

Matter 7: Employment Allocations Policies EP1, 2, 3, 4		
Issue 7: Has the Plan been positively prepared and is it justified, effective and consistent with national policy in respect of the employment allocations for Hyndburn?		
<p>General relating to all allocations</p>	<p>1. Are the site allocations for employment soundly based? Are they developable and likely to be delivered as anticipated during the plan period? Could competition from other sites in the Borough or in the East Lancashire area have a negative impact on delivery?</p>	<p>The choice of sites for employment has drawn on the outcome of the assessment of all sites put forward for development by interested land owners and tested through the site selection methodology detailed in HBC8.003 Background Paper Site Assessment and Selection.</p> <p>The quantum of employment land proposed to be allocated in the Plan is based on robust evidence including up to date evidence of current market demand for employment space. The M65 Corridor is characterised by a number of successful employment sites that have been brought forward and have been met with demand. It is considered that both strategic employment sites at Whitebirk and Altham are suitable and attractive to meet the needs of modern industry.</p> <p>Background Paper HBC8.002 Background Paper Employment Land, at Appendix 1 and 2, provides an assessment of market attractiveness for the strategic employment sites at Whitebirk and Altham. For Whitebirk, the assessment highlights the site’s prominent location adjacent to Junction 6 of the M65 motorway as well as referring to the successful development of the nearby Frontier Park Strategic Regional Employment Site, an accessible workforce and access to a variety of services and facilities.</p> <p>For Altham, representations of support have been submitted by those with land interests at the site as detailed in HBC1.007a Regulation 22 (1c) Consultation Statement, page 39 (Employment Allocation Site forms). The assessment of market attractiveness notes that Altham is already viewed as a very successful and high-quality business park with good links to the main road network, attractive setting and utilities capacity and is within easy reach of a skilled workforce.</p> <p>HBC2.003a HENA(2018) provides a detailed employment forecast of future employment growth in both Hyndburn and Blackburn with Darwen. It provides a review of economic strategies relevant to the plan area and beyond and provides a growth forecast based on quantitative evidence and analysis of wider market dynamics. Having regard to the above, it is not considered that competition from other local sites would impact on delivery and a clear vision would be provided by</p>

		<p>the development of masterplans for both sites reducing risk and providing greater clarity for developers.</p>
	<p>2. Sites EMP1 and EMP2 do not have a specific policy setting out development requirements? What is the justification for this? Do either of these allocations have particular constraints or matters which would be appropriate to be addressed in a policy?</p>	<p>Sites EMP1 and EMP2 do not have site-specific development policies because they are not strategic employment sites and do not present significant constraints that would warrant additional guidance.</p> <p>EMP1 is a modest-sized urban brownfield site within the Junction 7 Business Park, Clayton-le-Moors. Part of the site is occupied as a caravan storage facility, with the remainder used for vehicle parking and outdoor storage. The site is well-served and free from notable environmental, access, or servicing issues.</p> <p>EMP2 is a greenfield site adjacent to the Moorfield Industrial Estate. Its size and location, combined with the absence of significant constraints, mean that a site-specific policy is not justified.</p> <p>Development on both sites would be expected to comply with relevant policies in the Local Plan and the Development Management DPD. No particular issues have been identified that require additional policy guidance</p>
	<p>3. What is the justification for amalgamating sites EMP4 and EMP5 into one larger site?</p>	<p>The Council proposed the main modification to rationalise the two adjacent employment sites. It is considered that these will likely be developed in conjunction with each other and that the merge of the two sites would provide further clarity.</p> <p>The Council is currently preparing a Master Plan for EMP3, EMP4 and EMP5 which would ensure that the sites are considered as a whole. The Council does not believe that the proposed amendment would be required to ensure that the plan is sound.</p>
	<p>4. Policies EP1, EP2, EP3 and EP4 refer to the preparation of masterplans for these sites. Who is preparing these, what process will they go through, what are the timescales? Will the preparation of the masterplans lead to a delay in the delivery of the sites? Should the policies address the scenario that applications could be submitted before the masterplans are agreed?</p>	<p>Nexus Planning Ltd has been commissioned to prepare masterplan documents for the strategic sites at Altham (EP1) and Whitebirk (EP2, EP3, and EP4). The masterplans are intended to provide a clear, coordinated framework for the delivery of development on these key employment sites.</p> <p>It is envisaged that each masterplan will be subject to two stages of public consultation, alongside engagement with relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees, landowners, and other</p>

