

Hertsmere Local Development Framework

Local Significant Employment Sites

LDF Supporting Study

Update Report



September 2010

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Significant Employment Sites Local Development Framework (LDF) supporting study was completed in October 2008. The purpose of this update is to report any material changes in policy and any other circumstances since the completion of this work and to make alterations to the recommendations of the study accordingly.
- 1.2 Given that Hertsmere's LDF has not progressed as first envisaged, it is now proposed that the locations of any Local Significant Employment Sites will be identified within the Council's emerging *Core Strategy* Development Plan Document (DPD) and that the exact boundaries of these sites will then be defined within a later *Site Allocations* DPD.

2.0 Policy update

- 2.1 National, regional and local policy has moved forward since the completion of the study in 2008 on several fronts. However, it is not considered that any of these changes have had a material affect on the study's recommendations.
- 2.2 The government has recently replaced several Planning Policy Statements/Guidance notes, including *Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms* (PPG4), with *Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth* (PPS4). PPS4 sets out national policy in relation to development within the B-class uses; as with PPG4, this document requires that employment sites are accessible and have an acceptable impact on amenity and the environment, and, in more general terms, supports the provision of accommodation suitable for small businesses.
- 2.3 Another national policy document recently replaced has been *Planning Policy Guidance note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG15). This was replaced by *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5). However, PPG15 being replaced by PPS5 has no material affect on the need for employment sites to have no undue impact on historic assets.

- 2.4 There has also been a change in national government since the completion of the study in late 2008. One of the policies of the new government is to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) and on 6 July 2010 the new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government wrote to Local Planning Authorities announcing the revocation of all RSSs. As such, the *East of England Plan* (2008) is no longer part of Hertsmere's development plan. Although, as a result of this, the Council is no longer bound by RSS job growth targets, it is not thought that this alters the need for sites suitable for the accommodation of small businesses to be protected.
- 2.5 A further development since October 2008 has been the completion of the *Hertfordshire London Arc Job Growth and Employment Land Study*, which was finalised in March 2009. As anticipated, its findings did not indicate a lessening of demand for or an increase in supply of suitable premises for small businesses in Hertsmere. As such, it is not considered that the recommendation of the *Interim Central Hertfordshire Employment Land Review* that 'lower-value activities and the corresponding lower-skill employment opportunities' be protected has been altered as a result.

3.0 Site assessments update

- 3.1 As the study was completed over 18 months ago, it has been recognised that there was a need for the site assessments carried out to be reviewed in part. This update report considers changes to the sites recommended for designation as Local Significant Employment Sites, as well as those sites that were discarded at the later stages of the assessment process. Those sites that were discarded at the earlier stages of the process were considered unsuitable for more fundamental reasons, such as having accommodation of a type that is not suited to small businesses; as such, it is not thought likely that these sites would have changed to the extent that they would now be suitable.
- 3.2 In addition to a review of the assessments carried out previously, a search was made to establish whether any new sites eligible for allocation as Local Significant Employment Site had been developed since the completion of the

study. Information supplied by Hertfordshire County Council's Planning Information Service for monitoring purposes was used to identify those sites that met the initial criteria for allocation¹. It was found that two new sites – Blackbirds Farm in Aldenham and Bushey Hall Farm in Bushey – had been developed for B-class use.

- 3.3 The study's assessments have been reviewed, and any new assessments carried out, through revisiting the study's assessment criteria and following its methodology. This involved desktop work and, where necessary, site visits. Please see Appendix A of this update report for revised site assessments and Appendix B for new site assessments.

4.0 Assessment update findings

- 4.1 Overall it was found that little had changed since the completion of the study. As such, the key findings of the update are briefly set out below.
- 4.2 The two newly identified sites were found to be unsuitable for allocation as Local Significant Employment Sites. Although this was principally as neither was found to provide for local employment, given that the buildings at these sites were mainly used for the storage requirements of businesses located elsewhere, both sites also had other negative features, such as being located poorly in relation to public transport.
- 4.3 The 14 sites that were found to be unsuitable in the later stages of the study's assessment process were again found to be unsuitable, mostly as these sites had changed little in the period between the study being completed in 2008 and this update. However, where these had changed, this was almost always because of the site having been redeveloped for residential use, or because either planning permission had been granted or was being sought for such redevelopment; this demonstrates the development pressure being put on small, unprotected site within B-class or physically similar Sui Generis uses.

