



REPORT TO: Cabinet Member Planning

DATE: 3 February 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Head of Planning
(Tracey Rathmell, Principal Planner)

DEPARTMENT Development Services

SUBJECT: **Harrogate Borough Employment Land Review**

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

FORWARD PLAN REF: N/A

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the Employment Land Review and approve the document for publication and selective consultation in line with the arrangements set out at section 5.0 (e) of the report.
- 1.2 The Economic Development Officer has been consulted throughout the preparation of the Employment Land Review and has made comments on the Draft Report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 To approve the Employment Land Review for publication and agree that it is the subject of consultation in line with the arrangements set out at section 5.0 (e) of the report.

3.0 RECOMMENDED REASON/S FOR DECISION/S

- 3.1 To provide a sound evidence base to inform the employment policies of the emerging Local Development Framework.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTION/S CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED FOR REJECTION

- 4.1 Not to report the findings to the Employment Land Review – Rejected. A sound evidence base is critical to both the preparation and testing the soundness of the LDF at examination.

5.0 THE REPORT

a) Background

5.1 Following a competitive tendering process held during May 2005 Drivers Jonas were appointed to undertake the Harrogate Employment Land Review.

5.2 In accordance with the Guidance Note on Employment Land Reviews (ODPM December 2004) the aims of the study were identified as:

- To review the existing supply of employment land in order to identify those sites that should be retained and those which could be made available to other uses should there be evidence that they cannot be used for employment purposes.
- With reference to the Regional Employment Land Survey to identify the future quantity of land required for employment use based on an assessment of the scale and nature of likely demand taking account of economic forecasts, past rates of take up and market conditions
- To identify, in broad terms, the location and type of sites that are needed to meet future employment land requirements

b) Report of the Employment Land Review

5.3 The contents of the Employment Land Review report is set out below:

- Chapters 1 & 2 : Set the context and provide an outline of the approach taken to the review and methodology
- Chapter 3 : Sets out the policy context by reviewing a range of strategies and policy documents at the national, regional and sub-regional level
- Chapter 4 : Provides an assessment of the existing employment land supply, focussing mainly on employment allocations and employment commitments supplemented by Valuation Office data and vacant premises information
- Chapter 5 : Provides a qualitative assessment of the existing employment land and premises including employment allocations
- Chapter 6 : Provides an overview of market trends and demands within each of the study sub areas
- Chapters 7 & 8 : Details the methodology in forecasting Harrogate Borough's employment land requirements up to 2021 and the principal outputs derived from the forecasting model.
- Chapter 9 : Reports the outcome of a telephone survey carried out of a sample of businesses operating within the District.
- Chapter 10 : Sets out a summary of the findings and recommendations.

An Executive Summary is attached as an appendix to this report.

c) Main Findings

Need for Additional Employment Land (up to 2021)

- 5.4 Overall, the employment land requirement for the sectors covered by the report is predicted to increase by just under 7 hectares in total. This total embraces a reduction in manufacturing land of 10 hectares with increases in offices and warehousing. When the net supply for Harrogate Borough as a whole is compared against this forecast requirement there is sufficient quantity of employment land but there is a mismatch in the distribution of supply and there are other qualitative issues which restrict availability.
- 5.5 In terms of the different employment sectors assessed as part of this study, the main conclusions can be summarised as:
- Forecast office requirements [use class B1(a)] are anticipated to increase by 8.6 hectares. Existing land supply in the Borough (exclusive of vacancies) exceeds this minimum land requirement by only about 2 hectares. Office land supply is mainly focussed in Harrogate and to a lesser extent, Knaresborough and Ripon.
 - Forecast industrial requirements [use classes B1(b), B1(c) and B2] are set to decline over the period to 2021 by approximately 10 hectares, due in part to increased competition from the Far East and Eastern Europe. Allied to the quantum of existing employment land supply, in basic quantitative terms there will be a large surplus of land for this sector across the Borough. It is important to note however that this level of decline is less than that forecast for the Region. Decline will also likely vary across the District, with large amounts of existing industrial floorspace located within less sustainable rural areas.
 - As with offices, forecast warehousing requirements (use class B8) are predicted to grow by 8.4 hectares. Potential supply currently exceeds this requirement, focussed mainly in Knaresborough and Ripon.
- 5.6 As noted above there is a mismatch between supply in terms of its distribution across the district. The report recommends that consideration be given to increasing currently available land supply in Harrogate town and future longer term supply in Boroughbridge through the LDF process to provide a more geographically balanced employment land portfolio relative to the scale of local populations and sub-markets.

Maintaining a Portfolio of Sites

- 5.7 The sites considered as part of the review have been classified according to their importance and function in the employment land hierarchy. The qualitative review of sites only includes those sites identified by the Council for inclusion in the Study.

