Retail Assessment

On behalf of:
High Peak Developments Limited

In respect of:
Land adjacent to River Goyt, Bridgemont, Whaley Bridge, High Peak, SK23 7PD

Date:
19 April 2012

Reference:
JB/MA/13117/R001m

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This Retail Statement is submitted in support of an extension of time application for a mixed use development incorporating retail, business and restaurant uses on land adjacent to the River Goyt and the existing Tesco Store off Buxton Road, Whaley Bridge.

1.2 This report focuses solely upon the planning merits of the proposed retail and restaurant uses which form part of this development. The remainder of the development is discussed and justified through the remainder of the application material.

1.3 This report assesses the proposal in light of the relevant policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other relevant policies in the local Development Plan.

1.4 The proposed mixed use development is comprised of a commercial building sub-divided to provide three units at ground floor level with mezzanine floors, as well as business space provided at first floor level. Of the three proposed ground floor units, two of these will support non-food retail uses (Class A1) whilst the residual unit is identified to accommodate restaurant uses (Class A3).

1.5 Whilst the NPPF (in similar vein to PPS4) encourages that new demand should ideally be met in town centres, it does not place an embargo on out of centre retail development where there is a latent future demand, where no suitable and more central sites are available and where it can be demonstrated there is no significant adverse impact to existing centres.

1.6 The supporting sequential assessment has focused on the town centres of Whaley Bridge and New Mills and examines opportunities to relocate the entirety of the development as well as having consideration of disaggregation. The assessment concludes that the identified sites are neither suitable nor viable due to both their size and a number of significant constraints on the potential redevelopment of these sites. Given this, and the absence of any other plausible alternative sites, it is therefore concluded that there are no sequentially preferable sites.

1.7 The supporting economic retail assessment concludes that there is sufficient available expenditure within the identified catchment area to support the proposed development and to promote further retail floorspace within Whaley Bridge and indeed New Mills should opportunities be brought forward.

1.8 The development will have a positive impact on the local economy and employment levels, creating up to 50 new jobs.

1.9 The proposals will accord with the previously approved scheme in design terms. The scheme seeks to provide attractive commercial units which will make efficient use of an underutilised piece of land at the existing site proximate to the River Goyt and the existing Tesco store. The proposed development also provides associated parking, servicing and access works alongside landscaping and other public realm works.

1.10 Overall, this mixed use commercial scheme will provide a much needed improvement to the retail and leisure offer for Whaley Bridge, which is very poorly served at this time. This enhanced offer will better meet localised needs and reduce the need for unsustainable long journeys to destinations much further afield. This is in broad accord with the NPPF, former national guidance (in the form of PPS4, PPS1 and PPG13), and local policy.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 This Retail Statement has been prepared by DPP in support of an extension of time application by High Peak Developments Ltd for mixed use development including retail, restaurant and business uses on land adjacent to the River Goyt and the existing Tesco Store off Buxton Road, Whaley Bridge. The purpose of this report is to provide information on the proposed commercial development and address relevant town centre policy considerations.

2.2 In accordance with s.38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, this statement considers the conformity of the proposals against policies within the adopted Development Plan for the area, and addresses any other material considerations raised by the emerging planning policy documents.

2.3 Overall, the retail statement focuses on general retail planning policy issues relating to the proposed development. This report has been prepared following a request from High Peak Borough Council for a new retail statement in order for them to determine the likely impact of the proposal on Whaley Bridge Town Centre.

3.0 Planning Policy Review

3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that all development proposals are to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan for the area. For this application, the Derbyshire Structure Plan (2001), the East Midlands RSS and High Peak Local Plan (2005) comprise the Development Plan for the proposal.

3.2 Our review of these policies has focused on retail and town centre based policies for the purpose of this Retail Statement. We have also sought to identify relevant retail and town centre reports and documents which will influence the review of the statutory development plan. In the first instance, however, we examine key national planning guidance.

National Planning Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

3.3 The NPPF was published in March 2012 and replaced PPS4: Planning for Economic Growth in providing policy guidance on retail issues at a national level. Paragraphs 24-27 set out the relevant development management tests for planning applications for retail developments.

The Development Plan

Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan, 2001

3.4 The Joint Structure Plan covers the whole of Derbyshire with the exception of land which lies within the Peak District National Park. Chapter 6 deals specifically with Town Centre and Shopping. However, on 21 September 2007 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government issued a Direction under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act to extend the life of some Joint Structure Plan policies from 27 September 2007 until the Regional Spatial Strategy is approved. No shopping related polices were saved beyond September 2007.

East Midlands RSS

3.5 The East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was adopted on the 12 March 2009 and highlights how the region would progress over the next twenty years. The only relevant retail policy relating to this application is Policy 23: Regional Priorities for Town Centres and Retail Development.

3.6 The Localism Act states that RSS will be removed on a permanent basis as the regional tier of planning policy. However, this will not occur until after a Government publishes a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on the impact of the abolition. RSS is therefore likely to be abolished in spring 2012 according to a CLG press release on 20 October 2011.

3.7 Therefore, at this time, RSS remains a material component of the Development Plan for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004).

High Peak Local Plan, 2005

3.8 High Peak Local Plan was adopted in 2005 and is the current adopted development plan for the High Peak Borough. The plan was saved in its entirety until 27th September 2007. However, the Secretary of State has now made the decision as to which policies will be saved. As such the following saved retail policies are considered relevant to the application.

- Policy TC4 – Large stores which cannot be located in existing town centres
- Policy TC14 – Regeneration area at Hogs Yard, Whaley Bridge

Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Joint Core Strategy

3.9 Derbyshire Dales District Council and High Peak Borough Council have decided to prepare a Joint Core Strategy for the area for which they are the planning authorities. The area covered by the Core Strategy excludes the Peak District National Park, who are a separate local planning authority responsible for preparing their own Core Strategy. The Core Strategy plan period will cover the period up to 2026.