¹ B-class, or physically similar Sui Generis; outside of existing Employment Areas and the Centennial Park Key Employment Site; and 0.25 hectares or above in size.

- 4.4 The seven sites that were recommended in the study for allocation as Local Significant Employment sites were again found to be suitable. The only significant change to any of these sites was that part of Borehamwood Enterprise Centre & adjoining sites was found to be subject to a planning application for redevelopment for residential use. If this application were to be granted permission and the site redeveloped, then this part of the site might not be designated as a Local Significant Employment Site.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 Given the findings of this update, its recommendations are largely the same as that of the study.

Recommendation 1

- 5.2 Recommendations 1-7 of the study should be altered slightly. The seven sites that were recommended for allocation as Local Significant Employment Sites in the Council's future *Site Allocations* DPD should instead be identified as locations in the emerging *Core Strategy* DPD. This will offer the sites more immediate protection through the LDF, given that the *Core Strategy* DPD is to be adopted prior to the *Site Allocations* DPD. The seven sites are:

- Wrotham Business Park
- Borehamwood Enterprise Centre & adjoining sites
- Theobald Court & adjoining sites
- Lismirrane Industrial Park
- Hollies Way Business Park
- Beaumont Gate
- Farm Close sites

- 5.3 The exact boundaries of these sites should then, at a later date, be defined in the *Site Allocations* DPD. This will allow, in particular, for the boundary of Borehamwood Enterprise Centre & adjoining sites to be reviewed and, if part of this site has been, or has planning permission to be, redeveloped for residential use, then its exclusion from the designation could be considered.

Recommendation 2

- 5.4 Recommendation 8 of the study should be retained. As such, all seven sites listed in recommendation 1 should be given immediate protection from redevelopment for non-B uses, and the Council should approve the first recommendation of this update for interim development control purposes.

Appendix A: Revised site assessments

<p>Aldenham Depot <i>Oakridge Lane, Aldenham, WD25</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Not suitable: new site visit undertaken (09/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor location in relationship to public transport • Poor accessibility by motorised vehicle • Poor condition and appearance • Lack of accommodation for small businesses

<p>Wrotham Business Park <i>Wrotham Park, Barnet, EN5</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Suitable: new site visit undertaken (06/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall high quality • Good vehicular access • Quantity of provision for small businesses <p>Furthermore, unlike in 2008, when the site was recently complete, no vacancies exist, which demonstrates its popularity</p>

<p>The White House Commercial Centre <i>White House Road, Bentley Heath, EN5</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Not suitable: new site visit undertaken (06/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor location in relationship to public transport • Poor condition and appearance • Lack of accommodation for small businesses

<p>Glenhaven Avenue Commercial Estate & adjoining site – (26-30, Theobald Street) <i>Glenhaven Avenue / Theobald Street, Borehamwood, WD6</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Not suitable: new site visit undertaken (09/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative impact on visual amenity and the local environment • Unsuitable relationship with adjoining land uses • Negative impact on the local road network, in particular due to the lack of suitable arrangements for on- or off-site car parking

	<p>Furthermore, the use of the site has continued to move towards residential, with the redevelopment of 19 Glenhaven Avenue complete and a current application for the redevelopment of 22, 27A and 29 Glenhaven Avenue for residential use (TP/10/0758)</p>
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<p>Station Road sites – (Gasworks / H N H Timber / Prestige House / Unit 4 Autos) <i>Station Road, Borehamwood, WD6</i></p>	
Updated comments:	<p>Not suitable: new site visit undertaken (09/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor condition and appearance • Unsuitable relationship with adjoining land uses • Negative impact on the local road network, in particular due to the lack of suitable arrangements for on- or off-site car parking

<p>Borehamwood Enterprise Centre & adjoining sites – (The Kinetic Business Centre / NNC House / Galleo House / Link House / Redemption House / Sigma House / Gerrard House / Imajea House) <i>Theobald Street, Borehamwood, WD6</i></p>	
Updated comments:	<p>Suitable: new site visit undertaken (09/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for a variety of business uses and small businesses • Reasonable condition • Very good location in relation to public transport <p>However, there is a current application for the redevelopment of 43-47 Theobald Street (Gerrard House) for residential use (TP/10/1157)</p>

