

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12th July 2017



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| Third Evidence Gathering Session for the Scrutiny Review into Employment Sites and Premises | | Agenda No: 7 |
| The Publication Draft Local Plan Employment Land Supply | | |
| Portfolio Corporate Outcome: | Economic Development A sustainable environment and a great place to live, work and play A well connected and growing district with high quality homes and infrastructure A prosperous district that attracts business growth and provides high quality employment opportunities A high performing organisation that delivers excellent and value for money services Delivering better outcomes for residents and businesses and reducing costs to taxpayers | |
| Report presented by: Report prepared by: | Gary Sung, Senior Policy Officer Gary Sung, Senior Policy Officer | |
| Background Papers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) • National Planning Practise Guidance (NPPG) • Employment Land Needs Assessment 2015 • Local Plan Sub Committee Agenda and Minutes for 12th July 2016 • Braintree District Publication Draft Local Plan June 2017 | | Public Report Key Decision: No |
| Executive Summary: | | |
| <p>To ensure that the supply of new employment land meets projected need, the Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA) made seven recommendations for the Local Plan. The majority of recommendations were adopted in the Local Plan, resulting in the provision of 51.1ha of new employment land allocations plus the major business parks at the Garden Communities. The special employment area for emergency services at Kelvedon Park is also excluded. The amount of employment land will be monitored over the life of the Local Plan to maintain an overall provision and ensure that sufficient land is available for economic growth.</p> | | |

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| Recommended Decision: There is no decision before the Committee. |
| Purpose of Decision: Not applicable. |

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| Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail. | |
| Financial: | None arising from this report |
| Legal: | None arising from this report |
| Safeguarding: | None arising from this report |
| Equalities/Diversity: | None arising from this report |
| Customer Impact: | None arising from this report |
| Environment and Climate Change: | None arising from this report |
| Consultation/Community Engagement: | Recommendations from this committee will be considered by Cabinet. |
| Risks: | None arising from this report |
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will recall receiving a presentation on the Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA) and the SQW Ltd report into grow-on space in Essex at the O&SC meeting on 12th December 2016.
- 1.2 The ELNA is technical assessment commissioned from employment land specialists at AECOM. It reviewed the quantity and quality of designated employment land within the district, as at August 2015. One of the key points from the report is an demand assessment which concluded that a net additional requirement of 53,400 – 66,800 sqm of B1 office and between 7.5 – 11 hectares of other B Class industrial land in the period up to 2033. This is converted into an overall employment land requirement of 49.6ha as detailed in the tables within this report.
- 1.3 Policy LPP2 of the Publication Draft Local Plan provides for 31.5ha of industrial land and 19.5ha of office land. This will be met through rolling forward existing allocations and by allocating new Employment Policy Areas for development (mixed use B1, B2 and B8), as well as protecting the best clusters of existing employment land through more restrictive planning policies. A total of 51.1ha of Employment Policy Area is allocated through LPP2, plus major business parks on each of the cross border Garden Communities – the final amount will be determined through Strategic Growth DPDs.
- 1.4 This report will set out the evidence used to calculate the forecast need for employment land and then the Local Plan policies and allocations that were put in place to support the Council's economic ambitions and meet need for employment land.

2 Employment Land Needs Assessment

- 2.1 There are seven recommendations in the ELNA for the management of employment land which were taken into account during the production of the policies and allocations in Local Plan. These recommendations were formulated with the aim of building on the district's economic strengths by agglomerating businesses at the most successful and connected employment clusters. Each recommendation, as reprinted in Appendix 1 of this report, is accompanied with a justification on pages 85 – 94 of the ELNA.
- 2.2 The majority of recommendations were adopted although some of the findings were taken into account but not translated directly in the Local Plan.

Nevertheless the passage of time has resulted in the loss of additional employment land which was accounted for by allocating new employment land.