		<p>stakeholder groups and organisations. Following the consultation process, final masterplans will be prepared and presented to elected members for formal adoption.</p> <p>Progress on the masterplans has been delayed allowing time for the Full Council’s decision to submit the Local Plan for examination (January 2025). Draft masterplan documents and supporting material have been prepared and are currently awaiting internal sign-off ahead of the first round of public consultation.</p> <p>While the precise timescales for adoption will be influenced by the progress of the Local Plan and the capacity of Council officers, it is anticipated that, following the adoption of the Local Plan, the masterplans can be progressed to formal adoption within a relatively short timeframe such that the opportunity for planning applications to be submitted before the masterplans are agreed is minimised.</p>
	<p>5. As these documents will not be Development Plan Documents, and in the interest of flexibility through the design stage, should the developments be required to ‘have regard’ to these rather than to adhere to them.</p>	<p>At present, Policies EP1, EP2, EP3, and EP4 state that development must “adhere to” the relevant agreed masterplans. However, this terminology may be considered unduly rigid, given that the masterplans are intended to be non-statutory documents.</p> <p>A more appropriate approach would be to require that development proposals “have regard to” or “be informed by” the relevant masterplans. This would ensure that the masterplans effectively guide decision-making and provide a coordinated framework for development, while allowing for a degree of flexibility during the detailed design and implementation stages. This wording better reflects the status and purpose of the masterplans and supports a more adaptable approach to site delivery.</p> <p>The Council proposes the following main modificationsL</p> <p><i>i) Adherence Have regard to any agreed Masterplan for the site which is part of a wider area of growth including the allocated land to the north and south of this site.</i></p>
	<p>6. What is the justification for the policies allowing only B2 and B8 uses only on sites EP1, EP2, EP3 and EP4?</p>	<p>Core Documents HBC2.003a HENA(2018) and HBC2.003b HENA Update (2021) provide a robust and comprehensive assessment of employment land needs in Hyndburn. Both studies conclude that future employment demand is heavily focused on industrial and warehousing uses (Use Classes B2 and B8).</p>

		<p>The 2021 Update highlights a substantial historic loss of industrial and warehousing floorspace, which has placed pressure on the existing supply and reduced market flexibility. In response, it recommends that "a higher range for industry and warehousing would be justified to increase choice in the market and ensure that the impact of historic and future losses is minimised."</p> <p>Accordingly, the identified employment land requirement for the borough is dominated by B2 and B8 uses, with only a very limited demand for office (Class E(g)) floorspace. This clearly supports the Local Plan's emphasis on delivering high-quality industrial and logistics development to meet both current and future business needs.</p> <p>Background Paper HBC8.002 Background Paper Employment Land, at Appendix 1 and 2, provides an assessment of market attractiveness for the strategic employment sites at Whitebirk and Altham. This indicates that the location of both sites in a central location on the M65 make them better suited to distribution and logistics, as well as Value Added growth sectors.</p>
<p>Policy EP1 Land to the S of Altham Business Park (EMP3)</p>	<p>7. What exceptional circumstances are there to justify the release of land in the Green Belt? Have all other reasonable options for alternative sites been examined fully? What compensatory work is proposed and how would it improve environmental quality and accessibility?</p>	<p>The Council has set out its reasoning for Green Belt release in the Background Paper exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release (HBC8.004) and through responses to Matter 3 Questions 1, 2 and 3.</p>
	<p>8. Should the environmental requirements for the site recognise the location of ancient woodland to the east and west and ensure an appropriate buffer is maintained for their protection?</p>	<p>The Council agrees that the environmental requirements for the site should recognise the location of ancient woodland to the east and west and ensure that an appropriate buffer is maintained for their protection.</p> <p>The Council proposes a main modification to the policy to be included after part xiv:</p> <p><i><u>xv. Development should allow for an appropriate buffer to ancient woodland to the east and west of the site.</u></i></p>
	<p>9. To be effective, should the policy identify the primary access point to the site?</p>	<p>The Council does not believe that a proposed access point would need to be identified in the policy to make it effective. General requirement i) ensures that any proposed development would have regard to any agreed masterplan ensuring that access to the site is appropriately considered.</p>