<p>Theobald Court & adjoining sites – (27A-29 Theobald Street / 31-33 Theobald Street) <i>Theobald Street, Borehamwood, WD6</i></p>	
Updated comments:	<p>Suitable: new site visit undertaken (09/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for small businesses • Reasonable condition • Very good location in relation to public transport <p>However, as 31-33 Theobald Street still appears to be used for D1 purposes, only Theobald Court and 27A-29 Theobald</p>

	Street could be allocated as a Local Significant Employment site
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Folia Europe <i>Well End Road, Borehamwood, WD6</i>	
Updated comments:	Not suitable: no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor location in relationship to public transport • Lack of accommodation for small businesses

Cantillon Haulage & adjoining site – (10, Elton Way) <i>Elton Way, Bushey, WD25</i>	
Updated comments:	Not suitable: no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor location in relationship to public transport • Lack of accommodation for small businesses

Highfield Road / Vale Road sites – (32 / 34-38 / 42 / 46, Vale Road and Genesis House / Highfield House) <i>Highfield Road / Vale Road, Bushey, WD23</i>	
Updated comments:	Not suitable: no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's negative impact on the road network, on account of access being from relatively small residential roads. Furthermore, planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of Highfield House, Gensis House and 32-38 Vale Road for residential use (TP/10/0036)

Melbourne Road sites – (Herkomer House / Pearl House / Prestige House / Tryford House) <i>Melbourne Road, Bushey, WD23</i>	
Updated comments:	Not suitable: no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of accommodation for small businesses • Inclusion of a statutory listed building

Haydon Dell Farm <i>Merry Hill Road, Bushey, WD23</i>	
Updated comments:	Not suitable: no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's poor location in relationship to public transport. Furthermore, there is a current application for the redevelopment of the site for planning permission has now been granted for residential use (TP/10/1110)

<p>Rossway Farm <i>Rossway Drive, Bushey, WD23</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Not suitable: no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's poor location in relationship to public transport. Furthermore, the site will be subject to a planning brief, and is acceptable for residential use in principle, following the refusal of planning application reference number TP/08/0111 at the 24 April Bushey/Aldenham Planning Committee, which resolved as such</p>

<p>Walton Road Industrial Estate <i>Walton Road, Bushey, WD23</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Not suitable: no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site having been redeveloped for residential use</p>

<p>Allum Lane sites – (Station House / Bridge Works) <i>Allum Lane, Elstree, WD6</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Not suitable: new site visit undertaken (09/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor condition and appearance • Lack of accommodation for small businesses

<p>Lismirrane Industrial Park <i>Elstree Road, Elstree, WD6</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Suitable: new site visit undertaken (09/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for a variety of business uses and small businesses • Reasonable condition

<p>Elstree Aerodrome <i>Hogg Lane, Elstree, WD6</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Not suitable: new site visit undertaken (09/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor condition and appearance • Negative impact on the local environment • Poor location in relationship to public transport

<p>Hollies Way Business Park <i>Hollies Way, Potters Bar, EN6</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Suitable: new site visit undertaken (06/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for a variety of business uses and small businesses • Reasonable condition

<p>Beaumont Gate <i>Beaumont Gate, Radlett, WD7</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Suitable: new site visit undertaken (09/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for small businesses • Very good condition and appearance • Very good location in relation to public transport

<p>Farm Close sites – (Chestnut House / Hertford House) <i>Farm Close, Shenley, WD7</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Suitable: new site visit undertaken (09/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for small businesses • Very good condition and appearance • Very good accessibility by motorised vehicle

<p>The Meadows <i>Blanche Lane, South Mimms, EN6</i></p>	
<p>Updated comments:</p>	<p>Not suitable: new site visit undertaken (06/08/2010), no change in suitability since the completion of the study in 2008 on account of the site's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor condition and appearance • Poor location in relationship to public transport

