

Wyre Forest Employment Land Review Update Final Report

Wyre Forest District Council

31 October 2018

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Executive Summary

Lichfields was appointed by Wyre Forest District Council [WFDC] to undertake an Employment Land Review Update [ELR] for the District in June 2018. WFDC is preparing a new Local Plan for the next plan period 2016 to 2036 and is therefore reviewing its existing employment land evidence on the supply and demand of employment land in the District. The ELR Update will form a key part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. The emerging Local Plan will replace WFDC's Core Strategy (Adopted 2010).

The ELR Update is designed to follow the requirements set out in the revised National Planning Policy Framework and former Planning Practice Guidance with regards to planning for economic development needs. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to assess the need for, and supply of, employment land. This involved analysis of economic, demographic and commercial property market data, and consultation with a range of stakeholders including commercial agents, economic development and business organisations, and a survey of local businesses.

This ELR Update solely considers the land and floorspace implications for: B1a/b business space (offices/research & development); B1c/B2 Light/General Industrial; and B8 Storage or Distribution (wholesale warehouses, distribution centres).

Economic Context

The local economy of Wyre Forest District has seen substantial levels of restructuring over the past 40 years or so, away from the traditional carpet manufacturing base for which the area was internationally renowned, towards a more service-orientated economy, in particular logistics and distribution. However, the District is relatively remote from the strategic motorway network and larger conurbations contributing to a lack of strategic inward investment in new office developments in District. Since 2012, new industrial developments have been aided by the introduction of WFDC's Local Development Order [LDO] within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park [SKEP].

Wyre Forest District is characterised by higher economic activity rates, lower unemployment rates and a higher rate of self-employment relative to regional and national averages. However, the District has a relatively low qualified workforce, that on average, earn less than their counterparts across the region and the country.

Wyre Forest District is a net exporter of labour, with a net total of 8,980 out-commuters according to the 2011 Census. Very strong commuting relationships exist between Wyre Forest District and a number of nearby local authorities such as Birmingham, Bromsgrove, Dudley, Worcester and Wychavon. Based on the former Practice Guidance's methodology for defining Functional Market Areas [FEMA], Wyre Forest District can be described as self-contained FEMA.

Employment Space

Wyre Forest District's employment space is still dominated by industrial uses which account for around 90% of total employment floorspace. Nonetheless, the level of industrial stock in Wyre Forest District has been declining for a number of years. In contrast, the amount of office floorspace in Wyre Forest District had increased by 44.5% to approximately 80,000 sqm over a 15-year period.

Overall, Wyre Forest District's industrial market, whilst suffering from some of the same problems as the office market (characterised by stock which tends to be older and is not always suitable for the needs of modern businesses), has recently seen an increase in inward investment. This is particularly within the advanced manufacturing companies, but has also been helped along by the streamlined planning process the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park's LDO.

The vast majority of B-class completions in Wyre Forest District over recent years have consisted of industrial units. In summary, over the period 2005/2006 – 2017/2018, a total of 18.96 ha of employment land was developed at a rate of 1.54 ha a year.

Following the recession there has been a drop in the rates of B-class development across the board. Wyre Forest District has seen recent losses of B-class employment land largely due to permitted development rights [PDR]. A total of 18.32 ha of B-Class employment land has been lost across the District over the period 2005/06 – 2017/18, which averages 1.41 ha a year.

The net development rates have been positive over the period examined (0.13 ha per annum) – driven in part by the South Kidderminster LDO.

Commercial Property Market

Wyre Forest District's commercial property market is relatively localised and, notwithstanding some very large logistics employers, remains heavily reliant on a large base of SMEs and existing occupier churn. From a commercial property market perspective, the FEMA does not currently extend far beyond the boundaries of Wyre Forest District, although there could be an opportunity to broaden this if a strategy was put in place to pro-actively target and attract business requirements from further afield such as increasing the locations within the District that benefit from LDOs.

Commercial agents highlighted the need for high quality industrial premises which are suitable for the needs of modern businesses, located on strategic A-road or mainline train routes. These need to offer flexibility, both in terms of the uses such premises can be harnessed for and with flexible terms of contract.

Review of Employment Site Portfolio

A total of 23 allocated and non-allocated existing employment sites were assessed as part of the study covering 347.95 ha (gross) of land. Following the site assessments, 23 allocated and non-allocated existing employment sites are recommended to be included in the District's employment land supply, with a net developable area of 17.32 ha. This takes into account that two sites are recommended to be released from employment use.

Future Requirement of Employment Space

Five scenarios of future employment space were considered for Wyre Forest District. The scenarios based upon the future demand for labour harnessed three sets of employment projections – Experian, which projects employment growth over the period 2016-2036 of 1,100 jobs in Wyre Forest District. A Policy-On scenario also factored in the Experian job growth figures over the emerging Local Plan Period in key growth sectors. These key growth sectors are based on discussions with WFDC Officers, and making reference to the LEP Target Growth Sectors for both LEPs that Wyre Forest falls within (Worcestershire LEP and GBSLEP).

Labour supply scenarios were calculated based on the outputs of Wyre Forest District's emerging SHMA (based on a dwelling target of 276 dwellings per annum), and a past take up scenario considered providing for a similar level of development as had occurred in the past.

For Wyre Forest District, 28.54 ha (based on Scenario 4: Labour Supply Scenario – Dwelling-Led) was identified as being required over the 20-year plan period to 2036 of which 4.00 ha relates to office land, and between 24.54 ha relates to industrial/warehousing land. It was recommended that the current portfolio of land should be rebalanced to deallocate around two current employment sites, leaving around 17.32 ha (net). This would leave an identified shortfall of 11.22 ha of B-Class employment land across Wyre Forest District.

Demand / Supply Balance

WFDC's existing employment land supply of 17.32 ha is insufficient to meet the estimated requirement of 29 ha over the Local Plan period to 2036. Consequently, three potential sites were assessed for their suitability

to accommodate B-Class employment uses. All three sites are recommended to be allocated for B-Class employment use or mixed-use development with a component of B-Class use, with a combined net developable area of 10.23 ha. One of the sites, Lea Castle Hospital Phase 2, is expected to accommodate some significant employment B1 and potentially B2 needs, whilst the other sites are likely to appeal to a range of B2/B8 uses.

Taking into account the recommended gross employment land supply of 347.95 ha (with a net developable area of 17.32ha) and the recommended allocations of two new B-Class and one mixed use sites with a combined net developable area of 10.23 ha, the District has a recommended employment land portfolio of 27.55ha.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Wyre Forest District Council [WFDC] appointed Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners [Lichfields] in June 2018 to undertake an update to the Employment Land Review [ELR] that Lichfields produced on the Council's behalf in April 2016. It was considered necessary to revisit the 2016 ELR to ensure it aligns with:

- the ongoing Strategic Housing Market Assessment [SHMA] work being undertaken by arc4/Edge Analytics;
- updated Experian data projections;
- revised National Planning Policy Framework [Framework]; and,
- additional B-class employment sites that WFDC asked us to assess.

1.2 WFDC has started work on a new Local Plan for the next plan period to 2036 and is therefore reviewing its existing employment land evidence on the supply of and demand for employment land in the District. The ELR Update will form a key part of the evidence base for this new Local Plan for the period 2016 to 2036. A key focus for this ELR Update is the need to ensure that sufficient suitable employment sites are provided to achieve the Council's ambitions for long-term economic growth. The study provides WFDC with an assessment of the current position and recent trends within the District's economy, and the potential scale and type of future economic growth and business needs. The study has been prepared in the context of requirements set out in the revised National Planning Policy Framework [the Framework] published in July 2018 and Planning Practice Guidance [Practice Guidance] with regards to planning for economic development needs.

1.3 The study has involved three main stages:

- 1 **Stage 1: Taking Stock of the Existing Situation:** analysis of the economic strengths and weaknesses of the local economy, the functional economic area, and an assessment of the fitness for purpose of a portfolio of designated employment sites.
- 2 **Stage 2: Assessing B-Class Future Requirements:** testing the implications of different population/household growth scenarios on future employment space requirements for the District, including latest economic forecasts and housing requirements.
- 3 **Stage 3: Identifying a Site Portfolio:** analysing the condition, status and functionality of existing employment areas, which sites should be retained to meet future employment needs and which released for alternative uses, and any need for additional sites in the area.

Scope

1.4 The purpose of the ELR Update is to provide the Council with an understanding of the current and potential future requirements for employment land and how this aligns with current stock of B-Class employment land in the District [Wyre Forest]. This is based on considering a range of scenarios for how Wyre Forest's economy could change in the future, over the plan period (2016 – 2036).

1.5 Following from this analysis, the land and floorspace implications are specifically considered for the group of B-class sectors outlined below:

- **B1a/b Business** (offices, research & development);
- **B1c/B2 Light / General Industrial (factories and workshops)**; and,

- **B8 Storage or Distribution** (warehousing and distribution).

1.6 Demand for B-class employment land and floorspace is considered in this report, and references to “employment space” are intended to mean both land and floorspace. Industrial space in this report includes both manufacturing and distribution uses (B1c / B2 and B8 Use Class).

1.7 It should be noted that there are a variety of factors and drivers to consider when objectively assessing business needs for a local area. This study utilises a combination of both quantitative and qualitative analysis to explore these issues within the context of Wyre Forest and addresses these to draw overarching conclusions and implications. An important consideration for any work of this type is that it is inevitably a point-in-time assessment. This study has incorporated the latest data and other evidence available at the time of preparation. The accuracy and sources of data derived from third party sources has not been checked or verified by Lichfields.

1.8 As part of the study, and to ensure it reflects local characteristics and issues, consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders including commercial agents and business organisations.

Methodology

1.9 At the time of writing, the Planning Practice Guidance [PPG] section that provided detailed advice on how to approach undertaking economic development needs assessment has been archived following the updates to the Framework released in July 2018. In its place are two much-shortened sections in ‘Plan Making’:

What are the steps in gathering evidence to plan for business?

1.10 *Strategic policy-making authorities will need a clear understanding of business requirements in their area. The steps in building up this evidence include:*

- *working together with county and neighbouring authorities, Mayors, combined authorities and with Local Enterprise Partnerships to define the most appropriate geography to prepare policies for employment;*
- *preparing and maintaining a robust evidence base to understand both existing business needs and likely changes in the market, with reference to local industrial strategies where relevant; and*
- *engaging with the business community to understand their changing needs and identify and address barriers to investment, including a lack of housing, infrastructure or viability.¹*

How should authorities use this evidence base to plan for business?

1.11 *Authorities should use this evidence to assess:*

- *the need for land or floorspace for economic development, including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period, including for retail and leisure development;*
- *the existing and future supply of land available for economic development and its suitability to meet the identified needs. This should be undertaken at the same time as, or combined with, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments and should include a reappraisal of the suitability of previously allocated land.*

¹ 61-033-20180913

- *the likely availability and achievability of employment-led development, taking into account market signals;*
- *the role, capacity and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including any trends in the performance of centres;*
- *locations of deprivation which may benefit from planned remedial action; and*
- *the needs of the farming and food production industries, including the location and extent of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and the ways in which planning could support investment in those industries².”*

1.12 In the absence of a comprehensive methodology in the current version of the PPG, Lichfields has applied the previous PPG approach and best practice employed elsewhere, including the former ODPM ‘Brown Book’ Employment Land Review: Guidance Note (2004).

