

**ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Examination of Ashford Local Plan 2030**

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**Webpage:** [Local Plan to 2030](#)

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## **HEARING AGENDA**

**TUESDAY 12 JUNE at 10:00am**

**Issues 13 & 14 (Employment)**

**Inspector: Steven Lee**

### **Issue 13:**

***Are the employment topic policies justified, deliverable and consistent with national policy? Will they be effective?***

- i) Why is the impact on rural roads highlighted in criterion d) of Policy EMP1, but not those in urban areas? Is there any reason why the reference to mitigation in criterion d) of Policy EMP1 is not included in the similar criterion in policies EMP3, EMP4 and EMP5? Is the approach to development on rural roads in these policies consistent with that outlined in Policy TRA7 and what is meant by "inappropriate"?
- ii) Is Policy EMP2 consistent with paragraph 22 of the NPPF in terms of the long term protection of allocated employment sites? Why is the impact on neighbouring occupiers or the environment not a consideration in Tenterden and HOU3a villages? Should the policy address employment sites and premises outside Ashford, Tenterden or HOU3a villages?
- iii) How does the approach in Policy EMP4 to leisure and office uses relate to Policy EMP9 in terms of the sequential test? Would conversions be exempt? If so, what is the justification for this and should it be reflected in one or other of the policies?
- iv) Is Policy EMP5 consistent with paragraph 28 of the NPPF in terms of promoting economic growth in rural areas? What is the justification for expecting an essential need for new premises to be in the countryside and how would this be assessed?
- v) Is Policy EMP6 consistent with paragraph 21 of the NPPF, in terms of development not being over-burdened by combined requirements of planning policy expectations and is the policy justified in terms of need and the effect on viability? Given that delivery is provided by others, how will the policy support expansion of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)? What is meant by "reasonably sized" employment proposals?

**Issue 14: Are the retail, leisure and tourism topic policies justified, deliverable and consistent with national policy? Will they be effective?**

- i) Is it the intention for 'town centre uses' in policies EMP7 and EMP8 to reflect the definition of 'main town centre' uses in the NPPF and the Local Plan Glossary? If so, should this be made clear and what role does residential development have in this? Are the boundaries of the primary shopping areas (PSA) (including the extension), primary frontages and, where applicable, secondary frontages justified by evidence?
- ii) Is the approach to primary and secondary frontages set out in policies EMP7 and EMP8, which is permissive of all Class A uses, consistent with paragraph 23 of the NPPF, particularly in relation to promoting competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer? Would this approach be effective in supporting the vitality and viability of the centres in the long term?
- iii) The NPPF states that development should be refused if it likely to have a 'significant adverse impact' on investment and the vitality and viability of a town centre (paragraphs 26 and 27). Is the approach outlined in criterion b) consistent with this, both in terms of the test and/or the scope of the assessment? In setting the local threshold for impact tests, has the Council had regard to the matters listed in the PPG (Reference ID: 2b-016-20140306)? Is the same threshold justified for retail, leisure and office uses?
- iv) For effectiveness, should the exception to small scale retail and service provision in paragraph 5.203 be made in explicit in policy? What would be the approach for small scale development outside defined centres not covered by Policy EMP10?
- v) Is what constitutes a 'village centre' in Policy EMP10 clearly defined? In terms of the loss of shops and services, does Policy EMP10 provide sufficient clarity? Does the policy provide a satisfactory basis to ensure the vitality and viability of local and village centres are supported and which ensures their roles are maintained?
- vi) Has the Council had regard to the PPG (Reference ID: 2b-007-20140306) in drafting Policy EMP11 as this sets out what should be considered when planning for tourism? Is the plan positively prepared in terms of articulating a vision for tourism and identifying optimum locations for tourism development?

Participants:

Ashford Borough Council  
412 Home Builders Federation  
183 The Church Commissioners for England (Deloitte LLP)  
1086 Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council