

# **NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2019**

Title of report	<b>REVIEW OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES</b>
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Purpose of report	<p>To outline for members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) the purpose of undertaking an updated Review of Existing Employment Sites,</li> <li>ii) how and when it was undertaken; and</li> <li>iii) outline the key findings and overall conclusions.</li> </ul>
Council priorities	Business and Jobs
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	The cost of undertaking the Review of Existing Employment Sites was met from within existing budgets.
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	<p>The study has been undertaken by an experienced consultancy who have previous experience of working on similar studies elsewhere in Leicestershire and further afield.</p> <p>The previous Review of Existing Employment Sites was undertaken in 2010 and is therefore out of date. Not updating the study, which is a key element of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review, could potentially lead to the reviewed Local Plan being found unsound.</p>
Equalities Impact Screening	None specific in respect of this study, but an Equalities Impact Assessment of the Local Plan review will be undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal.
Human Rights	None discernible
Transformational Government	Not applicable

Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees	The Planning Policy Team have worked with the Business Focus team in drafting the new Study.
Background papers	<p>2010 Review of Existing Employment Sites –  <a href="https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/assessment_of_employment_sites_august_20101/Assessment%20of%20Employment%20Sites%20-%20August%202010.pdf">https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/assessment_of_employment_sites_august_20101/Assessment%20of%20Employment%20Sites%20-%20August%202010.pdf</a></p> <p>2019 Review of Existing Employment Sites –  <a href="https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/review_of_existing_employment_sites/Review%20of%20Employment%20Sites%20-%20Final%20Report%20January%202019.pdf">https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/review_of_existing_employment_sites/Review%20of%20Employment%20Sites%20-%20Final%20Report%20January%202019.pdf</a></p> <p>Adopted Local Plan -  <a href="https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/adopted_local_plan_2011_20312/Adopted%20Written%20Statement.pdf">https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/adopted_local_plan_2011_20312/Adopted%20Written%20Statement.pdf</a></p>
Recommendations	<b>THAT THE COMMITTEE NOTES THE FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES STUDY</b>

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The adopted Local Plan identifies 21 sites across the district as existing employment sites. These are predominantly areas currently occupied by B1/B2/B8 uses, and Policy Ec3 (Existing Employment Areas) seeks to protect these areas from non-B uses due to the important role they play in the economy of the district. The evidence that underpins these allocations is the 2010 Review of Existing Employment Sites. This assessed numerous existing employment areas in the district and concluded that the 21 identified in the Local Plan were worthy of retention.
- 1.2 The Local Plan also calculated, using information from the 2010 study and other evidence, that there was a potential loss of 10ha of existing employment land up to the end of the Plan period (2031).
- 1.3 It is important to have an up-to-date evidence base to support the Local Plan review. Therefore, an updated study of existing employment sites has been commissioned to:
  - 1) Update the 2010 assessment of existing employment sites, to see how many of the currently allocated sites are still of value to the local economy, both now and over the whole Local Plan review period (to 2036), and how many are therefore worthy of retention.

- 2) Using this new evidence, assess the estimated potential loss of existing employment land during the plan period to 2036. This will help us to identify our overall employment land need figure.
- 3) Consider whether there are any other existing employment sites, not currently identified in the Local Plan, which are worthy of protection through the Local Plan review due to the important role they play in supporting the local economy.

- 1.4 As a result of these issues, we commissioned BE Group, a consultancy specialising in commercial property issues and who have previously worked extensively across Leicestershire and beyond, to undertake a new Review of Existing Employment Sites. BE Group were appointed in September 2018 and undertook the work between September 2018 and January 2019. This included site visits to all of the included sites in September 2018, and consultation with a number of local landowners and agents.
- 1.5 It is important to note that the brief focussed exclusively on existing employment sites (or sites currently being developed). It did not look at the issue of overall need for new employment land or comprehensively seek to identify additional employment land to meet that identified need as this is the subject of separate work.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 The consultants were asked to assess 20 of the 21 sites identified in the adopted Local Plan. These are set out below:

- Ashby Business Park, Nottingham Road, Ashby
- Ivanhoe Business Park and Smisby Road Industrial Estate Ashby
- Flagstaff and Nottingham Road Industrial Estates Ashby
- Willow Farm, Trent Lane and East Midlands Distribution Centre
- (EMDC) Castle Donington
- Bardon Employment Area Bardon
- Hermitage Industrial Estate, Pegson's and Old Station Close Coalville
- Whitwick Business Park Coalville
- Owen Street Coalville
- Stephenson Industrial Estate Coalville
- Scotlands Industrial Estate Coalville
- Highfield Street Coalville
- Oaks Industrial Estate, Ravenstone Road, Coalville
- Pegasus Business Park East Midlands Airport
- Mountpark, Bardon (Amazon), Off Beveridge Lane Ellistown
- Former South Leicester Colliery/ South Leicester Industrial Estate Ellistown
- Computer Centre, Derby Road Kegworth
- Cotts Beverages, Derby Road (including possible extension) Kegworth
- Slack and Parr, Long Lane Kegworth
- Westminster Industrial Estate Measham
- Marquis Drive Moira
- TNT, Melbourne Road Lount

- 2.2 The 21<sup>st</sup> site, the former Workspace site in Highfield Street, Coalville, has already been cleared and is consented for residential development. It is therefore acknowledged that the use of this site for employment purposes has already been lost.

