



Employment Land Availability Assessment

2017 – 2023

Foreword

The Employment Land Availability Assessment (ELA) is a monitoring document reporting on sites that have been built out, those which are allocated through the Local Plan and/or have planning permission for employment use. This assessment reports on completions, commitments and losses of employment land in the Borough.

The previous edition of the Council's ELA was published in 2017 and reported on the 2016/2017 financial year. This latest edition addresses the gap in publishing of monitoring data and therefore reports on the period between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2023. Going forward, the ELA will be updated annually alongside the Council's other monitoring documents.

There have been many changes since the last ELA published in 2017, including changes to the Use Class Order in 2020, how the Council defines 'qualifying sites' from 2019 and the Council's adoption of a new Local Plan in April 2019. Where relevant, these changes have been explained in the report. The format of this year's Employment Land Availability Assessment has been amended from previous year's versions to reflect these changes. The content of some of the tables and figures have therefore been updated from previous reports.

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Contacts

Planning Policy Team

Tel. 0116 288 8961

planningpolicy@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) sets out the Government’s planning policies that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) implement to drive economic development and enable conditions where businesses can adapt, invest and expand. The framework states that Local Plans are the key to delivering sustainable development, and it is these Local Plans that contain local planning policies, site allocations and guidance. The monitoring and reporting of employment land will inform the next Local Plan.

- 1.2. Effective and consistent monitoring is needed to robustly take account of all residential, employment and strategic development in the local area. The Council has produced this ‘Employment Land Availability Assessment’ report along with other monitoring reports:
 - an annual ‘Residential Land Availability Assessment’ report;
 - an annual ‘Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment’;
 - an annual ‘Housing Implementation Strategy’; and
 - an ‘Authority Monitoring Report’

- 1.3. The outcome of this monitoring work is used to inform subsequent reviews of planning policy documents going forward.

- 1.4. This Employment Land Availability Assessment reports on employment completions, commitments and losses for the period of 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2023. Primarily, it is intended to assess the supply of identified employment land within the Borough, against the objectives, policies and proposals of:
 - National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
 - National Planning Practice Guidance
 - Local Plan 2011 – 2031, adopted 2019 (The Plan has replaced the Council’s previous Saved Local Plan, Town Centres Area Action Plan and Core Strategy)
 - Identified Employment Land Supplementary Planning Document (2020)
 - Employment Land and Premises Study (2017)

- 1.5. In previous ELA monitoring processes, there has been a minimum site threshold for the monitoring of employment developments of 0.1 hectares and above within the Borough’s eight Identified Employment Areas. These were subsequently referred to as ‘qualifying sites’. Employment completions within the Town Centre boundaries of Oadby and Wigston centres were also recorded. Losses above 0.1 hectares outside the Identified Employment Area boundaries were recorded. This method of monitoring was used up to the 31st March 2019.

1.6. As of the 1st April 2019, in line with the adoption of the new Local Plan, the minimum threshold requirement was removed and all employment development is now monitored. All increases and decreases are now recorded in square metres rather than hectares. For consistency, this report uses square metres as the measurement throughout.

2. Changes to the Use Class Order

2.1 Since the last ELA monitoring report, there have been changes to the Use Classes in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 (as amended), which initially came into force on 1 September 2020.

2.2 Table 1 below shows the change between use classes, along with their definitions.

Table 1. Changes to the Use Class Order

Definition	Past use class	New Use Class	Definition
Office	B1a	E (g)	i) office ii) the research and development of products or processes or iii) any industrial process (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area)
The research and development of products or processes	B1b		
For any industrial process (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area)	B1c		
General industrial	B2	B2	General industrial
Storage and distribution	B8	B8	Storage and distribution

2.3 For the purpose of cohesion, and due to the new use classes covering the same definitions as the previous, the new use classes are used in this report.

3. Requirements for Employment Land

3.1 The Council's adopted Local Plan 2011-2031 provides a Vision and Spatial Strategy for the Borough's delivery of employment land. The Plan's Spatial Strategy is informed by the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN), a report evidenced by both the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA 2017) and the Employment Land and Premises Study (2017).

3.2 The Employment Land and Premises Study (2017) took account of the state and quality of the Borough's existing employment use land stock. The study identified an Employment use land requirement of 82,500 square metres (including 5-year buffer) for the period of the Plan's adoption in 2019, to 2031.

Table 2. Total square metres of employment land identified in the Council's Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) by Use Class for 2019-2031.

