

# **West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan Examination**

## **Consideration of Policy ECON2 Protection of Key Employment Sites**

Arising in Matter 5



West Dorset District Council and  
Weymouth & Portland Borough Council

1. At the EIP session on Matter 4 – Economy Policy ECON1-10 on Wednesday 26 November, an objector raised a concern about the wording of policy ECON2 and how it related to the sites at Mount Pleasant in Weymouth. The main issues were:

(i) Much of the Mount Pleasant key employment site has been developed but there is a concern that policy ECON2 as currently drafted may not provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate alternative uses which may need to be considered given current viability concerns

(ii) The Inspector asked the councils and the objector to meet outside the hearings and discuss possible solutions

2. Following the hearing session, the Councils met with Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP), representing the objector. All parties agreed that there was an aspiration to see site being completed, being a gateway site for the town and, whilst the preference would be for completion of current permitted scheme (offices and employment), there is a recognition that draft policies allow for suitable facilitating development. It was therefore concluded that there was sufficient flexibility in the policy and supporting text as currently drafted and no changes were required.

3. In terms of bringing the site forward, discussions can continue with the relevant local authority officers through the usual a development management and planning policy arrangements. NLP will also explore submitting a bid for a low interest loan through the LEP Growing Places Fund (GPF) to support necessary infrastructure work. An early application for LEP loan funding could be approved by June/July 2015; this could then be built into a suitable viability assessment and thereby allowing a s106 agreement to be completed at the time of any planning permission.