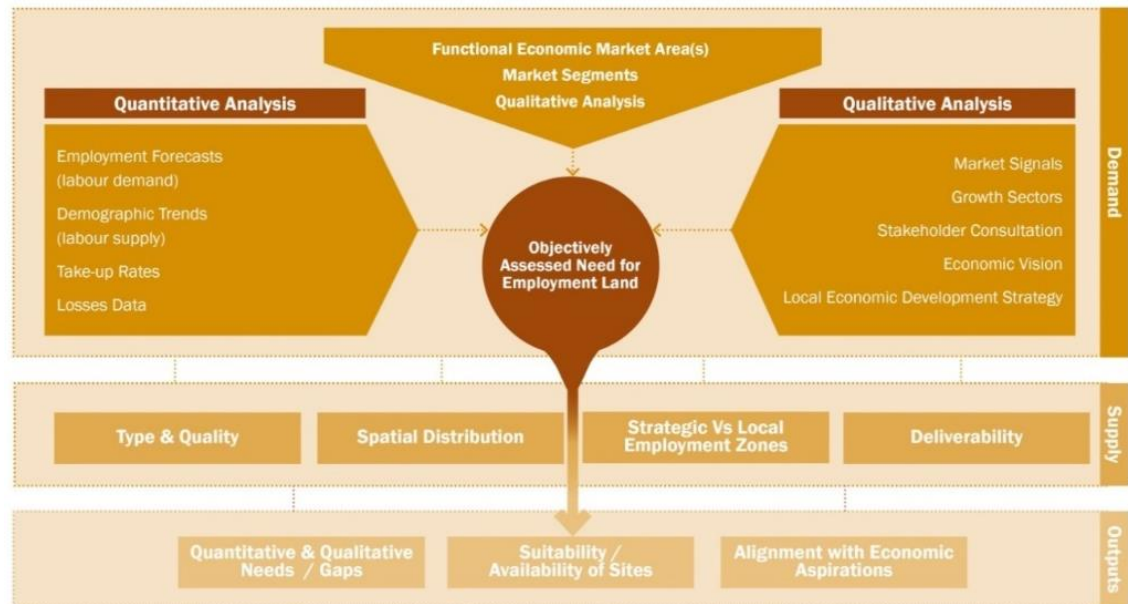
1.13 The previous PPG provided support for practitioners on how to implement the Framework. With regards to assessing economic development needs and land supply, it stated that local authorities should:

- 1 Consider their existing stock of land, identifying the demand for and supply of employment land and determine the likely business needs and future market requirements;
- 2 Consider recent patterns of employment land supply and losses to other uses;
- 3 Analyse market intelligence from local data, discussions with developers and agents, and engagement with businesses or economic forums;
- 4 Consider the locational and premises requirements of particular types of business;
- 5 Consider projections and forecasts to help identify where sites have been developed for a specific economic use;
- 6 Analyse supply and demand to identify whether there is a discrepancy between quantitative and qualitative supply and demand for employment sites; and,
- 7 Identify where gaps in local employment land provision exist by comparing the available stock of land with the requirements of the area.

1.14 This study’s methodology conforms to the requirements of the Framework and the previous PPG which is summarised in Figure 1.1.

² 61-034-20180913

Figure 1.1 Employment Land Methodology



Source: Lichfields

Report Structure

1.15

The report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2.0 sets out the policy context**, including a review of relevant national and local policy documents, employment studies and economic development strategies;
- **Section 3.0 outlines the economic context** including current economic conditions and trends that may affect future needs for employment space;
- **Section 4.0 provides an overview of the employment space** in Wyre Forest, including the mix of uses, development rates, completions and losses, supply and demand and the needs of different market segments;
- **Section 5.0 outlines the commercial property market** Lichfields has reviewed the local commercial property market; including the supply of and demand for different types of employment space within Wyre Forest and the needs of different market segments;
- **Section 6.0 reviews the existing portfolio of employment land and premises** in Wyre Forest against defined criteria including market attractiveness and ability to meet future needs;
- **Section 7.0 assesses the future requirement for B-Class Employment Space** including estimates of future employment space requirements for B-Class sectors in quantitative terms, drawing on employment forecasts and other factors;
- **Section 8.0 assesses the balance between current land supply and future needs**, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, by comparing (and validating) forecast requirements with the availability of existing sites; and,
- **Section 9.0 summarises the key conclusions** of the study along with policy recommendations to support the existing and future site portfolio and maximise future economic growth in Wyre Forest.

2.0 Policy Context

Introduction

2.1 National planning policy places a particular emphasis on sustainable development through a process of:

- 1 Reviewing employment and housing land allocations to ensure the supply meets identified needs;
- 2 Proactively supporting sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs; and,
- 3 Encouraging the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), with a view to promoting regeneration.

2.2 This section provides a summary of the relevant policies relating to employment land and economic development within Wyre Forest.

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018)

2.3 The timing of this ELR Update is particularly pertinent given that on 24th July 2018 the Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework [the Framework]. This incorporates policy proposals previously consulted on in the Housing White Paper and the ‘Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places’ consultation paper, and the draft Framework published for consultation in March 2018.

2.4 The Framework sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. The Framework [§7] states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It states in paragraph 8 that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social and environmental. The economic objective is to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

2.5 Paragraph 20 states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for a range of uses, including employment and other commercial development.

2.6 Section 6 of the Framework summarises how the Planning System should help build a strong competitive economy:

“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.” [§80]

- 2.7 The Framework [§81] indicates that LPAs are required to ensure that Local Plan policies set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration. They should set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period, and seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment. The Framework also requires planning policies to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.
- 2.8 Furthermore, planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. The Framework states that:
“This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.” [§82].
- 2.9 Paragraphs 83 and 84 of the Framework focus on supporting a prosperous rural economy. Planning policies and decisions are required to enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. It assumes that some sites needed to meet local business needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to, or beyond, existing settlements, hence why it is important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings. The use of brownfield sites well related to existing settlements is encouraged.
- 2.10 Offices are defined as a ‘main town centre use’ [Annex 1] in the Framework. As such, and in accordance with the sequential test, offices should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered [§86]. This sequential approach does not, however, apply to small scale rural offices [§88].
- 2.11 The Framework states that LPAs should ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services [§92(e)].
- 2.12 In line with the general thrust of the Framework which seeks to significantly boost the supply of homes, Chapter 11, ‘Making effective use of land’ stipulates that planning policies should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. In particular, this requires LPAs to promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially where this would help to meet housing needs [§118]. In particular, Paragraph 120 encourages LPAs to adapt planning decisions and policies to reflect “*changes in the demand for land*” by stating that:
“Planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability. Where the LPA considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan:
a) they should, as part of plan updates, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs (or, if appropriate, deallocate a site which is undeveloped)...”

2.13 Paragraph 121 of the Framework takes this theme further by stating that:

“LPAs should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. In particular, they should support proposals to:

a) use retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework...”

2.14 Ultimately, the Framework requires local authorities to have up-to-date and comprehensive evidence to inform their judgments about the need for, and relative importance of, the employment land in their areas, particularly in the face of added pressure for release to other uses.

Planning Practice Guidance

2.15 As set out in Section 1.0, the Planning Practice Guidance [PPG] section that provided detailed advice on how to approach undertaking economic development needs assessment has been archived. In its place are two much-shortened sections in ‘Plan Making’. In the absence of a comprehensive methodology in the current version of the PPG, Lichfields has applied the previous PPG approach and best practice employed elsewhere, including the former ODPM ‘Brown Book’ Employment Land Review: Guidance Note (2004).

2.16 The previous Practice Guidance set out a broad methodology for assessing the demand for, and supply of, housing and economic development.

2.17 The previous Practice Guidance states that plan makers should liaise closely with the business community to understand their current and potential future requirements.

2.18 Plan makers should also consider:

- 1 The recent pattern of employment land supply and loss to other uses;
- 2 Market intelligence (from local data and discussions with developers and property agents, recent surveys of business needs or engagement with business and economic forums);
- 3 Market signals, such as levels and changes in rental values, and differentials between land values in different uses;
- 4 Public information on employment land and premises required;
- 5 Information held by other public sector bodies and utilities in relation to infrastructure constraints;
- 6 The existing stock of employment land. This should indicate the demand for and supply of employment land and determine the likely business needs and future market requirements (though it is important to recognise that existing stock may not reflect the future needs of business);
- 7 The locational and premises requirements of particular types of business; and,
- 8 Identification of oversupply and evidence of market failure.

2.19 When examining the recent take-up of employment land, the previous Practice Guidance advises that it is important to consider projections (based on past trends) and forecasts (based on future scenarios) and identify occurrences where sites have been developed for specialist economic uses.

2.20 In terms of forecasting future trends, the previous Practice Guidance advises that:

- 1 Plan makers should consider forecasts of quantitative and qualitative need (i.e. the number of units and amount of floorspace for other uses needed) but also its particular characteristics (e.g. footprint of economic uses and proximity to infrastructure);
- 2 Local authorities should develop an idea of future needs based on a range of data which is current and robust;
- 3 Emerging sectors that are well suited to the area being covered by the analysis should be encouraged where possible; and,
- 4 The available stock of land should be compared with the particular requirements of the area so that 'gaps' in local employment land provision can be identified.

2.21 The previous Practice Guidance advises that plan makers should consider:

- 1 Sectoral and employment forecasts and projections (labour demand);
- 2 Demographically derived assessments of future employment needs (labour supply techniques);
- 3 Analyses based on the past take-up of employment land and property and/or future property market requirements;
- 4 Consultation with relevant organisations, studies of business trends, and monitoring of business, economic and employment statistics.

2.22 In identifying the type of employment land needed the previous Practice Guidance advises that:

- 1 The need for rural employment should not be overlooked;
- 2 Underlying population projections can be purely demographic or tied to future housing stock which needs to be assessed separately; and,
- 3 Plan makers should be careful to consider that national economic trends may not automatically translate to particular areas with a distinct employment base.

2.23 In order to derive employment land requirements, the previous Practice Guidance states that when translating employment and output forecasts into land requirements there are four key relationships which need to be quantified:

- 1 Standard Industrial Classification sectors to use classes;
- 2 Standard Industrial Classification sectors to type of property;
- 3 Employment to floorspace (employment density); and,
- 4 Floorspace to site area (plot ratio based on industry proxies).

Building Our Industrial Strategy Green Paper

2.1 In January 2017 the Government published the Green Paper: '*Building our Industrial Strategy*'. The document sets out a modern industrial strategy that aims to improve living standards and economic growth by increasing productivity and driving growth across the whole country. The Strategy identifies 10 'pillars' that will be supported to drive growth.

2.2 The pillars are as follows:

- 1 **Investing in science, research and innovation** – promoting a more innovative economy and doing more to commercialise our world leading science base to drive growth across the UK.
- 2 **Developing skills** –ensuring everyone has the basic skills needed in a modern economy; building a new system of technical education to benefit those young people who do not go to

- university; boosting STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills, digital skills and numeracy; and raising skill levels in lagging areas.
- 3 **Upgrading infrastructure** –upgrading standards of performance on digital, energy, transport, water and flood defence infrastructure, and better aligning central government infrastructure investment with local growth priorities.
 - 4 **Supporting businesses to start and grow** –ensuring that businesses across the UK can access the finance and management skills they need to grow; and creating the right conditions for companies to invest for the long term.
 - 5 **Improving procurement** – using strategic government procurement to drive innovation and enabling the development of UK supply chains.
 - 6 **Encouraging trade and inward investment** –boosting productivity and growth across the UK economy by increasing competition and helping to bring new ways of doing things.
 - 7 **Delivering affordable energy and clean growth** –keeping costs down for businesses and securing the economic benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy.
 - 8 **Cultivating world-leading sectors** –building on our areas of competitive advantage, and help new sectors to flourish, challenging existing institutions and incumbents.
 - 9 **Driving growth across the whole country** –creating a framework to build on the particular strengths of different places and address factors that hold places back –investing in key infrastructure projects to encourage growth, increasing skill levels, and backing local innovation strengths.
 - 10 **Creating the right institutions to bring together sectors and places** –considering the best structures to support people, industries and places.

Local Planning Policy

Wyre Forest Local Plan Review

- 2.3 WFDC’s Development Plan currently comprises the adopted Core Strategy (2010); the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan [AAP] (2013); Chaddesley Corbett Neighbourhood Plan (2014); Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan (2017) and the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan [SAP] (2013).
- 2.4 WFDC is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2016 to 2036. The Local Plan will draw upon a number of documents that comprise its evidence base, including this ELR Update.

Wyre Forest Local Plan Review Preferred Options (2016 -2034)

- 2.5 As part of the emerging Local Plan Review, WFDC published its Preferred Option Local Plan [LP] document for public consultation in July 2017.
- 2.6 The LP’s spatial strategy sets out where new development should go and how much, and of what type, is required. The document also considers a range of other associated matters such as the level of infrastructure (e.g. roads, schools, utilities) that will be required to support the proposed development.
- 2.7 Due to the difficult choices that will have to be made, WFDC put forward two variations (Options A and Options B) of the spatial strategy for consultation.
- 2.8 Policy 10A – ‘A Diverse Local Economy’ makes provision for employment land provision of up to 40ha. This policy requires all future employment land within the urban areas to be located in

highly accessible locations. Future development of small scale businesses and starter units is also encouraged.

- 2.9 Option A of the PO makes provision for 43ha, which is above the figure stated in Policy 10A and seeks to concentrate development to the east/south east of Kidderminster. In contrast, Option B provides 39ha (with one employment site re-categorised as residential. Future additional development in this latter scenario is expected to be more widely spread around the District, with further developments around Stourport-on-Severn and the Lea Castle Hospital area.

Wyre Forest Council Adopted Core Strategy (2010)

- 2.10 Having identified a number of vacant underused brownfield employment sites in Wyre Forest, the approach adopted in the adopted Core Strategy was to redevelop these underused and vacant sites into high quality employment areas so as to negate the need for further allocations in the Greenfield and/or Green Belt locations. For instance, the Stourport Road Employment Corridor is identified as a key strategic area within Wyre Forest and the Core Strategy highlights the importance of retaining and enhancing the existing sites within this corridor whilst developing opportunities for new businesses and sites in the area (such as the Former British Sugar Site).
- 2.11 The Core Strategy also acknowledges the role infrastructure plays in serving the needs of business. It highlights that access to and from economic areas will be crucial to the effectiveness of businesses within Wyre Forest. Therefore, any new employment-led opportunities will need to be in accessible locations well supported by sustainable infrastructure³.
- 2.12 Based upon the findings of the earlier Wyre Forest Employment Land Study published in 2008, the Core Strategy identifies a need to provide additional employment of the right type and in the right location by allocating the following quantum of land for employment uses:
- 1 44 hectares for employment land (Policy DS01); and,
 - 2 40,000 sqm of office development - (Policy DS01).

Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (2013)

- 2.13 The Kidderminster Central AAP sets out detailed policies to guide the regeneration of Kidderminster and allocates sites for specific types of development. It identifies areas for change and is intended to help stimulate and deliver regeneration opportunities.
- 2.14 Kidderminster is the main service centre for Wyre Forest and is a strategic centre which has significant redevelopment and regeneration potential. However, the AAP recognised that Kidderminster was undergoing major economic restructuring and faces acute economic, social and environmental challenges. The AAP identified a number of employment objectives, which included⁴:
- Strengthen and diversify the economic base of the town;
 - Encourage new job creation;
 - Increase the amount of office floorspace; and,
 - Retain some existing industrial areas.

³ Wyre Forest Council (2010) Adopted Core Strategy, paragraph 8.4

⁴ Wyre Forest Council (2013) Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan, page 23

Background Economic Studies

Wyre Forest Employment Land Review (2016)

- 2.15 The previous ELR was carried out in 2016 by Lichfields. It assessed current employment sites within Wyre Forest District and calculated potential future requirements for new employment land in the area.
- 2.16 The requirement for new employment land identified by the ELR was between 37 and 60 ha up to 2032. Lichfields recommended that greater weight should be attached to the lower end of this range.
- 2.17 The employment land range included making suitable provision for a modest safety margin to allow for delays in sites coming forward for development, reflecting a wide variation in the level of growth that could be supported by Wyre Forest's economy over the plan period
- 2.18 Having assessed the current supply of employment sites, the ELR concluded that Wyre Forest had a shortfall in the total amount of employment land available to accommodate its employment needs to 2032.

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan

- 2.19 The Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership's [GBSLEP] Strategic Economic Plan⁵ [SEP] sets out their key role in rebalancing the economy. The SEP's ambitions include to deliver 50,000 private sector jobs, 14,000 new houses, 1.7m sqm of commercial space, £2.3bn of GVA and leverage £1,100m of private sector investment over the next 10 years. It identifies a number of high value growth sectors which the LEP aims to grow with the prospect of developing further competitive advantage. These sectors are:
1. Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering;
 2. Life Sciences;
 3. Digital and Creative Industries;
 4. Business, Professional and Financial Services; and,
 5. Low Carbon and Environmental Technologies⁶.
- 2.20 The SEP lists Kidderminster as a 'Strategic Centre' and the Hoo Brook Link Road (a road linking the two main employment corridors within Wyre Forest) as a 'Priority Project', upon which funding from public and private sources has been leveraged to develop.⁷

Worcestershire LEP Strategic Economic Plan

- 2.21 Wyre Forest also sits within the Worcestershire LEP's sphere of influence. In its Strategic Economic Plan⁸ [SEP] the Worcestershire LEP sets out an ambitious vision to grow the local economy by over 25,000 jobs and to increase GVA by £2.9 billion to 2025. A particular focus of the SEP is on securing growth in GVA per worker and average annual earnings.
- 2.22 The SEP lists Worcestershire's sectoral strengths, which reflect local specialisations across the County. These growth sectors are:

⁵ Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (2016): *Strategic Economic Plan*

⁶ Ibid. page 4

⁷ Ibid. page 92

⁸ Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (2014) *Worcestershire Strategic Economic Plan*

1. advanced manufacturing;
2. cyber security/defence/IT;
3. agri-tech;
4. Visitor and Destination Economy; and,
5. Professional & Business Services.

2.23 Furthermore, the destination and visitor economy are also highlighted as an important source of jobs growth in some parts of the County, in particular in areas where accessible jobs are needed.⁹ The South Kidderminster Enterprise Park is listed as a ‘game changer site’ and the LEP’s aim is to support the ongoing development of an existing employment scheme in attracting new investment in this location, specifically targeting firms in the advanced engineering sector.¹⁰ Worcester LEP first nominated the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park [SKEP] within its application to create an Enterprise Zone in 2011, although this initial bid was unsuccessful.¹¹

2.24 The LEP submitted the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park as part of a second bid to create an Enterprise Zone across the County. The bid, which was submitted in September 2014, included several other sites within Worcestershire, specifically: Redditch Eastern Gateway; Worcester Six Technology Park; University Park in Worcester; Malvern Hills Science Park and Malvern Technology Centre; and Vale Park Food Enterprise Zone¹².

2.25 The Government’s 2015 Autumn Statement announced the latest round of Enterprise Zones and unfortunately the Worcester LEP was again unsuccessful in securing Enterprise Zone status for these sites.

South Kidderminster Enterprise Park Local Development Order

2.26 WFDC has implemented a Local Development Order [LDO] to cater for SKEP, which allows development falling into specific employment use classes to come forward without the need for planning permission. It is designed to simplify the planning process and it is hoped that this will help encourage new businesses to locate in the area and existing businesses to expand their operations. The LDO came into effect in 2012 and has been renewed twice, with the latest LDO to last until 2021. WFDC states that the LDO has seen over 40,000 sq. ft. of new business premises created, worth over £25m in inward investment in total between 2012 and 2018¹³. Examples of developments which have been facilitated in the area since the LDO’s implementation include:

1. **Specsavers:** The optical retail chain made a c.£8 million investment through the completion of a new 75,000 sq. ft. facility, which combines the existing Specsavers operations at the former Romwire site in the SKEP, and which offers expansion potential to meet the demands of a growing order book.¹⁴

⁹ Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (2014) *Strategic Economic Plan*, page ii

¹⁰ Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (2014) *Strategic Economic Plan*, page 29

¹¹ TheBusinessDesk (2011) ‘LEPs defiant after Enterprise Zones rejected’: Available online at: <http://www.thebusinessdesk.com/westmidlands/news/208214-leps-defiant-after-enterprise-zone-rejection.html>

¹² ‘Regeneration chiefs launch bold bid to drive investment in Kidderminster’ (2015) Available online at: http://www.kidderminstershuttle.co.uk/news/13797391.Regeneration_chiefs_launch_bold_bid_to_drive_investment_in_Kidderminster/

¹³ WFDC

¹⁴ Wyre Forest District Council (2015) ‘Specsavers looking to the future in Kidderminster’ Available online at: <http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/news/april-2015/specsavers-focus-on-kidderminster.aspx>

2. **Amada:** This manufacturing company expanded its existing premises, and in doing so invested c.£5 million and safeguarded 50 jobs.¹⁵
3. **Oakleaf Commercial Services:** The company has built a brand new £2m depot for its Oakleaf subsidiary company at Finepoint Business Park.¹⁶
4. **Beakbane:** The machine protection equipment manufacturer opened a new £1.2m factory and engineering lab which includes new offices, an engineering development laboratory alongside a storage and despatch area. The project involved completely rebuilding part of its main site and redeveloping the rest of it to create an additional 12,000 sq. ft. of production space.¹⁷
5. **Gemini Properties:** The property development and investment company developed Unit 2 at Finepoint Business Park (27,630 sq. ft.). This has been leased by global pharmaceutical giants Movianto and is used as a distribution centre.

¹⁵ Wyre Forest District Council (2018): South Kidderminster Enterprise Park: Local Development Order Consultation

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ The Birmingham Post (2014) '*Beakbane unveils new-look factory*'

<http://www.birminghampost.co.uk/business/manufacturing/beakbane-unveils-new-look-factory-7245580>

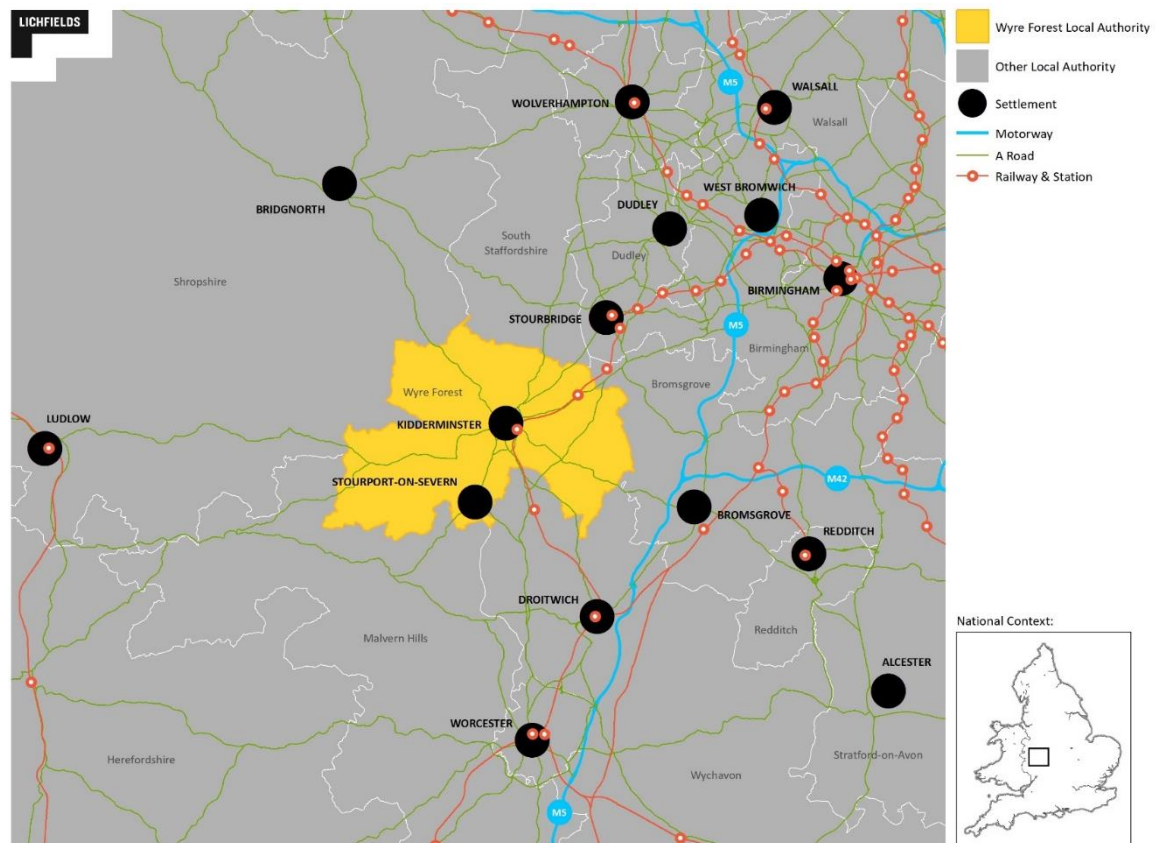
3.0 Economic Context

3.1 This section provides an update to Wyre Forest’s economic context and draws comparisons with the wider region and UK as a whole. It summarises recent economic conditions and trends within Wyre Forest where there have been significant changes since the previous ELR was produced in 2016.

Overview

3.2 Wyre Forest is located within the West Midlands, situated between the authorities of Shropshire to the north west, South Staffordshire to the north, Bromsgrove to the east, Wychavon to the south east and Malvern Hills to the south west. It lies in north Worcestershire, within two LEP areas - the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and the Worcestershire LEP.