	E(g) i/ii	E(g) iii) / B2	B8	Total
Total	7,400	72,400	2,700	82,500

3.3 Although the Borough is a densely built-up urban area, viable and sustainable opportunities have been identified to deliver the identified employment land requirements. The Spatial Strategy makes the following provision for new employment land:

- 50,000 square metres of Eg), B2 and / or B8 use land at the Wigston Direction for Growth Allocation
- 5,500 square metres of Eg), B2 and / or B8 use land at land at Magna Road, South Wigston
- 5,500 square metres of Eg), B2 and / or B8 use at the land adjacent to Magna Road which is now an Identified Employment Area in South Wigston.
- 26,700 square metres of Eg), B2 and / or B8 use land at Oadby Sewage Works
- 9,800 sqm of new office / commercial floorspace within the town centre of Wigston and the district centre of Oadby

4. Employment Land Supply

- 4.1** The needs of Employment use land identified is for the period 2019 to 2031. This ELA reports on the monitoring period 2017-2023. The following section on employment land supply in the Borough therefore reports on the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2019 and then 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2023 separately. This is due to the changes in how employment land is monitored.

Employment Land Completions 2017-2019

- 4.2** Table 3 below illustrates net completions in the Borough for 2017-2019 (using the 0.1 hectare threshold) by Use Class and shows a significant loss of B8 Use Class. This loss was due to the change of use at the Former Premier Drum site, Blaby Road, South Wigston, to retail use where Lidl and Wickes now operate. Although this illustrates a loss, the previous employment use had been redundant for a number of years, and therefore the repurposing of the site is seen as a vast improvement.

Table 3. Net completions in the Borough for 2017-2019

	E(g) i/ii)	E(g) iii) / B2	B8	Mixed Employment Use*	Total
Wigston	416	0	363	595	1,374
Oadby	0	0	0	0	0
South Wigston	-262	-835	-9,135	0	-10,232
					0
Total (sqm)	154	-835	-8,772	595	-8,858

*Mixed Employment Use is a combination of two or more of the use classes E(g), B2 or B8 outlined in applications for a loss or gain of employment land.

- 4.3** All completions in the 2017-2019 monitoring period were on previously developed land.

Employment Land Completions 2019-2023

4.4 Table 4 illustrates completions and losses in the Borough for 2019-2023 (no threshold) by Use Class.

Table 4. Net completions in the Borough for 2019-2023

Sites in the settlement of Wigston	Application number	E(g) i/ii)	E(g) iii) / B2	B8	Mixed Employment Use	Total
3 Chartwell Drive	17/00222/FUL			513		
33A Central Avenue	19/00287/P3JPA	-112				
1 Victoria Street	19/00397/FUL		-17.6			
86 Pullman Road	20/00296/FUL		50			
120 Bull Head Street	20/00331/COU	-95.9				
119 Gloucester Crescent	20/00507/FUL			7		
118 Bull Head Street	20/00545/COU	-78.4				
5 Leicester Road	20/00560/FUL				-141	
262 Aylestone Lane	21/00129/COU		-896			
31 - 33 Long Street	21/00217/P3JPA	-290.72				
119 Gloucester Crescent	21/00041/FUL			16.1		
122 Bull Head Street	21/00400/COU	-174				
20 Spa Lane	21/00412/FUL		50			
Gross total		0	100	536.1	0	636.1
Losses		-751.02	-913.6	0	-141	-1,805.62
Net total (sqm)		-751.02	-813.6	536.1	-141	-1,169.52
Sites in the settlement of Oadby	Application number	E(g) i/ii)	E(g) iii) / B2	B8	Mixed Employment Use	Total
74 The Parade	16/00519/COU	-91				
Unit C, 15 Mandervell Road	19/00216/COU			-257		
4A Selbury Drive	19/00315/COU			-181		
51 Kenilworth Drive	19/00357/FUL	180				
17 Mandervell Road	19/00502/COU				-4,347	
41 The Parade	20/00122/FUL	80				
49 London Road	20/00174/FUL	-85				
25 New Street	20/00302/COU	-29.8				
Brocks Hill Visitor Centre, Washbrook Lane	22/00037/R3FUL	962				
41 Kenilworth Drive	22/00267/FUL		292			
Gross total		1222	292	0	0	1514
Losses		-205.8	0	-438	-4,347	-4,990.8
Net total (sqm)		1,016.2	292	-438	-4,347	-3,476.8