Appendix B: New site assessments

Blackbirds Farm	
<i>Blackbirds Lane, Aldenham, WD25 8BS</i>	
Number of known businesses / units at site:	8
Number of responses to either the Business Questionnaire 2006 or owner / occupier survey:	Not applicable: no survey sent
Date of site visit:	Not applicable: site visit considered unnecessary
Is site over 0.25 hectares in size?	Yes: approximately 0.40 hectares
Current use class:	B8
Is there permission for a change of use / any other relevant planning history?	No
Age of the site:	<i>Not assessed</i>
Condition of the site (1-5):	<i>Not assessed</i>
Visual impact of the site (1-5):	<i>Not assessed</i>
Are there small business units?	Yes
How many small business units are there on site?	Between 5 and 9
Does the site have the potential to help reduce unemployment amongst those with lower-level skills?	No: information submitted with TP/08/2028, an application for a change of use to B8 storage, demonstrates that the units are used only for the storage purposes of businesses located elsewhere
Did the site appear vacant / to have been marketed for a long time?	<i>Not assessed</i>
Proximity of residential dwellings / other potentially conflicting land uses, including retail:	Fewer than 100 metres away, but not immediately adjoining
Suitability of the overall relationship with adjoining land uses (1-5):	<i>Not assessed</i>
Is there adequate infrastructure to facilitate vehicular access?	<i>Not assessed</i>
Approximate number of parking spaces:	<i>Not assessed</i>
Is the site compliant with non-residential parking standards?	Not known
Is there direct or indirect access to a strategic motorway / primary trunk road / main distributor road / secondary distributor road?	No
Impact on the road network and other road users (1-5):	<i>Not assessed</i>
Highways Comment:	Not applicable: highways not consulted
Ease of access using public transport (1-5):	1
Is the site at risk of flooding?	No
Are there any policy designations on the site?	Yes: Green Belt
Impact on bio-diversity / geo-diversity / the water environment:	None known
Is there a history of complaints to the Council's Environmental Health department concerning the site?	No

Overall impact on the environment (1-5):	5
Rating in CHELR:	Not applicable: not assessed
Comments:	No suitable: information submitted to the Council demonstrates that, whilst the site does provide space for small businesses, it does little to provide local employment, as all buildings are used for the storage requirements of one business based outside of Hertsmere.

Bushey Hall Farm	
<i>Bushey Mill Lane, Bushey, WD23 2AB</i>	
Number of known businesses / units at site:	4
Number of responses to either the Business Questionnaire 2006 or owner / occupier survey:	Not applicable: no survey sent
Date of site visit:	09/08/2010
Is site over 0.25 hectares in size?	Yes: approximately 0.56 hectares
Current use class:	B1 / B2 / B8 / Sui Generis
Is there permission for a change of use / any other relevant planning history?	No
Age of the site:	Mix of ages
Condition of the site (1-5):	2
Visual impact of the site (1-5):	2
Are there small business units?	Yes
How many small business units are there on site?	Between 5 and 9
Does the site have the potential to help reduce unemployment amongst those with lower-level skills?	Yes: however, the information submitted with TP/08/0896, an application for a lawful development certificate for an existing use, suggests that most units are used for storage only, with little or no on-site employment generated
Did the site appear vacant / to have been marketed for a long time?	No
Proximity of residential dwellings / other potentially conflicting land uses, including retail:	Fewer than 100 metres away, but not immediately adjoining
Suitability of the overall relationship with adjoining land uses (1-5):	3
Is there adequate infrastructure to facilitate vehicular access?	Yes
Approximate number of parking spaces:	51-100
Is the site compliant with non-residential parking standards?	Not known
Is there direct or indirect access to a strategic motorway / primary trunk road / main distributor road / secondary distributor road?	No
Impact on the road network and other road users (1-5):	3
Highways Comment:	Not applicable: highways not consulted
Ease of access using public transport (1-5):	2
Is the site at risk of flooding?	Yes: partially in 3b / 3a / 2
Are there any policy designations on the site?	Yes: Green Belt
Impact on bio-diversity / geo-diversity / the water environment:	None known
Is there a history of complaints to the Council's Environmental Health department concerning the site?	No
Overall impact on the environment (1-5):	5

Rating in CHELR:	Not applicable: not assessed
Comments:	No suitable: information submitted to the Council demonstrates that, whilst the site does provide space for small businesses, it does little to provide local employment, as most buildings are used for the storage requirements of one business based outside of Hertsmere. In addition, the site is not well located in relation to public transport and is in a relatively poor condition.

