



Tamworth Local Plan Examination

Representations by JLL on behalf of St Modwen Developments Ltd (SMDL)

MATTER 4 – SPATIAL STRATEGY AND HOUSING NEEDS

4.9 Bearing in mind the relatively tight boundaries around Tamworth, what should be the appropriate area in which to consider and plan for the provision of housing and other development to meet the Borough's needs?

The appropriate area outside the Borough in which to consider and plan for employment (B Class) land needs for the Borough is guided by a number of principal objectives contained within the draft Local Plan. These include:-

- To build on the town's employment strengths and minimise outward commuting (Vision – page 19).
- Provide local job opportunities that will reduce the need for residents to travel outside the Borough (Policy SP3 – page 21).
- To promote sustainable transport modes for all journeys by improving walking, cycling and public transport (Policy SP12 – page 23).
- To provide development in the most accessible and sustainable locations (Policy SS1 – page 24)
- The Green Belt review establishes no exceptional circumstances to release land within the Green Belt for development (paragraph 3.4 – page 25).
- Employment needs coming forward in adjoining local authorities should be aligned with housing growth (paragraph 3.28 – page 30).

It is equally important that the appropriate area for meeting employment land needs outside the Borough reflects the principal requirements of the market. These will include:-

- Excellent and unrestricted access to the motorway network.
- Ease of access to local labour supply (particularly areas of need).
- Availability of unconstrained and flat land.
- Well related to complementary uses (and not next to sensitive uses such as housing).

An obvious example of a site that has consent but not come forward for development, despite marketing, is Land at Rush Lane, Dosthill. This site measures 6.8 ha and is located just within North Warwickshire on the boundary with Tamworth. It forms part of the employment land supply for North Warwickshire (as a commitment as opposed to an allocation). It has not been developed primarily due to its location and situation, which do not meet the market requirements as expressed above.

The Green Belt restricts options to both the south and west of Tamworth. In any event, the road network serving much of this area is relatively poor, compared to the east of Tamworth. The same applies to land to the north. These two factors rule out Lichfield as being likely to absorb effectively any overspill employment land need from Tamworth. Further more detailed analysis on the constraints on land on the periphery of Tamworth was provided in the representations made by JLL on behalf of SMDL in December 2014 to the Pre-Submission draft Local Plan. The plan that accompanied these representations, that marked on relevant local plan designations and allocations, forms **Enclosure No.1**.

The obvious location for employment land outside the Borough is to the east of Tamworth in North Warwickshire. The area already has strong links between Tamworth and North Warwickshire. This has been evidenced by the Southern Staffordshire District Housing Needs Study, the Stage 2 GBSLEP and Black Country Joint Planning Committee Housing Needs Study (2014), the Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2013), and the Coventry and Warwickshire Sub-Regional Employment Land Study (2014). Furthermore, the travel to work patterns 2011 Census Data shows that Tamworth has a clear commuter link with North Warwickshire.

The eastern side of Tamworth benefits from excellent access to the major road network, because of its relationship to the intersection of the M42 and the A5 (Junction 10). In addition, this side of Tamworth contains the majority of the regeneration priority areas of the Borough.

However, the options within North Warwickshire are limited. The reasons why are explained in paragraph 2.13 to the draft Site Allocations Plan for North Warwickshire, that was consulted upon by North Warwickshire Borough Council in June 2014. Paragraph 2.13 provides guidance on the location of employment land to be allocated to meet its own local needs. It reads:-

“Nevertheless, the land available to meet these needs is limited and constrained by the presence of Green Belt across two thirds of the Borough and the need to be located close to good transport and rail links. This limits potential expansion to primarily the A5 corridor along the main settlements at Polesworth/Dordon and Atherstone.”

As such, realistically the catchment area for Tamworth’s overspill into North Warwickshire is constrained to the A5 corridor from the eastern edge of Tamworth to Atherstone at the principal points of settlement. This is a very limited area. In addition, accommodation of Tamworth’s needs cannot duplicate sites already identified by North Warwickshire Borough Council in its Site Allocations Plan to meet its own needs. The draft Pre-Submission version of this development plan was consulted upon last summer. An extract from the draft Site Allocations, showing the principal allocated employment sites in both table and map format, is provided in **Enclosure No.2**. This is considered in more detail, in terms of opportunities close to Tamworth, in the position statement JLL have produced in respect of Matter 10 – Employment.

Nonetheless, it is only logical that the closer that sites are to Tamworth the more easily they will meet the principal objectives set out in the draft Local Plan, as referred to above. The site currently being promoted by SMDL – 25.4 ha gross on land directly south-east of Jn 10 of the M42 motorway – is particularly well placed to meet these principal objectives. Further details concerning this site are provided in JLL’s position statement for Matter 10.

PJL
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