

**HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION**

**Statements addressing Inspectors Questions
for Hearing Session considering**

EMPLOYMENT

**Statement of
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**On behalf of
HEDLEY GREENTREE ASSOCIATES
(representing CAPCO)
(Ref:- PPUD/08/0489)**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 I have set out the background to this Statement. My clients are CAPCO Plc. The company has been negotiating with the Borough Council over any years, mainly with the assistance of the architects practice, Hedley Greentree Associates.
- 1.2 The company has an interest in the site known as Forty Acre Farm and has proposed a Joint Venture with the Borough Council in respect of Brockhampton West. The current recession has inevitably reduced the immediate prospects for the proposal but my clients wish to make it clear that they are still keen to pursue their interest here.

Employment

Question 7

Will the CS provide adequate employment opportunities of the right type?

- 2.1 Havant Borough is a member of PUSH which is a sub-regional partnership. PUSH has the principal objective of promoting the economy of South Hampshire. This means that the Core Strategy for the Borough should be employment led. There is little evidence that this is identified in the Core Strategy which tends to address local issues.
- 2.2 It is also known that South Hampshire underperforms in the context of the South East Region. The evolution of PUSH was based upon the need to resolve this underlying problem. The abolition of the South East Plan and with it the sub-regional agency known as PUSH does not represent the abandonment of this approach. PUSH is now expected to be replaced by a 'Local Enterprise Partnership' with the same objectives of promoting the sub-regional economy.

PUSH Economic Development Strategy

- 2.3 I have requested that the recent Report by DTZ on behalf of PUSH has been included as a Core Document. The Report was published in June 2010 and it is entitled 'PUSH Economic Development Strategy'. This report has affirmed that the basic tenets of the PUSH concept will be continued and, in fact, given greater emphasis in its new form as a Local Enterprise Partnership. The Report recognises that there is:-

"a need to continue to invest to close the gap with the South East and ensure prosperity for the residents of PUSH." (Executive Summary)

- 2.4 The issues that must be addressed are particularly relevant to the situation in Havant Borough. The Report states that:-

When looking forward, projections paint an undesirable picture of the South Hampshire economy in the future. Persistently high levels of unemployment as a result of rising population without sufficient employment growth will bring pressures on public services.

- 2.5 Havant suffers from high levels of unemployment. Unemployment is the highest in Hampshire (para. 1.29). It is also known that the adjoining Districts of South Hampshire have similar problems notably the City of Portsmouth. It also has some of the highest levels of deprivation. Thus, in the context of PUSH and the forthcoming LEP, it needs to perform above the sub-regional average. The DTZ Report stated:-

In developing the strategy for the PUSH area in 2004, the ambition of the partnership was to define a sustainable growth strategy for the sub-region, built upon enhanced economic performance. Key objectives of the strategy were to tackle identified pockets of deprivation and offer a better quality of life for everyone who lives, works and spends their leisure time in the area.

- 2.6 The Report also identifies the reasons for the poor performance and again this is especially pertinent to the problems of Havant. It states:-

The cause of the gap continues to be both issues of labour market engagement (a lower proportion of the working age population in work) and productivity (a lower output per worker as a result of the sectoral, occupational and skills mix).

- 2.7 These are all issues identified in the Core Strategy. Havant has a special role because it is its resident population that suffers the deprivation and the skill shortage which has to be rectified to improve the sub-regional performance. Employment creation is especially fundamental to the future of Havant. Again, the Report identifies this issue:-

At the crux of our ambition is the effective use of our resident workforce.

- 2.8 The Report also emphasises the importance of skill and training.

Employment & Skills Board (ESB) for South Hampshire to ensure that all the relevant partners are working to achieve a common goal and that this is reflected in the investments and skills development and to help people who are out of work to secure jobs.