3.10 Consultation was undertaken on the Draft Core Strategy during June and July 2010. The Core Strategy is the key strategic document within the Local Development Framework and will provide the basis for the production of other planning documents. Its role is to set out the strategic vision and direction for the area.

Community Conversations

3.11 High Peak Borough Council has undertaken a series of consultation events (badged as community conversations) through 2011, to help residents spell out their priorities for development in their local area. In respect of Whaley Bridge, the key points were as follows:

- Access to the countryside and to the range of amenities in Whaley Bridge was highly valued, in particular the park, shops, library and Mechanics Institute.

- People also welcomed the good transport links, community spirit and historic character of the area.

- Attendees were keen to maximise the economic potential of the town and stressed the need to continue efforts for a new Goyt Bridge to deliver regeneration of the canal basin and economic development at Bingswood Industrial Estate. There was also support for developing tourism.

- Priorities for future development included the provision of more affordable housing and housing for older people, with any new homes being of a design quality that reflected the rural location and heritage of Whaley Bridge.

Peak Sub Region Retail and Town Centre Study

3.12 The Peak Sub Regional Retail and Town Centre Study adopted in February 2009 is a joint study undertaken for Derbyshire Dales District Council, High Peak Borough Council, The Peak District National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council, principally considering floorspace requirements for the principal centres.

3.13 Whaley Bridge falls within the High Peak Central area and the report concludes that

the three main towns in this area have a relatively limited comparison goods retail offer which is reflected in the poor level of trade retention and market share that the three towns achieve.

3.14 The report states that whilst a status quo approach (i.e. on-going extensive trade leakage) would suggest no requirement for substantive new development, this should not prevent developer-led proposals from being promoted subject to addressing wider national policy retail issues such that proposals can be supported given the low market share retained within the High Peak Central catchment at present.

4.0 Retail Methodology

4.1 The proposed development represents an opportunity to extend the comparison goods retail offer within Whaley Bridge by the provision of two retail units providing 2,322m^2 of gross retail floorspace. The units will be used for the sale of comparison (either bulky or non-bulky) goods. Although no end operators have been identified, it is anticipated that the units will provide around 1,858m^2 of net retail floorspace.

4.2 The application site is located more than 300m from Whaley Bridge Town Centre and is therefore out-of-centre according to the NPPF definition. Although it is an out-of-centre location for retail use in NPPF terms, it is of course the case that the Development Plan should be afforded strong weight. The publication of the NPPF on 27th March 2012 simultaneously rendered former national guidance such as PPS4 summarily forfeit. Notwithstanding the cancellation of PPS4, subsequent PINS guidance has confirmed that the PPS4 Good Practice Guide remains a material consideration.

4.3 In Local Plan terms, there is a site-specific policy in the form of Local Plan Policy TC14 which states that within the regeneration of Hogs Yard, planning permission will be granted for, among other uses, non-food retail development provided that it meets a number of criteria.

4.4 This assessment therefore assesses the proposal in the light of the guidance of the NPPF alongside the Local Plan, further taking into account the evidence base provided by the Peak Sub Region Retail Study and the pertinent planning history.

4.5 We now move onto a step-by-step clarification of the methodology which has been used to take forward this assessment.

The Defined Catchment

4.6 As set out in '*Planning for Town Centres: Practice Guidance on need, impact and the sequential approach*', the purpose of defining a catchment area is principally to demonstrate where the majority of the trade attracted to a proposal will be drawn from. Identification of the catchment area for the proposal takes account of a

number of different factors, including the nature, scale, location and function of the existing comparison goods retail provision within the surrounding area, topography, the highway network and ease of access to surrounding settlements.

4.7 In this instance, the catchment area put forward has been based partially upon information contained within the *Peak Sub-Region Retail and Town Centres Study*, undertaken by GVA Grimley on behalf of the Council and published in February 2009, and partially upon a common sense approach based on knowledge of the surrounding area.

4.8 The study included 10 geographical zones covering the entire High Peak, Derbyshire County Council, Peak District National Park and Derbyshire Dales administrative boundaries. To assist analysis, these zones are then identified as being representative of generic areas such as Buxton, Bakewell, Ashbourne and Glossop.

4.9 The catchment area is relatively consistent with GVA Grimley's Zone 2 – High Peak Central. This zone includes the centres of Whaley Bridge and New Mills as well as smaller retail facilities. However, the primary catchment area (PCA) for this application is tightly drawn and excludes some of the rural areas to the north and indeed the areas in the immediate vicinity of Chapel-en-le-Frith town centre.

4.10 As mentioned above, the catchment area is focused upon the settlements of Whaley Bridge and New Mills and represents the offer and function of the proposed extended store. It also reflects the distribution of the resident population, the road network, and the distribution of competing facilities. The catchment area represents the theoretical point at which the likelihood of shopping at one facility is equitable with another immediately beyond the catchment.

4.11 This is of course a matter of judgement; however, this choice of catchment area is strengthened by the evidence within the retail study which found that 92% of Whaley Bridge Town Centre's turnover comes from within Zone 2[1]. This suggests that the majority of shoppers are unlikely to travel to Whaley Bridge from outside zone 2 to undertake shopping trips. Although this is partly because of a lack of facilities in the area, this will also be because of the distances between Whaley Bridge and other

[1] Calculated based on Market share findings within Tables 5a-5c within Appendix 5b and tables 5a-5d within Appendix 5c of the Peak Sub-Region Retail and Town Centre Study.

zones. In addition to this, the retail study also highlights that the majority of shoppers visiting the adjacent Tesco Store come from Zone 2. It is therefore considered that the catchment is considered to be appropriate.

