



**North Norfolk District Council  
Planning Policy Team**

Telephone: 01263 516318

E-Mail: [planningpolicy@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@north-norfolk.gov.uk)

Write to: Jill Fisher, Planning Policy Manager,  
North Norfolk District Council, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN  
[www.northnorfolk.org/ldf](http://www.northnorfolk.org/ldf)

**All of the LDF Documents can be made  
available in Braille, large print or in other languages.  
Please contact 01263 516321 to discuss your requirements.**



## Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2 Policy context and evidence</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3 The Council's approach to employment land</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4 Key features of the local economy</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>5 The role of towns</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>6 Conclusions</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>1 Appendices</b> .....	<b>12</b>

## Tables

Table 1.1 - Criteria used to assess whether employment sites are to be released .....	14
Table 1.2 - Site Assessment Methodology .....	15
Table 1.3 - Site Appraisals .....	17
Table 1.4 - Justification for Employment Land allocations in SSP Consultation document .....	22



## 1 Introduction

- 1.1** The Council is in the process of preparing its LDF and has submitted its **Core Strategy** for examination. This sets out the key elements of the planning framework for North Norfolk that will be used when considering individual planning proposals. It will cover the period from 2001 to 2021, but can be reviewed on a regular basis during that time if necessary.
- 1.2** When adopted, the Core Strategy will replace the North Norfolk Local Plan. The Local Plan is saved until September 2007, and thereafter a number of selected policies are saved for a further period until the Core Strategy is adopted.
- 1.3** In preparing the Core Strategy the Council has considered its approach to the supply and distribution of land that should be protected for employment uses. The Submission Core Strategy Development Plan Document includes a new policy (SS5) that aims, amongst other objectives, to:
- ensure that a suitable range of land and premises will be available in the district to accommodate employment related development (business, industrial and storage and distribution uses), and
  - to ensure that land is available in the right places so as to provide improved access to jobs close to where people live.
- 1.4** The main purpose of this paper is:
- To demonstrate that policy SS5 as proposed in the Submission Core Strategy, **so far as it relates to the quantity and distribution of employment land**, is supported by evidence, is appropriate, and is in conformity with the requirements of government advice and the East of England Plan<sup>ii</sup> and therefore accords with the tests of soundness.
- 1.5** A copy of the policy is attached as **Appendix A**.

## 2 Policy context and evidence

- 2.1** The preparation of the Submission Core Strategy in respect of employment land provision has been informed by:
- the requirements of the Government's Planning Policy;
  - the findings of the North Norfolk District Employment Land Study 2006;
  - the Roger Tym and Partners Norfolk Employment Growth Study 2005;
  - the Land Use Consultants Settlement Planning for North Norfolk 2005;
  - the requirements of the East of England Plan;
  - topic papers on the Economy and Development Strategy published by the Council in 2005, and
  - consultation exercises undertaken by the Council in its preparation of both the Core Strategy and the Site Specific Proposals Development Plan.
- 2.2** The East of England Plan aims to support the regional economy, contribute to prosperity, improve quality of life, and provide a better balance between homes and jobs. Policy E1 provides indicative

<sup>ii</sup> The Regional Planning Policy document which provides the framework for locally prepared plans.

jobs growth targets for all types of new jobs and indicates that North Norfolk should plan for the addition of 4000 jobs over the period 2001-2021. These jobs growth targets are adopted 'as reference values for monitoring purposes and guidance' but Local Development Documents should provide an 'enabling context' to achieve these targets.

**2.3** Policy E2 deals with the provision of land for employment purposes and indicates that '*Local Development Documents should ensure that an adequate range of sites / premises is identified and then subsequently allocated, safeguarded and / or protected to meet the full range of sectoral requirements needing to be accommodated to meet the indicative jobs growth targets of policy E1 and the needs of the local economy as revealed by up-to-date employment land reviews.*'

**2.4** The policy requires that sites of sufficient *range, quantity and quality* to cater for all relevant employment sectors should be provided at *appropriate scales* at urban areas, market towns and key rural centres. These locations should

- minimise commuting;
- maximise potential for the use of public transport;
- minimise loss of, or damage to, environmental and social capital;
- meet regional needs; and
- provide for skills training and education.

**2.5** For North Norfolk the jobs growth forecast is based on a lower housing growth figure of 6400 dwellings (now increased to 8000 in the East of England Plan). Growth sector information at District level is not included in the Roger Tym and Partners report but at County wide level it is anticipated that growth will mainly occur in community, social services, education and health, financial and business services, transport, storage, communications and retailing. In North Norfolk growth areas are likely to include tourism, health and social care, personal services and retailing. Recent declines in manufacturing employment are likely to continue.

**2.6** The current North Norfolk Local Plan identifies a number of sites across the District as either existing or proposed General Employment Areas. These sites are reserved for employment generating uses and hence other types of development are not permitted. In 2006 the Council undertook a review of the employment land provision in the district to inform its preparation of the Submission Core Strategy. The review considered the supply of employment land (designated sites in the local plan) its quality and its distribution and considered the historical patterns of employment land development in the district. Government advice is that where land has been identified for employment-related development but has not been developed its status should be reviewed to consider if it is still required or might usefully be developed for another purpose. The study paints a mixed picture in terms of quantity, quality and development rates across the district and points to a need to 'rebalance' land provision to more accurately reflect need and demand. **Appendix B** is an extract from the review providing a detailed appraisal of employment sites in the district in terms of their strategic importance, sustainability, and market attractiveness.