2.3 In addition to the employment sites identified under Policy Ec3 in the Local Plan, the consultants were also asked to assess four additional employment areas:

- East Midlands Airport Sites, including:
  - Royal Mail, Beverley Road
  - DHL
  - UPS, Herald Way (Under Construction)
- Pall Ex, Victoria Road Ellistown
- Segro Logistics Park (Roxhill)
- Aldi, Land at Sawley Crossroads Sawley

2.4 These sites, either existing or currently under construction, had been identified by officers as potentially playing an important role in the local economy during the Local Plan review period.

2.5 Each site was appraised and assessed through a combination of site visits, local intelligence, consultations with some owners, their agents and the views of those involved in the local property market. A standard proforma was completed for each site which included analysis of building age, nature of the site, availability, barriers to development and an estimation of likely lifespan of the site. Physical and market characteristics of each site have been graded using a standard scoring system, marking each site out of 40, using eight individual measures each scored out of five. These were:

- Road Access (Strategic and Primary Road network)
- Local Access (Other A class roads and B class roads)
- Parking and access to public transport
- Servicing and delivery vehicle access
- Proximity: Urban, Labour, Service (Prominence)
- Character and Constraints (Topography / Shape)
- Proximity to incompatible uses
- Market Attractiveness.

2.6 The full Review of Existing Employment Sites can be found here:

[https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/review\\_of\\_existing\\_employment\\_sites/Review%20of%20Employment%20Sites%20-%20Final%20Report%20January%202019.pdf](https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/review_of_existing_employment_sites/Review%20of%20Employment%20Sites%20-%20Final%20Report%20January%202019.pdf)

### 3.0 KEY FINDINGS

3.1 The study concluded that North West Leicestershire's stock of B-Class premises is mostly of good or moderate quality, with a high proportion of the premises developed over the last 20 years. Out of a possible score of 40, 17 of 24 sites (71 percent) scored 30 or more, with the highest scores achieved at East Midlands Airport and the new build Segro Logistics Park (Roxhill) - Big Box 1-10.

3.2 There were only four sites that scored 25 or less. These were:

- Scotlands Industrial Estate, Coalville (Score: 25) – Low scoring reflects the site's backland status in a residential area and constrained access between terraced shops/houses

- Owen Street, Coalville (Score: 24) – Low scoring reflects the site's backland status in a residential area and limited one-way access through the estate
- Former South Leicester Colliery/ South Leicester Industrial Estate (Score: 22) – Low scoring reflects the site's distance from services, low quality overall and some local access issues
- TNT, Melbourne Road (Score: 21) – The lowest scoring site overall. This reflects the fact that this is by far the most rural and isolated of North West Leicestershire's Employment Sites.

3.3 As part of the assessment of sites, BE Group recommended amending the boundaries to a number of the sites. This included:

- i. Ashby Business Park and Flagstaff and Nottingham Road Industrial Estates – Reduction in the boundaries to exclude areas currently in use for retail purposes (e.g. Tesco, Wickes/Pets at Home, Aldi units).
- ii. Ivanhoe Business Park and Smisby Road Industrial Estate – Extend existing boundary to include Bott vehicle storage land.
- iii. Whitwick Business Park/Slack and Parr – Minor amendments to boundary to take account of existing boundary not matching up with actual development on the ground (e.g. Whitwick Business Park boundary includes a small area of the adjoining retail park car park).
- iv. Westminster Industrial Estate – Extend area to include industrial units on Huntingdon Way, but also reduce existing boundary to exclude area of British Car Auction parking. Account will also need to be taken of the proposed route of HS2 running directly through the Huntingdon Court light industrial scheme part of the site.
- v. TNT Melbourne Road, Lount – In the adopted Plan, the site includes both the TNT site and the adjoining Pipeyard Works site to the south of the former railway. It is recommended to remove the Pipeyard Works site from the identified area due to it being a low value facility with constrained access for employment uses. (Note: Since this conclusion was made, an application has been approved for 6 residential dwellings and an office unit on the Pipeyard Works part of the site).

## 4.0 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

4.1 All sites, even those that scored 25 or less, are well occupied, with no large areas of void premises. They all still perform important roles in the local economy – for example Scotlands as a centre for the local motor trade, South Leicester Colliery as a location for budget and 'bad neighbour' uses. The study therefore concludes that all of the sites identified in the adopted Local Plan should be maintained in the review (subject to some boundary changes – see below), and that the additional sites assessed are also all worthy of identification in the review.

4.2 The only land in existing employment use that is recommended for removal from identification in the Local Plan is Pipeyard Works – a loss of just 0.63ha of existing employment land.

4.3 The study has also identified an additional 4.54ha of potential expansion land, which is land adjoining existing employment areas, that could potentially accommodate further employment in the future, and a further 38.58ha of 'infill' sites, which are sites within the land already identified for employment in the Local Plan, but which are currently undeveloped.

## **5.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 The findings from the Review of Existing Employment Sites will now be used to inform the drafting of policies in the Local Plan review. Specifically, it provides evidence on which employment sites should be identified and protected for employment uses. It also provides an estimation of how much employment land is expected to be lost over the plan period. We can therefore feed this into our calculations of how much additional employment land will be required up to 2036.