4.12 The catchment is based upon the following postcode sectors which help to provide a consistent basis upon which to assess available expenditure and shopping patterns and is shown in Appendix 1:

- SK12 2
- SK22 3
- SK22 4
- SK23 7

4.13 Main comparison goods retail provision within the primary catchment area is provided by the town centres of Whaley Bridge and New Mills with minimal comparison goods retail provision provided by the Tesco Store at Whaley Bridge which has an extant planning permission for an extension. There are no retail parks within the catchment area. Due to the lack of comparison goods provision the majority of expenditure is drawn outside the primary catchment area, particularly to the town centres and retail parks within Stockport, Macclesfield, Buxton and Cheadle. Expenditure is also drawn to the Trafford Centre and Manchester City Centre. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that there is a need for enhanced provision within the catchment in terms of main food shopping.

Population and Expenditure

4.14 We have prepared a range of economic tables attached at Appendix 2. The initial part of the process establishes a number of basic principles, these are as follows:

- The base year of the assessment is 2012.
- The design impact year of the assessment is 2017. This in accordance with guidance within the NPPF which states that the impact of the proposals on town centre vitality and viable should be assessed up to five years from the time the application is made.
- Population for the primary catchment area is 22,467 in 2012. This increases to 23,051 by 2016 representing growth of 584 persons between the base and

design years. Population data for the defined catchment area is provided by MapInfo AnySite Report, 2008, prepared by Pitney Bowes MapInfo.

- Per Capita Expenditure data is presented at 2005 prices, as set out in Table 2 for comparison goods including special forms of trading (SFT) and Table 3 for comparison goods excluding SFT. It is derived from a 2008 Pitney Bowes Anysite Report commissioned by DPP.
- The available comparison goods expenditure in the catchment area amounts to £74.62m in 2012 and £97.26m at 2017 (Table 4). This represents £22.64m worth of growth. These figures take account of the deductions in available comparison goods expenditure as a result of monies spent on Special Forms of Trading (e.g. Internet) which is undertaken on an annualised basis and accounting for projected SFT growth.

Existing Retail Floorspace and Store Turnovers

4.15 Having established the above information, the next stage is to quantify the level of floorspace within the catchment area and to calculate its benchmark turnover. This is set out in Table 5. The following data sources have been used:

- Floospace information has been gathered from a database of grocery retailers (IGD), GOAD Reports and on-site observations.
- Company average sales density information for main food foodstores (comparison goods) is derived from Verdict: UK Food and Grocery Retailers Report 2011.
- Company average floorspace have been used to calculate the amount of comparison goods floorspace in the main foodstores. These have been derived from Verdict: UK Food and Grocery Retailers Report 2011.
- More generic sales densities have been used for comparison goods floorspace in town centres and other local shops. We have used a sales density of £3,500 per m^2 for the centres of Whaley Bridge and Chapel-en-le-Frith, and a sales density of £3,000 per m^2 for New Mills. This is based on professional judgement and reviewing the existing retailers and comparison goods offer within these centres.
- The average sales densities are multiplied by the net floorspace of each of the stores within the catchment area to derive the benchmark turnover.
- An annual floorspace efficiency growth rate of 1.8% for comparison goods floorspace is used to derive the design year benchmark turnover. This is

taken from, and is in accordance with, the Pitney Bowes Expenditure Guide 2011/12.

- Where appropriate survey derived turnover has been utilised, based on the 2009 Peak Sub-Regional Retail and Town centre Study, however where these are not considered to be robust, or no data is available, company average benchmark turnovers have been utilised.

4.16 There are two defined town centres within the catchment area defined, Whaley Bridge and News Mills, as well as the smaller unallocated settlements of Furness Vale, High Peak and Disley.

4.17 Health Checks of the defined centres can be found at Appendix 3. However a brief summary is provided below.

Whaley Bridge

4.18 Whaley Bridge offers a range of uses within the town centre and has an especially low vacancy rate of 2.22% when compared to the GOAD national average (December 2011) of 13.6%. Comparison goods offer within the centre is restricted to just 13 units; however these serve the needs of the local community. The majority of the units are independent retailers; however a Co-Op provides the main convenience offer within the centre. There is a significant proportion of residential within the town centre boundary, predominantly due to the rural nature of the area.

4.19 The centre has a high proportion of service units (74%), well above the GOAD average (35%), again highlighting the rural nature of much of the surrounding area and the need to provide appropriate uses to serve the community.

4.20 Whaley Bridge is an attractive centre and is located within a Conservation Area. Footfall is high along Market Street and overall the centre shows a strong sense of vitality and viability, particularly given the low vacancy rates.

New Mills

4.21 New Mills is a healthy centre, particularly around the central retail core located around Market Street. The retail offer is predominantly comparison in nature, with

25% of the units used for comparison retail. The centre is predominantly occupied by independent retailers. Vacancy rates are currently at 9.89% which is below the GOAD national average (13.6%).

4.22 The centre has a very high percentage of service and other units within the centre, approximately 56% of units which far exceeds the GOAD average. These units tend to be concentrated around the southern and northern periphery of the town centre and do not affect the function of the main core area.

4.23 The centre benefits from a reasonable environmental quality, with properties, particularly around the Market Street core, being well maintained. The town centre is also highly accessible by car and public transport with a large car park and two railway stations.

Smaller Settlements

4.24 Furness Vale, High Lane and Disley each contain a small village store that meets the needs of the local community. There is limited comparison goods provision within these settlements. Each village store is genuinely small, much less than 200m^2.

Existing Shopping Patterns

4.25 The 2009 Peak Sub Region Retail and Town Centres Study is underpinned by a household survey which sought to establish existing shopping patterns across 10 identified zones, based upon an aggregation of postcode sectors.

