
Markham Vale - Local Plan Inquiry Hearing Matter 9

On behalf of Wilson Bowden



Local Plan Inquiry Hearing Matter 9

On the basis that Wilson Bowden and its advisers are unable to attend the Inquiry to deal with the remaining questions to be considered under Matter 9, we submit this short statement to pick up those points which we would like to be addressed.

It is clear that the sites proposed to be allocated under Policies WC2 and WC3 include a significant proportion of land which is not deliverable and/or (as has been shown by the length of time land has been previously available) not wanted by the market.

A proportion of the land has already been granted consent for alternative non-B class uses and Policy WC3 provides a basis to facilitate the change of use for even more of the employment land supply.

The Plan largely ignores the market opportunity presented by the M1 corridor. Markham Vale has seen remarkable success but, by a quirk of local authority boundaries, the majority of land has been in Chesterfield. On day one of the Examination hearing sessions, there were a number of representors commenting on the apparent lack of cross boundary cooperation and strategy. This, we consider, is evident in the employment strategy. The evidence base e.g. The ELR August 2017 Update, recommends cross boundary cooperation, but there is little evidence that this has taken place in respect of employment strategies across the FEMA. Unsustainable out-commuting is extremely high for NEDDC residents and yet the opportunity for growth within the District, building upon the success of Markham Vale is ignored.

We attach a table of take-up and remaining capacity at Markham Vale which demonstrates the scale and rate of take-up, the nature of occupiers (and the spread across target sectors), and the remaining capacity - which is now reduced to only c. 641,800 sq ft (59,624 sq m) across the overall site, including plots for B2/B8, offices and hotel. The largest plot has a capacity of 300,000 sq ft (27,870 sq m) but the majority of plots are limited to 60,000 sq ft (5574 sq m) or less.

Of the remaining land we calculate 5.1 acres (2.045 ha) now to remain for development within NEDDC.

We have been informed that the Coalite site could come forward wholly as employment land. This is to be welcomed but can be regarded as fortuitous windfall and is subject to remediation, masterplanning to determine how much land is actually deliverable, and the timing and development impact of the construction and operation of HS2. A copy of the line of HS2 including its safeguarding limits is attached for information; this is important to help start to understand its impact.

We agree that land should be allocated and reserved to cater for the local market, but the proposed allocations under Policies WC 2 and WC3 largely do not fulfil any other function. There is an alternative model which would be to grasp the opportunity and build on the success of Markham Vale by helping to bring forward The Coalite site and further adjoining land as a properly planned and phased approach; this is precisely what other planning authorities are doing around the country in response to growth strategies and the Government's Industrial Strategy. We attach a very high level and indicative plan to illustrate that approach and opportunity.