

# Harrogate District Local Plan: Economic Background Paper

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January 2018



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## 1 Introduction

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1** Local Planning Authorities are required to ensure that their Local Plans meet the development needs of their area as far as this is consistent with the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 1.2** This paper provides the context to the council's approach to the economy components of the draft Harrogate District Local Plan and demonstrates how the district's economic land requirement needs can be delivered through sites allocated in the Local Plan and the development management process. It provides information on:
- the national, regional and local policy context
  - the employment land requirement within the Plan and how it has been determined
  - how the Local Plan will meet the employment land requirement
- 1.3** The following evidence base documents should be read alongside this background paper:
- Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (G L Hearn, July 2017)
  - Employment Land Review (Atkins, 2015)
  - Harrogate Strategic Housing Market Assessment (GL Hearn, September 2015)
  - Harrogate Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (GL Hearn, June 2016)
  - Harrogate Strategic Housing and Economic land Availability Assessment (HBC, Dec, 2016 and Dec 2017)
  - Whole Plan and CIL Viability Assessment (HDH Planning & Development Ltd, 2016)
  - Harrogate Infrastructure Capacity Study (O'Neill Associates, Fore Consulting and DTZ, 2016 and HBC Update Jan 2018)
  - Traffic Modelling (Jacobs, 2016)
  - Harrogate Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (HBC, October 2016, July 2017 and January 2018)
  - Harrogate District Economic Growth Strategy (HBC, 2017)

## 2 Policy Context

### National Policy Context

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1** The core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 17) state that planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs' and that '...every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the .....business needs of the area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. This objectively assessed need should be met with 'sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or where specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted'.
- 2.2** Specifically the NPPF (paragraph 21) identifies what actions local planning authorities should do in drawing up Local Plans, including,
- setting out a clear economic vision and strategy for the area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
  - setting criteria, or identifying strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
  - supporting existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identifying and planning for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in the area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.
  - planning positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries
  - identifying priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement; and
  - facilitating flexible working practices
- 2.3** The NPPF (paragraph 28) also sets out the approach for supporting the rural economy by stating that planning policies should:
- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
  - promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
  - support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside;
  - promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship
- 2.4** To ensure the vitality of town centres, the NPPF in paragraph 23 states that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period.

## 2 Policy Context

**2.5** In order to plan for and deliver sustainable economic growth, local planning authorities should have a clear understanding of business needs within the economic markets operating in and across their area. This should be informed by the preparation of evidence that assesses:

- the needs for land or floorspace for economic development, including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period, including for retail and leisure development;
- the existing and future supply of land available for economic development and its sufficiency and suitability to meet the identified needs;
- the role and function of town centres and the relationship between them;
- the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development;
- locations of deprivation which may benefit from planned remedial action;

### National Planning Practice Guidance

**2.6** The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides more detailed guidance on the methodology behind the assessment of economic development needs and identifies the primary objective being to:

- identify the future quantity of land required for economic development uses including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for new development; and
- provide a breakdown of that analysis in terms of quality and location, and to provide an indication of gaps in current land supply

## Regional Policy Influences

**2.7** Harrogate district benefits from its location within two Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas; Leeds City Region (LCR) and York, North Yorkshire and East Riding (YNYER) both of whom acknowledge the importance of the Harrogate economy within their sub-region.

### Leeds City Region (LCR) Strategic Economic Plan 2016 - 2035

**2.8** The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) was approved in May 2016 and sets out the priorities to deliver the growth agenda across the City Region area. Harrogate is identified as an area enjoying high employment and strong levels of enterprise with resident earnings and skills above average but facing a significant challenge in that the average workplace earnings are lower than regional and national rates and for those residents who commute elsewhere. This is compounded by high house prices and a costly private rental market: Harrogate is one of three areas in the City Region with worsening housing affordability. The plan also identifies challenges around the availability of suitable business parks and transport connectivity.

**2.9** A key priority of the SEP is to increase productivity, growth and employment through an environment that enables businesses to start-up, innovate, trade and invest as well as creating a better skilled workforce leading to better, high-value jobs. Harrogate is not identified in the SEP as one of the employment growth areas but actions identified in the SEP across the region are relevant for the preparation of the Local Plan.