- 2.3 Recommendation 1 and 2 of the ELNA sets out the existing business clusters and extant planning allocations for sites at within Town Centres, Gershwin Park, Great Notley and Panfield lane, and recommends their retention, particularly as these locations are capable of support small size office units. These recommendations were accepted aside from the cluster at Halstead as detailed below.
- 2.4 Recommendation 3 was for the re-designation of Halstead Town centre employment cluster to a mixed use cluster. This recommendation was accepted although developments at Halstead Town centre has resulted in significant reductions in employment land provision from 4ha to 1ha. Policy LPP26 Comprehensive Redevelopment Area – Factory Lane West / Kings Road, Halstead will promote a mixed use redevelopment of some of the lost employment land and supports B1, B8, retail and residential uses (not on ground floor) at this site. Much of this cluster is affected by flood zone 2 and a negligible capacity of 0.4ha of B1 is assumed.
- 2.5 Six key existing employment clusters are proposed to be retained in recommendation 4. These locations are listed under Appendix 1 and were accepted and incorporated into policy LPP2 of the Local Plan.
- 2.6 A number of call-for-sites options were presented as having good strategic characteristics and potential for industrial use. The ELNA states that the Council should promote and encourage incremental growth of B8 or promote a shortlist to focus development geographically. Of these locations, extensions to Eastways, Panfield Lane and Bluebridge industrial estate were incorporated into the Local Plan as allocations. Sites at Gosfield Airfield and Earls Colne Airfield were partly taken forward as allocations.
- 2.7 Sites submitted during the Draft Local Plan consultation in June 2016, land at Four Elm Mills, Bardfield Sailing, infill at Blue Bridge Industrial Estate, Halstead and land to the west of Eastlink120 were also rejected as allocations. Details are within the minutes and agenda for Local Plan Sub-Committee for 16th May 2017.
- 2.8 The economic development aims of the council warrants the provision of high quality employment site and business premises in sustainable and accessible

locations. This means that some unsuitable premises and employment land will need to be replaced with new employment land at more accessible and suitable locations. Therefore the ELNA recommends deallocation of poor quality employment land in rural areas and some loss of older employment land in rural and urban areas. All of the de-designations in recommendation 6 were adopted with the exception of Kelvedon Railway station which is retained as an employment policy area. Further redevelopment plans could be considered in the Kelvedon Neighbourhood Plan. Only part of the employment land at Hunnable industrial estate at Great Yeldham was de-designated, 2.8ha was retained.

- 2.9 Recommendation 7 of the ELNA relates to monitoring to ensure that an overall approximate quantum of employment land supply is retained in the district. Table 4-1 of the ELNA states that there was 312.4ha of designated and non-designated B1, B2 & B8 employment land in the district. An exercise was undertaken in May 2017 to update the employment land situation for the Local Plan Sub-committee. Since the publication of the ELNA, a site measuring 3.5ha at the Carrier site (15/01366/OUT) in Braintree Town Centre was taken out of the Employment Policy Area. A reassessment of Skyline 120 and the deallocation of Arla Dairy in Hatfield Peverel reduces the net amount of Employment Policy Area by a further 5.4ha. These two losses are in addition to the recommended de-designations of underperforming sites within recommendation 6.

3 Employment Land Calculations

- 3.1 The following tables show how the employment land requirements were calculated based on the recommendation within the ELNA for the Local Plan.
- 3.2 For offices, a forecast need of 19.5ha is calculated using the mid-point of a plot ratio because of the potential for significant variations in building height between one and four stories. Footnote 84 of the ELNA (under Table 6-1) states that the office employment land need is between 13.4ha and 26.7ha.
- 3.3 For industrial employment land, 14ha plus 6.9ha (total 20.9ha) was of losses/de-designations was monitored. This will need to be replaced to ensure that sufficient land is available for new businesses to be accommodated.
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Employment Land for Offices (B1) Calculations

| | Area (Sqm/ha) |
|--|------------------|
| ELNA forecast requirements (mid point of range 53,400 to 66,800 sqm) (ELNA, 2015. Table 6-1) | 60,100 |
| Convert to Employment Land (plot ratio 1:0.25 to 1:0.4 - mid-point 1:0.325 used) | 195325 |
| Net new employment land forecast requirement for offices | 19.5325 |

Employment Land for Industrial Land (B2/B8) Calculations

| | Area (ha) |
|---|--------------|
| ELNA recommended de-designations of non-performing/less suitable employment land (ELNA, 2015. R6) | -14 |
| ELNA forecast requirements for industrial land use (mid-point of range) | 9.2 |
| Redevelopment and de-designation since ELNA publication (August 2015) | -6.9 |
| Net new employment land need | 30.1 |