	<p>10. The allocation is likely to have an impact on the strategic road network, namely J8 of the M65. Should a requirement for a Transport Assessment be added to the Policy in the interest of clarity?</p>	<p>The effects of the allocation of Altham Business park on junction 8 of the M65 have been considered with the transport study and ongoing transport assessments to support the Local Plan in relation to Junction 8.</p> <p>The Council agrees that a requirement for a transport assessment should be added to the Policy. The council suggest the below wording for a main modification to the policy to be included after part xx.</p> <p><u><i>xxi. Applications should include a transport assessment of the proposed impacts of development</i></u></p>
	<p>11. The development of the site requires contributions to significant highway infrastructure improvements. What consideration has been given to viability?</p>	<p>The Council has considered viability of employment sites through the Whole Plan Viability Assessment (HBC2.006). The study sets out viability assumptions for S106 contributions of £2000 per unit (Paragraph 12.34) which has been included in calculations. The study identified that in general office and industrial development are showing to be unviable while distribution/warehousing uses are shown to be viable (Paragraphs 12.79 – 12.80). The study does however caveat that developments of both typologies have been delivered at Frontier Park.</p> <p>The Council has identified required highway improvements required through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Council would expect these requirements to be considered in the Benchmark Land Value for the sites to reflect development costs. The Council would expect to secure contributions through S106.</p> <p>Furthermore, some of the identified upgrades to the highway infrastructure will be partly covered by funding commitments resulting from the development of Huncoat Garden Village and the Homes England Grant funding. This is specifically in relation to work at the Shuttleworth Mead Junction.</p>
	<p>12. The Policy in requirement iii) seeks the preservation of the character and setting of the Grade II listed Canal Bridge. Should other nearby listed buildings such as Shuttleworth Hall be added to this to ensure its significance is not undermined?</p>	<p>The Council proposes a main modification to the policy to be included as part of iii.</p> <p><u><i>iii. Preserving the character and setting of the Grade II listing canal bridge (Altham Bridge) and the setting of Grade II listed Shuttleworth Hall.</i></u></p>

	<p>13. Criterion vii) requires large scale buffer planting throughout to break up the mass of new buildings and connect into existing green infrastructure. What is the justification for this? Is the policy effective in defining what large scale means in this context?</p>	<p>The Council considers that the justification for this is criterion is to comply with the requirements for compensatory measures required for the release of Green Belt land as set out in paragraph 142 of the NPPF. This is set out in Table 10 of the background paper exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release (HBC8.004).</p> <p>Furthermore, this criterion supports the recommendations contained in HBC6.004c Landscape Assessment Stage 2 Section 2 Landscape Assessments, page 151.</p> <p>The Council proposes a main modification to criterion vii) of the Policy:</p> <p><i>vii. New development must incorporate large-scale buffer planting throughout to break up the mass of new buildings, and connect into the green infrastructure.</i></p>
	<p>14. The site has the potential for archaeological remains. Would a criterion be justified to require an Archaeological Impact Assessment at planning application stage and any necessary mitigation measures?</p>	<p>The Council agrees that an Archaeological Impact Assessment should be required. The Council has suggested a main modification in Appendix 8 Proposed schedule of amendments to the publication Local Plan (H010) through Ma010 which would require this assessment through reference in Policy SP19: Heritage.</p>
	<p>15. What is the justification for criterion v) of the Policy? Has the landscape and visual impact been assessed to inform the policy requirement?</p>	<p>The landscape and visual impact has been assessed as part of the Landscape Assessment (HBC6.004b and HBC6.004c). The assessment identified a potential cumulative effect on the views from the canal and recommends restricting the extent of the development immediately adjacent to the canal path. This is set out in section 4.1.1 of the Landscape Assessment (HBC6.004b).</p>
	<p>16. Criterion xiii requires existing trees and hedgerows to be retained, protected and reinforced throughout the site. Should the Policy recognise that this may not be achievable and permit mitigation and replacement planting where appropriate?</p>	<p>The Council recognises that some flexibility may be required. The Council considers that Policy DM17 in the adopted Development Management DPD provides adequate wording to achieve appropriate mitigation and replacement planting. The Council propose a main modification to criterion xiii which includes reference to Policy DM17.</p> <p><i>xiii. Existing hedgerows and trees, including those along Altham Lane, should be retained protected and reinforced throughout the site. <u>Where this cannot be achieved development proposals will be expected to comply with part 4 of Policy DM17.</u></i></p>
	<p>17. In the interest of clarity and effectiveness, should an additional environmental criterion be added which ensures a holistic and co-ordinated approach to foul and surface water drainage and incorporate multifunctional SuDS (sustainable drainage) that are designed in</p>	<p>The Council believes that a holistic and co-ordinated approach to foul and surface water drainage and the incorporation of multifunctional SuDS (sustainable drainage) are effectively reference through Policy SP13 parts g), j) and k) respectively. It is not considered that the site allocations should duplicate parts of the strategic policies which would be relevant to all applications.</p>