## Policy Context 2

### York, North Yorkshire and East Riding (YNYER) Strategic Economic Plan

**2.10** The SEP was approved in March 2014 and an update published in 2016. The vision of the LEP is to make York, North Yorkshire & East Riding the place to grow a small business, combining a quality business location with a great quality of life. The priorities of the plan are:

- Profitable and successful businesses
- Become a global leader in agri-food and the bioeconomy
- Develop inspired people
- Ensure successful and distinctive places
- Providing a well connected economy

**2.11** A key ambition of the plan is to maximise the economic potential of the sub-region by making sure the infrastructure is in place, there is a quality skilled workforce and businesses are supported to deliver the growth and jobs required. Harrogate is identified as one of the growth towns in the A1/A19 corridor but the SEP identifies that transport congestion severely restricts long term growth potential. The LEP Housing Strategy sets out more detailed housing aims.

**2.12** York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP, in their draft SEP (2016), highlights Station Parade, Harrogate and Flaxby Green Park as important future development projects. Harrogate Borough Council is committed to working collaboratively with both LEPs to maximise economic opportunities.

### North Yorkshire County Council: Economic Growth Plan

**2.13** NYCC's emerging Growth Plan has the following aims which align with the strategy within the YNYER SEP:

- grow the number of good quality jobs in the North Yorkshire economy
- ensure people across the county have equal access to economic opportunities
- increase the overall median wage levels

## Local Policy Influences

### Corporate Priorities and Economic Growth Strategy 2017 - 2035

**2.14** 'A strong local economy' is the council's top priority and the [Economic Growth Strategy](#) <sup>(1)</sup> places importance on supporting the delivery of 'good growth', to help create a successful and sustainable economic future for the Harrogate district, with interventions to grow and attract businesses in key sectors that will create higher value jobs. These sectors are sympathetic to the strong local labour market conditions within the district and reflect forecast growth and the existing strengths of the district's offer to these sectors with an attractive environment, quality of local services and education facilities, and central location in the UK. The Strategy's aim and the council's vision of a sustainable and resilient economy by 2035 will be achieved by delivering interventions in the following strategic themes:

- land and buildings for growth
- skills for growth
- targeted business support

1 For further information please visit [www.harrogate.gov.uk/downloads/file/2762/economic\\_growth\\_strategy\\_2017-2035](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/downloads/file/2762/economic_growth_strategy_2017-2035)

## 2 Policy Context

- conditions for growth: digital and telecoms, transport
- branding and promotion

**2.15** The interventions within these strategic themes will focus on four key sectors:

- creative and digital
- scientific research and development
- financial and professional services
- logistics

### Neighbourhood Plans

**2.16** Neighbourhood Plans enable local communities to develop a vision and planning policies for their designated areas. Where a Neighbourhood Plan is adopted or emerging before an up to date Local Plan is in place, LPAs should take account of it when preparing the Local Plan. The weight to be given to an emerging Neighbourhood Plan will depend on the extent to which there are unresolved objections: it can gain weight once the Neighbourhood Plan is published and the level of objection is known.

**2.17** Currently four Neighbourhood Plans are being prepared (Ripon, Knaresborough, Roecliffe and Westwick and Otley)<sup>(2)</sup>. At the time of preparing this paper, none of the Neighbourhood Plans had been formally submitted to the local planning authority so can only be afforded limited weight.

### Duty to Cooperate

**2.18** A separate Duty to Cooperate paper has been published which sets out the council's engagement with local authorities in North Yorkshire and the Leeds City Region, including on economy issues and how the Local Plan is seeking to meet the aims, objectives and aspirations within the SEPs.<sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This falls mainly within the Leeds City Council boundary

<sup>3</sup> For further information please visit [www.harrogate.gov.uk/info/20101/planning\\_policy\\_and\\_the\\_local\\_plan/556/local\\_plan\\_-\\_evidence\\_base](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/info/20101/planning_policy_and_the_local_plan/556/local_plan_-_evidence_base)



## The Employment Land Requirement 3

### 3 The Employment Land Requirement

- 3.1** The [Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment \(HEDNA\)](#) was published in July 2017 and replaced the [Employment Land Review \(ELR\)](#) of 2015.<sup>(4)</sup>
- 3.2** The HEDNA provides a 'non-constrained' assessment of future economic development needs i.e it does not take account of constraints relating to land supply, environmental constraints, infrastructure provision or any policy decisions.

#### Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)

- 3.3** The NPPG advises that the geography of commercial property markets should be thought of in terms of the requirements of the market, the location of premises, and the spatial factors used in analysing demand and supply often referred to as the functional economic market area (FEMA). Since patterns of economic activity vary from place to place, there is no standard approach to defining a functional economic market area, however, it is possible to define them taking account of factors such as LEP areas, labour market areas, travel to work areas and administrative areas.
- 3.4** The 2015 ELR concluded that the functional labour market provided the most appropriate basis for defining the FEMA and that this most likely reflects the geography of higher order economic centres and their hinterlands. Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon are the key centres in the district which together form a functioning labour market. The majority of the rural parts of the District also access jobs in this combined labour market area, rather than other areas outside the district, except for the far south east of the district, where a majority of workers travel out to York and Leeds. The FEMA for the study therefore was best defined as being consistent with the district boundary with the exclusion of a small area in the south east which should be included in the York FEMA.
- 3.5** The complete analysis of the functional economic market area can be found in the 2015 ELR.<sup>(5)</sup> As this analysis is relatively recent, the HEDNA has not sought to redefine it.

#### Meeting future employment needs

- 3.6** There are two stages to identifying the employment land target for the Local Plan. At the first stage, the council is required to identify the future quantity of land or floorspace required for economic development uses including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for new development and the relevant market segment. The second stage involves translating this into a target for amount of employment land to be provided. At this point, policy objectives can be taken into account. This includes the consideration of the capacity of the area's supply of deliverable and sustainable land, any cross-boundary un-met employment need, and the authority's wider policy objectives.
- 3.7** In line with advice in the PPG, the starting point of the HEDNA is to provide baseline demand based forecasts which include global and national factors and the appropriate impact on the forecasts at local authority level. These employment forecasts estimate the future employee jobs in each broad sector. The baseline forecast from the HEDNA indicates that the economy is expected to grow by 1.9% per annum (GVA growth pa)

4 For further information please visit [www.harrogate.gov.uk/info/20101/planning\\_policy\\_and\\_the\\_local\\_plan/556/local\\_plan\\_-\\_evidence\\_base](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/info/20101/planning_policy_and_the_local_plan/556/local_plan_-_evidence_base)

5 For further information please visit [https://www.harrogate.gov.uk/downloads/file/267/employment\\_land\\_review\\_2015](https://www.harrogate.gov.uk/downloads/file/267/employment_land_review_2015).

### 3 The Employment Land Requirement

between 2014 and 2035. The total number of jobs growth forecast is 11,400 which equates to an annual growth rate of 0.5%. As with national forecasts this is a slower level of growth compared to the previous business cycle. However this is justified as both consumer and public sector expenditure is expected to fall. The future GVA growth is particularly driven by growth in the professional, scientific and technical activities and wholesale sectors.

- 3.8** While the baseline forecast provides a good indication of the direction of growth, they do not reflect any planned/committed investment and the progression of some specific sectors locally. The council identified six strategic growth sectors which the HEDNA assessed in more detail with regard to the historic and future trend for the district in comparison to national and regional trends. The analysis revealed growth rates in Harrogate which were below the national rates and some that were outperforming them. As a result the HEDNA concludes a need to apply an uplift, to bring the growth sectors in line with national trends.
- 3.9** The adjusted scenario shows an additional employment growth of 800 jobs from the baseline scenario (2014-2035) taking the total jobs growth to around 12,000. This amounts to a growth between 2014 and 2035 of 0.6% compared to 0.4% regionally and 0.5% nationally. When converted to Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs, the net jobs growth expected is 9,900. The adjusted forecasts see the Professional, scientific & technical and Business support services have most significant growth in jobs. The agricultural and manufacturing sectors are both expected to see job losses going forward as a result of automation. However, both have a significant growth in GVA and productivity.
- 3.10** To enable the job forecasts to be translated into land requirements, employment densities have been applied to the forecasts on a sector basis e.g B1c = 49sq m per employee. The generated floorspace requirement can then be translated into a "policy off" hectare land requirement of **54.8ha** which is split as follows:

## The Employment Land Requirement 3

Use Class	Land Requirement (ha)
B1a/b	12.3
B1c/B2	13.0
B8	24.0
Sui Generis <sup>(1)</sup>	5.5
Total	54.8

**Table 3.1 Land requirements 2014 - 2035**

1. includes municipal functions such as waste collection and recycling and trade counters

## 4 Delivering the Employment Land Requirement

### 4 Delivering the Employment Land Requirement

#### Delivering the Employment Land Requirement

- 4.1** The Local Plan should make provision for sufficient employment land to fully meet demands over the plan period. Without sufficient employment land, projected job growth will be very difficult to achieve as existing businesses within the district may be hindered due to a lack of suitable sites. This could ultimately mean that existing businesses and those looking to locate or invest in the district may choose to look elsewhere for suitable sites. Housing growth needs to be supported by new jobs, failure to provide sufficient land to meet the projected growth targets would impact on the number of jobs available to the existing and future residents of the district, and hence more residents would need to look outside the district for employment.