4.26 Analysis of existing shopping behaviours, in association with estimates of available shopping expenditure within each zone, does allow the calculation of the turnovers which are drawn to given stores and centres by zone, and in overall terms. Once these survey derived turnover levels are compared to benchmark turnover levels, it can be judged whether stores and centres are trading better or worse than would ordinarily be anticipated.

4.27 In respect of zone 2, effectively the home zone for the Whaley Bridge area, the substantial majority of comparison goods shopping expenditure is drawn to the

Stockport Town Centre and Stockport Retail Parks (43%) and Buxton Town Centre (18%). Only 9.5% of available comparison goods expenditure is retained within the zone with this being split between Whaley Bridge (1.68%), New Mills (4.99%) and Chapel-en-le-Frith (2.86%). Further expenditure is lost outside of the Peak Sub-Region to the towns of Macclesfield (8.5%) and Cheadle (2.3%) along with Manchester City Centre (5.8%) and the Trafford Centre (2.4%).

Trading Performance

4.28 Despite this low retention level, the High Peak retail study and its associated household survey indicates that the town centres of Whaley Bridge and New Mills are trading well for comparison goods sales and above expected benchmark levels (see Tables 5 and 11). This is supported by our health checks of the centre which found few vacancies and good levels of footfall within both centres. Chapel-en-le-Frith town centre is also trading well in relation to comparison goods although this is slightly below benchmark levels. No survey data is available for the smaller settlement centres within the primary catchment area.

Committed Retail Turnovers

4.29 Table 6 of Appendix 2, highlights a retail commitment, approved by High Peak Borough Council, at the Whaley Bridge Tesco store adjacent to the application site and similarly out of centre.

4.30 The proposal comprises an extension to the existing store, providing an additional 489m^2 of comparison goods floorspace (net). Based firstly upon updated half of average comparison sales density figures for a Tesco store (derived from Verdict: UK Food and Grocery Retailers 2011) it is estimated that the proposal will turnover £2.49m at the design year, of which 90% or £2.24m will be derived from the primary catchment area. Half of the average comparison sales density figures have been used as the purpose of the extension is mainly at benefitting existing customers rather than attracting new customers – thus resulting in a lower average turnover for the additional floorspace.

Turnover of the Proposals

4.31 Table 7 set out the predicted turnover of the proposed retail units. An average net to gross ratio of 70% has been used. As there are no named operators, a standard average sales density of £4,000 per m^2 has been used. These have both been calculated based on professional judgement and experience of other similar schemes, and in accordance with what was modelled in the assessment of the Tesco extension on the adjacent site. The assumed opening year of the retail units is 2013 which is considered robust as there has been no work undertaken to discharge any of the pre-commencement conditions attached to the existing extant permission and therefore construction is unlikely to commence in the best case scenario until later this year.

4.32 It is calculated that the turnover of retail units will be £6.50m at the assumed opening year of 2013 and £6.98m at the design year of 2017 taking into account turnover efficiencies. It is estimated that 90% of this trade will be drawn from the local area resulting in a turnover from the primary catchment area of £5.85m at 2013 and £6.28m at 2017.

Impacts of Retail Commitments and Proposal

4.33 The next stage of the assessment is to determine how the retail commitment and the development proposals will influence local shopping patterns.

4.34 Judgements need to be made in terms of what the retail commitment consists of and this depends on the surrounding offer, proximity to other stores, quality, type and claim on expenditure. Linkages to surrounding areas also need to be considered, and this helps to inform an understanding of why shopping choices are made.

4.35 Such judgments have been made for the Tesco extension, taking into account the retail assessment submitted with the Tesco application, and are presented in Table 12 with the assessment then carried forward to assess the overall financial impact on centres within the catchment area.

Impacts of Tesco Extension

4.36 The Tesco extension is not yet under construction, however given the extant permission it has been modelled as a commitment. When considering the impacts of the proposed extension to the Tesco store it should be considered that the extension is mainly aimed at benefiting existing customers at a store that has been identified as significantly overtrading, rather than attracting new customers.

4.37 The proposed Tesco extension, should it be brought forward for development, will principally impact on those trading locations which perform a main-food shopping function such as the supermarkets within the area, including the overtrading foodstores at Morrisons, Chapel-en-le-Frith and Morrisons, Buxton. This impact will come about as a significant amount of comparison goods expenditure within supermarkets is spent during a customer's main-food shopping trip. Therefore, if shoppers are visiting the extended Tesco store instead of another foodstore to undertake their main food shopping trip, then linked comparison goods expenditure within these foodstores will be impacted.

4.38 The Tesco extension will also draw some trade from the comparison retail within the larger centres such as Whaley Bridge and Chapel-en-le-Frith. However, this will be minimal given the nature of the limited comparison goods turnover of these centres.

Impacts of Proposal

4.39 In terms of the proposals, given the size of the retail units in this out-of-centre location, it is anticipated that the units will be occupied by larger format comparison retailers that would be unlikely to locate within a town centre due to a requirement for a combination of floorspace, servicing, and parking.

4.40 As the site is located adjacent to the existing Tesco Store which, with its proposed extension, provides around 620m^2 net of comparison goods floorspace, it is inevitable that there will be trade diversion from this store – particularly as a result of linked trips with shoppers visiting the Tesco Store for a main food shopping trip and then also visiting the proposed retail units. We have assumed that 35% of the trade will be drawn from the Tesco store, resulting in a diversion of turnover of circa £2.4m.

