

<p style="text-align: center;">Luton & South Bedfordshire Joint Committee</p> <p style="text-align: right;">29 November 2007</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Agenda Item No. 7</p>	
AUTHOR	Joint Officer Team (David Atkinson, Kevin Owen, (LBC) Andrew Johnson, (SBDC), Ilias Drivylas, Steve Scott (Halcrow Consultants))
SUBJECT	The Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint Employment Land and Premises Study
PURPOSE	To update the Committee about the progress on the Employment Land Review and expected outputs.
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>The Joint Committee is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the progress and the findings presented. 2. Authorise the Member Steering Group to finalise and disseminate the study as part of the Local Development Framework evidence base.
REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS	To progress the study to its conclusion pending outstanding proofing work.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Officers of both Luton and South Bedfordshire District Councils commenced work on an Employment Land Review (ELR) study of the joint area in March 2006 in accordance with government best practice guidance. This involved a three-stage process of surveying, assessing and recording the 'fitness for purpose' of existing B1-B8 stock and employment land supply.
- 1.2 In July 2006 retained consultants Halcrow were also commissioned to take this work forward looking particularly at the available economic and employment demand forecasts for the period 2001 to 2021 and to 2031.

- 1.3 Members may recall that draft Stage 1 outputs (which quantified the first stage Assessment, characterising the quality and distribution of existing land and buildings, subsequently recorded onto an electronic database) were reported on 2 March 2007. This included an update of progress towards delivering Stage 2 demand forecasts and Stage 3 land portfolio outputs of the ELR. Stage 1 was also presented to a stakeholder Employment Conference at Whipsnade on 21 March 2007.
- 1.4 Stage 2 is now complete, and significant progress has now been made on Stage 3 outputs. A finalised Study with key recommendations is nearing completion following consultation between officers and Halcrow consultants. The Study will quantify and establish the employment land stock, quality of sites, the future demand for land including, identifying options for additional land allocations, as well as land releases, in order to meet the requirements of achieving the regional 23,000 jobs figure (as set out in draft Regional Spatial Strategy RSS14/'East of England Plan').

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 Halcrow has translated Stage 2 employment demand forecasts (by SIC sector – Standard Industrial Classification) into consequent land and property demand against market conditions and needs assessments using a Multi Criteria Assessment (MCA). A specific requirement was to test the employment land stock and supply against the economic aspirations set out by the draft RSS14 and local economic development strategies as well as local growth sectors - strengths and weaknesses of a restructuring economic base.
- 2.2 Halcrow's sectoral demand forecasts (derived from regional modelling behind the draft RSS14) are tested against local economic performance/structure, and achieving the draft RSS14 indicative target of 23,000 jobs (also initiated in the Luton and Bedfordshire Joint Economic Development Strategy 2006). This testing examined 4 scenarios:
 1. Business-as-Usual
 2. London Luton Airport's Constrained Growth i.e. maximising its current potential
 3. Achieving RSS employment target of 23,000 jobs for the Joint Area with implementation of expansion plans for London Luton Airport
 4. Achieving RSS employment target of 23,000 jobs for the Joint Area in absence of any expansion plans for London Luton Airport.

- 2.3 Business as usual growth adopts a baseline trend growth, whereas the other scenarios adopt modifying assumptions concerning airport expansion or limited airport growth and other sectoral influences e.g. niche sectors of high tech manufacturing.
- 2.4 The demand scenarios are converted to jobs and hence net B1-B8 employment land demand (taking into account losses and decline). Halcrow then match this quantitative demand with the quantitative and qualitative supply assessments (recorded on the electronic database) in order to determine how far the existing employment land portfolio can meet existing and future needs, where land can be lost to redevelopment and any gaps in supply where net additional land will be required.
- 2.5 Due to concerns about the growth of the airport, and in order to achieve RSS14 23,000 job aspirations, only scenarios three and four have been taken forward as they both aim to identify the land requirements needed to achieve the 23,000 jobs figure.

3.0 INITIAL FINDINGS

- 3.1 Halcrow will present the overall outcomes of the study to this meeting of the committee. In particular, how the study seeks to match the demand with supply (figures are currently being finalised with officers) and recommendations for safeguarding sites ('green sites'), employment regeneration/interventions sites ('amber sites') and redevelopment sites for other uses ('red sites').
- 3.2 The presentation by Halcrow will elaborate on the use of the traffic light concept and the implication of this approach in spatial terms as well as identify spatial options for the potential additional employment land to achieve the 23,000 jobs figure.

4.0 NEXT STAGES

- 4.1 The outcomes will provide the evidence base for preparing policies in the Local Development Framework to 2021 (and beyond) and options for rationalising and managing the existing B1-B8 land and property portfolio - making any net new land provision as necessary. It will also guide further monitoring of employment land.
- 4.2 On finalisation of the study, the report will be made available. Officers will work with stakeholders to take forward the study recommendations in order to develop suitable policies and allocations in the LDF.