- 2.9 The Report provides clear guidance on the future. It affirms that the sub-regional objective of improving the economic performance remains fundamental and, indeed, it takes this further by placing the business leaders at the heart of the success rather than politicians. The question is whether Havant's Core Strategy reflects these ambitions.
- 2.10 In my opinion, the Core Strategy fails to provide adequate employment opportunities and these are not in the right place. The spatial vision in terms of employment is to provide 91% of new employment in Havant and Leigh Park (para 3.1.6). This will create a focussed provision of employment and not one that is spread across the Borough.
- 2.11 This provision depends, in turn, upon the development of Dunsbury Hill Farm. It is now known from recent statements that the development of this site has been set back several years because of the costs of providing highway access are unaffordable (see Appendix – Newspaper Cutting). It is also known that it was proposed that the development of this 'Strategic Site' would take place over a period of five or more years. This is clearly too long in the context of the Growth Strategy for PUSH/LEP which needs to be addressed as soon as possible.
- 2.12 There is a lack of flexibility and the failure to provide a contingency plan to bring forward other sites is self evident. In this context, Havant Borough needs to develop a plan to promote more employment opportunities which compensates for the delay in the development of Dunsbury Hill Farm.
- 2.13 The delay in the development of Dunsbury Hill Farm is not a surprise. It has been the opinion of the local commercial world that the costs of development were a very heavy burden upon a site that was unlikely to command high rents. The site is poorly related to housing areas as it lies centrally within the Strategic Gap and was very dependent upon the proposed East-West Bus Corridor for which funding remains uncertain.

Question 8

Is the right policy for the protection of existing employment sites appropriate? Have the right sites been identified for protection?

- 2.14 The delay in the development of Dunsbury Hill Farm means that the Strategy relies upon a large number of smaller sites. These sites are often poorly related to the transport network. In these circumstances, it is surprising that the site known as Brockhampton West has been downgraded. It was a

strategic allocation in the Consultation Draft Core Strategy. It was de-allocated for reasons of possible of ecological issues.

- 2.15 Brockhampton West was originally intended to provide 40,000 m² of commercial floorspace which represents over 25% of the total floorspace proposed for the Borough. As a consequence of the expected delay in the development of Dunsbury Hill Farm, of over 5 years, Brockhampton West must be reviewed urgently. Unless the ecological issues are so fundamental to preclude its development, it should be restored as a Strategic Site. The Draft Core Strategy 2009 stated that it was:-

"An exceptional gateway location in the Borough. It is a key strategic employment site for Havant Borough and the wider south Hampshire sub region that could provide approximately 40,000m² of new employment floorspace."

- 2.16 It is difficult to comprehend the decision to change the status of this site that was clearly regarded as fundamental to the Employment Strategy in 2009. My clients, CAPCO, in the name of its subsidiary, Kestrel, investigated the ecological interests in 2008 in support of both the Forty Acre and Brockhampton Sites (copy appended). Although some minor issues were identified these were not insuperable. These would not prevent the development of Brockhampton West site which also suffered from contamination. This required remediation which would be costly without development.
- 2.17 The other matter that has not been identified sufficiently is the magnitude of the development at the West of Waterlooville MDA. This site which lies mainly in Winchester District adjoins the boundary of Havant Borough. Besides the Housing proposals, the Plan proposes 12.5 hectares of employment land.
- 2.18 Besides the new employment areas proposed in the West of Waterlooville MDA there is the existing employment area at Brambles Park. This emphasises the imbalance of opportunities on the western edge of the Borough.
- 2.19 It is also clear that reliance on the Strategic Sites makes the Core Strategy vulnerable to change. The Sustainability Appraisal Non Technical Summary, para. 1.50 states:-

'Strategic Sites such as Dunsbury Hill Farm, Waterlooville MDA and the Public Service Village are considered "critical" to the delivery of employment development and for achieving the Core Strategy's vision for the borough.'

