

**Report to:** **Strategic Planning Committee**

**Date of Meeting:** 29 January 2019

**Public Document:** Yes

**Exemption:** None

**Review date for release** A further review will be published later in 2019.



**Agenda item:** 8

**Subject:** **Employment Land Review to Year Ending 31 March 2018**

**Purpose of report:** This report provides summary details of the Employment Land Review produced by the Planning Policy section for 2017-18.

**Recommendation:** **That Committee takes note of 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 are based upon adequate, up to date and relevant evidence.

**Equalities impact:** Low Impact  
There are no specific equalities issues associated with production of the Employment Land Review Report.

**Risk:** Low Risk  
No risks identified

**Links to background information:** [East Devon – Employment Land Review 31 March 2018](#)

**Link to Council Plan:** Developing an Outstanding Local Economy

## **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 2018.

## **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. One new site has been added to the database in this latest report bringing employment sites monitored in East Devon to a total of 62. 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 5 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.
- 2.7 Plans of each site are provided illustrating the detail of activity for individual properties during the last 5 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.

### **3. Overview of Employment Land Review for 2017-18**

#### **3.1 Planning Permissions**

Planning permissions granted during 2017-18 amounted to approximately 3.58 hectares of net additional site area; 23 permissions were for plots within major sites and 17 were at small sites.

#### **3.2 Permissions Under Construction at March 31st 2018**

There were 13 plots under construction, amounting to approximately 4.07 hectares of net additional site area, as of March 31st 2018. This figure includes the new East Devon District Council offices in Honiton (7,640m<sup>2</sup>), a new office block at Skypark (7,000m<sup>2</sup>), two new 'Grow On' buildings at Exeter Science Park (6,270m<sup>2</sup> and 3,000m<sup>2</sup> respectively) and a series of developments at Blamphayne Sawmill in Gittisham (totalling 12,100m<sup>2</sup>).

#### **3.3 Outstanding Permissions**

At March 31st 2018, site areas with extant planning permission amounted to approximately 56.57 hectares.

#### **3.4 Completions**

Completions during 2017-18 amounted to 30.81 hectares of net additional site area. This figure includes the Lidl distribution warehouse at the Intermodal Interchange site near Clyst St Mary (210,000m<sup>2</sup>), the Met Office High Performance Computer Centre at Exeter Science Park (21,400m<sup>2</sup>), the waste transfer centre at Hill Barton (17,000m<sup>2</sup>) and the Travis Perkins warehouse at Hill Barton (10,721m<sup>2</sup>). It should be noted that completion levels, measured in land area terms, were exceptionally high (compared to previous years) for the 2017 to 2018 period. A number of major sites were completed in this year but of most significance was the Lidl distribution depot at the West End.

#### **3.5 Allocated Sites**

The report details 26 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; these allocations amount to approximately 67.64 hectares. There are also allocations within mixed use sites where specific plots are not identified.

#### **3.6 Non-Domestic Rated Properties**

At March 31st 2018, there were 1,249 properties within East Devon employment sites rated for non-domestic use; 105 of which (or around 8.4%) were classed as empty.

### **4. Employment Numbers in East Devon**

4.1 This section of this 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 50<sup>th</sup> lowest, of the 380 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?](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157358/subreports/ea_time_series/report.aspx?), for East Devon measured for the July 2017 to June 2018 period are also low (despite the low wage levels). East Devon has a reported unemployment rate of 2.3% (a total of 1,550 people down from 3,000, 5.1%, in 2011) this places the District as the 11<sup>th</sup> lowest percentage level (shared with three other local authorities) of the 378 measured local authorities in Great Britain. Of the (old) Devon authorities only South Hams has a lower percentage unemployment rate. 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. Nomis data reports of 16,400 residents of East Devon during July 2017 to June 2018 that were not economically active and of these 4,700 were classified as “Wants a job” and 11,700 “Does Not Want a Job”.
- 4.4 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/query/select/getdatasetbytheme.asp?theme=27> although the web site is not straightforward to use the monitoring report shows people in jobs based in East Devon as tabled below:

**Table of number of jobs located in East Devon by year**

Year	Job Numbers - Old Counting Methodology	Job Numbers - New Counting Methodology	EDDC officer recalibration of Numbers from Old to New Methodology
2009	45,158	Not Available	45,736
2010	45,725	Not Available	46,310
2011	46,500	Not Available	47,095
2012	45,780	Not Available	46,365
2013	44,415	Not Available	44,983
2014	47,315	Not Available	47,920
2015	46,525	47,120	47,120
2016	Not Available	48,095	48,095

- 4.5 The data should be used with some degree of caution, specifically noting for example that counting methodologies changed over time. However, what can be seen is that the number of jobs located in East Devon has increased over recent years, specifically since 2013, the base start date of the Local Plan. Unfortunately data for 2017 and 2018 is not available.
- 4.6 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.