**2.7** The North Norfolk Economic Development Strategy (*North Norfolk Economic Development Strategy, NNDC 2007*) identifies ten key objectives a number of which have land use implications including, supporting business start ups and business growth, broadening tourism, and retaining a flexible supply of employment land and buildings. If these objectives, and the overall aim 'to promote the diversification and development of the local economy through the creation of an environment which allows businesses to succeed and to provide a wide variety of employment opportunities for the residents of North Norfolk', are to be met, it is essential that planning policies provide a positive and supportive framework for employment related development. This positive and supportive framework is reflected in policy SS5.



## 3 The Council's approach to employment land

3.1 The main features of the Council's approach to employment land are as follows:

- The approach is precautionary, it seeks to retain choice of sites, and presumes that land which is already in use for employment purposes should be retained in employment use *'unless there is an overriding reason why this should not be the case.'*<sup>(ii)</sup>
- Quantity – That each of the identified towns in the Core Strategy should have a supply of developable employment land / buildings of sufficient quantity to meet **long term** needs unless there is an overriding reason why this should not be the case, and that there is a choice of sites available in each part of the district.
- Distribution – That land/buildings should be available close to where people live, to minimise travel, improve levels of self containment and therefore improve quality of life and contribute to the wider sustainable development agenda.
- Quality – That land / buildings should be of appropriate quality to meet developer / business requirements.
- To ensure that the retention of employment land will not prejudice the delivery of other strategic objectives particularly in respect of the provision of housing.

3.2 The Council is mindful of the requirement of the East of England Plan to identify sites sufficient to meet the indicative jobs growth target and it could be argued that as much of the predicted growth is likely to be in employment sectors which will not require industrial land allocations, such allocations will not be required. However the Council's experience over a considerable number of years is that business needs in the District are difficult to accommodate, they often relate to indigenous companies, with local workforces, which seek to remain in the area, often in the same town. Retaining a choice of sites in each part of the District is therefore regarded as essential if local business expansion and employment needs are to be met.

## 4 Key features of the local economy

4.1 North Norfolk has a narrow economic base, with much employment in the agricultural, manufacturing, tourism and social care sectors. Whilst rates of unemployment in the district are low, (Nov 2006 – 2% North Norfolk against a UK figure of 2.9%) there is a seasonal dimension to unemployment and employment opportunities in terms of choice and quality, remain limited.

4.2 Rates of economic activity are low compared to national and regional averages, reflecting the large numbers of retired people living in the district and its rural character. With many young people leaving the district for increased employment prospects and because of the high cost of local housing, there is a growing concern that businesses will be unable to recruit and attract staff. There is therefore an aspiration to broaden the economy so as to offer a wider choice of employment opportunities and achieve a more balanced economy and population in the future.

4.3 Whilst there has been a change in the manufacturing base of the district in recent years, with a number of business closures and down-sizing in the traditionally strong sectors of food-processing and engineering, there has been a growth of employment in the plastics, boat-building and marine engineering and wooden products sectors. Many of these are "home-grown" businesses started

ii Such reasons may relate to the suitability of the site and its use, or to one of the Councils' other Core Aims which would not be achieved by retaining the site in employment use.

by North Norfolk residents and the Council considers it is important to provide land allocations to support future investments of this type. Demand is often localised with companies specifying a very limited geographical area within which they wish to re-locate.

- 4.4** Historically the commercial property market in North Norfolk, in common with many peripheral rural areas of the country, has been relatively weak, with modest rates of employment related development on green-field sites in recent times. However there has been an intensification of uses within established industrial areas and a turnover of commercial property to the point that many industrial estates / areas are now fully developed. This has informed the Council in seeking to retain redundant employment sites in the expectation that they offer opportunities for future re-use for business related activity.
- 4.5** Limited capacity in basic infrastructure, such as water and power supply, in certain towns is an important constraint to the economy, and in the past grant funding has been secured from EEDA to overcome power supply problems and deliver employment development in North Walsham.
- 4.6** Analysis of 'Travel to Work' patterns in the district as undertaken on behalf of the Council by Land Use Consultants identified three distinct job search / employment areas as detailed below:-
- 4.7** **East of the district:-** covering North Walsham, Stalham and Hoveton and their surrounds. This area has historically had high levels of employment in agriculture, the defence sector, manufacturing (concentrated in North Walsham, Catfield and Hoveton) and Broads based tourism. This area also accommodates the Bacton Gas Terminal site. As discussed previously there has been a decline in manufacturing, particularly food processing, but a growth in the plastics and boat building and marine engineering sectors – with investment and employment growth in these sectors in North Walsham and Catfield. More recently 2500 jobs have been lost from the defence sector with the closure of the RAF Coltishall airbase and significant run-down of the RAF Neatishead Air Surveillance and Control Centre. There are few public service sector jobs in this part of the district. Levels of employment in the tourism sector in this part of the district remain stable but with a change from Broads based boating related activity to small scale land-based accommodation and attractions. The proximity of this part of the district to Norwich has meant that there is increasing levels of out-commuting.
- 4.8** Looking forward, it is anticipated that this part of the district will continue to see a turnover of manufacturing employment, with indigenous businesses being the largest source of jobs growth resulting in a turnover of sites and premises as evidenced over many years. In order that opportunities exist to support this it is important that a choice of sites and premises is provided in locations across the area. This part of the district might also benefit from investment related to the development of the Eastport proposal at Great Yarmouth. Further opportunities may also exist at the former RAF Coltishall site, although at this point in time there is uncertainty as to its future use, and it is somewhat remote from main settlements / centres of population and poorly served by local road infrastructure.
- 4.9** In this part of the district the Core Strategy seeks to retain current employment land designations at Catfield, Hoveton and North Walsham and makes small additional allocations at Stalham. The North Norfolk Local Plan made a large greenfield employment land allocation (26 hectares) in North Walsham, however, this development has not moved forward and is regarded as uneconomic. It is therefore proposed to make a smaller greenfield allocation of 6 hectares together with the retention of two brownfield employment sites for future business related uses in the town. These brownfield sites are well related to the strategic highway network, avoid cross town HGV movements and passing under low railway bridges, and in one case lie adjacent to a railway station thus increasing accessibility by public transport.