Figure 3.1 Context Map



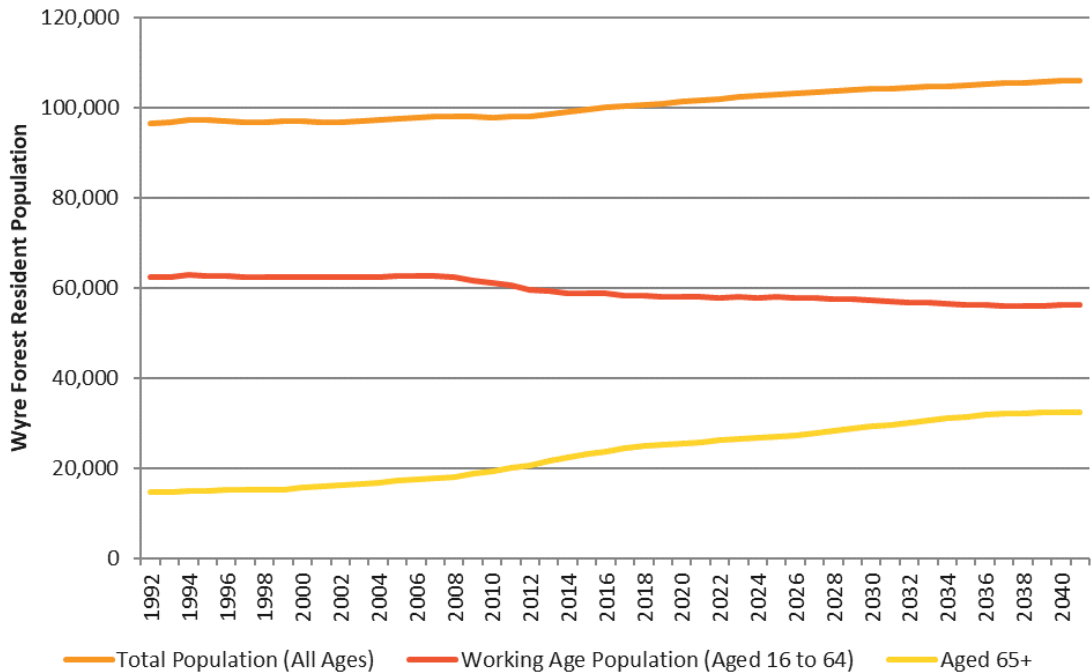
Source: Lichfields

3.3 As of 2017, Wyre Forest had a population of 100,700¹⁸, experiencing growth of 2.8% between 2007 and 2017. This was well below the 7.5% growth rate experienced across the West Midlands and the national growth rate of 8.2% as a whole. The latest ONS 2016-based Sub-National Population Projections [SNPP] suggest that over the Local Plan period to 2036, Wyre Forest’s population will increase to 4,500, to 105,200 (Figure 3.2). This is an increase of 4.5%, which is again below the West Midlands (8.8%) and national growth rates (9.5%). The 2014-based MHCLG household projections translate this population growth into 3,700 new households over

¹⁸ ONS (2018) Mid-Year Estimates 2017

the next 20 years; a growth rate of 183 annually or 8.3%. This growth rate is significantly below the national growth rate of 18.2%.

Figure 3.2 Population Change in Wyre Forest



Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates and 2016-based SNPP (1991-2041)

3.4 A significant proportion of Wyre Forest’s population growth over the next 20 years is forecast to come from those aged 65 and over, with that element of the population growing by a over a third (33.9%). This aligns with a rise in the old age dependency ratio and, proportionately, fewer people of employment age living in Wyre Forest.

3.5 The number of people of employment age living in Wyre Forest was 58.3% in 2017; this reflects a reduction of 6.4% of the working-age population since 2007. As can be seen in Figure 3.2, the sharp growth in the number of residents of retirement age stands in stark contrast to the decline in the working age population (16-64 years), which is forecast to fall by 2,564 residents, or -4.4% over the plan period (2016-2036). This has clear implications for this ELR Update in terms of the volume of land required; where it should be located; and the type of facility required, given changing working patterns and greater levels of flexible working (including more part time working and working from home).

Economic Conditions and Trends

3.6 Current economic conditions and trends in Wyre Forest are summarised below, with comparisons made (where appropriate) with regional and national averages. Data is taken from the June 2018 Experian Model and published ONS sources unless indicated otherwise.

Employment

3.7 Wyre Forest accommodated 40,300 workforce jobs in 2017, a fall of 7.1% from its 1997 peak (43,400 workforce jobs). This is in contrast to the West Midlands’s increase of 15.6% and +21.8%

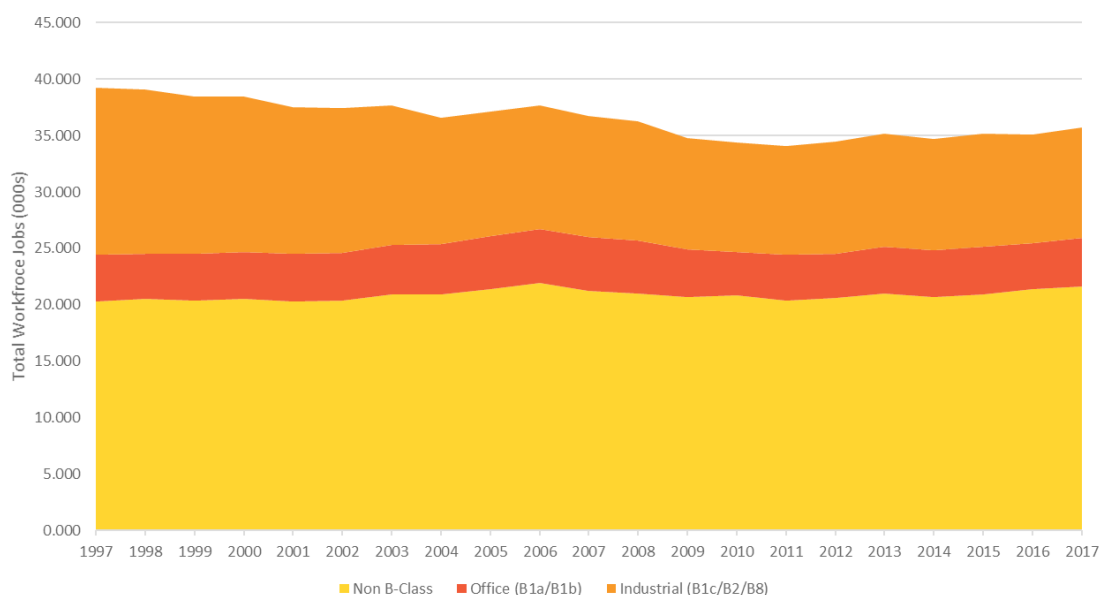
across the whole of the United Kingdom¹⁹. The main driver behind this decline in the local economy is the restructuring of the hitherto dominant manufacturing sector in Kidderminster.

3.8 The historical context to this is of course the area’s once thriving carpet manufacturing industry. Kidderminster grew rapidly with the industrialisation of the weaving industry, based on a ready supply of good quality water and close proximity to primary wool markets in mid-Wales, and gradually developed an international reputation for producing high quality carpets²⁰. However, over the past few decades the town has been badly affected by the industrial decline of this traditional activity, with the production of carpets moving overseas where labour costs tend to be lower. This has resulted in a substantial decline in B1c/B2 jobs, which the growth in B1 and non-B-class floorspace has not fully offset.

3.9 As with the total level of workforce jobs, the proportion of B class jobs have also declined steadily, falling from 43.7% of all jobs in Wyre Forest in 1997 to 35.1% in 2017 (Figure 3.3). This overall decline masks differences within the B-Class sectors. For instance, declining employment in industrial sectors²¹ (-33.9% over 1997-2017) compares to a modest growth in office jobs (+4.9% over the same period).

3.10 Between 1997 and 2017, employment growth within Wyre Forest was primarily driven by non-B-Class sectors notably recreation (increasing by +1,200 jobs), Education (+1,100), Accommodation and Supportive Services (+700) and Utilities (+400). At the same time, substantial job losses were recorded in Textiles and Clothing Manufacturing (-1,500), Printing and Recorded Media (-1,000) and Non-Metallic Products Manufacturing (-900) sectors.

Figure 3.3 Changes in Total Workforce Jobs and B-Class Jobs in Wyre Forest, 1997-2017



Source: Experian 2018 / Lichfields Analysis

3.11 Figure 3.4 plots jobs in broad industrial sectors within Wyre Forest against comparable rates for the wider region and nationally. As of 2017, the largest sector in Wyre Forest was Public Services²² (23.8%), whilst Wholesale and Retail (21.3%) and Professional & Other Private

¹⁹ Experian (2018)

²⁰ Worcestershire LEP (2014) Strategic Economic Plan, page 4

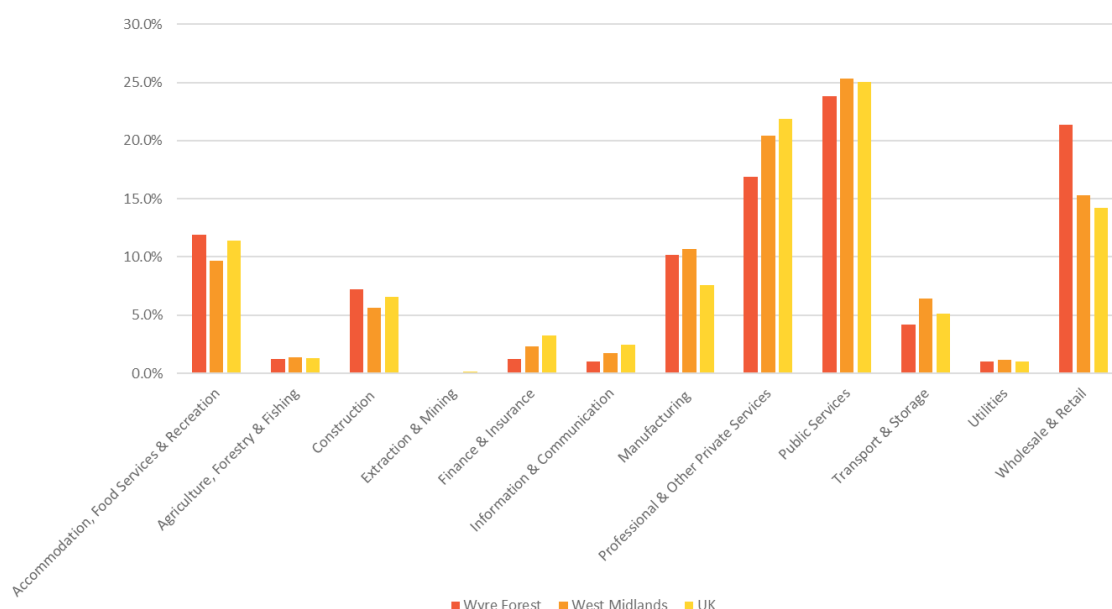
²¹ B1c/B2 industrial sectors in addition to B8 distribution sectors

²² This grouping includes the SIC2 sectors of Public Administration & Defence, Education, Health and Residential Care & Social Work

Services²³ (16.9%) also account for a relatively high proportion of workforce jobs. More detailed analysis of the Wholesale & Retail sector indicates that any perceived sectoral strength appears to be in Retail rather than within the Wholesale sector. Likewise, Manufacturing²⁴ accounts for 10.2% of the District’s employment, versus 10.7% across the West Midlands and just 7.6% across the UK as a whole. Whilst much of the employment associated with the carpet trade has shifted overseas, Wyre Forest is still home to high-end carpet manufactures, including Adam, Brintons, Brockway and Victoria Carpets.

3.12 By contrast, Professional and Other Private Services firms employ proportionally fewer (16.9%) employees in Wyre Forest relative to the regional (20.5%) and national average (22%), and the same is true for other high-value service sectors such as Finance and Insurance. Whilst public services²⁵ account for a large percentage of the overall workforce, the District generally is less reliant on this sector than the West Midlands region or the country as a whole.

Figure 3.4 Workforce Jobs in Wyre Forest and comparator areas (2017)



Source: Experian (2018) / Lichfields Analysis

Business Demography and Enterprise

3.13 Wyre Forest is predominantly a ‘small business’ economy. As illustrated in Figure 3.5, the District has a slightly higher proportion of ‘micro’ firms employing between 0 and 9 workers (89.6%) than the West Midlands (89.1%) or Great Britain (89.5%). As a result, there are a similar proportion of firms employing between 10 and 49 workers (8.8% versus 9.0% in the West Midlands and 8.7% in Great Britain), between 50 and 249 workers (1.4% versus 1.5% in the West Midlands and 1.5% in Great Britain) and large firms employing over 250 workers (0.3% versus 0.4% in both the West Midlands and Great Britain overall).

