

Stroud District Local Plan Review

Topic Paper: Employment

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Development Services
Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 4UB

The Planning Strategy Team
local.plan@stroud.gov.uk

visit www.stroud.gov.uk/localplanreview



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Introduction

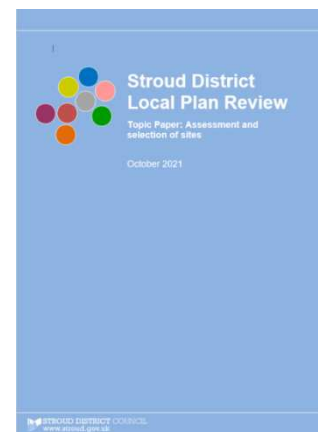
This topic paper is one of a series of papers supporting Stroud District Council’s **Draft Local Plan** (The ‘**Submission Plan**’), which has been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by the Planning Inspectorate. The topic papers provide a summary of the evidence base and how it has been used to shape the draft plan. They also highlight relevant national and local guidance where necessary, to explain how the various plan-making requirements have been addressed and have impacted on the emerging plan.

The topic papers do not contain any policies, proposals, site allocations or new evidence and they should be seen as explanatory supporting documents.

- **Issues and options consultation Autumn 2017:** An opportunity to discuss emerging issues and identify ways of distributing and managing future development needs.
- **Emerging strategy consultation Winter 2018:** We now know the minimum number of houses that we need to provide for and we have identified a potential strategy for delivery.
- **Final draft plan consultation Autumn 2019:** A chance to check that we have the right draft plan in place.
- **Additional housing options consultation 2020:** A focused consultation on some contingency spatial and site options
- **Pre-submission consultation Summer 2021:** The formal stages of making representations on the plan (Regulation 19). The ‘Publication Plan’.
- **Submission October 2021:**
The Draft Local Plan (plus evidence base and all Reg.19 representations received) is submitted to The Secretary of State (Regulation 22). The ‘Submission Plan’.

An Inspector will be appointed to **Examine** the Local Plan and scrutinise everything submitted, to ensure the plan is sound.

- **Modifications:** There will be further consultation on any proposed modifications to the plan, arising out of the Examination process.
- **Adoption:** It is anticipated that the new Local Plan will be adopted by Winter 22



◀ The Local Plan Review:

Topic Papers have been produced to support the Draft Local Plan through submission and examination: to summarise and direct the Inspector to relevant parts of the existing evidence base, and to explain the plan-making process in relation to a small number of topics.



Topic Paper: Employment

This topic paper focusses on the District's strategy for employment growth. The Draft Local Plan supports economic growth by planning to deliver a range and mix of employment uses, sites and types in the most appropriate location for each particular use, supported by and integrated with housing and other community infrastructure. This topic paper sets out the Council's approach to economic growth and strategic employment needs.



1. Policy context

National policy context

- 1.1 The overarching purpose of the planning system is to contribute to “the achievement of sustainable development” (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 7). The economic objective is to “to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure” (NPPF, paragraph 7).
- 1.2 Planning policies should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions and in building a strong, competitive economy, NPPF states that they “should help create the conditions which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.” (NPPF, paragraph 81). Planning Policies should:
- set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
 - Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
 - Seek to address potential barriers to investment;
 - Be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan.
- (NPPF, paragraph 82).
- 1.3 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), provides guidance on how local authorities should approach both housing and employment land reviews. This takes the form of a five stage process. Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, issued in 2014 and updated in 2018-19, provides a methodology of reviewing suitable land.

2. Establishing economic need

Gloucestershire Economic Needs Assessment (2020)

- 2.1 Commissioned jointly by all Gloucestershire councils, the **Gloucestershire Economic Needs Assessment (ENA)** examined a range of scenarios for future economic growth to establish future employment land requirements for each District.
- 2.2 For Stroud District potential requirements for the Plan period ranged from an additional 44.5 hectares to 71.8 hectares. The Assessment recommended that the Council should consider meeting two of the highest scenarios: a scenario based upon the expected labour supply and a slightly higher labour demand growth scenario based on supporting further growth in the key LIS sectors. This means supporting a net increase in employment land (offices, industrial and storage and distribution) of between 62 and 72 hectares for the Plan period.
- 2.3 Taking into account commitments from outstanding planning permissions; gains and potential losses, Table 1 illustrates that the minimum residual employment requirement is 50.9-60.3ha.



▲ Gloucestershire Economic Needs Assessment (2020)

Calculating our residual employment requirement up to 2040			
Supply	A	Commitments, at April 2020 (on sites with permission / under construction)	52.1ha
	B	Potential losses from 'B' uses, (average 2.03 ha lost per year since 2006 x 20)	40.6ha
	C	Total commitments net of potential losses (= A - B)	11.5ha
Requirement	D	Employment requirement for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2040	62.4 - 71.8ha
	H	Minimum residual employment requirement to 2040 (= D - C)	50.9 - 60.3ha

▲ Table 1: employment requirement up to 2040 (hectares)



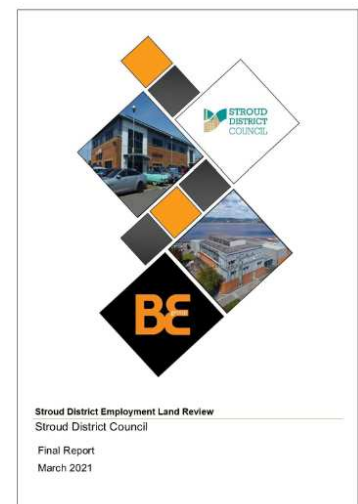
3. Assessing economic supply

Employment Land Availability (2020)

- 3.1 The **Employment Land Availability report (ELA)**, an annual publication by Stroud District Council, monitors all employment planning permissions to identify whether they have commenced.
- 3.2 The 2020 ELA identifies 52.1ha of existing commitments, sites with undeveloped planning consents of E(g)/B class uses.
- 3.3 Monitoring data demonstrates that the District has seen a loss of E(g)/B use employment land to other uses. Since 2006, the average loss equates to 2.03ha. The Council assume this historic trend may continue and have therefore made an allowance for this loss of 40.6ha in supply calculation up to 2040.

