

Report to: Strategic Planning Committee



Date of Meeting: 7 June 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Employment Land Review to year ending 31 March 2021

Report summary:

This report provides summary details of the Employment Land Review produced by the Planning Policy section for 2020-21.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

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.

Officer: James Coles, jcoles@eastdevon.gov.uk – 01395 571745

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact: Low Impact;

Climate change: Low Impact;

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/monitoring>

Link to [Statement of Intent](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better Homes and Communities for all
 - Greener East Devon
 - A resilient Economy
 - Services that matter
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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 latest Employment Land Review report for East Devon provides monitoring records up to March 31st 2021.

2 Employment Land Use Monitoring

- 2.1 Monitoring is based mainly on the assessment of 'B' use classes – B2: General Industrial and B8: Storage and Distribution – and the new E(g) class which covers: i) Offices to carry out operational and administrative functions; ii) Research and development of products or processes; and iii) Industrial processes. Some 'Sui Generis' or other uses that occupy employment sites, that do not fall into a B/E(g) 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/E(g) uses are mapped out. For avoidance of any confusion, "site" in this context constitutes a whole employment area or estate rather than an individual plot of land; so, for example, Heath park in Honiton is classified as an employment site and within Heath park there are vacant plots of land, as well as many existing businesses and buildings. A list of small sites is also monitored on an annual basis.
- 2.3 A full schedule of relevant planning permissions and completions since inception of the Local Plan in 2013 is provided for all major and small sites, with further information on sites / plots that are under construction or have outstanding permissions.
- 2.4 Records are also provided on the completion of planning permissions during the last eight years.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Plans of each site are provided illustrating the detail of activity for individual properties during the last eight years. Each plan also maps out vacant land as described in paragraph 2.5.

2.7 Information is also given on non-domestic rated units within employment sites, both occupied and empty.

3. Overview of Employment Land Review for 2020-21

3.1 Planning Permissions

Seventeen planning permissions granted during 2020-21 amounted to approximately 3.09 hectares of net additional site area.

3.2 Permissions under Construction

There were five plots under construction, amounting to approximately 1.33 hectares of net additional site area, as of March 31st 2021. This figure includes work on plots at Dunkeswell Airfield and three smaller sites.

3.3 Outstanding Permissions

At March 31st 2021, there were 63 site areas with extant planning permission amounting to approximately 38.39 hectares.

3.4 Completions

Seven completions during 2020-21 amounted to 1.91 hectares of net additional site area.

3.5 Allocated Sites

The report details 24 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 63.73 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 24 for each site but the overall area of land allocated for employment has been included in full within the stated total of 63.73ha.

3.6 Non-Domestic Rated Properties

At March 31st 2021, there were 1,283 premises within East Devon employment sites rated for non-domestic use; 109 of which (8.5%) 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 Drawing on Government data, from the NOMIS web site (see: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157358/subreports/asher_compared/report.aspx) East Devon has the 165th lowest, of the 353 recorded local authorities in Great Britain, median gross weekly resident pay level for full time workers. But, in Devon, all other local authority areas (with the exception of Exeter and Mid Devon) have lower median gross weekly resident pay levels for full time workers.

4.3 Unemployment rates, reported on NOMIS (see: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157358/subreports/ea_compared/report.aspx) for East Devon measured for the October 2020 to September 2021 period are also low (despite the low wage levels). East Devon has a reported unemployment rate of 3.2% (a

total of 2,000 people up 300 from the 1,700 in the previous monitoring period); this places the District as the joint 329th lowest of all the 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 17,600 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 13,500 are under a category of ‘does not want a job’ (Oct 2020 to Sep 2021).
- 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	2,446,000	29,546,000
2019	48,000	2,475,000	29,894,000
2020	47,000	2,453,000	29,326,000

- 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.
- 4.7 ONS data shows that the number of jobs in East Devon is some way lower than the resident population in employment (60,800 – Oct 2020 to Sep 2021). There is a net out-commuting movement of residents out of East Devon to jobs outside of the District with most of the commuting being to jobs in Exeter.
- 4.8 It should also 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).

Financial implications:

There are no financial implications within the report on which to 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. There are no legal comments from this report for noting.