## Background Paper No 3: Employment Land

- 4.10 Central area of the district:-** covering the towns of Cromer, Holt and Sheringham, this part of the district has a high degree of self-containment for employment. Tourism is the dominant sector with the resort towns of Cromer and Sheringham and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty providing a large number of jobs in the hospitality sector. There is also a large number of jobs in retailing and public administration – with Cromer being the administrative centre of North Norfolk District Council, and having a small district hospital, job centre, magistrates court. With a large retired population, there is also a growth of employment in social care.
- 4.11** Further there are a number of private schools operating in this part of the district - namely Greshams at Holt, Beeston Hall School and Wood Dene and children's outdoor activity centres at Sheringham, Overstrand and West Runton. All three towns have small industrial estates, although employment in this sector is considerably lower than in the other two parts of the district.
- 4.12** The analysis of 'Travel to Work' patterns undertaken by Land Use Consultants identified that the towns of Cromer, Holt and Sheringham function as a network in terms of movement for employment within and between these towns; with Sheringham being seen as a dormitory settlement with fewer people travelling into the town for employment than is the case for either Cromer or Holt. The Council's approach for the future employment related development of these towns and their hinterlands is to support their roles as tourist destinations and as retail / local service centres. Most of the employment land allocations made in the Local Plan continue to be allocated and at Holt, based upon its relatively good strategic location on the A148 road corridor, the association with Greshams School and the cachet of the NR25 postcode area, it is proposed to identify further employment land for B1 business uses in an attempt to broaden the economic base of the area and indeed the wider district.
- 4.13 West of district:-** covering Fakenham and Wells-next-the-Sea. Fakenham provides employment for 4,800 people and is the dominant centre of employment for a large rural area of north-west Norfolk, extending beyond the district boundaries. The town has a high degree of self-containment for employment, probably reflecting its somewhat remote location from many other centres of employment, although strategically being in the west of the district Fakenham occupies the most accessible location in the district in terms of access to the national road network and as a result has a strong manufacturing base and presence of distribution companies and is seen as an attractive location for investment. The town has seen some change in its manufacturing base with the loss of some jobs in the food processing sector, although this remains the single largest employment sector in the town. Traditional industries, such as boat building at Morston and fishing at Wells-next-the-Sea, also continue in this area.
- 4.14** Given the strategic location of Fakenham, it is anticipated that the Fakenham area will enjoy continued economic growth in the future. The Core Strategy proposes significant new housing at Fakenham and this requires the provision of additional employment land to support the balanced development of the town. Beyond Fakenham, the existing workshop space at Wells-next-the-Sea will be retained to support local business growth and development. Further land will be identified at the former RAF Sculthorpe Technical Site to the west of Fakenham as a location for specialist industrial / distribution uses recognising the good access the site enjoys on to the main A148 road to Kings Lynn.

## 5 The role of towns

- 5.1** Government advice and the Regional Spatial Strategy of the East of England are based on the principles of urban concentration and sustainability. In terms of the distribution of employment land these principles are best achieved by ensuring that employment opportunities are situated

in locations where the workforce and those servicing the business community can derive convenient access, thus reducing the need to travel. Locations either within or adjacent to the main centres of population would best fulfil this objective. This is reflected in the Core Strategy which identifies Fakenham, North Walsham, Cromer, and Holt as Principal Settlements where employment growth is being promoted.