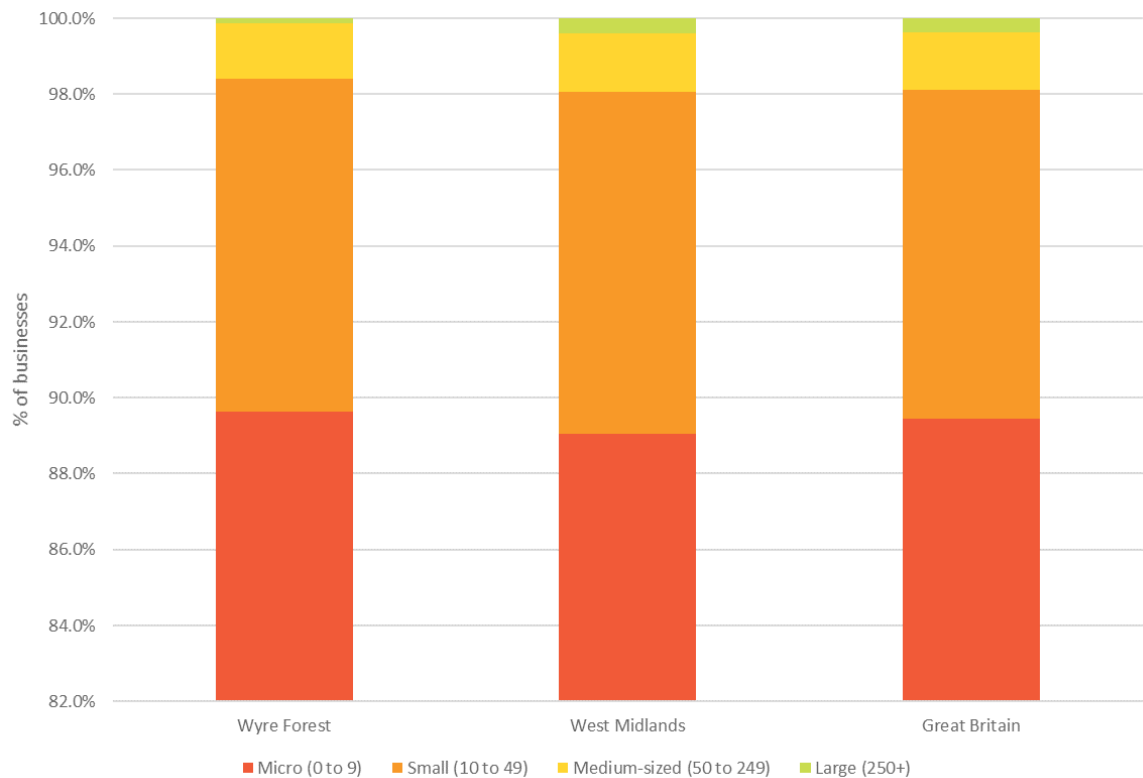
²³ This grouping includes the SIC2 sectors of Professional Services, Real Estate, Administrative & Support Services and Other Private Services

²⁴ This grouping includes the SIC2 sectors Food, Drink & Tobacco, Textiles & Clothing, Wood & Paper, Printing & Recorded Media, Fuel Refining, Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Non-Metallic Products, Metal Products, Computer & Electronic Products, Machinery & Equipment, Transport Equipment and Other Manufacturing

²⁵ This grouping includes the SIC2 sectors Public Administration & Defence, Education, Health and Residential Care & Social Work

3.14 When compared to the findings within the previous ELR, Wyre Forest and the other comparative area have seen an increase in ‘micro’ firms which has increased by +1.9% for Wyre Forest, +1.4% for West Midlands and + 1.2% since 2015. In contrast, the proportion of firms that between 10 and 249 workers has reduced since 2015 – whereas the proportion of large businesses employing over 250 workers has remained the same as 2015.

Figure 3.5 Business Demography (size), 2017



Source: ONS (2018) UK Business Counts - Enterprises

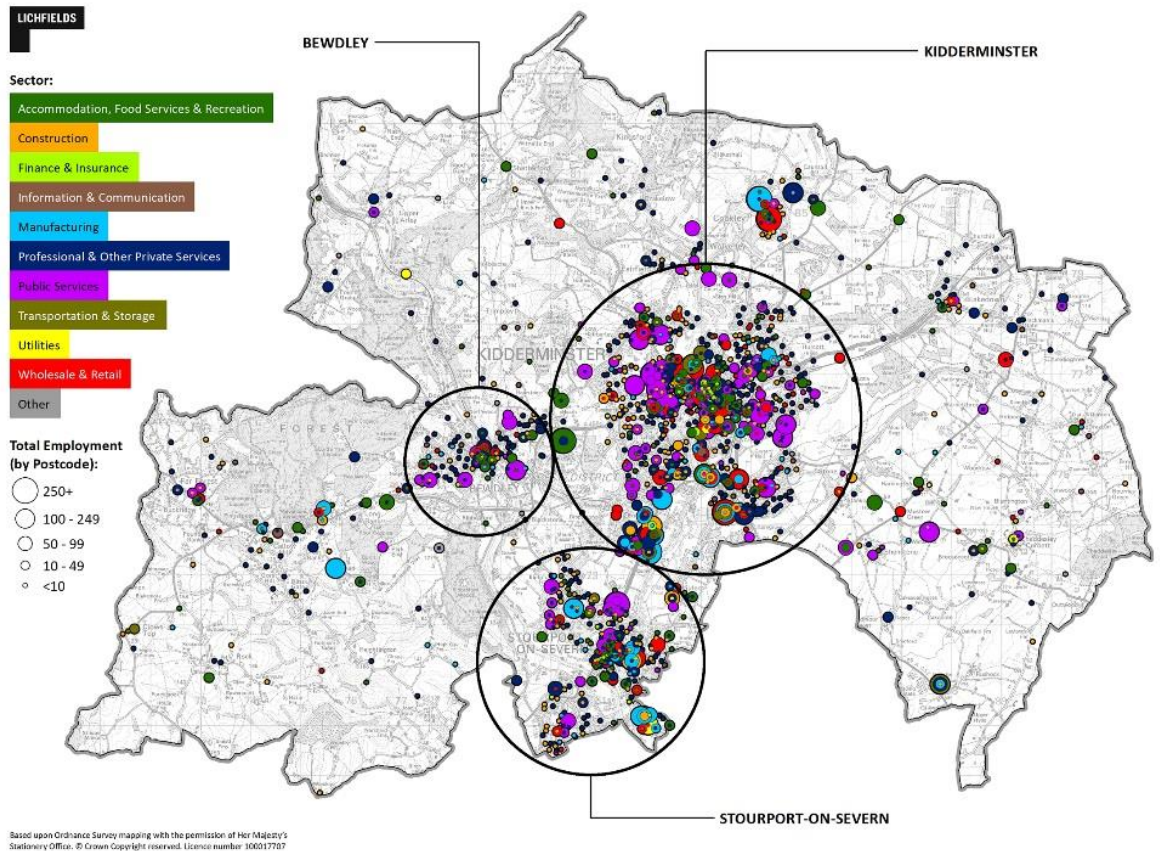
3.15 Self-employment in Wyre Forest is high, with 12.9% of the working-age population falling within this category, is higher compared with 9.6% regionally and 10.6% nationally²⁶. The proportion of self-employed workers in Wyre Forest and West Midlands have increased substantially compared to figures stated in the previous ELR which was 8.7% for Wyre Forest, regional (8.3%) and national (10.1%) levels (as of 2014/15).

3.16 The rise in self-employment within Wyre Forest is likely to be at least partly due to the attractive, rural nature of the District, the rise of high-speed broadband and the increasing ease with which ‘homeworking’ is possible.

3.17 Drawing on Inter-Departmental Business Register [IDBR] data, the spatial distribution of key business clusters Wyre Forest is presented in Figure 3.6 (with an insert showing Kidderminster business clusters within Figure 3.7). This data has been analysed to identify any inconsistencies or anomalies which may affect future modelling; any examples of agglomeration economics; and clustering of businesses in ‘sector hubs’.

²⁶ ONS (2018) Annual Population Survey (April 2017-March 2018)

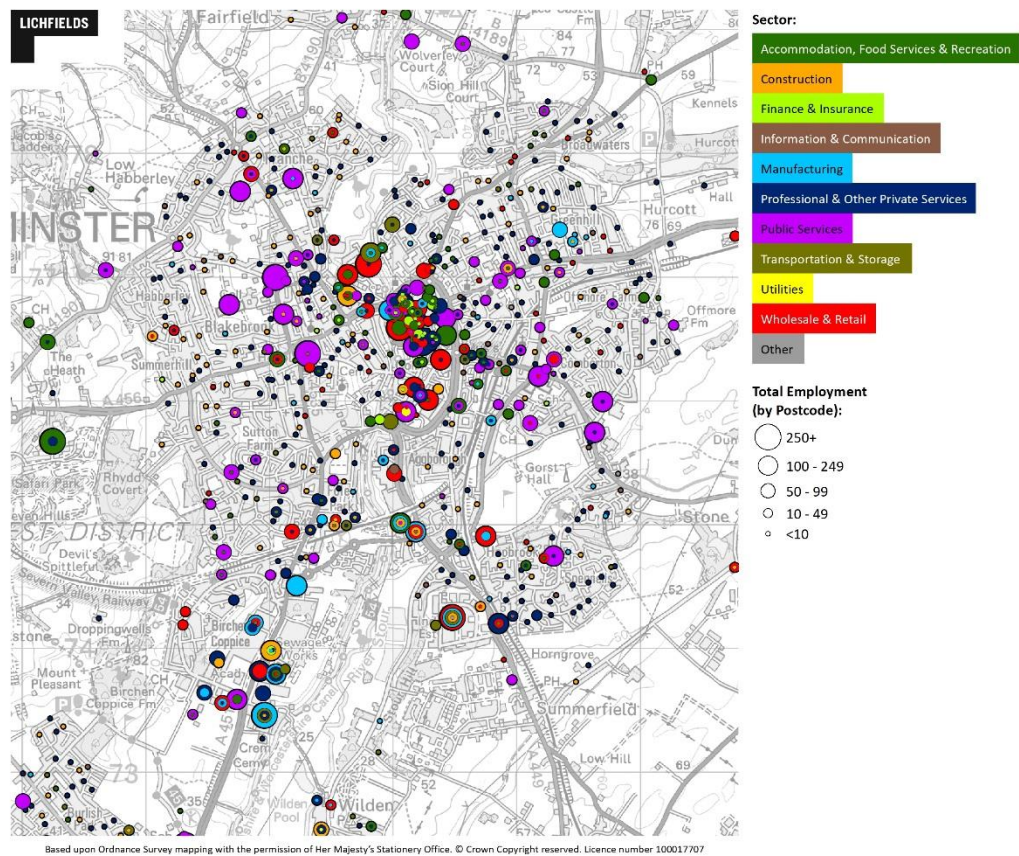
Figure 3.6 Spatial Distribution of Business Sectors and Employment in Wyre Forest



Source: IDBR (2018) / Lichfields Analysis
 Note: IDBR data does not record smaller businesses that fall under the VAT threshold

3.18 As Figure 3.6 indicates, there is a diverse mix of business sectors within Wyre Forest, with the main concentrations of businesses centred around the main settlements of Kidderminster and Stourport, with a smaller cluster of businesses within Bewdley and a scattering of businesses within the rural areas. The development of further businesses is constrained by its dispersed population and Green Belt designations.

Figure 3.7 Spatial Distribution of Business Sectors and Employment in Kidderminster



Source: IDBR (2018)

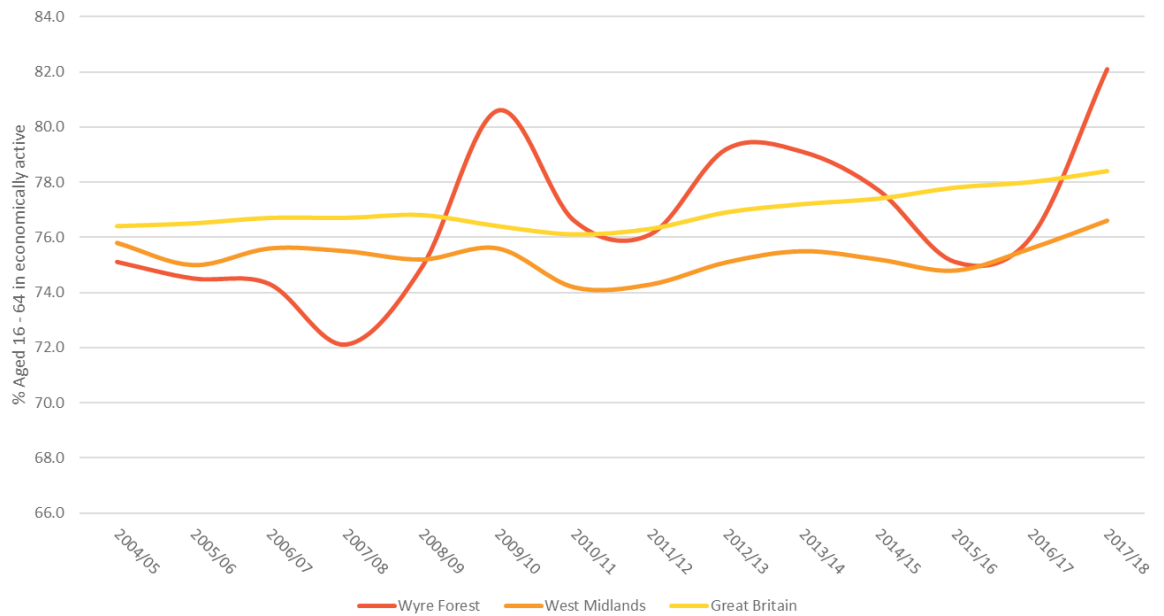
Labour Market

3.19 The economic activity rate (i.e. the share of working-age residents either in or seeking employment) in Wyre Forest, at 82.1%²⁷, is higher than both the regional (76.6%) and national rate (78.4%). This is also higher than the 77.7% that was recorded for Wyre Forest in the previous ELR. This suggests that only a relatively limited amount of capacity exists to boost labour supply from current residents.

