

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	Cabinet
2.	<b>Date:</b>	9 June 2010
3.	<b>Title:</b>	Rotherham Employment Land Review Update
4.	<b>Programme Area:</b>	Forward Planning, Environment & Development Services

### 5. Summary

An update of the 2007 Employment Land Review has been undertaken to form part of the evidence base which will support and inform preparation of the Local Development Framework, and inform planning decisions. This report seeks Cabinet's endorsement of the consultation strategy.

### 6. Recommendations

- a) That Cabinet notes the content of this report and endorses the consultation strategy set out for the Employment Land Review.

## **7. Proposals and Details**

### ***Background***

A report on the Employment Land Review was considered by the Rotherham Local Development Framework Steering Group of 23 April 2010, when it was resolved that the consultation strategy be referred to Cabinet for consideration. In light of this the consultation period has been amended to run between 23 June and 23 July 2010.

In order to help provide a robust evidence base for preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and assist when determining planning applications, the Council produced an Employment Land Review in 2007. This has now been updated. This updated Employment Land Review takes stock of Rotherham's current economy, looks at likely future economic changes and requirements and considers the amount of land likely to be required to be allocated for development to help meet these needs.

It has assessed the suitability for continued or potential use for economic purposes of a range of sites across Rotherham, focusing primarily on land allocated for employment development in the Unitary Development Plan but which remains undeveloped, a number of other sites currently or formerly used for employment purposes, and sites identified as potential allocations as part of our early Site Allocations work.

### ***Employment Land Review Headlines***

The Employment Land Review is available to view on the intranet here, in the "Employment Land Review 2010" folder:

<http://intranet.rotherhamconnect.com/C0/PlanningRegen/default.aspx>

Please note that the document has been produced using our website based consultation software, which is reflected in the formatting of the above document.

The Employment Land Review highlights Rotherham's economic recovery since 2001, the impact of the current recession and that take up of allocated development sites and major windfalls have averaged around 15.3 hectares per year between 1996 and 2009.

An examination of local economic prospects highlights that public services, manufacturing, construction and wholesale/retail are forecast to remain as key economic sectors within Rotherham. Growth is also expected across a range of Yorkshire Forward identified clusters including advanced manufacturing and metals. It identifies that around 250 hectares of employment land may be required to meet needs for the LDF period to 2027 and 5 hectares of land may be required to accommodate forecast office space requirements.

Following the review of employment land, 43 sites amounting to some 231.44 hectares of land are recommended for allocation as employment development sites, of which 114.72 hectares are readily available for development. This includes sites within the greenbelt, primarily in locations identified as potential urban extensions, reflecting the 2009 Core Strategy Revised Options which identified that to meet

current RSS housing targets and plan for sustainable communities, development within the green belt will be necessary.

It also recommends that 100.8 hectares of current employment land are considered for re-allocation for alternative uses. This is due to a variety of reasons including the need to meet the RSS housing target, the inappropriate location of some sites, the need for reclamation and decontamination and planning permission or emerging plans for alternative uses.

To meet the 250 hectares of employment land identified above around 20 hectares of land may need to be identified as development sites in addition to the 231.44 hectares already recommended. The Employment Land Review does not commit the Council to any future uses and site recommendations will need further consideration as part of preparing the LDF Site Allocations development plan document.

### **Site Assessments**

This update has involved reviewing 144 sites or areas, including sites suggested for employment allocation as part of the 'call for sites' to be considered for possible future allocation. We are in the process of updating the Employment Land Review database with the survey results and therefore individual site assessments are not available at present. However the survey sheets and location maps will be made available as part of the public consultation.

### **Consultation**

There is no statutory requirement to consult on the Employment Land Review (ELR), however in line with the earlier 2007 ELR it is considered best practice to gather comments on this update to inform the LDF. Once finalised the ELR will inform the LDF Site Allocations document. Consultation on the allocation of specific sites will begin later this year and provide substantial opportunities for communities to be involved in selecting sites for future development.

This is a technical document which will form part of the LDF evidence base and as such this is reflected in the target audience for this consultation. The document has been prepared in Limehouse, our website based consultation software, with respondents being encouraged to provide comments online. In line with the Council's consultation protocol, Planning Form 1 will be completed, however the table below summarises the consultation strategy. This has been developed having regard to the emerging timescales for production of and consultation on the Core Strategy and Site Allocation documents, into which the findings of this Employment Land Review will feed.

### Consultation Strategy

Consultation Period	Four weeks between 23 June and 23 July 2010
Target audience	General and specific consultees, major landowners, agents, those who have put forward sites for consideration as employment allocations, other organisations with an interest in the development of the local economy such as the LSP, Yorkshire Forward and

Chamber of Commerce, and the general public (via area assembly/parish briefing notes)

Communication methods    Email letter, update poster for libraries, website, briefing note for area assemblies/parishes, press release, internal workshop linked with development of the broader economic strategy to be set out in the Core Strategy

### **Next Steps**

Following consultation the Employment Land Review will be finalised taking account of any comments received. A report will be brought to the LDF Steering Group at this stage. The Employment Land Review will then form part of the evidence base to inform preparation of the Core Strategy and Site Allocation DPDs. The document will also provide evidence to be taken into account as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

### **8. Finance**

This report has no financial implications for the Council. Consultation costs will be met from the Forward Planning budget. As a primarily web-based consultation costs should be minimised; however costs may increase should requests for printed copies be received.

### **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The Employment Land Review is a key document contributing to a robust evidence base for preparing the Local Development Framework. This evidence base is vital in ensuring that LDF documents assessed at Independent Examination satisfy the tests of soundness set out by the Planning Inspectorate.

### **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The Employment Land Review and its contribution towards the preparation of the Local Development Framework contributes to the Community Strategy's Strategic and Cross Cutting Themes by ensuring that employment land provision meets the needs of the modern economy and supports sustainable communities through access to employment opportunities and promoting equality in terms of choice and opportunities

### **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

- Employment Land Review available on the intranet here in the "Employment Land Review 2010" folder:  
<http://intranet.rotherhamconnect.com/C0/PlanningRegen/default.aspx>

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