

Great West Corridor Employment Background Paper

Hounslow Local Plan Reviews Issues Consultation - December 2015

Employment land is an important land use within Hounslow and will continue to be in the future. The London Plan estimates 21,000 new jobs will need to be provided in the borough by 2036. This is an increase of approximately 14 per cent. Significant areas in the Great West Corridor include Brentford district centre and Transport Avenue and Great West Road (part) Strategic Industrial Locations (designations in the London Plan 2015). The Local Plan also designates a few Locally Significant Industrial Sites in the area. Employment growth will be directed towards the town centres and existing employment areas.

Employment Land Review

The Council has commissioned Peter Brett Associates (PBA) to undertake an update to the 2011 Employment Land Review (ELR). The ELR will determine demand and supply of employment land over the Local Plan period (2015-2030). Employment land includes offices, general industrial and storage and distribution. The ELR forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and be used to help inform planning decisions.

The 2011 ELR showed that there was a need for an additional 200,000m² of office floorspace. The borough has distinctive geographic and socio economic characteristics which make it suitable for office expansion. These include its proximity to central London and Heathrow, its excellent transport links, good quality housing and environment, relatively skilled workforce and links to the wider M4 corridor market. These factors remain and will continue to make Hounslow an important place for businesses to locate.

The updated ELR will assess the current supply of employment land, review socio-economic trends and look at employment and floorspace projections to help determine the need for business land in the future. It will also look at changes in government policy, including factoring in the potential loss of employment land (see Changes in government policy below) and undertake scenario forecasting. The ELR will need to address employment land losses so will provide a net position.

The ELR will inform the Local Plan review for the Great West Corridor. It is anticipated the plan will help inform site allocations in the west to deliver the employment space the area needs. It will also provide other policy recommendations to inform the Local Plan review.

Digital and media

Part of the Great West Corridor is designated a Strategic Outer London Development Centre for Media in the London Plan (2015) in recognition of the strategic importance of the digital and media is sector that has established in this area . There is already a strong focus within the Great West Corridor on this sector with the location of large media companies such as Sky and Discovery. Other smaller firms are located in the area, for example in a cluster in the Power Road area of Chiswick. The update to the ELR will make policy recommendations, and possible recommend new site allocations to ensure the continued support and growth of this sector within the area. The ELR is also expected to outline the types of employment space that is needed to meet the needs of media companies in the Great West Corridor.

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Other sectors

There are also heavy industrial uses located within the Great West Corridor. There is an established aggregate and waste processing sector located at the railhead in Transport Avenue. Transhipment businesses have also been established here. This area is bordered by the River Brent to the east and an existing freight train line to the west. The Council is promoting the introduction of passenger rail services on the existing line (to connect with Crossrail at Southall) which would need to co-exist with the rail freight.

Changes in government policy

Changes in government policy can significantly impact on the delivery and supply of employment land. Recent changes to permitted development rights, confirming the change of office to residential without the need to apply for planning permission, will impact on the supply of office land in the borough.

The Council has recommended the use of an article 4 direction to remove these rights in a number of locations, in particular the designated employment sites. This change is critical in influencing the ELR as it will need to factor in potential losses of employment land in its forecasts for the amount needed over the coming years.

For more information on this, refer to the information on the Article 4 Direction under “protecting office space” on the Council’s website.