4.41 Whilst in the absence of the Tesco store being extended this would result in notable solus impact on the existing store's comparison goods trade, we must take into account that there is indeed an extant consent for an extension which will enhance both the food and non-food offer. It is evident that subsequent to cumulative impact, the turnover of the Tesco store would be substantially higher than is currently the case. This would therefore not be a significant adverse impact on the Tesco store which, given its out-of-centre location, is not afforded any policy protection anyway.

4.42 The extent of comparison trade diversion from the key centres within the catchment will be limited due to their limited existing comparison goods offer, and by virtue of existing shopping patterns which show very significant leakage further afield. Therefore, the solus impact of the proposals on these centres is minimal at less than 1% on Whaley Bridge and 1.5% on New Mills. In terms of cumulative impact, taking into account the Tesco extension, the resultant cumulative impact is in the order of 1.6% on Whaley Bridge and 2.6% on New Mills. Both these impacts are considered minimal and will not harm the on-going vitality or viability of these stores.

4.43 The proposals will draw around £0.7m of its trade from Buxton – particularly from the out-of-centre Morrisons store (which has extant consent for an extension principally to enhance its non-food offer) – with a smaller degree of trade being drawn from Buxton Town Centre. This is a minimal impact on the town centre and the Morrisons store, which is overtrading and, in any case, afforded no policy protection due to its out of centre location.

4.44 Given the limited comparison offer within the catchment area, it is unsurprising that the survey information illustrates that residents feel compelled to travel further afield to purchase many of the non-food items that they require. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the proposals will help to retain more expenditure locally through the diversion of a significant proportion of its trade (50%) from the larger comparison retailing centres of Manchester, Macclesfield, Stockport and the Trafford Centre. Given the minimal proposed turnover of the proposals in comparison to the turnover of these retail destinations, any impact upon these centres will be very minimal and almost indiscernible in practice.

5.0 The Overall Case for Retail Development and Compliance with Policy

5.1 This chapter sets out the overall basis for the proposed extension in light of the relevant Development Plan policy and the development management tests set out in the NPPF based on the evidence as set out above. Other material considerations are set out in the following section. It is important to note that this development will help to retain more expenditure locally by significantly improving the comparison goods retail offer of Whaley Bridge reducing the need for people to travel outside the primary catchment area in order to purchase the comparison goods that they need.

Local Settlement Hierarchy

5.2 Whaley Bridge is identified as a Town Centre within policy TC1 of the High Peak Local Plan, adopted March 2005. Other town centres identified are Glossop, Hadfield, New Mills, Whaley Bridge, Chapel-en-le-Frith and Buxton.

5.3 Our knowledge of the area shows that whilst on the same level of the retail hierarchy, these town centres clearly perform different roles and provide vastly different functions. Whaley Bridge town centre underperforms in respect of what would be expected of a town centre and this is compounded by the absence of any national retailers or units with a large floorspace. No lower level centres are identified within the Local Plan.

Sequential Test

5.4 In retail terms the application site is located outside of the defined town centre however it is promoted for retail uses, alongside other uses, by Local Plan Policy TC14. Therefore Paragraph 24 of the NPPF is relevant to the proposals as it requires a sequential test to be undertaken where a proposal is not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. Although the proposal is in accordance with the development plan, with Policy TC14 promoting retail uses on this site, the site is in an out-of-centre location and therefore a sequential test assessment is required.

Sequential Site Assessment

5.5 The *'Planning For Town Centres; Practice Guidance on need, impact and the sequential approach'* document states that sequential assessments should be focused on existing defined centres within the catchment area that the proposal is likely to serve. Within our defined Primary Catchment Area (PCA) there are only two centres; Whaley Bridge and New Mills. Therefore, the sequential assessment has focused on sites within, or on the edge of, these two centres. That being said, the key focus should be on Whaley Bridge as it is this centre which will be most clearly served by the proposed commercial development.

5.6 The parameters that have been used for this sequential site search would be for a site, of approximately 0.7ha to accommodate the proposed mix of town centre uses including around 2,322m^2 of retail floorspace and 214m^2 of restaurant floorspace. In order to demonstrate flexibility on this we have sought to identify units and sites that can accommodate retail units and restaurant 15% smaller or larger than those proposed. Therefore, the sequential site search has sought to identify units and sites that could accommodate retail units of between 1,974m^2 and 2,670m^2, and a restaurant of between 182m^2 and 246m^2.

5.7 None of the vacant units within Whaley Bridge town centre are suitable to accommodate either of the retail units or the restaurant use due to their scale and the requirement of significant internal alterations that would be required in order to create a workable floorplate.

5.8 Subsequent to an extensive review of opportunity sites, only two sites in or near to Whaley Bridge town centre is adjudged to have even limited opportunity to be deemed preferable and therefore justifies more detailed assessment against the criteria set out in paragraph 24 of the NPPF.

Wharf Road, Whaley Bridge

5.9 The site is located at Wharf Road, Whaley Bridge bounded to the north by Reservoir Road and to the east by the railway line. The site is located to the west of the town centre and whilst technically adjoining the town centre there is significant segregation as a result of the railway line. The site therefore can at best be classed

as edge of centre due to the barriers (visual and in terms of compromised access) between the retail core and its location.

5.10 The site is occupied by several commercial buildings and would appear to be in multiple use and part-occupation. The site is not allocated, and has no specific policy protection within the Local Plan for its current use. Adjacent uses include residential, such as the recently completed social housing scheme at Tymbark House.

5.11 The site suffers from a number of in-principle constraints which weigh against its use for large format retailing or indeed restaurant use. On a commercial level, visibility is poor and this will impact considerably upon the majority of business models. This lack of visibility and general prominence is compounded by its fundamentally substandard access.

5.12 The site has limited access, with Wharf Road being the only access/egress point into the site. This road is narrow and passes under the railway bridge where it narrows even further. This type of access arrangement would be unsuitable without substantial investment, which would itself adversely affect the character of this area. Given the level differences between the site and Reservoir Road there is no potential to create a new workable access point off Reservoir Road.

