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**Leicester Local Plan
2020 to 2036**

Employment Topic Paper



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Topic Paper

Submission document
September 2023

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This topic paper supports the employment land supply evidence that informs the local plan. The paper sets out approach to Leicester’s outstanding employment need.

2. National Context and Background

2.1 The Local Plan sets out a strategy for employment land provision which has been prepared based upon the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its aim to secure sustainable development, through balancing economic, social and environmental objectives. The plan seeks to respond to relevant paragraphs in the NPPF by helping to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity, and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

2.2 The planning policies in the Local Plan have been prepared to meet the requirements of the NPPF, as set out in paragraph 82. This aims to provide an economic strategy which positively encourages sustainable economic growth; identifies sites to meet anticipated needs; addresses barriers to investment; and provides the flexibility to respond to changing economic circumstances.

2.3 The need for employment land identified in the Leicester Local Plan is provided by the evidence base “The Economic Development Needs Assessment” (EDNA) 2020.

2.4 The Strategic Growth Plan also confirms that the joint ambition is to make Leicester and Leicestershire one of the most desirable places to live and work in the UK. By further developing its strengths, Leicester has a pivotal role to play in the strategy. It states that Leicester should develop its role as the ‘central city’ supporting the market towns and rural areas around it. More jobs, leisure, arts, culture and entertainment facilities would be provided within the City Centre, with strong office, shopping, arts, culture, heritage and visitor profiles.

3. Purpose of Topic paper

3.1 This topic paper explains the background to the preparation of the employment policies in the Leicester local plan and provides more detail regarding:

- The evidence for employment land need in Leicester
- The supply of employment sites identified in the Pre-Submission Draft Leicester local plan

Background

3.2 The EDNA was commissioned to provide a robust evidence base which will determine the city's overall economic development land needs up to 2036 as part of the new Local Plan. It's forecast is based on historical take up, based on adjusted completions (only completions within in employment areas and the city centre.)

3.3 It confirms that the city council needs to continue to support a thriving and diverse economy that will provide high quality employment. It is important to produce a climate for innovation and creativity and to provide more employment in higher skill, higher wage jobs.

3.4 However, within the administrative boundary of Leicester, very little land is available. The existing allocations have therefore been assessed to ensure that they are fit for purpose for employment use.

Key Outcomes

3.5 To support a competitive economy, sufficient land of the right type needs to be available in the right places. A mix of types of employment land and policies to support them have been provided, to protect and promote the growth of the Cultural Quarter's unique mix of creative industries, cultural facilities and city living; provide high tech and knowledge economy businesses with the aim of creating a cluster of highly skilled jobs at pioneer park; and enable financial and business services in the city centre office allocations.

3.6 The EDNA has assessed and categorised the supply of employment land, as High Quality (Policy E03), General Quality (Policy E02), and Neighbourhood

(Policy E05). Neighbourhood areas are generally much smaller and lower in quality but are valuable to retain, as local sources of employment. Further policies have also been included to provide for research and development uses at the Science Park (Policy E04) and for the creative industry in the Cultural Quarter (Policy E06). Strategies to support employment such as providing training by requiring Employment and Skills Plans are included in Policy E07.

4. Leicester's Forecast Employment Land Supply – EDNA 2020

4.1 The EDNA considers 3 alternative scenarios for forecasting and concludes that the most appropriate forecast is scenario 3: Gross Adjusted Completions (Take Up in Employment Areas/City Centre Only). Including a five-year buffer, it forecast need for 67.32 ha, (65.12 ha for B2/B8 less the B1(a) office requirement) and a need for 46,112 sqm of offices as is shown in the table below.

EDNA Table 37. Leicester Employment Land Need Modelling, 2019 - 36 Growth Plus a Further 5 year Buffer

Use Class	Floorspace /Year, Sqm	x17 (Years)	x5 (Years), Buffer	Total Need, Sqm	Hectares/ Year	x17 (Years)	x5 (Years), Buffer	Total Need, ha
B1(a)	2,096	35,632	10,480	46,112	0.1	1.7	0.5	2.2
B1(b)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B1(c)	129	2193	645	2838	0.03	0.51	0.15	0.66
B2	5,989	101,813	29,945	131,758	1.54	26.18	7.7	33.88
B8	4,067	69,139	20,335	89,474	1.04	17.68	5.2	22.88
Total	13,626	231,642	68130	299,772	3.06	52.02	15.3	67.32

Source: BE Group, 2019

Employment (B1/B2/B8) - Available Land Supply

4.2 The available land supply is shown to provide a total of 29.08 ha (see Table 8 of the Local Plan below).

Table 8. Supply of Employment Sites

Address	Size (ha)
Former Western Park Golf Course	9.74 ha
Beaumont Park	7.53 ha
North of Birstall Golf course/East of Ashton Green	2.4 ha
Eastern part of Thurcaston Road/Hadrian Road open space	2.7 ha
Mountain Road	2.1 ha
East of Samworth's Bradgate Bakery	5.0 ha
	Total 29.08 ha*

4.3 Charnwood Borough Council has agreed to provide 23 ha to help meet this need. (This agreement is set out in the Leicester & Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground on Housing & Employment Need, June 2022). There therefore remains an outstanding shortfall of 12.92 ha.

Meeting the Shortfall

4.4 A section 73 application at Ashton Green is expected later this year that will provide the shortfall of 13 ha of employment land. (A proposed change of use from land designated as a school and residential use in the original outline consent, to employment use.)

4.5 Pre application advice is currently being sought, to provide an indication of the Council's formal view on the application. This will be made available to the Examination.

Office Provision

4.6 The EDNA forecasts a requirement of 46,000 sqm of offices by 2036. Two sites are proposed as site allocations to help meet this requirement, by the Railway Station (Site 1052) and on land around Midland Street (Site 1053). Making this provision in the Central Development Area (CDA) is important to provide city centre access to employment, for the occupants of the 6200 proposed new dwellings in this area.

4.7 The influence of Covid and homeworking on the office market has been raised as to whether further office provision is still required.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Local Plan has been prepared to provide an economic vision and strategy for Leicester, which will positively support sustainable economic growth and respond to the requirements of the local economy. The plan, and the policies it contains, have been based upon evidence of our identified employment needs and prepared in accordance with national policy and through collaboration with neighbouring authorities. We have sought to address this need through the Duty to Cooperate process.

Other Documents

- Publication of Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing and Employment Land Needs – June 2022