#### Supply of existing employment land

- 4.2** In order to plan to provide around 54.8 hectares (gross) of employment land provision with development potential across the district it is important to assess the potential supply of land on employment sites within the district. Site analysis in the HEDNA identified a total of 62.6ha of available and suitable land in the district for employment uses however the distribution of supply is focussed on the Eastern Rural sub-area and there is a mismatch with locational demand which is focused in Harrogate and Knaresborough and their surrounds. The HEDNA recommends therefore that the council do not over rely on the available land in this sub-area to meet the district's need.
- 4.3** The greatest demand for commercial uses is in Harrogate and the surrounding area whilst the majority of the established existing employment areas in Harrogate are fully or almost fully built-out and very well occupied. There is therefore a current undersupply of developable employment sites within these existing employment sites. There are a number of relatively small, rural employment sites around Harrogate which are performing well and provide for the needs of small scale or local occupiers, however in addition to this Harrogate has a considerable demand for space from larger/national occupiers which should be met in more centralised locations or at larger business locations within the Harrogate sub area.
- 4.4** Sites of around 10-20ha are necessary to provide a critical mass of employment uses to support a new business park type development and there is a particular lack of such sites in and around Harrogate or in and around Knaresborough which are the areas with the largest demand for employment uses. The existing large employment sites in these sub-areas are generally high quality and well performing with high occupancy rates however there is limited scope for intensification or expansion at these existing sites.
- 4.5** Whilst 62.6 ha of vacant land has been identified, this is predominantly made up of small infill and expansion opportunities at existing employment areas and unfortunately there is a lack of large available sites particularly around Harrogate and Knaresborough which are the areas with the largest demand for employment. Therefore approx 17ha has been identified as potential vacant land on existing sites that could be developed for employment purposes. This results in a need to provide for a minimum of 38ha of new employment land. To provide for a choice of sites and ensure flexibility of supply however, there is a need to allocate more than this figure.

## Delivering the Employment Land Requirement 4

### Permitted Development and Prior Approval

- 4.6** Legislative changes introduced more flexibility about the conversion and re-use of existing buildings from commercial and office/industrial to residential use without the need for planning permission. Some of these permitted development rights are for a temporary period only and/or subject to limitations on the floorspace/units created and a prior approval process. These changes have the potential to further reduce the supply of valuable office space within the district and in particular Harrogate Town Centre.
- 4.7** The HEDNA highlights that the district's office space has reduced by approximately 21% in the last three years and the council have been notified of changes of use of office to residential under permitted development rights with almost 40,000 sqm of office space proposed for conversion. At least an additional 3,750 sq m of office space has been lost through planning approvals.

### Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

- 4.8** The [Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \(SHELAA\)](#) forms part of the technical evidence base to inform the preparation of the Local Plan. It provides a high level assessment of the availability, suitability and achievability of sites for development and whether and when sites will come forward for development.<sup>(6)</sup>
- 4.9** In line with guidance set out in the NPPF and PPG, the assessment of housing land availability has been combined with the assessment of available economic land. The first SHELAA was published in July 2016 with a subsequent version published in December 2017. As part of the SHELAA preparation landowners, developers and agents have been invited to put sites forward for assessment through a 'Call for Sites': in total over 460 sites have been submitted for potential housing and/or employment use. A number of submitted sites were discounted because they were below the site size threshold or the promoters of a site subsequently informed the council it was no longer available. In the SHELAA update a total of 447 sites were assessed with only 18 being for employment potential; five for either housing or employment and 14 for mixed use.
- 4.10** The sites were assessed to determine whether and when they were likely to be developed and the site selection process is shown in Appendix 1. Each site was assessed on the basis of its:
- Suitability for development - were there any policy restrictions, physical problems, potential impacts or environmental conditions that might render the site as unsuitable
  - Availability for development - were there any legal or ownership issues that might prevent a site from being developed
  - Achievability for development - were there any market, cost or delivery factors that might impact on when a site was developed
- 4.11** Since starting to prepare the SHELAA, a number of sites had obtained planning permission. These sites were excluded from further detailed assessment under the SHELAA as they were considered to remain suitable and deliverable locations for development.