5.13 Even setting aside these fundamental points in regard to access and visibility, the other obvious constraints are size and availability. Dealing firstly with the former, the site is simply too small. The developable area of this site, taking account of existing level changes, embankments and necessary access works would likely be less than 0.5ha which falls substantially short of the area required to accommodate the proposed development with its servicing and parking arrangements.

5.14 In terms of availability, whilst the site does not appear to be in full occupation, there does appear to be commercial activity which would be rendered obsolete through its use for retail purposes and this would prejudice a range of established local businesses which would be in conflict with the Local Plan and Community Strategy.

5.15 As required by the NPPF, the applicant is required to demonstrate consideration of the potential for disaggregation and flexibility. In respect of how the proposals could be disaggregated, this could only be done by seeking to accommodate just one of

the retail units proposed, therefore reducing the opportunity to deliver the much needed enhancement of Whaley Bridge's non-food offer.

5.16 Whilst this site would theoretically be of sufficient size to accommodate one of the retail units or the restaurant unit with some car parking, it would be fatally compromised by inadequate access to the site which would make both customer and service vehicle access to the site very difficult and unattractive to potential operators. In addition to this, the noise environment associated with this new commercial use could generate significant residential amenity concerns as a result of servicing and customer movements- assuming that these more intensive movements would be deemed safe by the highway authority in the vicinity of the railway bridge.

5.17 The site is not considered suitable to accommodate either the retail or the restaurant use in disaggregated form.

5.18 It should also be noted that disaggregating the development to accommodate it in this location would prevent the regeneration of the Hogs Yard site which is sought and promoted by Local Plan Policy T14. In conclusion, this site is not considered a suitable sequentially preferable site.

New Mills

5.19 The catchment is focused upon Whaley Bridge but is also comprised of New Mills for robustness. Two sites have been identified within, or on the edge of, New Mills Town Centre. These are the Torr Vale Mill regeneration area, and Torr Top Street car park. In addition to these sites, the sequential assessment also identified vacant units within the town centre.

Torr Vale Mill

5.20 Torr Vale Mill regeneration area is allocated in the High Peak Local Plan as a regeneration opportunity, under policy TC13. It is understood to occupy in the region of 1.8-2.2 hectares. In terms of physical size therefore, it is significantly larger than the application site. Whilst the site is located close to the Town Centre given the level differences and access, the site is not within easy walking distance (i.e. 300m or less) of the town centre boundary and therefore should be considered as an out-of-

centre site. Significant works to the access could potentially be carried out to create an easy walking route to the town centre resulting in the site being classed as edge of centre.

5.21 The opportunity site is dominated by Torr Vale Mill, which is a prominent Grade 2* listed. The TC13 policy seeks the retention of this building, and identifies the need for a comprehensive development to provide:

- Education use,
- Office and business use,
- Leisure and tourism facilities, and
- Residential development necessary to enable mixed use development.

5.22 Retail use on this site is not supported by this policy and the location of the proposed development on this site would inevitably require the demolition of the grade 2* listed mill complex which is unlikely to be supported by English Heritage.

5.23 In summary, the use of this edge-centre site (assuming access works being carried out) would fail to adhere to other planning requirements, or achieve the broad-based benefits that could be delivered through a scheme as envisioned by the TC13 policy. In addition to this the site is too large to accommodate the development and would represent an inefficient use of the land. The Torr Vale Mill site is therefore wholly unsuitable and can be discounted in terms of the sequential site.

Torr Top Street Car Park

5.24 This Torr Top Street Car Park is located within the New Mills Conservation Area, and is located within the defined New Mills town centre. This is a Council owned car park, providing 50 spaces. It is understood to occupy in the region of 0.5 hectares. In terms of physical size therefore, it is too small to accommodate the development as a whole.

5.25 Whilst this site may be of sufficient size to accommodate one of the retail units and restaurant with some car parking this would lead the loss of an important town centre car park. Whilst car parks are not sacrosanct, they do represent important facilities which contribute to the vitality of town centres and the attraction provided by the retail and other town centre services therein. The loss of this car park is likely

to harm the vitality and viability of the town centre by reducing the attractiveness of the centre as a result of a reduction of available car parking for visitors.

5.26 Again, it should be noted that disaggregating the development to accommodate it in this location would prevent the regeneration of the Hogs Yard site which is sought and promoted by Local Plan Policy T14. In conclusion, this site is not considered a suitable sequentially preferable site.

Vacant Units

5.27 There are two vacant units to the south of Union Street within New Mills town centre which both provide circa 200m^2 floorspace. These units have a narrow frontage and whilst they present to the main road they are well south of the main retail core, and these units provide no existing (or opportunity for) dedicated servicing or off-street parking. The sites are also located within the New Mills Conservation Area. As a consequence of size and the other key constraints as identified, these units do not provide a plausible opportunity for the much needed new retail uses that are absent from and would serve Whaley Bridge.

5.28 Whilst these two vacant units would have the potential to accommodate a restaurant use, the fact remains that the business model of such a use relies upon its co-existence with the larger format retail uses that are provided by the scheme.

5.29 In reality, a range of opportunities are already available in New Mills for hot food given the presence of public houses, restaurants, cafes and numerous takeaways. Given this extent of choice, the type of restaurant that might use one of these two vacant units (if any such demand existed) would cater for a highly localised catchment which would therefore be considerably smaller than the catchment area to be associated with the larger format retail uses. On a typical basis, these larger format retail units sustain a retail offer which draws custom from a wider area, and the same would not be said for smaller units or those occupied by local retailers.