3.20 As can be seen in Figure 3.8, between 2004 and 2018 the number of economically active people living in Wyre Forest has fluctuated. Wyre Forest experienced a very pronounced dip between December 2015 and March 2016, where the economic activity rate fell to 44,400, or 75.1%, well below the national rate; since that point, the trajectory has increased substantially.

²⁷ ONS (2018) Annual Population Survey (April 2017-March 2018)

Figure 3.8 Economically Active Residents in Wyre Forest and comparator areas (2017/18)

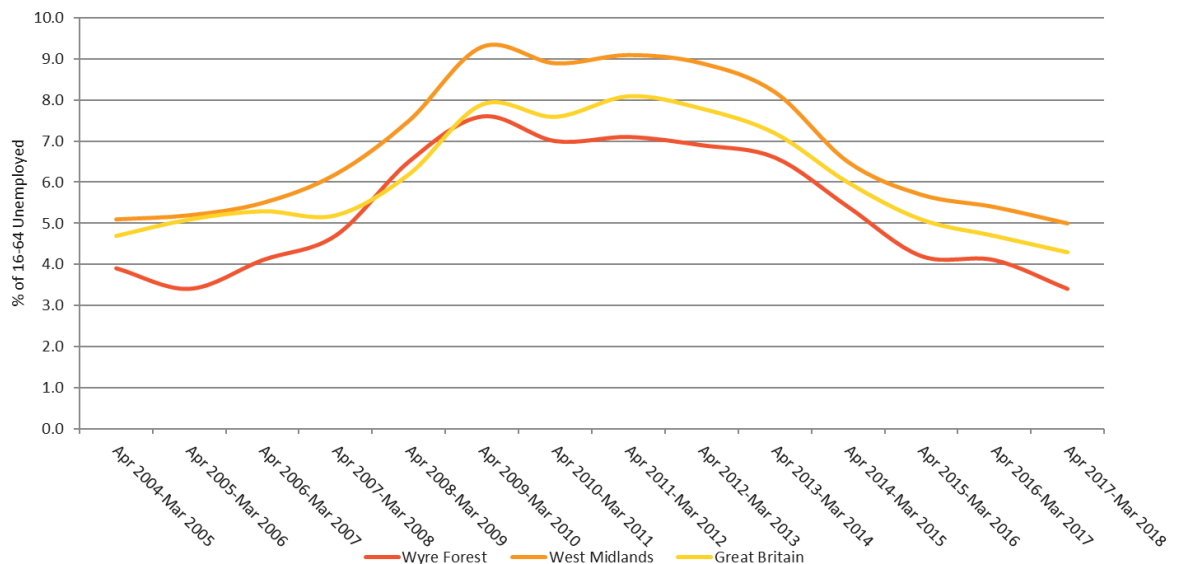


Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (April 2017-March 2018)

3.21

Model-based Unemployment in Wyre Forest has fallen significantly in recent years since the peak of 7.6% in December 2011. As of March 2018, the unemployment rate for Wyre Forest was 3.4%, which is lower than the pre-recession level (at around 4%). As can be seen in Figure 3.9, unemployment rates have been consistently lower than both the regional and national rates, which are currently around 5.0% and 4.3% respectively.

Figure 3.9 Changes in Model-based Unemployment Rates in Wyre Forest and comparator areas, 2004-2018



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (April 2017-March 2018)

3.22

Historically, JSA Claimant-counts in Wyre Forest have been lower than the regional rates. Levels rose significantly in Wyre Forest between 2008 and 2009 (as they did across the region and Great Britain as a whole, reflecting the onset of the recession), peaking at 4.5% in January

2010²⁸. As of July 2018, the proportion of JSA claimants in Wyre Forest has fallen to 1.7%, which is lower than regional (2.8%) and national (2.2%) rates.

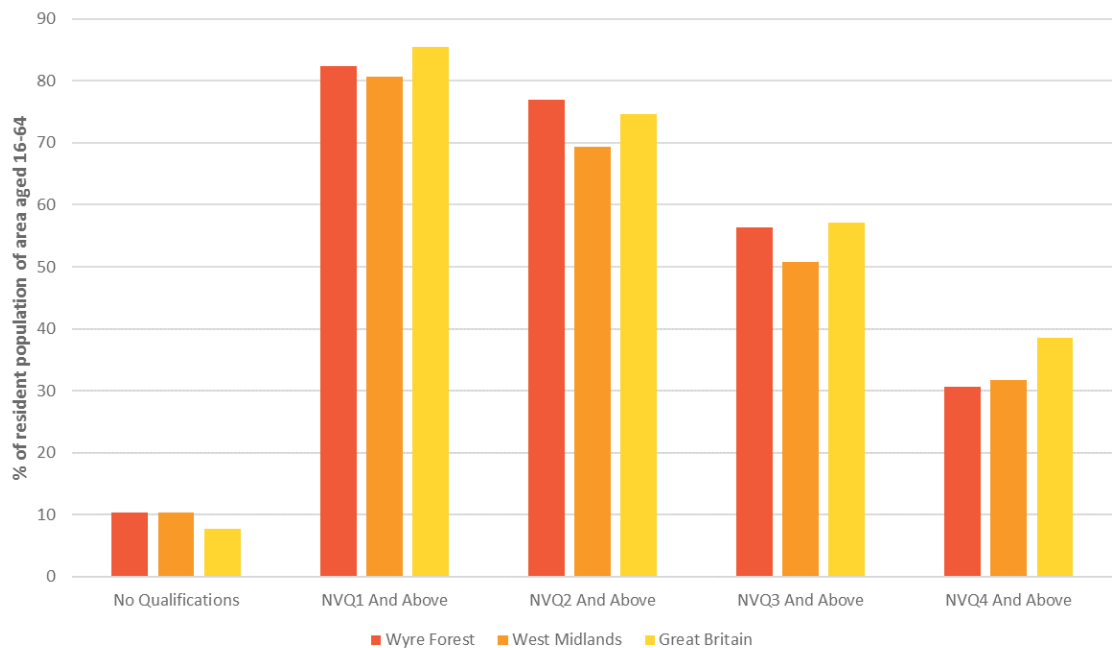
3.23 Another indicator of labour market participation is the proportion of working age residents claiming Employment and Support Allowance [ESA] and incapacity benefits. In Wyre Forest this is equivalent to 7.0%, which is slightly higher than the regional (6.3%) and national equivalents (6.1%)²⁹.

3.24 In 2016, the job density³⁰ figure in Wyre Forest was 0.64, lower than the regional rate (0.79) and also the density across Great Britain as a whole (0.84). This has declined since 2000 (0.68) suggesting that there are far fewer jobs than there are residents in employment within Wyre Forest. This indicates that levels of net out-commuting are high, and have increased in recent years.

3.25 The role of education is vital for preparing the workforce for employment and ensuring that people have the right skills and qualifications to access high quality jobs and contribute to overall economic growth and increasing prosperity.

3.26 In this regard, Wyre Forest’s resident workforce is generally lower skilled when compared to the West Midlands and the country as a whole (see Figure 3.10). The District’s resident population has proportionally fewer workers qualified to NVQ4 and above (graduate level) at 30.7% compared to 31.8% regionally. Both figures are significantly below the national average (38.6%). Furthermore, there are more residents in Wyre Forest (10.4%) with no qualifications in comparison to the national average (7.7%).

Figure 3.10 Qualifications of the labour force in Wyre Forest



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (2018)

²⁸ ONS (2018): Claimant count (July 2018)

²⁹ DWP (2016) Benefit claimants - working age client group (November 2016)

³⁰ The ratio of jobs to resident population, often used as a measure of labour demand. 2016 represents the latest available data

- 3.27 Wyre Forest has a higher level of resident-based earnings than workplace-based wages. As can be seen in Table 3.1, on average, Wyre Forest residents earn, on average, £ 473.30 a week. This is significantly lower even than the regional (£517.40) and national (£552.70) levels.
- 3.28 Workplace-based average gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in Wyre Forest are even lower, at £440.00 compared to the regional (£514.90) and national averages (£552.30)³¹.
- 3.29 Workplace earnings are lower than resident-based earnings, this suggests that the types of jobs available within Wyre Forest are lower-paid than elsewhere in the sub-region (and beyond). It also suggests that residents are commuting out to higher-paid jobs outside of the District (in areas such as Birmingham and the wider West Midlands region).
- 3.30 Table 3.1 also shows that there has been an increase in wages for workplace and resident-based earnings across all comparator areas. Wyre Forest has experienced an increase in both workplace and resident-based earnings (since the previous ELR between 2015 and 2017) by +2.1% and +1.1% respectively.

Table 3.1 Median gross weekly earnings in Wyre Forest and comparator areas

	WFDC ELR (2016) ONS ASHE 2015 Earnings			WFDC ELR Update (2018) ONS ASHE 2017 Earnings		
	Wyre Forest	West Midlands	Great Britain	Wyre Forest	West Midlands	Great Britain
Median Gross Weekly Earnings by Workplace	£430.80	£479.10	£520.00	£440.00	£514.90	£552.30
Median Gross Weekly Earnings by Residence	£468.20	£480.60	£520.80	£473.30	£517.40	£552.70

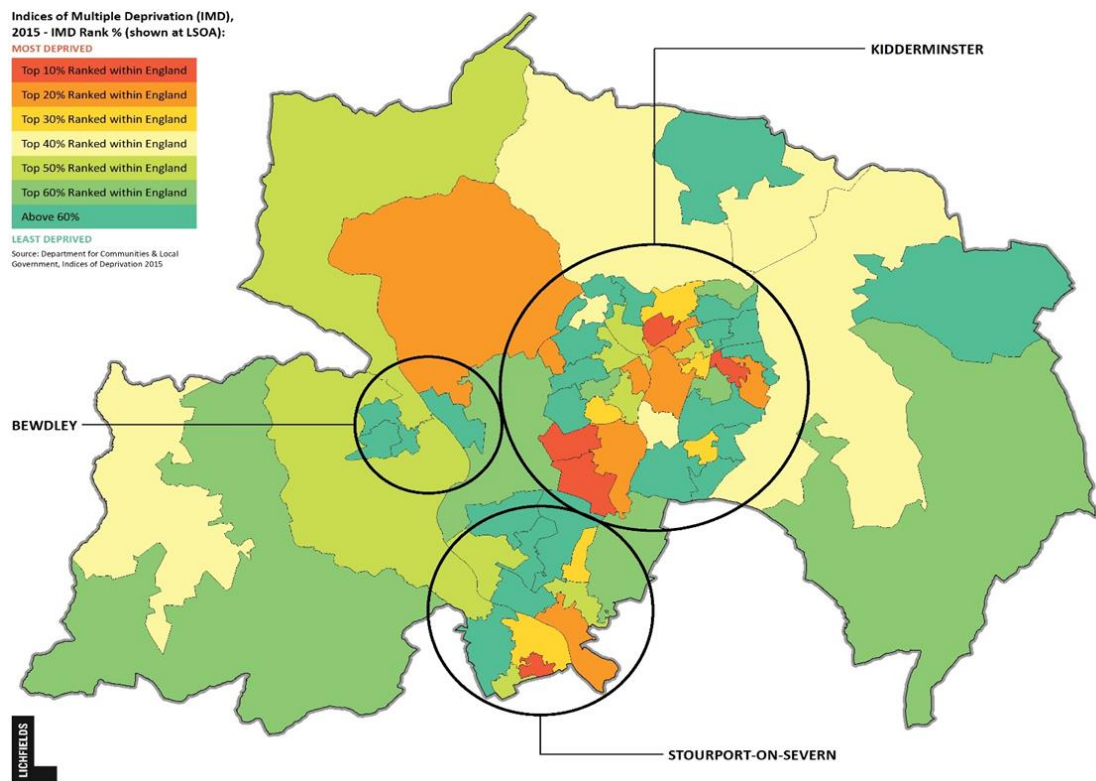
Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2015 and 2017

Deprivation

- 3.31 Wyre Forest is characterised as having moderate levels of deprivation, with a ranking of 123th out of 326 local authority areas based on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015). However, this District-wide profile masks some variation within Wyre Forest (Figure 3.11), with unemployment and worklessness remaining entrenched in pockets of deprivation in Kidderminster, with the adjoining rural areas to the east and west, and Bewdley in particular, considerably more affluent. Oldington and Foley Park ward in Kidderminster is the most deprived ward in Worcestershire, with part of it ranked 16th most deprived in the UK for educational attainment. The Horsefair, Broadwaters and Greenhill areas of the town also have significant areas of deprivation issues, as well as below average household incomes. Two LSOA (one large and one small) to the north of Bewdley/north west of Kidderminster around Trimply (which also includes a number of small housing estates on the northern edges of both towns) is also within the 20% most deprived areas of the country.