6 For further information please visit [www.harrogate.gov.uk/info/20101/planning\\_policy\\_and\\_the\\_local\\_plan/560/site\\_options\\_shelaa](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/info/20101/planning_policy_and_the_local_plan/560/site_options_shelaa)

## 4 Delivering the Employment Land Requirement

### Employment Allocations

- 4.12** The sites submitted to and assessed through the SHELAA have formed the starting point for identifying sites for allocation in the Local Plan together with a number of other sites submitted to the council outside the SHELAA process, for example in response to consultation on the draft Local Plan. All sites have been assessed in a consistent way.
- 4.13** The Draft Local Plan which went out for consultation in November 2016, identified 10 sites to be allocated for employment or an element of employment development. Following a review of consultation responses and the evidence from the HEDNA, the council decided that one site TW2: Land to the north of Marston Business Park should not be taken forward due to the location and quality of the existing business park and evidence which indicates no need for employment development in this location. Site FX4: South of A59, Flaxby also has gained planning permission for employment uses and therefore will not be included on the list of allocations. The updated evidence from the HEDNA identified a need to allocate more sites to meet the 54.8ha requirement and therefore a further five sites were included in the Additional Sites consultation (which took place in July and August 2017) however two sites were subsequently removed due to updated information as below:

Site Name	Settlement	Site Reference	Reason for Change
Extension to employment site south of A59	Flaxby	FX5	Site deleted due to uncertainty over availability
Showground car park, Wetherby Road	Harrogate	H27	Site deleted due to recent grant of permission for a hotel, resulting in limited available land remaining

**Table 4.1 Sites not allocated for Employment**

- 4.14** The Harrogate District Local Plan Publication Draft therefore includes 11 sites allocated for employment or an element of employment development where planning permission has not yet been granted. The table below shows how the Local Plan is meeting the identified requirement:

Supply	Ha
Vacant Land on Existing Employment Sites	17.23
Draft Allocations - employment and mixed use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lady Lane (H51-Mixed Use) - 8ha</li> <li>● Claro Barracks, Ripon (R25) - 5ha</li> <li>● Land W of Barker Business Pk, Melmerby (MB8) - 12.14ha</li> <li>● Land S of Barker Business Pk, Melmerby (MB3) - 3.2ha</li> <li>● Playing Fields, Harrogate College (H16) - 3.28ha</li> <li>● Land at Wetherby Road, Harrogate (H28) - 6.85ha</li> <li>● South of Almsford Bridge, Pannal (PN18) - 18.8ha</li> <li>● Land at Barker Business Park, Melmerby (MB6) - 5.16ha</li> <li>● Land at Station Parade (H37-Mixed Use) - area to be determined</li> <li>● Dragon Road Car Park, Harrogate (H63 - Mixed Use) - area to be determined</li> <li>● Knaresborough Cattle Market (K17 - Mixed Use) - area to be determined</li> </ul>	62.43
Commitments	13.00

## Delivering the Employment Land Requirement 4

Supply	Ha
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flaxby Green Park (FX4) - 13ha</li> </ul>	
Total Supply	92.66
Employment Land Requirement	54.8
Total Supply - Employment Land Requirement = Over/Undersupply	+37.86

Table 4.2 Employment Land Calculation

**4.15** In addition to the above sites it is expected that a new settlement in the broad location of Green Hammerton/Cattal will provide about five hectares of employment land to provide for a mix of employment uses. The boundary, nature and form of a new settlement within this broad location will be established in a separate New Settlement Development Plan Document (DPD).

### Flexibility

**4.16** The NPPF indicates that plans need to be sufficiently flexible to respond to changing circumstances. As shown in Table 4.2, provision is made to deliver around 93ha of employment land over the plan period exceeding the proposed Local Plan requirement by 38ha<sup>(7)</sup>. The 54.8ha requirement figure should be considered as a minimum given the need to allow flexibility and choice in supply relative to demand. Furthermore, in planning for a balanced and sustainable local economy it is important not to constrain important 'windfall' demand opportunities, arising from significant inward investment enquiries.

**4.17** Given the uncertainties surrounding long term forecasting, and the many externalities that could affect Harrogate's economy over the period to 2035, it is recommended that a flexible approach is taken to the provision of employment land planning which provides a range of sites and locations that meet the needs of businesses of different type and size.