- 5.2** Of all North Norfolk towns, it is considered that **Fakenham** offers the greatest opportunities for sustainable development building upon its existing high level of 'self-containment' and its role as an employment centre for surrounding settlements. A high proportion (in excess of 60%) of the resident working population are employed in the town and a broad range of jobs and services are available. The town is sufficiently distant from both Kings Lynn and Norwich to discourage out commuting. There is a supply of land available in the town for new employment developments and 'turnover' in building occupancy provides opportunities for new businesses. The last decade has seen significant new investments in the town. Large scale housing and employment related development has taken place and further growth is being promoted. Failure to retain existing and provide additional employment opportunities, to match the growth in housing development, is likely to result in an increased need to travel for work, thus reducing the 'sustainability' of the town. Hence providing opportunities for employment development is a key objective of the Core Strategy which identifies the town as a Principal settlement. Consequently, it is considered that only where the redevelopment of existing employment sites for other purposes would deliver significant environmental enhancement, would a change in designation be justified. Any re-designation should only be considered in the context of maintaining a good supply of developable employment sites elsewhere in the town.
- 5.3** In contrast **North Walsham** has strong links to Norwich, with the close proximity of the city encouraging high levels of out commuting for jobs and other services and acting as a discouragement to inward investment (better sites are perceived as being available in and around the city). The local economy was traditionally dependant upon manufacturing, a sector which has been in decline in recent years following the closure of a number of large businesses. The closure of RAF Coltishall will have further negative impacts on the North Walsham area. However, this does not entirely overshadow North Walsham's significance as an employment centre for residents of the town and those of neighbouring local settlements. It is the largest town in the District and despite recent closures a broad range of jobs are available. As with Fakenham the town is identified as a Principal settlement. Thus it is considered that employment generating developments should be a high priority to strengthen the sustainability of the town. As with Fakenham large scale housing growth which is not matched with the provision of good quality job opportunities and enhanced services would do little to improve the sustainability of the town. There is a large supply of employment land and buildings and it is acknowledged that the influence of Norwich will continue to impact on investment decisions. Consequently, it is considered that some re-designation of employment sites is justified. A range of opportunities including land and buildings should nevertheless be retained to ensure that longer term opportunities are not compromised. Given the existing supply of land and buildings it is considered that additional allocations of employment land would not be justified.
- 5.4** In **Cromer**, growth in housing and employment opportunities is being promoted. Historically there has been demand for employment land and the majority of the existing designated areas are now developed. However the towns economy is not so reliant on industrial development with large numbers of jobs in retailing, tourism and the public sector. A small number of industrial sites remain on the Holt Road Industrial Estate but these may be difficult to bring forward due to either physical or ownership constraints. None of the remaining sites on the Industrial Estate would be suitable for housing development due to their proximity to existing commercial uses, and therefore it is recommended that these are retained. Elsewhere employment sites should be retained unless



## Background Paper No 3: Employment Land

redevelopment would result in significant environmental enhancement or assist in the delivery of other strategic objectives. Ideally additional employment land should be identified in or close to the town but environmental constraints may make this difficult.

- 5.5 Holt** is a significant net importer of employees from the surrounding area including Sheringham and Cromer and 55% of the working population work in the town. Growth in both housing and employment is being promoted in the town. Employment land is designated on the Hempstead Road Industrial Estate and there are significant areas of land which remain to be developed. The town has established a reputation as a niche market shopping centre and jobs in retailing constitute a significant proportion of total employment. Whilst land is designated for employment use concerns have been expressed concerning its 'availability'. Providing a choice in possible development sites may be beneficial to the local economy, particularly in attracting B1/ Business Park development.
- 5.6 Stalham** is heavily dependant on Norwich and new development is unlikely to change this. Only 35% of the working population work in the town. Therefore, it is considered that further residential development in the town should meet identified local needs and should be matched with meaningful opportunities for new employment. Historically the town has had no developable employment land. Investments in nearby Catfield suggest that if land was available in the town there may be demand. Fulfilling this demand in the town rather than elsewhere is clearly a desirable objective in order to improve levels of self containment.
- 5.7 At Wells next the Sea** there is a limited supply of employment land, however there is also little evidence of demand for new industrial development. Tourism and fishing are important sectors in the local economy. The town's location and relative inaccessibility is likely to discourage business start ups. Any demand is likely to be from local businesses and service providers. The town's level of self containment is 55% with a further 20% commuting to Fakenham for jobs. The designated employment land in the town is within a tidal flood risk zone and consequently residential development would be inappropriate. Consequently it is recommended that the existing allocation be retained to ensure that any future demand can be met.
- 5.8 At Sheringham** there is also a limited supply of employment land. There is also little evidence of demand for new industrial development. The undeveloped element of the employment allocation in the town is in an environmentally sensitive location and poorly related to other developed areas (particularly housing). Approximately 52% of the working population find employment in the town but this is often in low paid sectors. The town is therefore a significant net exporter of employees but many access jobs in nearby Holt and Cromer.
- 5.9 Hoveton** has a limited supply of allocated employment land, a small site on the Stalham Road is fully developed whilst a site on the Tunstead Road (Norfolk Fruit Growers) is currently undergoing redevelopment by a local boat building business. Whilst there are diverse employment opportunities in the village, retailing and the boatbuilding / hiring industries are significant sectors. As with other settlements in this part of the District the close proximity of Norwich may act as a discouragement to inward investment. The railway provides convenient access to Norwich and main line connections to London and the South East.

## 6 Conclusions

- 6.1** The Core Strategy adopts a spatial approach to the provision and retention of employment land and buildings taking account of travel to work areas and the individual characteristics of settlements. It adopts a long term approach to land supply based on historical patterns of development in North Norfolk and the Council's experience in retaining a strategic supply of



land/buildings for employment purposes. The policy adopts the enabling approach required by the East of England Plan and will provide a 'range, quantity and quality' of sites. The selection of sites is informed by the Employment Land in North Norfolk Study<sup>(iii)</sup> which considers the level of employment land supply, historical development patterns and likely future requirements and reflects the Council's aspirations to enhance job opportunities, improve the self containment levels in towns and support sustainable development.