- 2.20 Only the Waterlooville MDA is progressing and this lies mainly in Winchester District. This means that Havant may benefit from the jobs but that Winchester District will show the 12.5 hectares and the job creation in its Core Strategy.
- 2.21 It should be acknowledged that housing construction has an important role to play in job creation in the short term while the recession causes delays to the development of Dunsbury Hill Farm.
- 2.22 An important objective of the CS is the provision of conditions which will promote a "dynamic, knowledge-based economy based on large and small businesses". Support for the economic growth of the Borough is important. The DTZ Report identified areas of strength in the sub-regional economy:-
- The evidence clearly identifies that our greatest strengths lie in advanced manufacturing, including the marine and aerospace sectors. (4.1)**
- 2.23 Havant should maximise its beneficial role in these areas. It has existing companies in these areas and a long coastline that could enhance the marine industries.
- 2.24 The DTZ Report focuses on the importance of developing employment in the two Cities. It is evident that the greatest problems of deprivation and unemployment lie at the south east end of the sub-region ie Portsmouth and Havant. Good communications are vital to this issue.
- 2.25 It is also known that more people leave the Borough (out-commuting) than enter it for employment purposes. Besides the need for a better balance to attract more employment to the Borough, there is a need to provide a greater range of job opportunities within the Borough to minimise the overall level of commuting. The DTZ Report states that:-

Investment is also required in transport infrastructure. A major factor in the relatively strong employment growth outside the cities has been that locations along the M27 are more easily accessed by car than city centre locations. This advantage of locations close to the M27 needs to be offset by enhancing the accessibility of the city centres by high quality public transport.

- 2.26 Good transportation infrastructure is key to the promotion of the economy through the delivery and support of the employment areas. The strategic sites specifically Dunsbury Hill Farm and the Havant Public Service Village need good transportation links and services. Other sites such as Brockhampton west (a former strategic site) are also dependent upon good transport infrastructure serving the A27 and A3(M) corridors.
- 2.27 It is important that the Core Strategy safeguards land to facilitate transport infrastructure opportunities into the future. It therefore needs to identify in broad terms locations where opportunities exist for future investment.
- 2.28 It is noted that the emerging Portsmouth Core Strategy has made such provision and it is important therefore that the Havant Core Strategy should identify similar provisions. Land is available and should safeguarded at Forty Acres Farm at the junction of the A3(M) and the A27. The Core Strategy would benefit and gain greater soundness by safeguarding land to facilitate a future transportation hub at the junction of the M27/A27/A3(M) corridors.

Portsmouth City Core Strategy

- 2.29 The emerging Portsmouth Core Strategy addresses Transport in Section 6.5 where it refers to the Regional Transport Strategy describing the city as “an international gateway due to the commercial port”. The Core Strategy refers in support of its approach to transport to the same transportation advice and documents that are relevant to the Havant Core Strategy. The Core Strategy concludes that it should implement the agreed transport policies as set out in the LTP2. Policy PCS13 Transport sets out the measures it proposes to take and in so doing includes specific reference to sites. In particular it refers to:-

“Safeguarding land for :

d) Land for future stations at Farlington and Paulsgrove.”

- 2.30 It is recommended that the land at Forty Acre Farm is safeguarded as a possible site for a new railway station and park and ride interchange integrated in particular with the development of Brockhampton West. Safeguarding land for the purpose of a transportation hub would be fully in compliance with Policy DM11 Planning for Sustainable Travel. The provision of a site for a transportation hub would also be supportive of Policy DM12 Mitigating the Impacts of Travel in that it would make an important contribution to the options for future travel patterns.

3.0 CONCLUSION: TO MAKE THE CORE STRATEGY SOUND

- 3.1 The Core Strategy must be changed to make it much more positive in respect of the promotion of employment provision. The weakness of the Core Strategy is evident from the set back of the Dunsbury Hill Farm development. The Core Strategy should be more flexible in its approach to employment promotion.
- 3.2 The site at Brockhampton West (Hart Plain Farm) should be re-instated as a Strategic Site and its development re-examined to see if it can be brought forward. A positive response to its case together with the proposal to safeguard a transport interchange at Forty Acre Farm would provide encouragement to investors such as my client CAPCO. This representation seeks the inclusion of reference to safeguarding land for a transportation hub at Forty Acre Farm.
- 3.3 DM15 Safeguarding Transport Infrastructure currently states:-

"Land to be safeguarded will be identified in the Delivery Development (allocations) Plan or other development document as appropriate and agreed with the appropriate delivery body"
- 3.4 The Core Strategy is unsound because it identifies Strategic Sites that are questionable in terms of deliverability and which are not truly fundamental to the Strategy. The Core Strategy could be made more effective if it was more flexible and more positive and if it promoted housing and employment across the Borough and away from the West of Waterlooville SDA.