

Full Council	
Meeting Date	4 th December 2024
Report Title	Local Plan Review – Local Plan Employment Sites
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson, Head of Place
Lead Officer	Natalie Earl, Planning Manager (Policy)
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That members note the potential employment sites available for allocation through the Local Plan; and 2. That members recommend the employment sites recommended by Policy and Resources Committee on 11th September 2024 for consultation through the Regulation 18 Local Plan.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the discussion had at both Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group (PTPWG) on 8th August 2024 and at Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) on 11th September 2024. The report and minutes of both meetings are provided in Appendices I – IV.
- 1.2 As part of preparing the Regulation 18 consultation document for the Local Plan (LP) it is now timely for Members to discuss, and set out their preferences for, employment sites for allocation. The PTPWG discussion paper set out the evidenced need figure for employment allocations (73ha of industrial land and 1.1ha of office space) through the LP, and the available sites to meet that figure.

2 Background

- 2.1 The discussions at both PTPWG and P&R encompassed the suitability of the proposed sites for different types of employment use and the need for clearly written allocation policies within the Local Plan (LP) to guide design, landscaping, access and usage. Members raised concerns about employment uses with frequent HGV movements being located in rural areas.
- 2.2 The sites that are in existing use but proposed for allocation, would have LP policies drafted to allow their uses to be intensified, and those with landscape and heritage interests would have those concerns addressed through their policies.
- 2.3 Members proposed a motion that the Leader of the Council write a letter to the Local Government Authority (LGA) seeking to persuade the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Deputy Prime Minister to

include education and health as employment land, in the employment land calculations. This letter has been sent.

- 2.4 Links to the Employment Land Review 2018 and the recent Employment Land Review Update 2024 can both be found in section 8 of this report under 'Background Documents.' The sites being recommended for employment allocation are those that were assessed in the ELR Update as sites with "good" and/or "possible" prospects to meet Swale's employment need. There are therefore deemed to be the most suitable sites to allocate for employment uses.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 At 11th September P&R, members recommended to Council:

That the preferred sites set out in the PTPWG report, with the exclusion of sites CSF30, CSF47, and CSF50, if no housing development be put forward to the site, for consultation through the Regulation 18 Local Plan.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Members could instruct officers to look for employment sites not currently assessed through the Employment Land Review Update (ELR) but these would then need to be assessed with the same methodology used in the ELR and this would require work not currently timetabled. It is also unlikely that any significant sites would come forward due to the extensive call for sites undertaken and the detailed knowledge of the borough and local economy that the Economic Development and Planning teams have, who have both been unable to find any other suitable sites.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation on employment allocations will be undertaken through the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Local Plan is responsible for delivering the spatial elements of the Corporate Plan.
Financial, Resource and Property	The Employment Land Review is a statutory, budgeted piece of evidence base.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Preparation of a Local Plan is carried out under a national legislative and regulatory framework.

Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	<p>The Local Plan will be supported by its own Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment at each key stage in decision making.</p> <p>The sustainability appraisal process appraises the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan from the outset. In doing so it helps ensure that Plan making decisions are made that contribute to achieving sustainable development.</p> <p>Habitats regulations assessments test if a Plan and the site allocations and policies within it could significantly harm the designated features of a site or sites protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.</p> <p>Drafting of the Plan and its Policies will also take in to account the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix I: 8th August PTPWG report: Potential Local Plan Employment Sites Discussion

Appendix II: 8th August PTPWG draft minutes

Appendix III: 11th September P&R report: Potential Local Plan Employment Sites Discussion

Appendix IV: 11th September P&R draft minutes

Appendix V: Table of potential sites assessed as 'good' or 'possible' in the ELR 2024

Appendix VI: Map showing the spatial distribution of potential sites from Appendix I Table

8 Background Documents

9.1 [Employment Land Review Update 2024](#)

9.2 [Employment Land Review 2018](#)