valley).

Co-ordinated Actions for Rural Lancashire, LEP (2006)

The document sets out a vision for the rural Lancashire: one that is 'economically prosperous, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable'. It recognises the economic importance of rural areas and their links with urban areas. It seeks to maximise the economic potential of rural areas, in particular a sustainable farming and food sector. It wants to promote fairer access to services in rural communities and address social exclusion.

It points out that rural areas support more businesses per head than urban areas. Growth in business stock is higher in rural areas, particularly Lancaster and the Ribble Valley. More people are employed in higher value growth sectors. It seeks coordination between partners and initiatives to realise sustainable economic growth in rural Lancashire.

Lancashire Rural Delivery Pathfinder, Lancashire Rural Futures and Rural Innovation (2006)

From CARL, emerged the Lancashire Rural Delivery Pathfinder funded by Defra. Its key objective was to work towards 'a dynamic rural economy for Lancashire which is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable'. Its key themes include facilitating rural enterprise, and market town functionality.

The research analysed barriers to business growth, and patterns of connectivity and contribution. Rural enterprises are not primarily agriculture and tourism based but represent a diverse range of sectors. Most skilled workers commute to urban areas for work. The Pathfinder sought to encourage more people to work in rural areas and so contribute to sustainable rural communities.

Local

RVBC is preparing its Local Development Framework, which is a portfolio of policies and documents that will eventually replace the existing Local Plan. The Core Strategy is currently being finalised.

Ribble Valley District Wide Local Plan 1998-2006 (1998)

The Local Plan seeks to deliver sustainable urban development and priorities brownfield above greenfield development. Key considerations prior to any development are location and accessibility; capacity and infrastructure; physical, and environmental constraints.

Clitheroe is recognised as the main employment centre. Barrow Brook Business Village is considered the key emerging business site in the Borough. Specific policies relate to employment sites and consents. These are reviewed in Section 5.0 of the main report.

Various retail policies seek to encourage visitors and shoppers to the town centres, to promote their vitality, viability and quality of environment. Other uses (residential and offices) are encouraged above shops.

Summary

These guidance notes and statements are intended to assist local authority policy makers. The following key factors are important in identifying new employment land allocations in the Local Development Framework:

- Provide sufficient land to meet future business and commercial requirements
- Provide land readily capable of development i.e. minimal servicing and remediation costs
- Provide sites well served by infrastructure i.e. services, communication and transport
- Utilise sustainable locations i.e. do not perpetuate use of the car, rather encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking
- Avoid locations that are not well served by public transport.

Other

Sustainable Live/Work Development in a Low Carbon Economy, Live/Work Network and RTPI (2008)

This document outlines the benefits and disadvantages of live/work space – homes designed or converted to include professional workspace. Benefits include reduced commuting, carbon emissions, loss of time and stress and supports sustainable mixed-use communities. It encourages planning to promote the inclusion of live/work space into new developments where appropriate.

Planning needs to be flexible to economic change. Live/work space blurs the boundaries between housing and employment use classes. PPS4 calls on planning authorities to take account of changing spatial working patterns and advances in information and communication technologies that support live/work units.

Due to a lack of clarity in policy at national level, some local authorities have developed live/work space policies, which have varying definitions of live/work space.

The report recommends that live/work space developments are fast tracked. It suggests:

- Live/work quarters are created
- Economic development planning gains are prioritised
- A proportion of live/work units are affordable
- A more flexible approach to change of use adopted by local authorities
- Clear local policies on live/work space are created
- Economic development staff are involved in live/work support
- A new approach to marketing, monitoring and management of live/work schemes
- Promotion of live/work business clusters, with central shared hub facilities.