	accordance with the 4 pillars of SuDS and integrated with the landscaped environment?	
	18. Is criterion xx) effectively worded? Should it say that the development should demonstrate that any significant impacts etc can be cost effectively mitigated?	The Council proposes a main modification to criterion xx) of Policy EP1: <i>Development should demonstrate that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network or on highway safety can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable standard</i>
	19. Are there any other constraints to the development that need to be overcome? Should they be addressed in the policy? Do they have any impact on viability?	The Council does not consider there to be any further constraints to development.
<p>Policies EMP2, EP3 and EP4</p> <p>Note: Allocations EMP4, 5 and 6 form three proposed allocation sites for employment use abutting Whitebirk Business Park. I am aware that it is proposed to amalgamate sites EMP4 and EMP5 which will require the deletion of Policy EP2 and modification of the wording of Policy EP3. For clarity the MIQs relate to the plan as submitted and do not take this into account.</p> <p>The following questions apply to all three sites unless stated otherwise.</p>		
Policy EP2 Land between Blackburn Road and the M65 slipway (EMP4),	1. What exceptional circumstances are there to justify the release of land in the Green Belt? Have all other reasonable options for alternative sites been examined fully? What compensatory work is proposed and how would it improve environmental quality and accessibility?	The Council has set out its reasoning for Green Belt release in the Background Paper exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release (HBC8.004) and through responses to Matter 3 Questions 1, 2 and 3.
Policy EP3 Land between Blackburn Road, Sidebeet lane, Leeds and Liverpool Canal and railway (EMP5), and	2. The allocations are likely to have an impact on the strategic road network, namely J6 of the M65. Should a requirement for a Transport Assessment be added to the Policies in the interest of clarity?	The effects of the allocation on Junction 6 the M65 have been considered with the transport study (HBC7.001a). The Council agrees that a requirement for a Transport Assessment should be added to the Policy. The Council suggest the below wording as a main modification to the policies under 'Transport Considerations'. <i>Proposals should include a Transport Assessment to assess the impacts of development on the local and strategic road networks.</i>