Employment Land Review (2021)

- 3.4 To complement and build upon the Gloucestershire Economic Needs Assessment and support the development of the SDLP, the District Council commissioned a new **Employment Land Review (2021)**. The ELR takes the employment land requirements set out in the ENA and identifies a supply of suitable land to meet the needs of the District over 2020-2040. The ELR was undertaken in line with both the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant Planning Practice Guidance.
- 3.5 The ELR looked in detail at the local commercial market and identified occupancy rates at well above 90% for industrial and to a lesser degree office space, suggesting an undersupply of premises against demand. Key markets identified included: a focus of industrial and warehouse development at Quedgeley, Hardwicke and M5 Junction 12; a focus of industrial activity at Stonehouse; a market for smaller and more modest industrial units within the Stroud Valleys; a key local office market in Stroud, Stonehouse and certain rural locations; a growing focus on start-ups/micro businesses in green technology sectors at Berkeley as well as more traditional industrial and distribution activity at Sharpness. In addition, there is an active rural market for a mix of office and small workshop space.



▲ Stroud District Employment Land Review (2021)

- 3.6 Six key segments of market demand have been identified for future employment land supply to satisfy:
- large industrial/warehousing units at key locations within the A38/M5 corridor, serving the wider Gloucestershire/regional market;
 - meeting the growth needs of existing mid-sized/large local manufacturing and warehousing businesses in Stonehouse/Stroud Valleys;
 - meeting the needs for larger offices in the Stonehouse area;
 - supporting local scale expansion at existing employment areas;
 - development space to meet the needs of specific businesses; and
 - encouraging the growth of the high-technology sectors, particularly focussed on green technologies.
- 3.7 The suitability, availability and deliverability of existing stocks and proposed allocations were assessed in terms of its ability to meet future requirements, including the needs of particular settlements and the spatial requirements of particular sectors of the economy.
- 3.8 The ELR concluded a realistic supply of possible employment land supply to 2040, incorporating 2020 Commitments, existing allocations in the adopted 2015 Local Plan, proposed sites in the 2019 Draft Local Plan and further submissions made to Local Plan/SALA/Call for Site exercises is 105.14 ha.

Employment land allocations

- 3.9 The Local Plan seeks to provide for new employment land and support existing employment areas located at the key employment property market areas identified in the ELR: south of Gloucester; within the M5/A38 corridor, at Stonehouse, Stroud, Cam/Dursley, Berkeley/Sharpness; and the Stroud Valleys. These include areas near to existing successful business parks at Quedgeley East (Hardwicke), Severn Distribution Park (Sharpness) and Stroudwater Business Park (Stonehouse), and co-located with new housing at the proposed new settlements.
- 3.10 Through Core Policy CP2, eight new strategic development sites have been allocated to meet employment land needs of the District. Table 2 lists their locations and size:



Strategic sites	Hectares
Quedgeley East Extension	5ha
Javelin Park	27ha
Sharpness Docks	7ha
Sharpness	10ha
Stonehouse North West	5ha
Stonehouse Eco-Park (M5 J13)	10ha
Wisloe	5ha
Renishaw New Mills	10ha
Total	79ha

◀ **Table 2**
Distribution of new employment land

4. Meeting employment land requirements

- 4.1 Through robust evidence base, the Council can demonstrate that the level of existing commitments through planning permissions in addition to Local Plan allocations, exceeds the level of employment land need, identified in the ENA study as 62.4-71.8ha. The additional supply, above need levels, provides a buffer to allow for further losses of employment land, to other uses, to 2040.
- 4.2 Taking into account the key recommendations of the ELR, the employment strategy for Stroud, through the SDLP will provide new employment development through a range of sites and premises across the District. Strategic employment sites will be allocated, mixed use developments encouraged and the expansion of existing businesses and rural diversification supported. Employment sites will be provided in order to increase the range and choice of sites available and to address the self-containment of settlements in terms of homes / jobs balance. Small work places, live-work units and facilities for co-working will be supported as part of new housing developments.
- 4.3 Existing employment sites will be safeguarded unless new proposals are put forward that intensify the employment use of part of the site, supported by enabling development as set out in other policies in the Local Plan. Sites allocated for mixed use redevelopment should aim to provide for at least the same or an increase in the level of job opportunities as existed when the employment space was previously used, subject to viability and site specific circumstances.

Bibliography: list of evidence base documents referenced

Evidence base documents are included in the Stroud District Local Plan Examination Library, and can be accessed via our Local Plan Review web pages www.stroud.gov.uk/localplanreview

The following documents are referenced in this Topic Paper:

Employment Land Availability, Stroud District Council (2020)

Gloucestershire Economic Needs Assessment, Strategic Planning Research Unit (2020)

Employment Land Review, BE Group (2021)