### Protection of Existing Employment Land

**4.18** The HEDNA assessed the majority of the existing employment sites and recommended those that should be retained for employment purposes. This analysis informed the list of key employment sites provided under Policy EC1: Protection and Enhancement of Existing Employment Areas as follows:

- Cardale Park, Harrogate
- Hornbeam Park, Harrogate
- St James Park, Knaresborough
- Melmerby Business Park, Melmerby
- Claro Park, Harrogate
- Plumpton Park, Harrogate
- Manse Lane, Knaresborough
- Boroughbridge Road, Ripon
- Harrogate Road, Ripon
- Dallamires Lane, Ripon
- Bar Lane, Boroughbridge

## 4 Delivering the Employment Land Requirement

- Fearby Road, Masham
- Marston Business Park, Tockwith
- Manse Farm, Knaresborough
- Dunlopillo, Pannal
- New York Mills, Summerbridge

**4.19** Employment land can be placed under pressure from alternative uses, therefore it is important for the well-being of the local economy to secure the long-term future of a range of employment opportunities. Given the shortfall of readily available, viable and deliverable employment sites particularly in the high demand area of Harrogate and Knaresborough, it is vital that protection is provided for the existing employment land supply and in particular the key sites. The Local Plan employment allocations once developed will also be protected as key employment sites under Policy EC1.

### Risks to Delivery and Monitoring

**4.20** The potential risks to achieving the level of employment delivery identified in the Local Plan are set out below.

### Economic Conditions

**4.21** Although the economy has seen some recovery in recent years, nationally building rates continue to be inconsistent year on year. The council can seek to work closely with developers and businesses active in the district to understand what constraints there may be on individual site delivery and actions needed to unlock the site and facilitate delivery.

### Alternative Uses

**4.22** Whilst the sites have been allocated to meet the demand for B Use class development there is always pressure on these sites as well as existing sites for development for alternative uses such as car showrooms, children's nurseries. The loss or gradual erosion of particularly the key employment sites including the new allocations undermines the delivery of the employment land requirement and needs to be resisted where possible. The change in the Permitted Development regulations to allow the change of use of offices to residential also places greater pressure on the existing office stock. Policy EC1: Protection and Enhancement of Existing Employment Areas is included within the plan to ensure the protection of important employment land and the council will also encourage pre-application discussions with developers /land owners to increase certainty in the development process and to address any planning issues early on.

### Infrastructure Provision

**4.23** Delivery risks can arise due to the need to provide necessary infrastructure particularly in relation to costs if they are higher than anticipated or if there is uncertainty about when the infrastructure would be provided. The Infrastructure Capacity Study prepared to support the Local Plan, recognises that the level of employment growth must be supported by the necessary infrastructure and has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders and service providers to identify infrastructure needs, delivery costs and barriers to implementation.



## Delivering the Employment Land Requirement 4

### Economic Viability

- 4.24 A [Whole Plan Viability Study](#) has been prepared in order to appraise the viability of the Local Plan.<sup>(8)</sup> The study considered policy requirements that might affect the cost and value of employment development. The study considered policy requirements that might affect the cost and value of employment development.

### Monitoring and Review

- 4.25 The Local Plan is supported by a monitoring framework, which identifies and monitors the indicators necessary to determine whether Local Plan policies and proposals are being successfully implemented.
- 4.26 Monitoring of employment permissions, starts and completions each year is carried out on an annual basis with the outcome reported through publication of the Annual Monitoring Report.

## 1 Site Selection Process

### Appendix 1 Site Selection Process

#### Site Selection Process

**8.1** The selection of sites for allocation in the Harrogate District Local Plan went through a five stage process.

##### Stage 1: Data gathering

**8.2** A desktop study was undertaken using all known map based information about sites. All sites were visited by planning policy officers and site descriptions and notable characteristics of the sites collated. This information has formed the base data upon which the site assessments have been made.

##### Stage 2: Initial Sift

**8.3** Using the desktop information all sites were considered against the criteria listed below to sift out those sites that were unsuitable for allocation at this time:

- Site size/previous permission
  - Site is too small to be allocated i.e. less than 0.25 hectares
  - Site has planning permission
- Showstoppers
  - Site is subject to international or national designation for biodiversity
  - Site is subject to international or national designation as a heritage asset
  - Site falls within Flood Zone 3 or removal of affected area would result in area of less than 0.25 hectares
  - No physical point of access from the adopted highway into the site and no evidence to suggest one can be achieved

**8.4** Sites listed below do not meet one of the above criteria and have been considered inappropriate for allocation. They have been sifted out at this stage and have not been subject to any further assessment or consideration.

