

## Employment Land

### Employment Allocations

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a sufficient quantity of land is reserved for employment generating developments across the District.

~~10.11 To facilitate the employment requirements of the District as a whole, the Council considers it is important to retain a supply of land which is reserved (designated) solely for employment uses. The currently adopted Core Strategy designates 204 hectares of employment land. A significant proportion of this is located on traditional industrial estates in the District's towns and larger villages and which is already developed. According to the North Norfolk Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Part 2 (2018), approximately 42.53 hectares of designated land remained undeveloped within the District. However, this is not evenly distributed across North Norfolk and in some locations the choice of sites is very limited. In some locations, existing and new businesses have found it difficult to acquire suitable land and buildings, with a resulting delay or loss of investment. Many smaller local businesses wish to retain local connections including workforce and are dependent on local opportunities being available when they wish to expand and the Council aims to facilitate this.~~

~~10.12 The NPPF requires that the suitability of designated employment land should be kept under review and sites should not be retained for employment uses if there is little prospect of development within a reasonable period of time. An assessment of each of the Employment Areas made through the Core Strategy has been undertaken in line with Paragraph 120 of the NPPF. To ensure flexibility within the market the Council is proposing to designate a total of 285.54 hectares of employment land inclusive of the 192.51 hectares which are already developed for employment purposes. This will increase the supply of undeveloped employment land in the District to 93.03 hectares and provide a reasonable supply in each area of the District.~~

~~10.11 To facilitate the employment requirements of the District as a whole, the Council considers it is important to retain a supply of land which is reserved (designated) solely for employment uses. The Council consider it is important to offer a range of employment opportunities across the District to accommodate the expansion of local businesses and to ensure that there are opportunities for companies to move into the area.~~

~~10.13 The North Norfolk District Council Growth Sites Delivery Strategy Stage 1 Report (2020) assesses employment land not superseded by this Local Plan and allocated employment sites made through this plan to ensure consistency with Paragraph 120 of the NPPF. Further, the study assesses the local employment market in regard to market demand and market failures and establishes a future employment need within the District over the plan period.~~

~~10.14 The study sets out a range of scenarios: 'Past Land Take-up' looking at past employment development within the District and taking this forward across the plan period; 'Labour Demand Forecasting' which looks at econometrics based on the East of England model and projects the likely jobs growth in different sectors forward across the plan period; 'Labour Supply Forecasting' looks at the residential growth in the District and the resulting implications of providing jobs over the plan period; and 'Policy On Demand Forecasting' which adjusts the Demand Forecasting model with specific policy interventions such as Scottow Enterprise Zone and the North Walsham Urban Extension. These scenarios give a range of employment land need from 2.9 hectares under the 'Labour Demand Forecasting' scenario to 40 hectares under the 'Past Land Take-up' scenario.~~

The conclusions of the study go on to set out that these scenarios underestimate what is happening on the ground and that a higher quantum of employment land would be required to ensure flexibility within the market and to ensure that any upturn in the market can be satisfied over the plan period. As such the Council is proposing to designate a total of ~~285.54~~ 265.25 hectares of employment land inclusive of the ~~192.51~~ 201.41 hectares which are already developed for employment purposes. This will increase the supply of undeveloped employment land in the District to ~~93.03~~ 63.84 hectares and provide a reasonable supply in each area of the District.

### Policy ECN 1: Employment Land

For the period 2016-2036, a total of ~~285.54~~ 265.25 hectares of land will be designated/allocated and retained for employment generating developments.

Employment creating developments will be approved on the following sites subject to compliance with Policy ECN 2 'Employment Areas, Enterprise Zones & Former Airbases'. Proposals which do not comply with Policy ECN 2 will not be supported.

Location	Existing Employment Areas (Including Enterprise Zones) Already Developed (Ha)	Existing Employment Areas (Including Enterprise Zones) Undeveloped (ha)	New Proposed Allocations (ha)	Total Employment Land
<b>Eastern Area Totals</b>	<b>78.87</b>	<b>15.46</b>	<b>17.11</b>	<b>111.44</b>
Catfield	11.46	0.34		11.80
Hoveton	8.06	2.11		10.17
Ludham	0.27	0		0.27
Mundesley	0.41	0		0.41
North Walsham	38.48	5.71	15.11 (Policies DS 14, DS 15, DS 16)	59.3
Scottow	18.70	7.30		26
Stalham	1.49	0	2.00 (Policy DS21)	3.49
<b>Central Area Totals</b>	<b>34.10</b>	<b>7.51</b>	<b>5.43</b>	<b>47.04</b>
Corpusty (Saxthorpe)	1.16	0		1.16
Cromer	16.51	1.72		18.23
Holt	7.18	5.79	5.43 (Policy DS 12)	18.40
Sheringham	2.26	0		2.26
Melton Constable	6.86	0		6.86
Roughton	0.13	0		0.13
<b>Western Area Total</b>	<b>88.44</b>	<b>18.33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>106.77</b>
Blakeney	0.18	0		0.18
Fakenham	44.82	9.23		54.05
Egmere	16.50	5.00		21.50