³¹ ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2017

Figure 3.11 Deprivation Levels within Wyre Forest



Source: CLG (2015) Indices of Multiple Deprivation

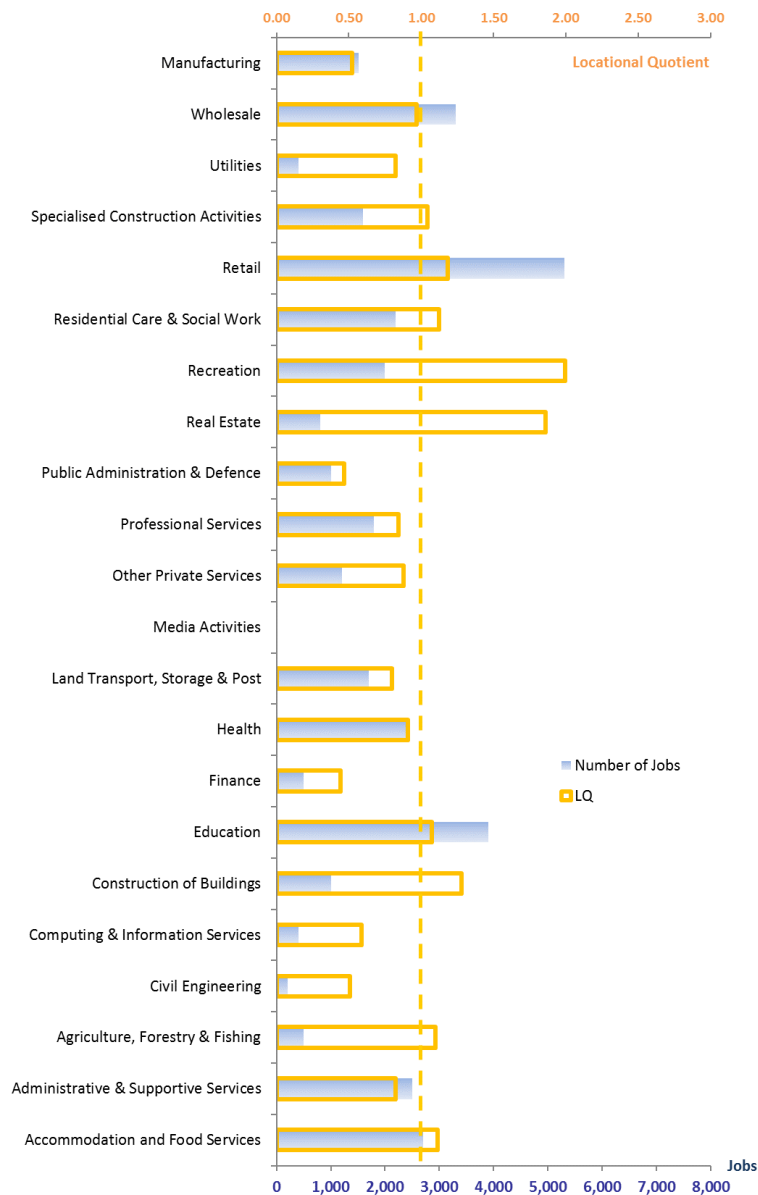
Location Quotients

- 3-32 In order to identify the full economic potential of Wyre Forest, it is important to consider which industrial sectors are best placed to drive future growth. This is informed by an understanding of which sectors are under or over-represented in terms of local employment and their recent growth performance.
- 3-33 Figure 3.12 assesses Wyre Forest’s current sectoral strengths through the use of location quotients, which measure the proportion of employment in an industry at the local authority level relative to the regional average. In the graph, the location quotients [LQ] are shown using an orange bar. A value above 1.0 denotes a higher local representation of a sector compared to the West Midlands average, whilst anything below 1.0 signifies an under-representation. The further the orange bar is from 1.0, the greater the extent of any over or under-representation. In addition, the blue bars show the absolute level of employment within Wyre Forest accounted for by each sector.
- 3-34 The Figure indicates that the District has a strong employment representation in recreation (1.99) and real estate (1.86), as well as a high representation of jobs in construction of buildings (1.28), retail (1.19) and residential care and social work (1.12). It is important to note, however, that a number of these sectors account for relatively low levels of employment in absolute terms, notably real estate and construction of buildings.
- 3-35 Perhaps surprisingly given Wyre Forest’s distance from the strategic road network, after retail and education, the wholesale sector supports the largest number of jobs in the District (3,300), although this is still below the level that might be anticipated given the size of the workforce (with an LQ of 0.97)

3.36

The graph also starkly illustrates the low level of employment in the more knowledge-intensive services such as media, professional services, finance, insurance and pensions, in both relative and absolute terms, which may reflect the lower skills base of Wyre Forest’s labour force. Additionally, this is exacerbated by outwards commuting of high-skilled workers to Birmingham and other authorities in the Black Country. This highlights the need to attract and retain higher value businesses in Wyre Forest. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the relatively small size of the District, the proportion of the workforce working in public administration is a fraction of the level seen elsewhere, with just 1,000 jobs and an LQ of just 0.47.

Figure 3.12 Location Quotients of Economic Sectors in Wyre Forest, 2018



Source: Experian 2018 / Lichfields Analysis

Future Job Growth Prospects

3.37

Lichfields obtained the latest June 2018 Experian econometric job growth projections for Wyre Forest. Wyre Forest is projected to have moderate level of growth of 1,100 workers between

2016 and 2036 (2.8%). In contrast, the West Midlands (12.5%) and the UK (11.3%) are projected to have significantly higher growth levels³². This is due to projected decreases in manufacturing, education and air and water transport jobs which are offset by projected increases in retail, recreation and residential care and social work.

- 3.38 Wyre Forest's comparatively modest future job growth prospects appear pessimistic. However, it stands in stark contrast to the sharp historic job decline experienced since 1997 where an additional 4,000 jobs were lost (net). This occurred mainly due to the restructuring of the District's manufacturing sector, reducing the size of the local workforce by 7.1%. This contrasts with strong growth across the West Midlands (15.6%) and the UK (9.8%) as a whole over the same time period.

Table 3.2 Historic and Projected Employment Change

	1997 to 2016		2016 to 2036	
	Jobs	%	Jobs	%
Wyre Forest	-4,000	-9.2%	1,100	2.8%
West Midlands	290,300	11.2%	360,050	12.5%
UK	5,803,030	20.2%	3,912,120	11.3%

Source: Experian (June 2018) UK Local Market Forecasts Quarterly - Workforce Jobs: Lichfields analysis.

- 3.39 Table 3.3 shows the projected change in sectoral employment in Wyre Forest from 2017 to 2036. The accommodation, food services & recreation sector is projected to play an even bigger role in generating employment opportunities, as is the public sector and ICT sectors. The most significant declines are forecast in the agriculture, forestry and fishing (-80.0% - albeit from a low base), wholesale & retail (-8.1%) and manufacturing (-7.3%) sectors.

Table 3.3 Projected Sectoral Employment Change in Wyre Forest (2016-2036)

	2016		2036		Change from 2016 to 2036	
	Jobs	%	Jobs	%	Jobs	%
Accommodation, Food Services & Recreation	4,700	11.9%	5,500	13.6%	700	14.6%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	500	1.3%	100	0.2%	-400	-80.0%
Construction	2,800	7.1%	2,700	6.7%	-200	-6.9%
Extraction & Mining	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	
Finance & Insurance	500	1.3%	600	1.5%	100	20.0%
Information & Communication	400	1.0%	500	1.2%	100	25.0%
Manufacturing	4,000	10.2%	3,800	9.4%	-300	-7.3%
Professional & Other Private Services	6,300	16.0%	6,700	16.5%	-100	-1.5%
Public Services	9,500	24.1%	10,600	26.2%	1,000	10.4%
Transport & Storage	1,700	4.3%	1,700	4.2%	0	0.0%
Utilities	400	1.0%	400	1.0%	0	0.0%
Wholesale & Retail	8,600	21.8%	7,900	19.5%	-700	-8.1%
Total workforce jobs	39,400	100.0%	40,500	100.0%	1,100	+2.7%

Source: Experian (June 2018) UK Local Market Forecasts Quarterly - Workforce Jobs. Lichfields analysis. Note data are rounded and may not sum.

Functional Economic Market Area

- 3.40 This section provides a broad overview of Wyre Forest and its likely position within a wider Functional Economic Market Area [FEMA]. The following provides an up to date analysis of the extent of the FEMA in accordance with the guidance contained within the previous Practice Guidance. This remains the only guidance that has been published on establishing a FEMA and

³² Experian (June 2018) UK Local Market Forecasts Quarterly – Workforce Jobs

therefore has been relied upon by Lichfields. The ELR Update uses the latest 2011 Census data on migration and commuting levels.

3.41 The previous Practice Guidance provides advice on how a FEMA can be defined. It stated that the geography of commercial property markets should be thought of in terms of the requirements of the market regarding the location of premises and the spatial factors used in analysing demand and supply. It went on to state that since patterns of economic activity vary from place to place, there is no standard approach to defining a FEMA. However, the Practice Guidance identified it is possible to define FEMAs taking account a range of factors including travel to work areas and housing market areas.³³

3.42 The methodology adopted for this study follows the Practice Guidance direction in terms of defining FEMAs within and across local authority areas. As set out in the Practice Guidance, the study examines the following variables in relation to Wyre Forest's FEMA:

- Extent of any Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) within the sub-region and administrative areas;
- Travel to work areas;
- Housing market areas; and,
- Commercial Market Geography.

3.43 The study also considers Wyre Forest's general economic linkages within the wider area. Similarities in characteristics such as employment and business structures between different geographies can strengthen the basis of conclusions made after reviewing each of the previous Practice Guidance variables, while offering the additional opportunity to identify other economic linkages and trends that may not have been identified otherwise. At the time of writing, the previous Practice Guidance formed the FEMA definition for this ELR Update.

LEP Geography

3.44 As set out earlier, Wyre Forest is located within both the GBSLEP and the Worcestershire LEP, reflecting its strong economic linkages to both.

3.45 The GBSLEP comprises the local authorities of: Birmingham City Council; Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council; Cannock Chase District Council; East Staffordshire Borough Council; Lichfield District Council; Tamworth Borough Council; Bromsgrove District Council; Redditch Borough Council and WFDC.

3.46 The Worcestershire LEP comprises the local authorities of: Bromsgrove District Council; Malvern Hills District Council; Redditch District Council; Worcester City Council; Wychavon District Council and WFDC.

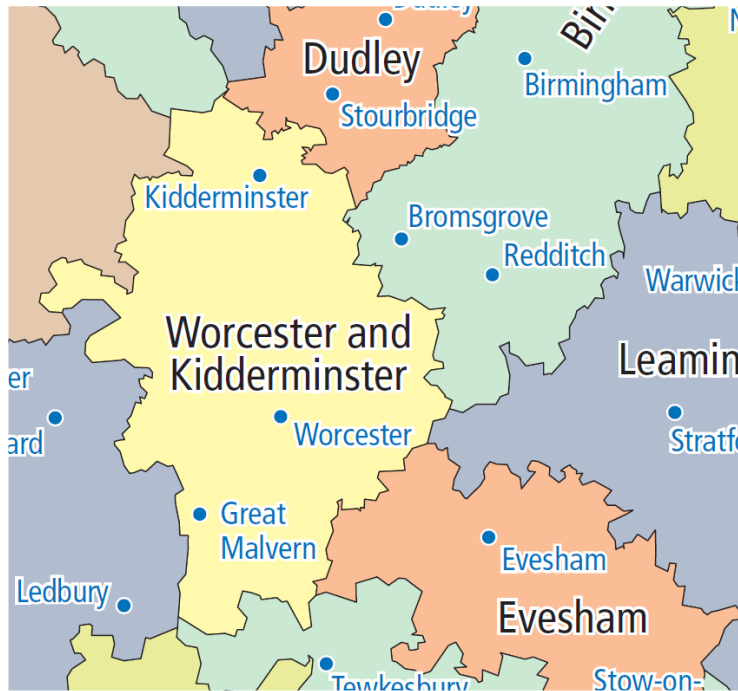
Travel to Work Areas

3.47 Travel to Work Areas [TTWA] are an area defined by the ONS as where 75% of an area's residents work and at least 75% of the people who work in the location reside. TTWAs provide a good indication of what labour market a location or local authority is in and how labour market areas are split across the UK. However, for areas with a working population in excess of 25,000, self-containment rates as low as 66.7% are accepted to define a TTWA as part of a limited "trade-off" between workforce size and level of self-containment.

³³ Planning Practice Guidance (2014) §2a-012-20140306

3.48 Previous analysis of TTWAs across the country was carried out by ONS in 2015, based on 2011 commuting patterns (Figure 3.13). From the modelling work undertaken, ONS considered that Wyre Forest was contained within a much larger TTWA that includes Worcester, Wychavon and Great Malvern (situated within Malvern Hills District).

