

Report to: **Strategic Planning Committee**

Date of Meeting: 17 December 2019

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None

Review date for release None



Subject: **Employment Land Review to year ending 31 March 2019**

Purpose of report: This report provides summary details of the Employment Land Review produced by the Planning Policy section for 2018-19.

Recommendation: **That Members acknowledge this report.**

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that the Council has an up to date report monitoring employment land availability and use within the district and also to provide information on numbers of residents of East Devon in employment and job numbers in the District.

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Financial implications: There are no direct financial implications requiring comment.

Legal implications: The Employment Land Review is a technical document which the Council is legally required to regularly review, thereby ensuring local plan policies and decision making is based upon adequate, up to date and relevant evidence.

Equalities impact: Low Impact

Climate change: Low Impact

The delivery of new factories, offices, warehouses, etc, has a significant impact on climate change, however the purpose of this report is to record the number of such premises delivered. The developments referred to in this report have all been previously granted consent and in making those decisions their impact on climate change has been considered.

Risk: Low Risk

Links to background information:

- <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/monitoring>
- [East Devon Employment Land Review to year ending 31 March 2019](#)

Link to Council Plan: This review has direct links to the Council priority of 'developing an outstanding local economy' and also explicitly to Strategies 1, 31 & 32 and Chapter 24 of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2021.

1 Background Information

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Authorities to support sustainable economic growth by setting out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area and to ensure there is sufficient land available to support growth. National Planning Policy Guidance advises on what employment considerations can be monitored, which form the basis of this report.
- 1.2 The current Employment Land Review report for East Devon provides monitoring records up to March 31st 2019.

2 Employment Land Use Monitoring

- 2.1 Monitoring is based mainly on the assessment of 'B' use classes which includes B1: Business, B2: General Industrial and B8: Storage and Distribution. Some 'Sui Generis' or other uses that occupy employment sites and which do not fall into a B category but which are similar in nature are also monitored.
- 2.2 Employment sites which typically cover at least 1,000 square metres (0.1 ha) containing B uses are mapped out. For avoidance of any confusion, "site" in this context constitutes a whole employment area of estate rather than an individual plot of land; so, for example, Heathpark in Honiton is classified as an employment site and within Heathpark there are vacant plots of land, as well as many existing businesses and buildings.
- 2.3 A list of small sites are also monitored on an annual basis with a threshold of 100 square metres of site area or buildings with 50 square metres of floor space, above which sites are recorded.
- 2.4 A full schedule of relevant planning permissions and completions since inception of the Local Plan in 2013 is provided for all major sites and small sites, with further information on sites and plots under construction, outstanding permissions and lapsed permissions.
- 2.5 Records are also provided on the completion of planning permissions during the last six years.
- 2.6 Vacant, available sites by virtue of a Local Plan allocation or planning permission, which are likely to be policy compliant and with scope for development, are identified. Plots within employment sites that are not identified as necessarily being policy compliant but which may offer scope for development are also shown in the same category.
- 2.7 Plans of each site are provided illustrating the detail of activity for individual properties during the last five years. Each plan also maps out vacant land as described in paragraph 2.6.
- 2.8 Information is also given on non-domestic rated units within employment sites which are occupied or empty at each site on separate plans.

3. Overview of Employment Land Review for 2018-19

3.1 Planning Permissions

Seventeen planning permissions granted during 2018-19 amounted to approximately 20.85 hectares of net additional site area; seven permissions were for plots within major sites and ten were at small sites. This total includes two permissions for the loss of employment use.

3.2 Permissions Under Construction at March 31st 2019

There were nine plots under construction, amounting to approximately 2.98 hectares of net additional site area, as of March 31st 2019. This figure includes work on plots at Woodbury Business Park, Dunkeswell Airfield and at a number of smaller sites.

3.3 Outstanding Permissions

At March 31st 2019, there were 40 site areas with extant planning permission amounting to approximately 58.84 hectares.

3.4 Completions

Fourteen completions during 2017-19 amounted to 5.81 hectares of net additional site area. This figure includes plots at: Alexandra Road Trading Estate, Sidmouth; Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton; Skypark, near Clyst Honiton; Exeter Science Park; Hunthay Farm, near Axminster; Dunkeswell Airfield and at a number of smaller sites.

3.5 Allocated Sites

The report details 25 plots of land across a number of employment sites that are specifically allocated in the Local Plan for employment use or are otherwise seen as having possible development potential / being available; these allocations amount to approximately 64.16 hectares. This includes allocations within mixed use sites where specific plots are not yet identified; where this is the case, only one plot has been included in the total of 25 for each site but the overall area of land allocated for employment has been included in full within the stated total of 64.16ha.

3.6 Non-Domestic Rated Properties

At March 31st 2019, there were 1,328 premises within East Devon employment sites rated for non-domestic use; 119 of which (or around 8.96%) were classed as empty.

4. Employment Numbers in East Devon

4.1 This section of the report provides background information on job numbers and employment statistics relevant to East Devon as reported in the monitoring report.

4.2 The monitoring report notes that East Devon is characterised by comparatively low wage levels. Drawing on Government data, from the NOMIS web site for 2018, see: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157358/report.aspx?#tabearn> East Devon has the 50th lowest, of the 378 recorded local authorities in Great Britain, median gross weekly resident pay level for full time workers. This places it in the lowest 14% nationally

and in Devon terms only North Devon, Torbay and Teignbridge have lower median wage levels.

- 4.3 Unemployment rates, reported on NOMIS (see: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157358/subreports/ea_time_series/report.aspx?) for East Devon measured for the April 2018 to March 2019 period are also low (despite the low wage levels). East Devon has a reported unemployment rate of 1.9% (a total of 1,300 people down from 1,550 in the previous monitoring period); this places the District as the joint second lowest (along with Eden in Cumbria) of the 378 measured local authorities in Great Britain.
- 4.4 It should be noted, however, that the unemployment rate does not show a complete picture of people that are **not** economically active (i.e. not in work) but that may like a job. The Nomis web site (see: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157358/report.aspx>) reports on there being 10,400 economically inactive residents of East Devon aged 16 to 64 – these are people that are neither in employment or counted as unemployed and, of this total, the Nomis website records that 7,200 are under a category of ‘does not want a job’ (Apr 2018 to Mar 2019).
- 4.5 The number of actual jobs located in East Devon, drawing on NOMIS data, fluctuates quite markedly from year-to-year, see: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157358/subreports/bres_time_series/report.aspx

Year	East Devon (employee jobs)	South West (employee jobs)	Great Britain (employee jobs)
2015	45,000	2,366,000	28,565,000
2016	45,000	2,398,000	29,045,000
2017	44,000	2,415,000	29,368,000
2018	48,000	2,447,000	29,583,000

- 4.6 What can be clearly seen is that the reported job numbers located in East Devon can show very marked changes over short time periods. For example, a decrease of 1,000 jobs (down 2.22%) from 2016 to 2017, and an increase of 4,000 jobs (up 9.09%) from 2017 to 2018. The data shows that over the four years from 2015 to 2018 job numbers were at their highest in the most recent survey year, 2018.
- 4.7 It should be noted that whilst many of the jobs that are based in East Devon will be filled by East Devon residents, there are also large numbers of people that live elsewhere that commute into the District for work purposes. The 2011 census – see: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/WU03UK/chart/1132462159> – showed 12,500 people travelling into the District for jobs, but a higher number, 18,405 East Devon residents, travelled out of the District for jobs (most of these, 11,430, were to Exeter).