<p>Policy EP4 Land north of the railway line between Sidebeet Lane and Leeds and Liverpool Canal (EMP6)</p>	<p>3. In the interest of clarity and effectiveness, should an additional environmental criterion be added which ensures a holistic and co-ordinated approach to foul and surface water drainage and incorporate multifunctional SuDS (sustainable drainage) that are designed in accordance with the 4 pillars of SuDS and integrated with the landscaped environment?</p>	<p>The Council believes that a holistic and co-ordinated approach to foul and surface water drainage and the incorporation of multifunctional SuDS (sustainable drainage) are effectively referenced through Policy SP13 parts g), j) and k) respectively. It is not considered that the site allocations should duplicate parts of the strategic policies which would be relevant on all applications.</p>
	<p>4. Should Policies EP2, EP3 and EP4 require the masterplans for Sites EMP4, EMP5, and EMP6 to be produced in accordance with a holistic allocation wide infrastructure strategy?</p>	<p>The Council has hired Nexus Planning to develop a masterplan that covers EMP4, EMP5 and EMP6 jointly. Further details of this are set out in Matter 7, Question 4. The Council considers that this master planning process will include a holistic infrastructure strategy for all the sites.</p>
	<p>5. Site EMP4, EMP 5 and EMP6 have a number of heritage assets within of near to them. Should an additional requirement be added to the respective policies to require development conserves and enhances the historic environment and require a Heritage Impact assessment at planning application stage?</p>	<p>The Council proposed that a main modification should be made to reflect the requirements for a heritage impact assessment at planning application stage for each of these allocations in in HBC1.006 Proposed Schedule of Minor Amendments to the Local Plan 2021-2040, MA nos. 033, 034 and 036.</p>
	<p>6. The allocations have the potential for archaeological remains. Would a criterion be justified to require an Archaeological Impact Assessment at planning application stage and any necessary mitigation measures?</p>	<p>The Council agrees that an Archaeological Impact Assessment should be required. The Council has suggested a main modification in Appendix 8 Proposed schedule of amendments to the publication Local Plan (H010) through Ma010 which would require this assessment through reference in Policy SP19: Heritage.</p>
	<p>7. Do Policies EP2, EP3 and EP4 provide sufficient protection for ecological features on the sites responding to the findings of the Habitats Survey 2019 and provide for appropriate mitigation where necessary?</p>	<p>The Council considers that the policies EP2, EP3 and EP4 provide sufficient protection for the ecological features that are onsite and provide appropriate mitigation measures. The developments would also need to accord with Policy SP16 which provides further protections when considering planning applications for these allocations.</p>
	<p>8. Allocations EMP5 and EMP 6 are located in a reservoir flood zone. Should an additional criterion be added to Policies EP3 and EP4 to require the applicant to have early dialogue with United Utilities and to seek to avoid the reservoir flood risk path in the design and layout of the site and assess the impact of reservoir flood risk on the site?</p>	<p>Flooding incidents have occurred in the wider vicinity of the site, therefore the Council would be happy to include wording here, as proposed by United Utilities in its response to Reg. 19(2) (Ref 706(2)):</p> <p><i>“Viii. Existing public sewers pass through and near to this site. Modelling data (and / or flooding incident data) identifies these sewers as being at risk of sewer flooding. This will need careful consideration in the detailed design, masterplanning and drainage details for the site”</i></p>

	<p>9. The Kearsley – Padiham overhead transmission line crosses EMP5. In the interest of effectiveness, should this be recognised in Policy EP3 and a strategy for responding to the presence of the overhead transmission line be required through the masterplanning of the site and the impact of the transmission line addressed through good design?</p>	<p>Yes. The Council proposes the following main modification to Policy EP3 under ‘Design Considerations’:</p> <p><i><u>Development should have regard to the overhead transmission lines crossing the site, ensuring that any impacts are adequately mitigated.</u></i></p>
	<p>10. Policy EP4 sets out that allocation EMP6 will be accessed through EMP5 and that access to the site will require a bridge over the railway line. In addition, a further bridge would be required over the canal for pedestrians and cyclists. What implications would this have for the delivery and viability of this allocation?</p>	<p>The Council recognises through Policy EP4 that access to site EMP6 will require a bridge over the railway line. The Council has not undertaken an individual assessment of the viability of sites as Local Plan Viability assessments are undertaken as guided by the National Planning Practice Guidance on viability and plan-making paragraph 10. The Council would expect that the potential costs of this would be reflected in the benchmark land value for the site as a known policy cost. This is reflected in the commentary within the Viability Assessment (HBC2.006) paragraphs 7.11 – 7.16 which states that abnormal costs will be reflected in land value.</p> <p>The Council note that the required bridge over the canal for pedestrian and cyclist’s states that this ‘could be provided’. The development of this requirement would therefore need to be considered against the overall viability of the proposals at the planning application stage.</p> <p>The Council will continue to prepare a holistic infrastructure strategy for EMP4, EMP5 and EMP6 as part of the ongoing master planning work at Whitebirk. The Council will include any outputs of this within the next iteration of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.</p>
	<p>11. Are there any other constraints to the development of these sites that need to be overcome? Should they be addressed in the respective policies? Do they have any impact on viability?</p>	<p>The Council does not consider there to be any further constraints to development.</p>