Sites in the settlement of South Wigston	Application number	E(g) i/ii)	E(g) iii) / B2	B8	Mixed Employment Use	Total
124A Countesthorpe Road	20/00030/PNP3		-550			
Shelmer House, Canal Street	20/00423/FUL			-129		
91 Blaby Road	21/00287/FUL	-94				
Natsons House, Cornwall Road	21/00607/FUL			717.4		
Gross total		0	0	717.4	0	717.4
Losses		-94	-550	-129	0	-773
Net total (sqm)		-94	-550	588.4	0	-55.6
Total net across the Borough		171.18	-1,071.6	686.5	-4488	-4,701.92

4.5 All completions in the 2019-2023 monitoring period were on previously developed land.

4.6 This ELA acknowledges development at the Former F R Brookes site, Magna Road, South Wigston, now referred to as Genesis Park. This site was previously occupied by one large building and had been vacant for many years due to a lack in market demand for such a large single building. In 2021, the Council permitted an application for the erection of smaller commercial units for a mix of E(g)(i), E(g)(iii), B2 and B8 uses. Due to the monitoring method of accounting for a loss of employment land only when a new change of use is complete, this site had not been recorded as a loss in previous ELA reports, nor is recorded as a new commitment in this ELA as the development results in no change in employment land. As of monitoring in 2023, this site is near completion.

Employment Land Commitments 2019-2023

4.7 Table 5 provides a breakdown of the committed increases and expected losses relating to employment land. There are no committed developments in Oadby.

4.8 For the purpose of this report 'committed' development, refers to:

- Granted planning permission, but not yet commenced
- Granted planning permission and currently under construction, or
- Granted planning permission, subject to a signed S106.

Table 5. Net commitments in the Borough as of 2019

Sites in the settlement of Wigston	Application number	E(g) i/ii	E(g) iii) / B2	B8	Mixed Employment Use	Total
3 Chartwell Drive	17/00222/FUL			650		
Wigston Direction for Growth Land East Of Welford Road	21/00028/OUT				50,000	
Flat 3, Beth-El House, Launceston Road	22/00370/COU	63				
Gross total		63	0	650	50,000	50,713
Losses		0	0	0	0	0
Net total (sqm)		63	0	650	50,000	50,713
Sites in the settlement of South Wigston	Application number	E(g) i/ii	E(g) iii) / B2	B8	Mixed Employment Use	Total
26 Blaby Road	22/00463/COU	-39				
Gross total		0	0	0	0	0
Losses		-39	0	0	0	0
Net total (sqm)		-39	0	0	0	-39
Total net across the Borough		24	0	650	50,000	50,674

Employment Land Requirements and Supply

4.9 As mentioned, the need identified is for the period 2019-2031. Table 6 identifies net completions and commitments from 1st April 2019 onwards in relation to the identified need to be delivered across the Borough.

4.10 Please note that this assessment includes committed sites that have been granted planning permission. This does not indicate that the development will successfully be completed. Also the table does not include the sites that are currently allocated within the Local Plan.

4.11 Additionally, the non-inclusion of a site in the assessment does not in any way rule out future development on that site, providing the proposal is in keeping with the principles outlined in National Planning Policy Framework at the time the site comes forward.

4.12 As Table 6 shows, the Council is set to over provide by 5,471 square metres of employment land by 2031.

Table 6. Employment land requirement and supply position as of 31st March 2023 in relation to the needs identified in the OAN

		E(g) (i/ii)	E(g) (iii) / B2	B8	Mixed Employment Use	Total
[1]	Total net complete since 2019	171.18	-1,071.6	686.5	-4,488	-4,701.92
[2]	Total net committed since 2019	24	0	650	50,000	50,674
[3]	Total complete and committed [1] + [2] = [3]	195.18	-1,071.6	1,336.5	45,512	45,972.08
[4]	Need identified	7,400	72,400	2,700	0	82,500
[5]	Remaining need [4] – [3] = [5]	7,205	73,472	1,364	-45,512	36,529
[6]	Remaining Allocations	9,800	0	0	32,200	42,000
[7]	Residual need [5] – [6] = [7]	-2,595	73,472	1,364	-77,712	-5,471

4.13 The Wigston Direction for Growth Allocation of 50,000 square metres of employment land has an outline application for flexible use across the three employment Use Classes (Eg, B2 and / or B8 use land). When the Reserve Matters application comes forward, the Council will seek to fulfil as much of the identified employment land needs as possible.

4.14 The delivery of remaining need will be largely dependent on the market over time due to employment delivery predominantly being market led.