Wells-next-the-sea	2.31	0.23		2.54
Tattersett	24.63	3.87		28.50
<b>Total Across District</b>	<b>201.41</b>	<b>41.30</b>	<b>22.54</b>	<b>265.25</b>

Table 3 Available Employment Land 2016 – 2036

### Employment Areas, Enterprise Zones & Former Airbases

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employment land within the District is protected for employment uses and that proposals that come forward for Employment Areas are for acceptable uses.

10.14 Employment uses are traditionally defined as B class uses (B1, B2, and B8) including offices, manufacturing and storage and distribution. The diversification of the economy and the decline in traditional manufacturing means that employment opportunities now emanate from a wider range of uses. There are opportunities for employment generating, non-B class uses, to co-exist alongside the traditional B-class uses on designated employment sites. There is a balancing act here: the cumulative impact of non-B class uses can have an impact upon the functionality of more traditional B class uses.

10.15 The proposed policy allows for mixed use developments to reflect the level of flexibility set out within the NPPF. Mixed use developments may include elements of development that do not fall within the B1, B2 and B8 use classes such as hotels, pub restaurants, trade counters and potentially care/nursing homes, all of which create job opportunity. Proposals for Main Town Centre Uses (as defined in the glossary of the NPPF) will not be supported on designated employment land unless it is first demonstrated that no suitable Town Centre, or edge of centre, sites are available.

10.16 Within North Norfolk there are two Enterprise Zones: Scottow Enterprise Park and Egmere Business Zone. Scottow Enterprise Park is a 26 hectare ex-RAF site on the northern edge of the Greater Norwich urban zone. The site provides a unique offering for grow-on space, with a private high voltage renewable electricity network it promises to be a strategic business location across the East and the UK. Egmere Business Zone is a 7.4 hectare site situated to the south of port facilities at Wells-next-the-Sea, which has been established to support investment associated with the growing offshore renewable energy sector off the North Norfolk Coast. Egmere Business Zone is subject to a Local Development Order (LDO) which introduces simplified planning on the site and sets out the type of development that is dealt with under Permitted Development Rights.

10.17 The District contains four former defence establishments: Coltishall Airbase, Neatishead (part), Sculthorpe Airbase (part) and West Raynham, which include large areas of brownfield land. Sculthorpe, West Raynham and Coltishall provide significant levels of existing housing but lack the key services and facilities which would make them suitable locations for new housing development. Due to the more isolated location of these sites, any further significant residential development would lead to increased car journeys and would not be in conformity with the settlement hierarchy and approach to sustainable development advocated in this Plan. However, these locations represent an under-used resource within the District and the Council wishes to support their re-use for appropriate employment generating uses. The Policies Map defines the 'technical area' for each site, indicating where development will be focused. The non-technical areas (such as former airfields) are defined as Countryside. Sculthorpe Airbase, being best served by the highway network,

is considered to offer opportunities for employment uses which would, for environmental or operational reasons, would not be acceptable on designated Employment Areas within settlements.

### **Policy ECN 2; Employment Areas, Enterprise Zones & Former Airbases**

Sites that are identified as Employment Areas, Enterprise Zones and Employment / Mixed Use Allocations, as identified on the Policies Maps<sup>1</sup>, will be protected for employment use.

New employment development, including B1, B2 and B8 uses, will be permitted on designated Employment Areas where all of the following criteria are met:

1. in the case of Main Town Centre Uses(1), it is first demonstrated that no alternative sequentially preferable site is available, and in all cases;
2. the proposed use does not undermine the functionality of the wider employment area;
3. the scale and appearance of the development is compatible with the character of its surroundings,
4. there are no significant detrimental health impacts as demonstrated through a Health Impact Assessment;
5. there are no significant amenity impacts on occupiers of nearby dwellings or users of adjacent buildings by virtue of increased levels of noise, odour, emissions or dust and impacts on light;
6. the traffic generated does not have a severe adverse impact on local amenity, highway safety or the operation of the highway network;

Non employment generating proposals will only be permitted where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being developed for the designated purposes as demonstrated through evidence of it no longer being suitable, available and/or economically viable, including evidence of appropriate marketing(2) and future market demand.

#### **Enterprise Zones**

Employment generating proposals on designated Enterprise Zones, as identified on the Policies Maps, will be supported where these comply with the Local Development Order specific to the site where such an Order has been prepared.