# 1 Appendices

## Appendix A - Policy extract from submission Core Strategy

### SS5

#### Economy

At least **4,000** additional jobs will be provided between 2001 and 2021 in line with the indicative targets set out in the East of England Plan. Job growth will be achieved via policies for tourism, retail and the rural economy as well as provision of employment land. A range of sites and premises will be made available for employment development, through designation of existing employment sites in all Principal Settlements, Secondary Settlements and some Service Villages and the allocation of new sites in order to increase the choice of sites available and to address the self-containment of settlements in terms of homes / jobs balance.

In **Employment Areas**, as designated on the Proposals Map, only employment generating development proposals in Use Class B1, B2 and B8 will be permitted. Other commercial uses<sup>(iv)</sup> may be permitted provided that there is no sequentially preferable site available. Allocations for new employment land or as part of mixed-use schemes, will be made in Fakenham, Holt and Stalham. One or more employment allocations will be identified for employment uses that cannot be accommodated on other identified employment land owing to environmental or operational requirements. (e.g. noise etc).

The distribution of employment land will be as follows:

Area	Existing Designations in hectares (of which vacant) <sup>(v)</sup>	Approach and approximate change in supply	Total
<b>Eastern Area</b>	<b>103.5 ha</b>	<b>-11.5 ha</b>	<b>91 ha</b>
North Walsham	80 (20)	reduce supply by 15ha	65
Stalham	1.5 (0)	increase supply by 3.5ha to increase choice and self-containment	5
Hoveton	10 (3)	no change	10
Catfield	12 (1)	no change	12
<b>Central Area</b>	<b>47 ha</b>	<b>+3 ha</b>	<b>50 ha</b>
Cromer	20 (1)	no change	20
Holt	10 (3)	increase supply by 5ha to increase choice and rang	15
Melton Constable	8.5 (0.5)	no change	8.5

iv eg. petrol filling stations, car/vehicle hire, the selling and display of motor vehicles, builders yards, retail warehousing and hotels  
v Figures accurate at April 2007

Sheringham	8 (2)	reduce supply by 2 ha	6
<b>Western Area</b>	<b>55 ha</b>	<b>+7 ha</b>	<b>62 ha</b>
Fakenham	52 (7)	increase supply by 7ha to increase choice and home/jobs balance as part of urban expansion	59
Wells-next- the-Sea	3 (0.5)	no change	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>205.5 ha</b>	<b>-1.5 ha</b>	<b>204 ha</b>

The **tourist** industry will be supported by retaining a mix of accommodation and encouraging new accommodation and attractions which help diversify the offer and extend the season. Proposals should demonstrate that they will not have a significant detrimental effect on the environment, and cycling, walking and heritage tourism will be encouraged by promoting and enhancing long distance walking and cycling routes and heritage trails.

The **rural economy** and **farm diversification** will be supported including extensions to existing businesses of an appropriate scale and re-use of existing buildings, including appropriate re-use of the operational land at redundant defence establishments.

The role of **town centres** as a focus for a broad range of shopping, commercial and other uses will be supported. Residential proposals will be permitted where they do not result in the loss of shops located within a defined Primary Shopping Area. Proposals should also have regard to the integration of public transport in town centres and seek to provide pedestrian friendly environments. A **retail hierarchy** guides decisions on the scale of new retail and leisure development that will be permitted. The retail hierarchy is;

- Large town centres: Cromer, Fakenham and North Walsham
- Small town centres: Holt, Hoveton, Sheringham, Stalham and Wells-next-the-Sea

Proposals for large scale developments will be located in Large Town Centres with schemes in the Smaller Town Centres limited to those that meet local needs and support their roles as visitor and tourist destinations.

**Primary Shopping Areas** and **Primary Frontages** are defined in order to concentrate retail development in central areas of towns. Retail opportunity sites will be identified in the Site Specific Proposals document to allow for between 13,300 - 19,900m<sup>2</sup> additional comparison goods retailing and leisure floor space. This floor space will be distributed in the large town centres in these approximate amounts: Fakenham 4,000 to 6,000m<sup>2</sup>, Cromer 2,000 to 5,000m<sup>2</sup> and North Walsham 2,500 - 5,000m<sup>2</sup>.



## Appendix B - Extracts from 'Employment Land in North Norfolk'

The following extracts from 'Employment Land in North Norfolk' (updated to take account of changes in circumstances) outline the appraisal methodology and conclusions reached in respect of the recommendation to retain, or otherwise, the existing employment land allocations from the North Norfolk Local Plan.

- 1.1** In considering which employment sites should be retained and which new sites are required the Council has based its assessment criteria on Stage 1 of the ODPM guide for completing Employment Land Reviews and in particular has had regard to the strategic, sustainability and market attractiveness criteria outlined in the guide (see table below). The assessment has been completed for sites which have been identified / suggested as potential allocations in the emerging LDF Site Specific Proposals document, existing significant employment land allocations in the Local Plan which have been developed, and existing employment sites which have been vacant for some time.
- 1.2** The criteria have not been 'scored' or weighted as it is considered that the rationale for the provision and retention of land may vary across different locations in the District. For example, in some locations a site may score very poorly but may also be the only suitable site available in the area. Furthermore the role and function of each town is an important consideration.
- 1.3** Table 1.2 'Site Assessment Methodology' illustrates how the criteria have been considered. Sites have been assessed on the basis of how 'important' they are in terms of fulfilling the strategic objectives, contributing to sustainable development patterns, and market attractiveness criteria identified in the ODPM guide. Hence a site which is strategically important, would contribute to sustainable development and is either fully developed, or the subject of developer interest, is considered to be of 'high importance', whilst a site which is not strategically important, where employment development would be unsustainable and there has been no interest in development is of 'low importance'. The site's 'importance' has then been used to inform the conclusions and recommendations outlined in Table 1.3 'Site Appraisals'

