


Oxford Core Strategy Examination Statement of Oxford City Council		www.oxford.gov.uk  OXFORD CITY COUNCIL
C/M4/2	Matter 4 – Employment Issue 2 – Employment land requirements	

i) **What is the requirement for new employment land provision, bearing in mind the above and the RSS strategy ?**

The evidence base for the amount of employment land required for the future is set out in the Employment Land Study 2006 (CD 14/27), prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield.

The study sets out a series of employment growth options. The options (paras 8.7 to 8.12) considered different balances of accommodating demand and policy constraints, but all of which assumed some contribution to future needs from the West End. At the lower end of the range Option 1 involved no employment new land allocations and relaxing the protection of key employment sites to allow some loss. Option 2 made no new employment land allocations but maintained the protection of key employment sites and promoted their retention and modernisation. At the higher end of the range Option 4 represented a higher growth scenario that required the allocation of the Pear tree site (Northern Gateway) in addition to a further potential 20ha of land through the urban extension. Option 5 represented the upper end of the range and involved all elements of Option 4 together with a further 20ha of land on the land at Barton.

Option 3 represented a pro-active approach, in line with the 'managed economic growth' scenario. This essentially adopts the 'business as usual approach', which is based on a continuation of past economic and employment trends, but requires new land to be allocated in addition to the existing supply. It therefore identifies a net additional requirement for employment land of at least **13.5** ha, and to allow for some flexibility this could be up to **36.5** ha. The Northern Gateway is some 16 ha and is the key new strategic site that has been allocated to meet this need, together with the protection and modernisation of existing key employment sites and limited provision within the West End.

Whilst a range of options were considered both through the Employment Land Study, and latterly through the early stages of the Core Strategy, the only suitable, available and viable option to provide additional employment land is the Northern Gateway. There are no realistic alternative sites available. In the longer-term there could potentially be some scope for further provision through additional land

provision in the SDA. According to the study and to allow for some flexibility this would require the provision of a further **20** ha.

The Northern Gateway will be a phased development, with work intending to commence in 2011 and to be phased over a ten-year period to 2021.

SEEDA in their representations consider the balance proposed for Oxford is appropriate. In particular they 'welcome Policy CS.6 for the Northern Gateway, which will help to deliver employment land for high value businesses in support of the Regional Economic Strategy.' This and 'Policy CS29 which seeks to retain existing employment land and facilitate modernisation and intensification of existing sites.' SEEDA consider 'this will go some way to delivering much needed employment land in the district.'

ii) How much land / jobs should the Core Strategy be seeking to provide ?

Whilst the RSS sets out a target for additional dwellings it does not do the same for jobs. The South East Plan (CD 10/1) does however include a monitoring figure for the number of jobs, which are required to be created within Central Oxfordshire sub-region. This figure is 18,000 jobs up to 2016, but it is not split down to district level.

The RSS clearly sets a target for housing growth of 8,000 dwellings, in recognition of this increase in housing there does need to be some increase in jobs to serve this growth in housing numbers. The Background Paper: Spatial Strategy (Appendix 1) (CD5/5), sets out the estimated increase in Oxford's workforce and employment. Estimates of the potential growth in the workforce have been forecast on the basis of the projected population increase from the additional 8,000 dwellings together with the further 4,000 dwellings from the urban extension. This results in a broad estimate of between **9,760** and **14,640** additional economically active persons.

Further research has been carried out using population and labour supply data, which uses a smaller household size of 2.38 persons, together with an agreed economic activity rate of 53.6% to estimate the future workforce, based on the increase in housing supply. This analysis shows that 8,000 dwellings would generate an additional potential workforce in the region of **9,760 – 10,205**. Using the same methodology for the 'urban extension' this would result in an additional potential workforce available to Oxford's economy in the region of **14,640 – 15,308**.

In relation to land the Employment Land Study considered five options. Options 1 and 2 represented a minimal approach largely relying on the modernisation of the existing land supply, but no new allocations. Option 3 represented a pro-active approach in line with the 'managed economic growth' of the city. It recognised the land constraints within Oxford and the demand from competing uses. Options 4 and

5 considered higher growth scenarios, which required the allocation of land in the 'urban extension', which would not be deliverable by the City Council and lies outside the city boundaries.

Option 3, which is influenced by the 'business as usual' economic growth scenario, requires the provision of a minimum of 13.5 ha but with flexibility a maximum of 36.5 ha. The managed economic growth scenario requires the delivery of the Northern Gateway (16 ha), together with some development in the West End and the protection and modernisation of key employment sites.

In relation to employment growth, the Employment Land Study 2006 estimates that Option 3 for employment land release would generate a gross increase of Class B jobs of around 4,500. However the actual increase in employment depends to a large extent on the precise mix of uses and the density of development at the Northern Gateway strategic site, which will be determined through the Area Action Plan for this area. This estimate does not however include existing commitments and other sources of employment growth, such as that arising from retail development. The study, based on a continuation of past economic and employment trends, therefore identified a net additional land requirement of at least 13.5 ha, and to allow for some flexibility this could be up to 36.5 ha. The additional flexibility in providing more land would allow even greater opportunities for individual firms to choose alternative locations and different types and sizes of site.

The Background Paper B: Spatial Strategy (Appendix 1) (CD 5/5) sets out the potential employment growth, described in detail earlier in this statement. The forecast employment growth for Class 'B' jobs takes into account two time periods up to 2016 and 2026 and produces a lower and upper scenario. Up to 2016 the estimated potential job growth ranges from **2,300** to **4,500**, whilst to 2026 this ranges from **4,500** to **7,000** jobs.

iii) What are the implications on levels and timing of delivery of seeking to achieve a balance between housing and employment development over the period to 2026 ?

The SHLAA update and in particular Stage 10 Table 18, provides a breakdown of the time periods to show when housing development is likely to come forward. This shows that 50% of the housing numbers on all the range of potential housing sites are likely to come forward within the first 5 years to 2013/14, whilst a further 28% of the housing numbers are expected to come forward in years 6-10 by 2019. The remainder would come forward towards the end of the Core Strategy period. So much of the potential housing growth is forecast to be delivered early on in the Core Strategy time period.

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In the case of the Northern Gateway, being the main strategic employment allocation, the Employment Land Study originally estimated a growth of **3,750** jobs. This has been forecast to comprise between 1,250 and 1,500 jobs up to 2016 rising to between 3,150 and 3,750 up to 2026. The actual increase in jobs does however depend to a large extent on the precise mix of uses and the density of development. In seeking to provide more details on the potential floor space that could be accommodated on this site, and through further discussions with the Consortium it is forecast that the Class B use on the site could amount to between 55,000 m² and 80,000 m². On the basis of a density ratio of 1.20, this could potentially result in between **2,750 – 4,000** jobs.