5.30 As such, whilst it is accepted that these units are available they are wholly unsuitable for either of the proposed retail units or indeed the proposed restaurant use. These units can therefore be discounted and are not sequentially preferable to the application proposal.

Sequential Assessment Summary

5.31 In conclusion with regard to the Sequential Test, none of the identified tests are suitable to accommodate the proposed use and therefore the application passes the sequential test as required by paragraph 27 of the NPPF.

Retail Impact Assessment

5.32 Paragraph 27 of the NPPF also directs planning authorities to refuse applications where it is likely that the proposal is likely to have a 'significant' adverse impact on existing, committed and planning investment or town centre vitality or viability.

5.33 The methodology for the impact assessment has been detailed in the previous section, identifying:

- The appropriate catchment area for the proposals;
- The relevant population, per capita expenditure and available comparison goods expenditure;
- Existing shopping provision and benchmark turnovers;
- Committed retail development with planning permission and assessing how they will impact on shopping patterns and trade; and
- The turnover of the development proposals and how it will impact on existing and future turnovers

5.34 This is supported by a range of Economic Tables at Appendix 2 and the shopping provision plan attached at Appendix 1 which depicts the primary catchment area and location of existing retail provision. Health checks for the existing centres for New Mills and Whaley Bridge are attached at Appendix 3.

5.35 In terms of examining impact, this is focused on the design year of 2017 in accordance with guidance within the NPPF. Paragraph 26 of the NPPF states criteria that should be considered as outlined below:

The impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the

proposal

5.36 The economic impact assessment incorporates the only identified retail commitment which is the Tesco extension adjacent to the application site. This commitment is still to be developed but has permission to create an additional 489m^2 of net comparison goods floorspace. This commitment is not in an allocated centre and is therefore afforded no policy protection under the guidance within the NPPF.

5.37 Nevertheless, the cumulative impact of the proposal has been assessed, and we have set out how the development will impact on this commitment. The level of impact would not result in a significant adverse impact on the Tesco store and therefore would not prevent the Tesco extension from coming forward for development.

Retail Capacity

5.38 Although there is no longer a requirement to demonstrate the need or retail capacity for development proposals as part of the tests set out in the NPPF, the following assess the retail capacity within the primary catchment area in relation to the proposals impact on existing, committed and planned public and private investment.

5.39 Currently the substantial majority of comparison goods shopping expenditure from Zone 2 (High Peak Central) is lost outsides of the zone with the majority being drawn to Stockport Town Centre and Stockport Retail Parks (43%) and Buxton Town Centre (18%). Table 8 summarises the retail capacity taking into account the turnover of the existing comparison floorspace and retail commitments within the Primary Catchment Area. This table highlights that only 19% of available expenditure within the PCA is spent within the PCA taking into account existing retail units and identified commitments. This percentage drops to 16% at the design year of 2017.

5.40 Given this lack of expenditure retained locally and the size of the PCA, it is reasonable to expect that a higher level of retail expenditure can, and should be, retained within the PCA. The proposed development will help to increase expenditure retention to 22.5% at the design year of 2017. Even taking into account the proposed development, there will still be £75.33m of surplus expenditure within the PCA that will be lost to other centres and retail destinations. Future retail development within the PCA will help to claw back a higher proportion of the expenditure currently lost.

Therefore, it is concluded that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate future public and private investment in new retail development within the PCA.

The impact of the proposal on town centre vitality viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and wider area

5.41 The health checks presented at Appendix 3 demonstrate that both New Mills and Whaley Bridge are vital and viable town centres with low vacancy levels that serve the local community well despite lacking any significant comparison goods retail provision. The proposals will draw a limited amount of trade from these centres due to their limited existing comparison goods offer. The cumulative impact, taking into account the Tesco extension, results in a cumulative impact of 1.6% on Whaley Bridge and 2.6% on New Mills. Both these impacts are considered minimal and will not harm the on-going vitality or viability of these centres.

5.42 The proposals will also draw trade a minimal amount of trade from (around £0.7m) Buxton. Whilst the majority of this will be drawn from the out-of-centre Morrisons store, a small degree of trade will be drawn from Buxton Town Centre (around £0.16m). This is a negligible impact on the town centre which will have no discernible impact upon the on-going vitality or viability of the centre.

5.43 In terms of impacts on centres outside the primary catchment area, given the amount of trade that is currently lost to centres outside the PCA, a significant amount of the proposals trade will be drawn from these centres. This includes the centres of Manchester, Macclesfield, Stockport and the Trafford Centre. Given the minimal turnover of the proposals in comparison to the turnover of these retail destinations, the impact upon these centres will be very minimal and indiscernible in practice.

5.44 It is not considered that the development proposals would have a significantly adverse impact on the overall vitality and viability of any of the defined centres within the catchment area with all three still serving a predominantly local function as well as serving the needs of tourists to the area.

Local Plan Policy TC14

5.45 The following assesses the proposals against the criteria set out in Policy TC14 for

retail development. Each criterion is dealt with in turn below.

The retail floorspace should not exceed 2,500 square metres

5.46 The proposed retail floorspace equates to 2,322 square metres (gross) which is below the policy threshold. There is no conflict with this criterion.

An amount of business and non-retail floorspace equal to the retail floorspace should be developed

5.47 It is important to recognise that the Local Plan policy has been in place since 2005 and the scheme benefits from an approval in 2009. This being the case, the scheme was endorsed and approved by the Borough Council in the full understanding of this policy and the relationship of the application with it.

5.48 Whilst we would confirm that the extent of retail space modestly exceeds non-retail space, the spirit of the policy is to seek genuine mixed use development which is what can be delivered by this mixed use commercial development. Notwithstanding the adoption of the NPPF, it is considered that there has been no material change in circumstances to suggest that this application is no longer compliant with this Development Plan policy.