Table 1.1 Criteria used to assess whether employment sites are to be released

### Strategic Planning Factors

- Is the site within an area identified as a principal or secondary settlement in the draft Core Strategy?
- Is the site in a location being promoted for employment growth in the draft Core Strategy of the LDF?
- Is the site identified or likely to be required for a specific user or specialist use?
- Is the site part of a comprehensive or long term development or regeneration proposal, which depends on the site being developed for employment uses?
- Are there any other policy considerations, such as emerging strategic objectives or spatial vision, which should override any decision to release the site?
- Is the site the only site available or part of a limited supply of land in the locality?

### Sustainable Development Factors

- Would the site be allocated today for employment development, measured against present sustainability criteria (including public transport and freight access, environmental impacts and brownfield / greenfield considerations)?
- Is employment the only acceptable form of built development on this site (eg because of on-site contamination, adjoining uses or sustainable development reasons)?

### Market Attractiveness Factors

- Has the site been formally identified for employment for at least 10 years?
- Has there been any recent development activity, within the last 5 years? This could include works on site but also new or revised planning applications / building regulations applications.
- Is the site being actively marketed as an employment site?
- Is the site owned by a developer or another agency known to undertake employment development?
- Is the site in multiple ownership / occupation, or owned by an organisation unlikely to bring it forward for development?
- Is there public funding committed (or likely to be provided) sufficient to overcome infrastructure or on-site constraints to make employment development viable?
- Is there a valid permission for employment development, likely to meet market requirements? Or for an alternative use?
- Would employment development on this site be viable, without public funding to resolve infrastructure or other on-site constraints?
- Has the Authority been approached concerning possible development of the site in the last 5 years?

Table 1.2 Site Assessment Methodology

Factors Considered (Summary)	Degree of Importance		
	High Importance	Medium Importance	Low Importance
<b>Strategic Planning Factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Size</li> <li>• Adequacy of supply</li> <li>• Designated for specific use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site is a large site within or adjacent to a Principal settlement</li> <li>• There is a limited supply of land</li> <li>• The site is designated for a specific use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within or adjacent to a Secondary settlement</li> <li>• Choice of possible sites available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not in a Principal or Secondary settlement</li> <li>• Would make no meaningful contribution to employment land supply</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable development Factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would site be allocated today applying sustainability criteria</li> <li>• Site unsuitable for other uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site would be allocated for employment purposes today having regard to sustainability criteria</li> <li>• Unsuitable for another use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlikely to be allocated today unless part of a limited supply</li> <li>• Unsuitable for another use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would not be allocated today having regard to sustainability criteria</li> <li>• Is suitable for another use</li> </ul>



## Background Paper No 3: Employment Land

Factors Considered (Summary)	Degree of Importance		
	High Importance	Medium Importance	Low Importance
<p><b>Market Attractiveness Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacancy</li> <li>• Availability</li> <li>• Developer interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site is fully occupied or is being marketed with Planning Permission and/or there have been expressions of developer interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site is allocated for employment and has been vacant for five years or more</li> <li>• There is no evidence of marketing or development interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site has been vacant for the past 5 years and despite evidence of regular and reasonable marketing there has been no developer interest</li> </ul>

## Recommendations for individual sites

- 1.4** Having regard to the comments outlined above in respect of the role of each settlement and the site assessment criteria in Table 1.1 'Criteria used to assess whether employment sites are to be released' the following conclusions have been reached in respect of individual employment sites.

Table 1.3 Site Appraisals

Site Name Status	Site Ref	Strategic Importance	Sustainability	Market Attractiveness	Summary Appraisal / Decision
Catfield Industrial Estate Existing Local Plan designation	EMP01	Medium	Medium	Medium	<p>The site is not located in one of the principal or secondary settlements but is well related to the strategic highway network. Developments in the last 10 years suggest that this is a popular location particularly with businesses already on the site. The remaining 1.0 hectares of undeveloped land (EMP01) appear to be constrained by access and ownership issues and therefore may be difficult to bring forward for development. Overall the site makes a significant contribution to employment land at this part of the District where suitable land is limited. Proposals for housing or live / work units have been resisted in recent years and it is thought that parts of the site are owned by a housing developer.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b></p>
Cromer High Station Existing Local Plan designation	EMP02	Medium	Medium	Low	<p>The site is located within a principal settlement but due to its comparatively small size is not regarded as strategically important. Employment development would be appropriate but the development potential of this site is considered to be constrained by multiple ownerships, poor quality access, poor quality buildings, site clearance costs and proximity to residential properties. It is therefore considered that the prospects of the site being redeveloped for commercial purposes are remote. It is well located for residential development and arguably this would constitute an environmental improvement.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Allocate as residential development site in LDF</b></p>
Cromer Holt Road	EMP03	High	High	High	<p>Now almost fully developed this site makes a substantial contribution to employment needs in Cromer and due to the lack of significant alternatives and its size is regarded as strategically important. Only a small number of</p>



