KETTERING SITE SPECIFIC PART 2 LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION
HEARING STATEMENT - MATTER 9

EMPLOYMENT

On behalf of:
Weetabix

Date:
September 2020

Reference:
00120/LP Examination Matter 9
1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement is prepared on behalf of Weetabix in relation to Matter 9 – Employment and provides their response to the Questions 1, 2, 3 & 5 raised by the Inspector.

2.0 Response to the Inspector’s Question

Question 1: Is the approach to safeguarding employment land justified, effective and consistent with national policy and the JCS?

Question 2: Is Policy EMP1 in accordance with JCS Policy 22 which seeks to safeguard employment sites, unless a number of circumstances apply?

2.1 The two questions have been considered together. The Weetabix site at Station Road Industrial Estate is an important active employment site occupied by a major international business supporting many hundreds of jobs in the local area and businesses in the supply chain. The safeguarding of this important employment site is consistent with the aims of national policy and the JCS, supporting as it does the continued provision of employment at this important site.

2.2 Policy EMP1 is also considered to accord with JCS Policy 22 in respect of the Weetabix site. This is reflected in the Statement of Common Ground which has been agreed between Kettering Borough Council and Weetabix on policy EMP1.

Question 3: Is proposed MM1 justified and necessary in terms of soundness? What does it seek to achieve?

2.3 Consistent with national policy which supports the provision of policies flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated or to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances (NPPF, paragraph 81) MM1 is considered to be necessary.

2.4 It sets out the basis on which proposals to extend safeguarded employment areas, outside of settlement boundaries will be considered. This includes the preparation of a Development Briefs/Masterplans to inform proposals. As confirmed in the Statement of Common Ground agreed between Kettering Borough Council and Weetabix on policy EMP1 a draft Development Brief has been prepared for the Weetabix site including the expansion land to the north. The content of the Brief has been agreed as the basis for future consultation and would provide site specific guidance informing future development at the site.

2.5 The Statement of Common Ground and draft Development Brief provide evidence of Weetabix’s support for the changes to policy EMP1, provided by MM1.

2.6 Weetabix would wish to see the safeguarded employment area extended to the north and to take in both the safeguarded land (shown edged by a dotted red line) to the south and expansion land (shown shaded red) to the north, as shown in the plan below:
2.7 Nevertheless Weetabix acknowledge the changes introduced by the Council to policy EMP1, under MM1 and fully support the greater flexibility it offers important employers like Weetabix to make the case for the expansion of their operations. This is consistent with national policy and the onus it places on creating conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.