The retail floorspace should not be occupied the unit the non-retail floorspace is substantially complete

5.49 This can be controlled through the inclusion of an appropriately worded condition attached to the planning permission.

Any retail floorspace should be used for the sale of non-food bulky goods in the following categories only: DIY Products, Hardware, Garden Products, Furniture, Carpets and Floor Coverings and Electrical Goods

5.50 The extant consent provides a series of controls and this is inclusive of the extent of floorspace to be used for retail purposes and the prohibition of the sale of convenience goods.

5.51 This assessment seeks to maintain this position, and models the impact consequences of its implementation in cumulative terms. In effect, this mirrors the approach undertaken by DPP in pursuance of the consent for the extension of the adjacent Tesco store which was approved by the Council following detailed review by their retained specialist advisor. If the cumulative impact position was acceptable in 2011 (in the light of the 2009 Peak Sub Region Study's evidence base and conclusions) then it must remain so given that there has been no update to the evidence base.

5.52 Whilst we would confirm that the range of retail goods to be sold could include other comparison goods, the submitted assessment has modelled these eventualities and concludes that there will be no significant adverse impact upon the identified centres. Notwithstanding the adoption of the NPPF, it is considered that there has been no material change in circumstances to suggest that this application is no longer compliant with this Development Plan policy.

Use should be limited to a single user, or limited number of users

5.53 Again, it is important to recognise that the Local Plan policy has been in place since 2005 and the scheme benefits from an approval in 2009. This being the case, the scheme was endorsed and approved by the Borough Council in the full understanding of this policy and the relationship of the application with it.

5.54 Furthermore, the cumulative impact assessment which underpins this Statement is in similar vein to the approach which was accepted by the Council in 2011 in respect of the Tesco extension. If it was acceptable then, with no tangible revisions to the evidence base or underlying circumstances, it must also be acceptable now.

5.55 Notwithstanding the adoption of the NPPF, it is considered that there has been no material change in circumstances to suggest that this application is no longer compliant with this Development Plan policy.

Policy TC4

5.56 This policy is concerned with the tests applicable to larger retail developments which cannot be located in existing town centres. The premise of this policy is a recognition

that in some circumstances a clear qualitative need can be shown but is incapable of being accommodated within a town centre location. For the purposes of this policy, a larger shop is defined as 500m^2 and is therefore applicable to this proposal.

5.57 The policy requires that a qualitative need case be presented, and that it be shown that the scheme could not be accommodated in a centre and would not undermine the vitality and viability of defined centres. In reality, these tests are analogous to the requirements within the NPPF in terms of sequential and impact so present no additional tests or impediment to planning approval.

5.58 This Statement has already demonstrated that there is a clear qualitative need case for enhanced non-food shopping choices to serve Whaley Bridge, and that there are no sequentially preferable opportunities to accommodate it. Furthermore, the applicant has undertaken a detailed cumulative impact assessment which highlights that there will be no significant adverse impacts upon any defined centre.

5.59 We therefore conclude that there is no policy conflict with Local Plan policy TC4.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The proposed development will help provide a wider range of non-food goods and services to an area that is fundamentally underserved. It is intended that the enhanced offer will give improved shopping choice to local people that should encourage them to stay local and reduce their propensity for undertaking long journeys to complete lower order non-food shopping transactions further afield.

6.2 The tests set out within both the NPPF and the Local Plan have been addressed in detail within Section 5. Whilst the NPPF encourages demand for retail floorspace to be met within the town centre, it does not place an embargo on out of centre development where there is a demand and where it can be demonstrated that there is no significant adverse impact.

6.3 In light of the settlement hierarchy and the identified catchment area our search has focused on Whaley Bridge and New Mills. We have identified one site on Wharf Road which has been ruled out on as being unsuitable due to considerable constraints on access and the size of the site. We have concluded that there are no sequentially preferable sites in or near to Whaley Bridge and New Mills, or elsewhere within the catchment area.

6.4 We have demonstrated that there would be more than sufficient expenditure within the catchment area both in terms of convenience and comparison goods expenditure to accommodate both the proposed Tesco extension and the proposed development which has of course been identified previously as a retail commitment.

6.5 There will be some minor impact on the centres of New Mills, Whaley Bridge and Chapel-en-le-Frith; however recent health checks undertaken indicate that these centres are healthy and vital and that even with the proposed Tesco extension and the proposed development they will still continue to trade as predominantly local retail destinations.

6.6 Overall, the development offers an opportunity to provide a greater range of non-food goods and services to a town which suffers from a terribly limited offer which unsurprisingly translates to excessive expenditure leakage. The proposed improvement in the offer will not arrest all expenditure leakage to higher order

centres, but will go some way to retaining more locally generated non-food shopping expenditure and reducing the need for unsustainable long journeys further afield.

6.7 As well as enhancing consumer choice the proposals will also create further jobs within the local area, including opportunities for local constructors to tender for construction work.

6.8 The proposal has also been designed to ensure that it is in keeping with the existing retail store and will not compromise the Council's ambition to provide bridge access to Bingswood Industrial Estate from land to the rear of the Tesco store. This land has been safeguarded as part of the proposals. Landscaping and pedestrian access will also be enhanced as part of the proposals.

6.9 In light of the above considerations, the development proposals offer significant benefits to the local area and are in accordance with the applicable requirements of the NPPF requiring that sequentially preferable sites be assessed and discounted and that there will be no significant adverse impacts arising from the development. Overall, we conclude that the proposal is in accordance with the NPPF and the Local Plan (specifically policies TC4 and TC14) and all other material considerations.

6.10 In accord with the advice of s38(6) of the Planning Act, we respectfully recommend that the application be approved.



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