#### **Former Airbases**

Development proposals **for employment generating uses** on the former air base sites will allow for the re-use of existing buildings or development of replacement buildings within the 'Airbase Technical Areas', as identified on the Policies Maps<sup>2</sup>, provided that there is no overall increase in gross floor space of the existing permanent buildings. All proposals should seek to protect the surrounding environment and ensure no degradation of the site itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Current Core Strategy employment designations and employment allocations can be seen on the existing Core Strategy Proposals Maps: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/proposalsmap> for proposed updates please see Background Paper 3 'Approach to Employment'

<sup>2</sup> Can be seen on existing Core Strategy Proposals Maps: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/proposalsmap>

1. NPPF glossary definition: Main Town Centre uses: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

2. Appropriate marketing periods, **not usually less than 12 months**, to be agreed in writing, on a case by case basis, with the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any marketing activities.

### **Employment Development Outside Employment Areas**

The purpose of this policy is to provide opportunities for businesses situated outside of defined Employment Areas with the potential to expand and thrive and to recognise the importance of employment outside the designated Employment Areas to the wider economy by requiring such uses to be retained where possible.

10.18 The majority of new employment development will be guided towards the sites that are designated in this Plan as Employment Areas. These sites represent clusters of uses in the most sustainable locations. However, in a rural District such as North Norfolk, smaller areas of employment will exist across the District resulting from historic land uses. These businesses are important to the rural economy, providing local opportunities for rural communities to live and work in close proximity.

10.19 Any development proposals for a change of use from an employment use to a non-employment use will need to be justified. These employment sites are important for the rural economy and any proposal resulting in the loss of jobs will have to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable for employment uses and/or that the loss of the employment would not have a detrimental impact upon the local economy.

10.20 Proposals for the expansion of existing businesses, will generally be supported for businesses that are based on agriculture, forestry or other industries where there may be sustainability advantages to being located in close proximity to the market they serve. The demonstration of sustainability advantages should include evidence of reduced need to travel, re-use of previously developed land or existing buildings, and enhanced opportunities for rural communities to access employment in their locality. This should be presented in the form of a Sustainability Statement accompanying an application.

**10.21 Proposals that relate to the expansion of tourist accommodation or tourist attractions are covered by policies elsewhere in the plan.**

~~10.21~~ There may be some cases where an industry and/or business would be detrimental to local amenity if located in a designated Employment Area or nearby a built up area. The Council has designated employment land at Tattersett for these types of uses. This employment land should be investigated in the first instance for these types of uses.

~~10.22~~ In order to ensure that development in rural areas is sustainable, proposals will be expected to make best use of previously developed sites. Developments that relate to the replacement of rural buildings should comply with the North Norfolk Design Guide and show how the provisions of the Guide have been met.

~~10.23~~ Bacton Gas Terminal is one of the largest gas terminal complexes in the UK. The pipeline can import up to 23.5 billion cubic metres of gas per annum, enough to supply 15 million homes. It is a

major local employer and occupies a large site which has an impact on the surrounding area. Any future development on the site should normally be contained within the existing site boundaries in order to limit the impact on the surrounding countryside.

### **Policy ECN 3: Employment Development Outside of Employment Areas**

#### New Employment ~~uses~~ Development outside of Employment Areas

New Employment development outside of designated Employment Areas and Employment / Mixed Use Allocations will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

1. there is no suitable and available land on identified or allocated Employment Areas
2. there are specific reasons for the development not being located on an identified or allocated Employment Area, including, but not limited to:
  - a. the expansion of an existing business;
  - b. businesses that are based on agriculture, forestry or other industry where there are sustainability advantages to being located in close proximity to the market they serve;
  - c. industries and/or businesses which would be detrimental to local amenity if located in settlements, including on identified or allocated Employment Areas.
3. the development would not adversely affect the type and volume of traffic generated.

#### Bacton Gas Terminal

Development at Bacton Gas Terminal that is ancillary to the terminal use will be supported within the defined area as shown on the Policies Map<sup>3</sup>. **Proposals must be supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment.**

#### Existing Employment Uses ~~outside of Employment Areas~~

~~Employment uses in locations outside of Employment Areas and Employment/Mixed Use Allocations are considered important to the economy of the District.~~ Conversion and redevelopment of, or change of use from existing employment ~~sites and buildings generating uses~~ to non-employment uses will be considered on their merits taking account of:

1. whether the loss of land or buildings would adversely affect the economic growth and employment opportunities in the area that the site or building would likely serve;
2. whether it is demonstrated that the site is no longer suitable, available and/or economically viable, including evidence of appropriate marketing (1) and future market demand.

1. Appropriate marketing periods, **not usually less than 12 months**, to be agreed in writing, on a case by case basis with the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any marketing activities.

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<sup>3</sup> Can be viewed on the existing Core Strategy Proposals Map: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/proposalsmap>