## Background Paper No 3: Employment Land

Existing Local Plan designation					small sites remain available for development. These are not considered suitable for residential development due to the proximity of adjacent commercial uses. There are no other significant opportunities for industrial development elsewhere in the town. <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b>
Cromer Retail Park Existing Local Plan designation	EMP04	High	High	High	Now fully developed as a retail warehouse site this development fulfils an identified need for this type of development in Cromer. <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b>
Fakenham Industrial Estate Existing Local Plan designation	EMP05	High	High	High	This site has high occupancy rates and some scope for further development. The site is well placed to meet the employment needs of Fakenham and the surrounding area and has high strategic importance. <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b>
Fakenham Commercial Park (Enterprise Way) Existing Local Plan designation	EMP06	High	High	High	Enterprise Way is now fully developed. Additional employment land was identified adjacent to Morrisons in the Local Plan. Whilst no development has taken place there has only recently been evidence that the site is being marketed and this has resulted in some interest. <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b>
Fakenham (adjacent 30 Holt Road) Existing Local Plan designation	EMP07	Low	Medium	High	This site is occupied by two small businesses and is separated from the main industrial area by Holt Road. It is currently unsightly and occupies a prominent position on two main road frontages. Areas of employment land and buildings are available elsewhere in the town. Residential development would improve the appearance of the site. <b>DECISION : Allocate as residential development site in LDF</b>
Fakenham, Site at 66/72 Holt Road Existing Local Plan designation	EMP07	Low	Medium	Medium	Most buildings on the site are occupied with low vacancy rates. Some small areas of land appear underused but are not being marketed. <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b>

Fakenham, Oxborough Lane Existing Local Plan designation	EMP08	Medium	Medium	High	<p>Much of this site is developed and provides significant numbers of jobs.</p> <p>The area to the east appears underused and has redevelopment potential. Its relationship with existing commercial uses and poor quality vehicular access are considered to make the site unsuitable for housing.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b></p>
Fakenham, Hempton Road Existing Local Plan designation	EMP09	Medium	Medium	Medium	<p>Site fully developed although buildings on site EMP09(a) are currently vacant. The site lies within a flood risk zone and is consequently unsuitable for housing development.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b></p>
Holt Industrial Estate Existing Local Plan designation	EMP10	High	High	Medium	<p>This is the main area of employment development in Holt. Site EMP10(a) is constrained by ownership issues and any further development would add to traffic in Hempstead Road. However the site makes an important contribution to employment land supply and is not suitable for housing due to its relative lack of integration with the town.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b></p>
Holt, Old Station Way (Thaxters) Existing Local Plan designation	EMP11	Medium	Medium	High	<p>This area is fully developed. The site is located in a prominent position on a 'gateway' to Holt and is of insufficient size to make a substantial contribution to employment land supply. Redevelopment for residential purposes would improve the appearance of the site.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Retain part as employment land and allocate remainder (Thaxters) as residential / mixed development site.</b></p>
Hoveton, Tunstead Road Estate Existing Local Plan designation	EMP12	Medium	Medium	High	<p>It is understood that the northern part of this site (Norfolk Fruit Growers) has recently been purchased by developers interested in a mixed use redevelopment of the site. In the first instance it is recommended that the site be retained for employment developments as it represents one of only limited development opportunities in the area.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b></p>



## Background Paper No 3: Employment Land

Hoveton, Stalham Road Industrial Estate Existing Local Plan designation	EMP13	Medium	High	High	Fully developed with low levels of vacancy. <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b>
Melton Constable Industrial Estate Existing Local Plan designation	EMP14	Medium	Medium	High	Almost fully developed this site has proved to be a popular location in recent years. <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b>
North Walsham Industrial Estate Existing Local Plan designation	EMP15	High	Medium	High	The main industrial estate is regarded as fully developed. Site EMP15(a) is understood to be available for redevelopment. It is not known to what extent the site has / is being marketed but it is considered premature to consider non commercial use at this stage. This and the remainder of the employment land including site EMP15(b) should be retained for employment uses. It is considered that there is very little prospect of EMP15(c) (remainder of the Local Plan designation) being developed at it is recommended that this be designated as 'Countryside' . <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land and 'countryside' in LDF.</b>
North Walsham, Midland Road Existing Local Plan designation	EMP16	High	High	High	This site is fully developed with low levels of vacancy. <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b>
North Walsham (HL foods and adjacent land) Existing Local Plan designation	EMP17	High	High	Medium	Substantial complex of vacant buildings suitable for re-use or redevelopment. Good location for employment in relation to highway network/rail freight facilities. Although currently vacant it is considered that the site is ideally suited to meet any long term needs, particularly for employment buildings. The site is within a principal settlement where employment growth is being promoted. Retention and re-use of the site/buildings for employment uses would assist in fulfilling strategic objectives in a sustainable manner. <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b>