4 Employment Land Supply

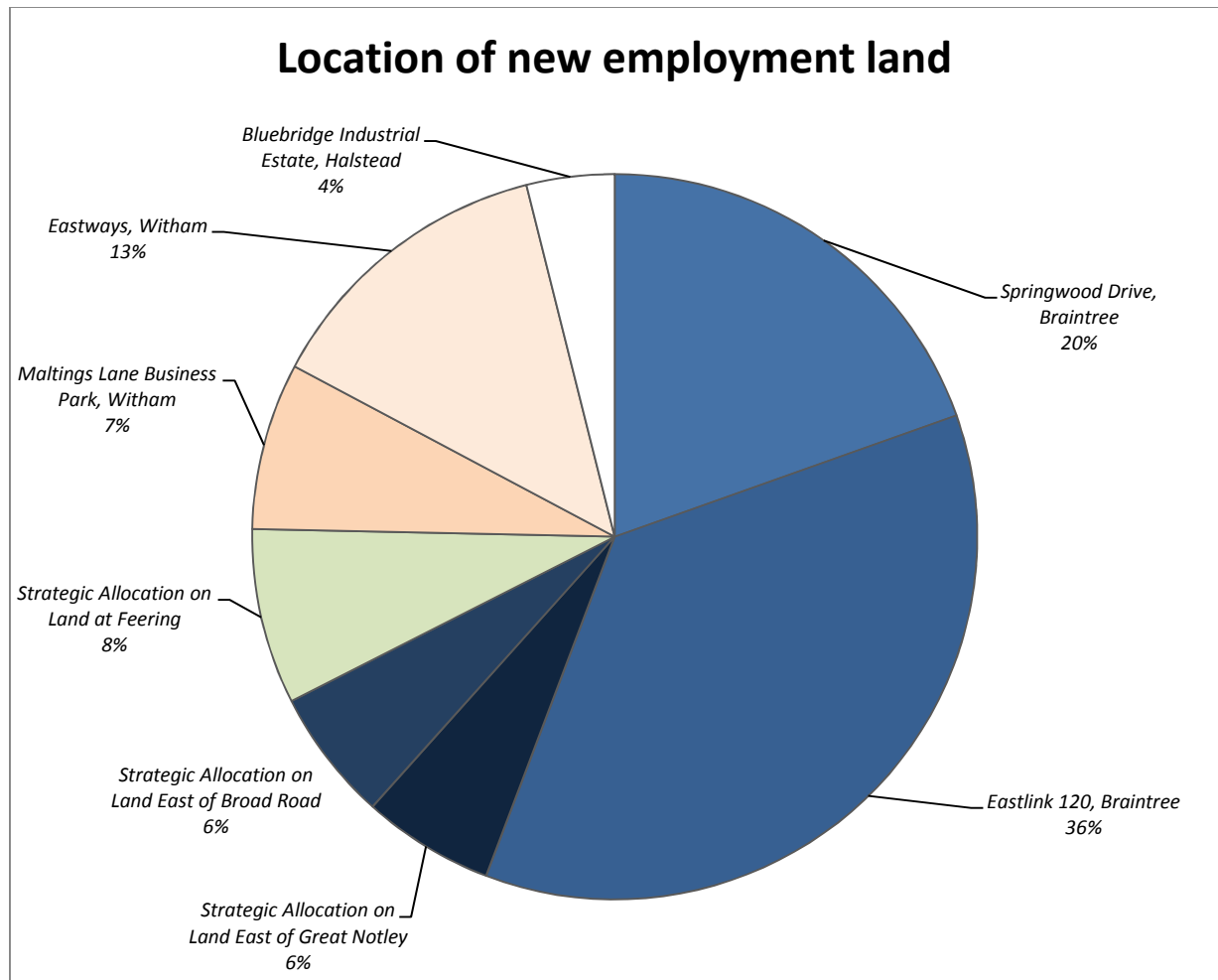
- 4.1 To meet the need for 49.6ha of office and industrial employment land calculated, the Local Plan allocates 51.1ha of new employment land at the following locations as per policy LPP2 Location of Employment Land below. This includes a degree of frictional vacant land for choice and competition.