## **5. Relationship between employment numbers and housing delivery**

- 5.1 On large scale major housing sites (those of 200 homes or 4 ha of land or more) the Local Plan through Strategy 31 seeks to provide 1 job for each new home built. The Local Plan does not however seek to provide this ratio of jobs to homes across the whole district. Indeed the evidence underpinning the local plan recognises that this is unrealistic and that the number of jobs created per year is likely to be lower than the number of homes overall. It is recognised that it is an aspiration of Members to deliver one job for each new home across the district but since the adopted Local Plan does not set out to deliver this it is not considered appropriate to formally monitor the relationship between the delivery of homes and the delivery of jobs.
- 5.2 Measuring the relationship between the delivery of homes and the delivery of jobs over time is in any event fraught with difficulties. There are a number of reasons for this including the fact that the number of jobs is very susceptible to fluctuations arising from issues such as businesses opening and closing leading to hundreds of jobs being created or lost overnight. In contrast the delivery of homes is more linear and consistent with very limited potential for losses. This could lead to false conclusions based on the gain or loss of a big business in any given period. In addition the planning system is fundamentally concerned with the use of land and buildings whereas jobs are less and less reliant on these things.
- 5.3 More and more jobs are home based and so the relationship between the number of jobs and the delivery of employment land is less clear. Even where jobs are based in a traditional business unit the number of jobs per square metre will vary wildly depending on the nature of the activities taking place. As planning authority we can only control the use of units through the use classes order and so we can only estimate how many jobs a particular land allocation will create but this will actually depend on the nature of the business, levels of automation etc.
- 5.3 It is not therefore intended to record the relationship between the number of homes delivered and the number of jobs delivered over time but it is considered appropriate to continue to report on the number of jobs in the district using the Nomis data detailed above to ensure that in monitoring the delivery of employment land we relate this to the number of jobs.
- 5.4 The following table is a summary of employment sites in the district and the number of non-domestic rated premises at each site by use class as a summary of the current position.

Ref	Name	TOTAL	In Use	Empty	WORKSHOP (not Vehicle Repair)	WARE HOUSE	RETAIL	STORAGE (including Land)	FACTORY	OFFICE	SHOW ROOM	VEHICLE REPAIR	OTHER
1	Alexandria Road Industrial Estate	40	38	2	15	1	1	15	1	1	1	3	2
2	Axminster Carpets, Woodmead Road	5	5	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
3	Ottery Moor Lane / Bramble Hill Industrial Estate	13	4	9	2	7	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
4	Odhams Wharf	12	10	2	4	1	0	1	1	5	0	0	0
5	Darts Business Park	33	31	2	7	2	0	17	0	0	5	0	2
6	Dunkeswell Industrial Estate	170	152	18	39	60	0	48	9	9	0	0	5
7	East Devon Business Park	18	14	4	6	1	0	4	0	3	0	2	2
8	Finnimore Industrial Estate	36	31	5	4	7	2	6	4	6	0	4	3
9	<b>NOT IN USE</b>												
10	Harbour Road, Industrial Estate	27	23	4	1	1	8	5	0	2	1	1	8
11	Heathpark Industrial Estate	133	126	7	35	52	6	12	6	6	1	4	11
12	Greendale Business Park, Woodbury	73	71	2	2	18	0	36	1	4	0	2	10
13	Harepath Industrial Estate	12	12	0	8	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
14	Hill Barton Business Park	50	44	6	3	26	0	9	0	2	0	0	10
15	Millwey Rise Industrial Estate	63	60	3	29	4	0	5	0	6	0	1	18
16	Liverton Business Park (Phase I)	26	25	1	8	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	7
17	Liverton Business Park (Phase II)	8	8	0	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
18	Dinan Way	8	8	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
19	Manstone Lane	10	9	1	6	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
20	Mill Park Industrial Estate & Hogsbrook Farm	55	53	2	14	23	0	11	0	2	0	4	1
21	Coal Yard, Castle Gate	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
22	Aylesbeare Common	4	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
23	Pound Lane Industrial Estate	50	48	2	7	4	3	21	2	3	2	2	6
24	Colyton Business Park (Wheelers Yard)	14	14	0	8	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	1
25	Intermodal Interchange	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	Skypark	5	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
27	Science Park	43	41	2	0	0	0	0	0	39	0	0	4
28	Dinan Way Trading Estate	25	24	1	7	6	0	5	0	1	3	2	1



Ref	Name	TOTAL	In Use	Empty	WORKSHOP (not Vehicle Repair)	WARE HOUSE	RETAIL	STORAGE (including Land)	FACTORY	OFFICE	SHOW ROOM	VEHICLE REPAIR	OTHER
57	Land North and East of Town, Axminster *												
58	Hunthay Farm	20	20	0	3	3	0	12	0	1	0	0	1
59	Axehayes Farm	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
60	Dotton Farm	10	10	0	3	1	0	5	0	1	0	0	0
61	Colliton Barton	5	5	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
62	<b>NEW</b> Dunkeswell Airfield	17	14	3	1	0	0	6	0	1	0	0	9

\* specific site / plots not yet been identified



