

Matter 5 – Spatial Strategy – Employment Provision

March 2018

Local Plan Examination Matter Statement



*Oadby and Wigston
Borough Council*

Issue 1: Whether the Spatial Strategy for employment provision the most appropriate having regard to all reasonable alternatives and the evidence base.

Q1. Is the overall employment land requirement of 5 hectares (1 ha of Class B1a/b use and 4 ha small scale Class B8) justified having regard to the HEDNA?

Council response;

1. Yes. Similar to the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing, the OAN for employment use land is the starting point from which the Council's Plan period requirement stems. The Council's OAN for employment use land is fully evidenced by the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA). In addition, as part of its further evidence base, the Council commissioned an Employment Land and Premises Study (2017), which sought to look in more detail at the demand / need for employment uses within the Borough area.

2. The justifications for undertaking this independent exercise were:

- *To gain a greater understanding of local market conditions* – The 2017 Study directly engaged with local property market stakeholders (developers and their agents), reviewed secondary market data and consulted with local businesses. Through this work, strong local growth aspirations for industrial and warehouse accommodation were identified, combined with reasonable prospects for investment from other areas of the Leicester Principal Urban Area.
- *To directly assess deliverability of local sites* – Reflecting NPPF Guidance, the delivery prospects of the local land supply was reviewed through engagement with both landowners and potential occupiers, as well as a broader market assessment
- *To compliment the sub-regional approach of forecasting in HEDNA with a local analysis* – The Study allowed greater inclusion of local specific issues in forecasting than is possible in the broader HEDNA.

3. Reflecting Planning Practice Guidance '*Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments*', two recognised forecast methods were used in the 2017 Study:

- A forward projection of historic land take up trends and Labour demand

- Jobs growth, as identified in Oxford Economics (2016) forecast modelling, the same forecasting that was used in the HEDNA Study.

4. Of these two approaches, historic take up was felt to better reflect past growth patterns, while ensuring sufficient land was provided to meet the growth aspirations identified in the market assessment, than the Labour Demand model. This take up model identifies an employment land requirement of 8.25 ha (including 5-year buffer) for the period of 2011 to 2031. This is increased on the HEDNA requirement of 5 ha over the same period but, as noted, reflects a more intensive assessment of Borough specific needs.

5. Against the identified OAN of 8.25 ha over 2011-2031, the Local Plan makes provision for a new additional supply of B-Class employment land of 8.52 ha, comprising the following sites:

- 5 ha of B1, B2 and / or B8 use land at the Wigston Direction for Growth Area (includes 2.5 ha with extant outline planning permission)
- 0.55 ha of B1, B2 and / or B8 use land at land at Magna Road, South Wigston
- 2.67 ha of B1, B2 and / or B8 use land at Oadby Sewage Works
- 9,800 sqm of new office / commercial floorspace (0.30 ha) within the town centre of Wigston and the district centre of Oadby.

6. All these options were assessed and identified as deliverable over 2011-2031 in the Oadby and Wigston Employment Land and Premises Study (2017). The proposals maximise use of the modest supply of brownfield expansion options which exist within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston's identified B1/B2/B8 Employment Areas, and the town/district centres, before looking to the greenfield land in the Wigston Direction for Growth Area.

7. In addition, these proposed allocations:

- Provide flexibility in supply, to meet a diverse range of needs
- Respond to identified market demand including the requirements of both local firms and potential inward investors
- Provide options which could be brought forward in the short term, to meet more urgent needs, along with longer term options, likely to be delivered more gradually over the Local Plan Period (i.e. the Wigston Direction for Growth Area)

- Allow for employment growth in the town/district centres, of a scale appropriate to those centres, reflecting existing adopted policy – The Oadby and Wigston Centre Area Action Plans.

645 words not including the title