| Ref | Site Name | Proposed Uses | Area (ha) |
|-----|---|------------------------------|-----------|
| a) | Extension to Springwood Drive industrial area | 10ha employment policy area. | 10 |

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|--|--|---|-------------|
| b) | Land to the west of the A131 at Great Notley 'Eastlink 120' | 18.5ha Innovation and Enterprise Business Park for uses in the B1, B2, B8. Part of the site may be developed for a hotel (C1 use). B8 uses should be restricted to no more than 40% of the total floor area and no single unit should be larger than 7,500sq m. | 18.5 |
| c) | Extension to Eastways Industrial Estate, Witham, in Rivenhall Parish | Employment policy area. | 6.8 |
| d) | Extension to Bluebridge Industrial Estate, | Employment policy area. | <u>2</u> |
| e) | Land East of Great Notley | Up to 3ha employment policy area. To be determined through Masterplan Framework. | 3 |
| f) | Land East of Broad Road | Up to 3ha employment policy area. To be determined through Masterplan Framework. | 3 |
| g) | Land at Feering | Up to 4ha employment policy area. To be determined through Masterplan Framework. | 4 |
| h) | Maltings Lane Business Park (Gershwin Park) | Retained allocation for business uses. | 3.8 |
| Major Business Park on the West Braintree Garden Community | | To be determined through Masterplan Framework | |
| Major Business Park on the Marks Tey Garden | | To be determined through Masterplan Framework | |
| Total identified new employment land allocations for B1, B2 and B8: | | | 51.1 |

4.2 The Employment Policy Area above are mixed use B1/B2/B8 employment land. If they are split between B1 office land and B2/B8 industrial land on a 40/60 ratio, there will be 18.8ha for offices and 32.1ha for Industrial land.

- 4.3 Any slight mismatch between requirements and supply can be accommodated by increasing the office density or varying the split on Employment Policy Areas. In addition the Local Plan policies for Employment Land are not reliant on provision at either of the Garden Communities. A special employment area at Kelvedon Park is allocated for a potential extension of up to 3.3ha to the Essex Fire & Rescue Service HQ. The Local Plan policy, LPP4, restricts development specifically to the requirements of the emergency services only and is therefore not mixed with general Employment Policy Areas.
- 4.4 The spatial distribution of new employment land is in accordance with the spatial strategy of concentrating development along the A12, A120 and railway lines. Locations in and around Braintree will account for 68% of employment land which will agglomerate well with existing sites at Skyline, Panfield Land and Braintree Town. Expansions to established industrial estates at Witham and Halstead make up a quarter of employment land allocations. The remainder is a small allocation at Feering which builds upon the success of Threshelfords.
- 4.5 The majority of new sites will have good, direct access to the strategic highway network, often just minutes away from either the A12 or A120. A broad alignment between homes and employment is established in the Local Plan with good potential to enhance public transport access to the majority of these sites.



- 4.6 A focus on these sites, which are in attractive, sustainable locations with flexible planning policies could build on the key economic sectors such as:
- Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering
 - Construction
 - Digital, Cultural and Creative
 - Health and Care
 - Transport and Logistics
- 4.7 The amount of employment land, accounting for losses and gains, will be monitored over the plan period to ensure that the overall amount of employment land is maintained. Where a shortfall or overprovision arises this could be addressed through a Local Plan review, by permitting applications for additional land or the Strategic Growth DPD for Garden Communities.

Appendix 1: ELNA Recommendations

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions our recommendations are set out below:

R1 The demand assessment estimates that, under the medium demand scenario, there will be a net additional requirement for 60,000sqm of B1 floorspace in the District of Braintree over the Local Plan period to 2033. In order to meet this demand requirement, the Council should support the provision and retention of existing B1a/b use classes across the District and, in addition, promote the provision of new B1a/b use class employment land and premises at suitable locations.

These locations are:

- In the town centres of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, where development opportunities arise and in particular at C10 in Halstead town centre south on land which is vacant or with derelict buildings (though office provision at C10 could come forward as part of a mixed use scheme)
- C34, Maltings Lane (Gershwin Park), which is currently being promoted for B1a/b use classes
- C31, land to the west of the A131 at Great Notley (Eastlink 120); and
- C30, land to the north west off Panfield Lane.