North Walsham, General Trailers. Existing Local Plan designation.	EMP18	High	High	High	<p>The site was acquired for redevelopment for employment purposes by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) in March 2001. However until works commenced on part of the site to provide a new DIY store in January 2005 the site and factory premises has remained in a derelict and undeveloped state. Interest has been expressed by developers in the partial clearance and redevelopment of the main factory building and a planning application is expected shortly. Redevelopment of this site for employment purposes is a key component of the economic development strategy for North Walsham.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b></p>
North Walsham, Marricks Wire Ropes Existing Local Plan designation	EMP19	Medium	High	Medium	<p>Mainly undeveloped land with poor quality vacant building. The site is in a good location for employment development. The proximity of adjacent industrial land and developments and its relative lack of integration with other residential areas of the town render this site inappropriate for residential development.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b></p>
Sheringham, Weybourne Estate and land adjacent to Splash leisure pool. Existing Local Plan designation	EMP20	Medium	Low	Medium/Low	<p>This small industrial estate has had good levels of occupancy in recent years. A small site EMP20(b) is currently available for redevelopment but has not been vacant for a lengthy period. The presumption should be in favour of retaining this site for employment development. Site EMP20(a) has been available for a number of years. Due to its prominent and highly sensitive location on the coast road approach to the town this site is no longer considered suitable for development and de-designation is suggested.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Designate the developed part of the site as employment land in LDF and the undeveloped (Allotments) as countryside.</b></p>
Stalham, Hall Farm Existing Local Plan designation	EMP21	Low	Medium	Medium/Low	<p>This site is mainly in use. The site is not regarded as a suitable location for housing development as it is distant from the town centre and other key facilities. Other preferable sites for housing are available elsewhere in the town.</p> <p><b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b></p>
Tattersett Business Park	EMP22	Medium	Medium	High	<p>This site is located in a rural area but is served by good quality roads with</p>



## Background Paper No 3: Employment Land

Existing Local Plan designation					convenient access to the strategic highway network. It has proved to be a popular location for employment development in terms of re-use of existing buildings. Existing local plan policies limit the potential for new building as there are concerns that development here may undermine investment decisions in nearby Fakenham. However the site would be suitable for uses which are difficult for environmental or operational reasons to locate on other industrial estates in the district. Such an approach is identified as a preferred option in the SSP document.
Wells-next-the-Sea, Great Eastern Way	EMP23	Medium	Medium	Medium	<b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF</b>
Existing Local Plan designation					The site includes some areas and buildings which are underused or suitable for redevelopment but are constrained by ownership issues. Most of the designated area is within a flood risk zone and consequently unsuitable for housing development. A small site to the north of Maryland is not within the flood risk zone (EMP23(a)) and would therefore be a suitable housing site. In light of the lack of demand for industrial development in the town it is recommended that site EMP23(a) be allocated for housing development. <b>DECISION : Designate as employment land in LDF with exception of site EMP23(a) which it is proposed to allocate for residential use.</b>

**1.5** In addition to the existing Local Plan additional employment land allocations are proposed in the Site Specific Proposals Consultation document as follows:

Table 1.4 Justification for Employment Land allocations in SSP Consultation document

Site	Ref	Strategic Importance	Sustainability (See SA Report for SSP)	Market Attractiveness	Justification
Fakenham, additional land at Clipped Bush Lane	FO1	High	High	Not Known	Fakenham is identified as a Principal settlement in the Core Strategy where employment growth is a key priority. Large scale residential growth is also being promoted and to support this further employment growth is desirable. Employment Land is currently available in the town. However, historical development rates have been high (in the context of North Norfolk) and over the plan period additional land may be required.

<p>Stalham, Former Bushes Abbattoir</p> <p>Stalham, Church Farm</p> <p>Station Yard / Moores</p>	<p>E4</p> <p>ST01</p> <p>ST02</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Not Known</p>	<p>Evidence suggests that the levels of commuting from Stalham are high, with many people going to work in Norwich. Catfield, to the south east of the town plays an important role in providing jobs for people in the area and Broads related employment is also significant. There is a real need to improve the opportunities for employment development within the town.</p> <p>The most significant site which offers opportunities for re-using a redundant industrial building is the former Bush's abattoir. Whilst it would be desirable for this site to be improved as a gateway into the town, particularly when approaching on foot from the Staithe, its potential for employment development should not be lost. This site also benefits from direct access on to the A149 meaning that HGV access can be achieved without travelling through residential areas.</p>
<p>Holt, Cromer Road</p>	<p>E2</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Not Known (but strong demand in Holt)</p>	<p>Holt has been identified as the most suitable location in the central 'cluster' of towns to accommodate further employment growth on industrial estates and business parks. Opportunities for further employment land development have been constrained in the past, to the detriment of the town's economy, and it is reasonable to suppose that if a range of suitable sites are allocated they will be developed in the plan period.</p> <p>Sites with a suitable vehicular access to the A148 are proposed, which comply with the objectives for the town as identified in the Core Strategy.</p>
<p>Tattersett Business Park</p>	<p>E7</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Over the years following the closure of Sculthorpe Airbase the District Council has supported a number of proposals for the re-use of former airbase buildings on the site for commercial purposes. In the main the Council has not been supportive of proposals which would require the erection of new buildings.</p> <p>This site is well located in terms of vehicular access to the strategic highway network and it has been a popular location for new investment. The Core Strategy aims to ensure that job creating developments are</p>



## Background Paper No 3: Employment Land

located in positions close to the main centres of population (Fakenham), but also suggests that a site or sites should be identified for industrial uses which for either operational or environmental reasons would be inappropriate on industrial estates in one of the larger towns. Tattersett is regarded as an acceptable location for this type of development.