Settlement	Site Ref	Location	Reason Sifted Out
Birstwith	BW8	Land adjoining Kerry Ingredients	Access cannot be achieved
Boroughbridge	B1	Land south of Brickyard Road	Planning permission for employment development
Harrogate	H62	Land adjacent to Oak Beck Park	Below threshold
Harrogate	H64	Tower Street car park	Below threshold
Knaresborough	K4	Land at Bridge Farm, Bar Lane	Access cannot be achieved
Knaresborough	K8	Land at Harrogate Road	Access cannot be achieved
Ripon	R30	Victoria Grove Car Park	Below threshold
Spofforth	SP1	The Old Railway Cutting	Access cannot be achieved

## Site Selection Process 1

Table 3.1 Sites Sifted Out at Stage 1

Settlement	Site Ref	Location	Reason Sifted Out
Summerbridge	SB6	New York Mill	Access cannot be achieved
Tockwith	TW9	Land west of Blind Lane	Access cannot be achieved

Table 1.1 Sites Sifted Out at Stage 1

**Stage 3: Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA)**

- 8.5** To ensure the assessment of all remaining sites was carried out in a clear, consistent and robust manner a SA/SEA decision making framework was prepared using the SA/SEA objectives for the Local Plan. The SA/SEA objectives cover environmental, social and economic issues and are designed to ensure a complete assessment of all strands of sustainability. This is in accordance with the three strands of sustainable development set out in the NPPF and reflects advice within the NPPF that these three roles are mutually dependent.
- 8.6** The SA/SEA report sets out in detail the methodology used to assess the effects of the site options on sustainability objectives. The report also includes detailed matrices showing the outcome of the SA/SEA assessment on all remaining sites.
- 8.7** The matrices demonstrate that the assessment of each site has been carried out in the same level of detail. They also allow a comparison of the sites performance and highlight where significant effects have been predicted.
- 8.8** As a result a number of sites were considered to have the most positive and/or least adverse effect on the SA/SEA objectives and were considered as part of the next stage.

**Stage 4: Identification of additional factors which may affect the deliverability of a site**

- 8.9** Further consideration of the sites which have been subject to SA/SEA has also been undertaken to consider the following detailed factors:
- Does the highway access limit the capacity of the site;
  - Does the topography of the site affect the way it could be developed i.e. reducing the overall capacity of a site, increasing build costs;
  - Is the proposed use compatible with the neighbouring uses;
  - Would development in this location be harmful to the local landscape, character of the settlement, conservation area and its setting or a listed building and its setting or could this harm be mitigated;
  - Is the current use of the site, if it is in use, the most appropriate and should it be retained;
  - How does the site relate to the existing pattern of development.
- 8.10** The assessment has been carried out using comments provided by the highway authority (North Yorkshire County Council) and the council's consultancy team (conservation, ecology, landscape officers).

## 1 Site Selection Process

- 8.11** To ensure consistency a number of questions were prepared together with a series of answers which determined how the sites would be assessed against each of the criteria. This employed a traffic light colour coding. Each colour referred to a specific answer to the question and provided a consistent and transparent means of assessing sites making judgements about sites as explicit and objective as possible.

### **Stage 5: Assessment of site deliverability**

- 8.12** Consideration was then given to the deliverability and developability of sites with regard to the advice of paragraph 46 footnotes 11 and 12 of the NPPF.

- 8.13** This was informed by the deliverability assessment undertaken for the most recent SHELAA and considered the following factors:

- The site is available for development - the owner is known to be willing for the site to be developed and it has actively been promoted through the SHELAA or plan making process;
- There has been development interest in the site - the site is promoted by or has the involvement of a developer or pre-application discussions have taken place or detailed planning reports prepared to support development;
- There is no physical constraint on/adjacent the site which would prevent it from being developed;
- There is no known impediment to development which might affect viability.

### **Conclusion**

- 8.14** As a result of the assessment process it is clear that a number of sites could be considered for allocation. The final selection of preferred employment allocations was based on the information collected and assessed, as outlined above. These sites are deemed to be the most sustainable and deliverable overall and are consistent with the Local Plan growth strategy.