The provision of new office space should complement existing provision and help to support and encourage a range of businesses to grow and invest in Braintree District from start-up, micro, small to medium sizes businesses, and large businesses too, should interest be received.

In particular there is an opportunity to promote small size office units to accommodate the needs of small sized businesses. This should be affordable flexible business space located in accessible locations with proximity to amenities such as town centres, where there is capacity for new office provision, and/or as part of mixed-use schemes such as C34, Gershwin Park; C31, land to the west of A131 at Great Notley; and C30, land to the north west off Panfield Lane.

We are aware of a planning application to construct an enterprise centre at Land Adjacent to Lodge Farm in Witham (to be called Witham Enterprise Centre). Were this application to be granted, Witham Enterprise Centre 60 would meet part of the additional floorspace requirement for small business flexible office space.

R2 To support the provision of office space at C34, Malting Lane Business Park (Gershwin Park), as set out in R1 above, the Council should continue to designate land as a Business Uses area and promote 3.8ha of the cluster for office provision.

R3 The Council should consider re-designating C10, Halstead Town Centre South as a mixed-use cluster. Proposals for redevelopment should be either compatible with the operations of existing industrial businesses or ensure that the 2.2ha of land which

currently supports B-use class business activities is re-provided on site or elsewhere in the District. The mixed uses designation should allow redevelopment for industrial, office, retail, leisure and residential uses.

R4 To support the requirement for a net additional 9.2ha (medium scenario) of land for industrial uses over the plan period to 2033, the Council should support development of clusters which are currently functioning well as employment locations which have vacant land, land with derelict buildings or have underutilised land and premises. These locations are:

- C9, Broton Drive Industrial Area, Halstead
- C13, Riverside Business Park, Earls Colne
- C15, Springwood Industrial Estate
- C18, Skyline 1202
- C19d, Braintree Town Centre; and
- C26, Eastways, Witham Industrial Estate.

In addition, to ensure occupiers have a range of locations to choose from the Council should promote and encourage development at new sites which display good strategic characteristics and potential for industrial use. These new sites could include:

- Call for sites RIVE362 and RIVE363 adjacent to C26 (Eastways, Witham Industrial Estate)
- Call for sites GOSF249, adjacent to C8 (Gosfield Airfield)
- Call for sites BOCS138 and 141 adjacent to and overlapping with C15 (Springwood Industrial Estate), and PANF136 adjacent to C30 (Land to the North West off Panfield Lane)
- Call for sites COLE188, HASA288 or GGHR282 which are adjacent to C11 (Bluebridge Industrial Estate); and
- Call for sites EARC226 which is adjacent to C14 (Earls Colne Airfield).

There is also an opportunity to promote flexible and small size workspace units to accommodate the needs of business start-up and small size businesses. Affordable and flexible business space should be promoted as part of sites, where there is capacity, and as part of mixed-use schemes.

R5 To support the net additional growth of industrial space as set out in R4 above, the Council could consider designating a proportion of the following Call for Sites for industrial B1c/2 and B8 use class activities:

- Call for sites RIVE362 and RIVE363 adjacent to C26 (Eastways, Witham Industrial Estate)
- Call for sites GOSF249, adjacent to C8 (Gosfield Airfield)
- Call for sites BOCS138 and 141 adjacent to and overlapping with C15 (Springwood Industrial Estate), and PANF136 adjacent to C30 (Land to the North West off Panfield Lane)
- Call for sites COLE188, HASA288 or GGHR282 which are adjacent to C11 (Bluebridge Industrial Estate); and
- Call for sites EARC226 which is adjacent to C14 (Earls Colne Airfield).

R6 A number of clusters are not performing well or are judged to be less suitable for use as industrial locations. The Council could de-designate the following Employment Land Areas:

- C2, Slate Hall Farm, Helions Bumpstead
- C4, Greenfields Creation, Ridgewell
- C5, Hunnable Industrial Estate, Great Yeldham
- C6, Former Tanner's Dairy, Oxford Lane, Sible Hedingham
- C16, Broomhills Industrial Estate
- C17, Bovington Road, Bocking Churchstreet; and
- C24, Kelvedon Railway Station.

R7 Monitoring: The Council should monitor changes of employment land through planning permissions to ensure that sufficient land is available for economic growth over the planned period, 2015 to 2033.