

Tendring District
Employment Land Study
Executive Summary
March 2004

CONTENTS

	Page No
1. Introduction	1
2. Employment Land Supply Review – Stage 1	1
3. Employment Land Identification Study – Stage 2	1
4. Employment Land Study – Stage 3	3
5. Employment Land Study – Stage 4	3
6. Conclusions	4

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Executive Summary draws together the conclusions of the four employment land supply studies undertaken by Drivers Jonas for Tendring District Council. The purpose of the studies was to inform the Council on employment land issues in taking forward the Tendring Local Plan Review process currently taking place.

2. Employment Land Supply Review – Stage 1

- 2.1 Drivers Jonas was appointed by Tendring District Council on 30 May 2001 to carry out a District-wide Industrial/Business Sites and Land Allocation Study. The Study dated January 2002 included an assessment of a range of previously identified sites in planning and commercial terms. The purpose of this work was to consider the suitability of each site for employment use and to establish whether or not additional employment land would need to be identified as part of the ongoing Local Plan Review covering the period up to 2011.

- 2.2 As part of this study, we:

- Ø Developed an overview of the local economy;
- Ø Reviewed the planning policy background, relevant planning history and taken account of the views of landowners and stakeholders;
- Ø Made recommendations on the future land use allocations in the local plan review; and
- Ø Made recommendations on the general policy approach towards protecting employment land and the likely need for additional sites to be identified in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

- 2.3 The Essex Structure Plan requires 80 hectares of employment land be identified within Tendring District for the period up to 2011. A shortfall of approximately 21 hectares was identified. We recommended that a further 20 hectares should also be identified, bringing the total requirement for additional employment sites to approximately 40 hectares.

3. Employment Land Identification Study – Stage 2

- 3.1 In April 2002, we were instructed to undertake a Stage 2 Study. The purpose of this Study was to identify additional land for employment development purposes to meet the District's needs for the period up to 2011. This Study followed on from the January 2002 Study, which had assessed existing employment sites and employment land supply. The broad conclusion of the earlier Study had been that there remained a shortfall of approximately 40 hectares of employment land and that suitable sites to meet this shortfall should be identified as part of the Local Plan Review.

- 3.2 The Stage 2 Study:

- Ø Provided an overview of the local economy and property sectors;
 - Ø Reviewed the planning policy background and took account of the views of key stakeholders;
 - Ø Tested market interest from a wide range of industrial/ business sectors in the District and across the UK;
 - Ø Visited and assessed in planning and development terms a range of identified sites for industrial/business purposes; and
 - Ø Made recommendations on future land use allocations from the identified sites to be included in the Local Plan Review.
- 3.3 Each of the identified larger sites was assessed in detail, in planning, property and economic terms. The recommendations included a suggested economic development spatial strategy comprising a series of sites within different parts of the District, together with broad estimates of employment generation potential.
- 3.4 We recommended that the Council's economic development strategy should focus new employment development within and on the edge of the main urban centres in the District. Development near to the main centres could also contribute to the formation of a corridor of planned growth at key locations within close proximity to the A120 trunk road. Provision for further development on the northern fringe of Clacton as well as small scale developments within other settlements serving the more remote coastal and rural areas was also recommended.
- 3.5 In the context of the suggested strategy, we identified a number of sites which could be developed as employment centres in the Local Plan Review:
- Harwich (A120 Corridor)**
- Ø Site 1 – Land south of A120 – South of Iconfield Site
 - Ø Site 2 – Land south of Carless Petrochem, Parkeston
 - Ø Site 3 – Land West of Station Road
- Colchester Fringe (A120/A12 Corridor)**
- Ø Site 4 – Land near to Crown Interchange, Ardleigh
- Clacton Area**
- Ø Site 5 – Land north of Oakwood and Gorse Lane Industrial Parks
 - Ø Site 6 – Land south of Centenary Way
- 3.6 The strategy was informed by taking account of realistic commercial development prospects in the context of emerging regional economic issues, underpinned by sustainable planning principles.

4. Employment Land Study – Stage 3

- 4.1 In January 2003, we were instructed to undertake a Stage 3 Study. This Study drew on the findings of the Stage 1 and 2 Studies. Its primary purpose was to consider new material that had been provided to the Council on the likely economic impact of the proposed expansion of Harwich International Port at Bathside Bay and other related economic issues within the Haven Gateway Sub-region. This led to revised recommendations on employment sites to be carried forward into the Local Plan Review.
- 4.2 We considered that the Harwich sites recommended for employment land allocation in our Stage I and II studies should provide sufficient land to accommodate the off-site requirements and growth of development directly and indirectly associated with the Port of Harwich as a result of the development of the Bathside Bay proposal for the period up to 2016. In addition, the sites would also provide for the expansion of existing and new firms within Class B1, B2 and B8 uses which are not associated or reliant on the development of Bathside Bay.

5. Employment Land Study – Stage 4

- 5.1 The Stage 4 update was required to look at alternative sites in light of loss of a number of previously identified sites, namely, Harwich International Park and Crown Interchange. Specifically, we were asked to give fresh consideration to the Oasis site, at the junction of the A120 and A133.
- 5.2 In the report, we reviewed the historic land requirements and assessed the employment land supply and demand at December 2003. We reviewed the economic indicators, updating them where possible, and on the basis of some employment land take-up, reviewed sites that had previously been discounted.
- 5.3 Within the Clacton area, although there is additional land on the edge of the town that would be suitable in land-use terms for employment uses, there is, no justification for making employment further allocations in the town when it is well supplied with employment land.
- 5.4 In respect of the A120 corridor, further high quality employment land might in the future be provided at the Oasis site, but in our opinion this should be part of a comprehensively planned mixed-use development only. Whether or not this can be justified will depend upon new housing requirements within the District post 2011.
- 5.5 The low level of activity in the commercial market suggests that the previously identified sites at Harwich Industrial Park and west of Station Road should be developed first. The only feasible location for additional employment sites is in Harwich. We have identified land on the A120 approach to the town to the east of Pond Hall Farm. Because of its prominence and potentially good accessibility, this should be a commercially attractive site, if there were demand from occupiers to locate in the area. The Bathside Bay proposal is expected to stimulate some new demand in the area.

- 5.6 However, the site is environmentally sensitive. Because of this, justification for its release for employment uses, will require evidence of the need for additional employment land associated with commercial demand.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The low level of activity in the commercial market in Tendring District since the first report was commissioned means that the employment land requirement is substantially in excess of current levels of demand in the area. As noted in Section 3, the take-up of employment land in the district has been very slow and as a result the Council has faced pressure for the release of employment land for other uses.
- 6.2 We understand and support the justification for having a good supply of available employment land in the District. However, where sites are environmentally sensitive, other planning considerations may make it impossible for them to be allocated in the absence of a strong economic case. In addition, over-allocation of sites can lead to pressures for the release of employment land for other uses, principally for housing.

**Drivers Jonas
March 2004**