Classification	Recommendation
Best Urban (BU)	Protect for employment use
Good Urban (GU)	Protect for employment use
Other Urban (OU)	Normally protect for employment use subject to revised policy E2
Other Local (OL)	May have potential for release subject to revised policy E2

- 5.8 The report recommends that those sites classified as Best Urban and Good Urban be retained as they are considered valuable employment sites/areas which should be protected against loss and the gradual erosion through the encroachment of alternative uses. The following sites fall into this category:

Site	Classification
Cardale Park, Harrogate	BU
St James Park, Knaresborough	BU
Melmerby Business Park	BU
Bar Lane (Becklands Close), Boroughbridge	GU
Bar Lane (Brickyard Road), Boroughbridge	GU
Boroughbridge Road, Ripon	GU
Harrogate Road, Ripon	GU
Fearby Road, Masham	GU

- 5.9 Sites identified as 'Other Urban' are of reasonable quality but which are likely to be of interest to local occupiers only. Their loss should generally be resisted except in exceptional circumstances. For instance, where the only way forward to stimulate employment development is likely to be through the mixed use of a site.
- 5.10 The report recommends that the following 'Other Urban' sites be considered in the Council's Local Development Framework for mixed use development including employment use should they become available for redevelopment:-

- Poplars Trading Estate, Boroughbridge
- Riverside Sawmills, Boroughbridge
- Dunlopillo, Pannal
- Hutton Bank, Ripon

For any mixed use development it will be important for proposals to demonstrate that any non-employment elements are (the minimum) necessary in viability terms.

5.11 The following 'Other Urban' sites should be retained for full employment use. These are:-

- Rossett Drive Industrial Estate, Harrogate
- Former Timber Yard, Stockwell Road, Knaresborough

Land to the rear of Poplars Trading Estate, Boroughbridge, also defined as an 'Other Urban' site is specifically recommended for allocation as a future longer term employment opportunity.

5.12 Sites classed as 'Other Local' generally perform poorly under the qualitative assessment, but tend to provide an important supply of lower grade employment land for the cheaper end of the market. The users on these sites are often difficult to relocate – rentals are prohibitive elsewhere and/or amenity considerations make this difficult. Therefore, apart from those sites recommended below for potential alternative or mixed uses, these sites should be protected from non-employment uses in the Local Development Framework.

5.13 'Other Local' sites recommended in the report for consideration in the Local Development Framework for alternative/mixed uses are:

- Former Cattle Market (and adjoining uses), Knaresborough
- Former Gas Holder Station, Stonebridgegate, Ripon
- Rear of Auction Mart, Masham

5.14 'Other Local' sites are recommended for protection under a revised employment land protection policy. These are:

- Land at Milby, Boroughbridge
- Grove Park Centre, Harrogate
- Harrogate Glass, Back Valley Drive, Harrogate
- Starbeck Highways Depot, Harrogate
- Castleforge and Cheapside, Knaresborough
- Ash Grove Industrial Estate, Ripon
- City Motors, Bondgate Green, Ripon
- Tower Garage, Palace Road, Ripon
- Jamesons Warehouse and office, Masham
- Highways Depot, Pateley Bridge
- Coal Yard, Pateley Bridge

d) Implications for the LDF

5.15 Recommendations made in the Employment Land Review in respect of individual sites will need to be considered as part of the preparation of the Major Allocations Development Plan Document. However, the overall strategic direction for employment land will need to be addressed in the Core Strategy.

- 5.16 In light of the findings and recommendations in the Employment Land Review the following options emerge for consideration of the overall strategic direction for employment land:

Existing Employment Land

JB1a: Continue with the current policy of protecting all employment sites

JB1b: Protect the best performing employment sites against loss whilst allowing the loss of poorly performing/located sites to other uses

New Employment Land

JB2a: To promote additional Greenfield land for employment use within Harrogate and Boroughbridge

JB2b: Do not promote additional Greenfield land for employment use within Harrogate and Boroughbridge

e) Consultation

- 5.17 Following publication of the report, a targeted consultation exercise will be carried out. Agents and developers will be notified of the publication of the Employment Land Review and invited to attend a meeting with Council Officers on 15 February 2006 to discuss the report. Following this meeting formal written comments will be invited, to be submitted to the Council by 6 March 2006. The report will also be placed on the Council's website.

6.0 CONCLUSION/S

- 6.1 The Employment Land Review provides an important element of the Council's evidence base for developing the Local Development Framework and in testing its soundness

Background Papers

Harrogate Borough Employment Land Review

OFFICER CONTACT: Please contact Tracey Rathmell if you require any further information on the contents of this report. The officer can be contacted at the Department of Development Services, Knapping Mount, West Grove Road, Harrogate, HG1 2AE by telephone on 01423 556588 or by Email Tracey.Rathmell@harrogate.gov.uk

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT/POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

		Implications are		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
A	Economy	✓		
B	Environment	✓		
C	Social Equity	✓		
i)	General			
ii)	Customer Care / People with Disabilities			
iii)	Health Implications	✓		
D	Crime and Disorder Implications		✓	

If all comments lie within the shaded areas, the proposal is sustainable.