

STAGE 1

Matter 7 - Employment Development

(Main Evidence Base : SD03 / CD27 / CD25 – SHELAA / EX/02 / EX/07)

Issue

1. Allocations and the delivery of employment land

*Is there a reasonable prospect that the employment land allocated will be delivered?
Should consideration be given to a greater number and range of sites being allocated to increase the prospect that more local higher skilled jobs are created?*

Response

1. The Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment – August 2016 (CD25), summarises the approach taken to the identification of land for housing and employment use (Paragraphs 2.4-2.9).

The HEDNA Report (CD28) considered the need for employment land and floorspace in the Derbyshire Dales taking account of economic trends and projected growth in employment, commercial property conditions and a survey of businesses in the District. The study concluded that there was a requirement for up to 15 hectares of additional employment land to meet development needs in the District up to 2033. This provision is met by the allocation of sites in Policy EC2.

The Derbyshire Dales Economic Plan 2014-2019 (CD29) identifies the specific objectives of creating higher value jobs within the local economy and identifies the requirement to bring forward key employment sites across the District to support this objective, including the key strategic sites at Ashbourne Airfield (Local Plan Policy EC2(a) and EC2(f).

The development of employment floorspace provides significant challenges within rural areas such as the Derbyshire Dales with the challenges of relatively small overall markets for new accommodation and values at levels which are not considered to provide a sufficient level of return to developers to justify the risks of speculative development in such locations. Despite the extensive ‘call for sites’ exercises that have been undertaken over a number of years, very few sites are put forward for consideration for employment development. The District Council’s approach has therefore been to seek to secure employment land provision as part of strategic development sites where there are opportunities for economies of scale in the provision of infrastructure and a degree of cross subsidy from higher value end uses such as housing.

Furthermore, the development of new high quality employment floorspace to support the provision of higher value jobs provides significant challenges to the area – particularly given the continuous pressure to support housing targets within the Derbyshire Dales and demand from property developers and landowners to accommodate such higher value uses. As a result, the majority of employment land provision is accommodated as part of major mixed use development schemes with large residential elements supporting the employment parts of the individual projects.

The schemes are each longstanding development proposals within the area – with recent progress towards site development on each considered to be as a result of improvements

	<p>within residential markets which have improved project viability, however it is important that the pressure for new residential development will also deliver the good quality employment floorspace which will play an important role in meeting future demand in the area.</p> <p>In principle, the District Council is supportive of a greater number of sites being allocated for employment use, however an insufficient quantum of suitable sites was identified through the SHELAA to justify such an approach being taken.</p>
Issue	
2.	<p>The effectiveness of Policies EC1, EC3 and EC4 and consistency with Policies S3 and S5</p> <p><i>Will the modifications to be made in response to preliminary questions ensure that Policies S3 and S5 are consistent with Policy EC1?</i></p>
Response	
2.	<p>Policy S3 of the Pre-Submission Draft Derbyshire Dales Local Plan establishes a settlement hierarchy which seeks to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are achieved across the plan area. The Policy defines five tiers of settlement, all areas beyond the defined tiers are for the purposes of the plan defined as 'countryside.</p> <p>Policy S5 establishes the criteria for considering development proposals in the countryside. In regard to employment development, the policy permits the redevelopment of previously developed sites and/or the conversion of existing buildings for employment use, the sustainable growth of tourism or other rural based enterprises, proposals for agriculture and related development. As currently drafted, criteria c) of the policy is supportive of rural employment development in the form of home working, commercial enterprises and live-work units where a rural location can be justified. In order to ensure that other forms of rural employment can also be accommodated, the District Council has proposed a modification to this criterion.</p> <p>Policy EC1 (bullet point 15) states that business development in the countryside will be supported. However, in the interests of achieving sustainable development, it is considered that this aspect of the policy needs to be referenced back to Policy S5. A modification is therefore proposed to this effect.</p> <p>In order to maintain a sufficient supply of land for employment purposes, Policy EC3 seeks to retain existing sites in employment use unless there is evidence to demonstrate that this is not feasible. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings will be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities as per NPPF paragraph 22. The District Council has proposed a modification to the supporting text of Policy EC3 to clarify the requirements of the marketing exercise to be undertaken.</p> <p>The principles established in Policy EC3 will also be applied to Policy EC4.</p> <p>The basis of these policies is supported by evidence obtained through the Derbyshire Dales Business Survey (October 2016) (EX/11)</p>