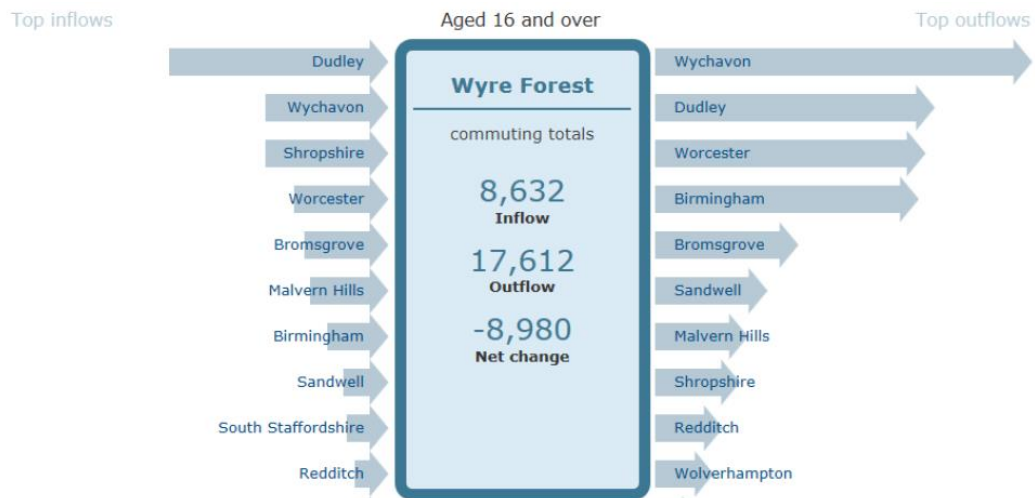
Figure 3.13 ONS Travel-to-work-area analysis based on 2011 Census commuting data



Source: ONS (2015)

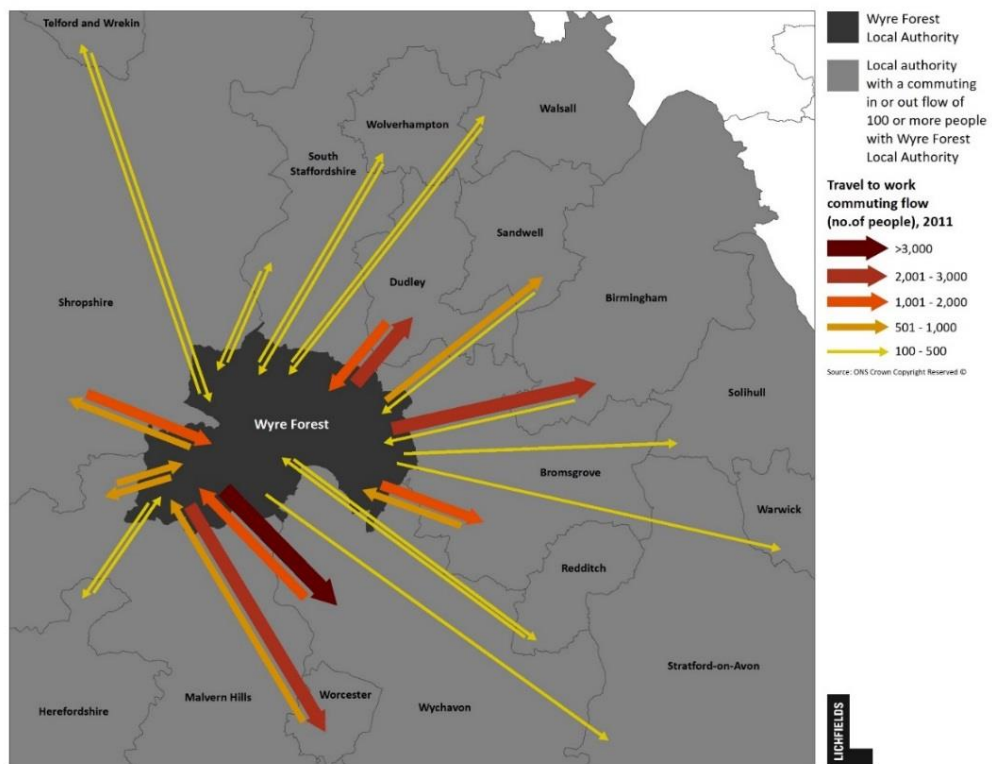
3.49 At the time of the 2011 Census, 8,632 residents commuted in to Wyre Forest on a daily basis against 17,612 out-commuters, giving a net total of 8,980 out-commuters. Wyre Forest has high levels of out-commuting to Birmingham, Worcester, Wychavon and Dudley, although the latter two authorities also have high levels of commuters travelling into Wyre Forest in return. Wychavon is the largest recipient of Wyre Forest commuters. This is likely to be partly due to the Hartlebury Trading Estate, a large employment site located near to the WFDC boundary and which provides a significant number of jobs to Wyre Forest residents.

Figure 3.14 Travel to Work Flows within Wyre Forest, 2011



Source: West Midlands Functional Economic Market Area Study (2015)

Figure 3.15 Travel-to-Work Flows for Wyre Forest, 2011



Source: Census 2011 / Lichfields Analysis

3.50

Expanding on the TTWA analysis above, it is possible to examine commuting relationships at local authority and middle super output area [MSOA] geographical levels using Census origin and destination data. Table 3.4 summarises Wyre Forest’s key commuting characteristics.

Table 3.4 Wyre Forest Commuting Patterns (2011)

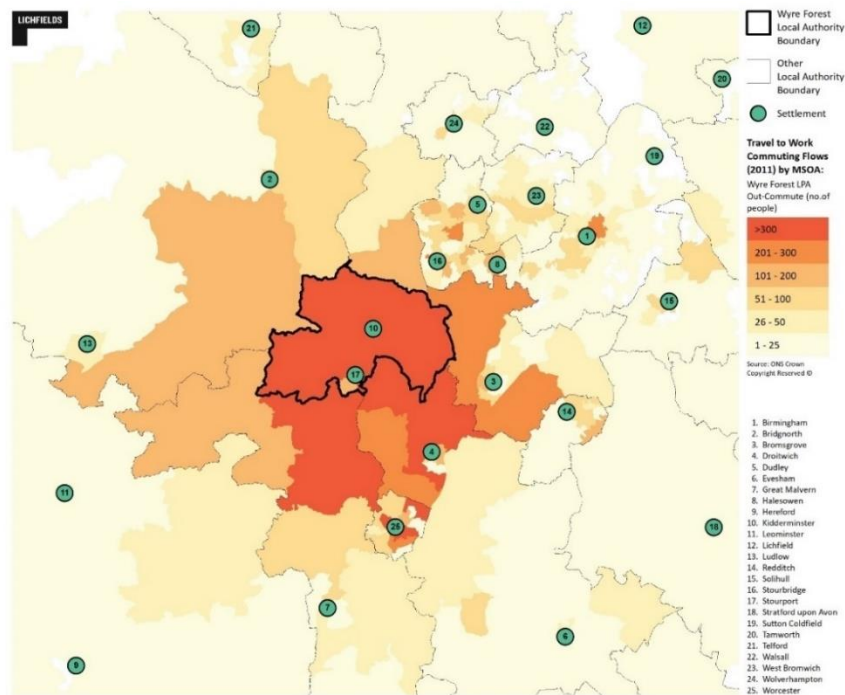
	Wyre Forest
Number of Working Residents	29,080
Number of Workplace Workers	37,712
Live and Work in Wyre Forest	20,165
Out Commuting Workers	17,612
Top Out Commuting Destinations	Wychavon, Dudley, Worcester, Birmingham, Bromsgrove
In- Commuting Workers	17,612
Top In Commuting Destinations	Dudley, Wychavon, Shropshire, Worcester, Bromsgrove
Net Outflow of Workers	-8,980
FEMA #1	62%
FEMA #2	77%

Source: ONS (2011) / Lichfields analysis

Note figures may not sum due to rounding.

- 3.51 The main destinations for out-commuters are Wychavon (3,377), Dudley (2,473), Worcester (2,387), Birmingham (2,318) and Bromsgrove (1,186), while the largest sources of in-commuters are Dudley (1,924), Wychavon (1,043), Shropshire (1,037), Worcester (774) and Bromsgrove (679).
- 3.52 The major in and out commuting destinations highlight Wyre Forest’s strong commuting relationship with the Black Country, Worcestershire and Birmingham urban area as well as the local authorities that border it, namely, Wychavon and Dudley.
- 3.53 Figure 3.16 shows where the resident workforce of Wyre Forest commuted to by MSOA in 2011. The map highlights a large number of residents commuted to work within the District, the bordering local authorities of Wychavon and Dudley and into Worcestershire and Birmingham. There are also some noticeable smaller flows into Bromsgrove and Shropshire.

Figure 3.16 Wyre Forest MSOA Out-Commuting (2011)

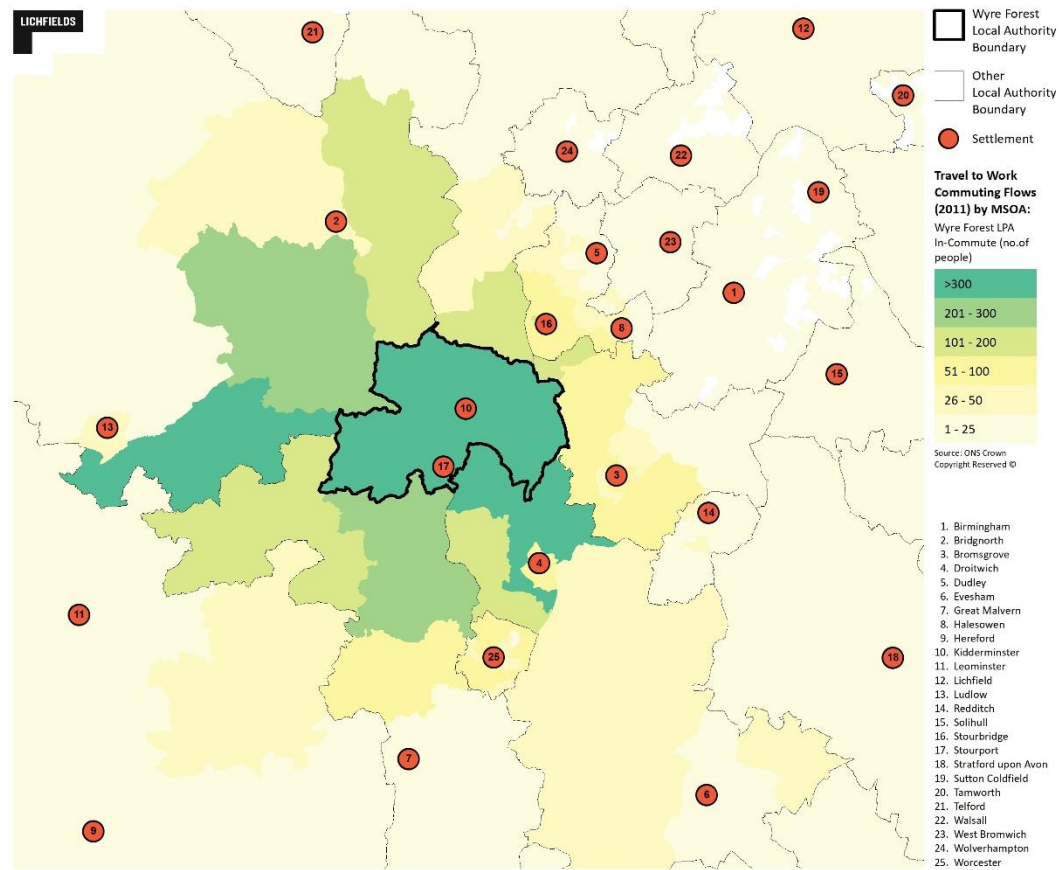


Source: ONS (2011) / Lichfields analysis

3.54 In comparison to out-commuting flows at MSOA level, in-commuting flows to Wyre Forest highlight that it primarily draws its workforce from within its border, Dudley, Malvern Hills and Wychavon. Overall, the MSOA patterns indicate in-commuters are typically drawn from:

- Northern parts of the Wychavon and Malvern Hills;
- West of Bromsgrove; and,
- South Shropshire.

Figure 3.17 Wyre Forest MSOA In-Commuting (2011)



Source: ONS (2011) / Lichfields Analysis

Housing Market Areas

3.55 Recent studies indicate that Wyre Forest is located in separate local and sub-regional housing market areas [HMAs]. The Wyre Forest Objective Assessment of Housing Need [OAHN] (2017) shows that Wyre Forest is largely a self-contained HMA. There is however, recognition that it has interactions with other areas of Worcestershire as well as the Greater Birmingham and Solihull and Black Country areas. This is both in terms of net in-migration and travel to work patterns.

3.56 The OAHN concluded that:

“Wyre Forest is positioned within the Worcester strategic housing market area. An analysis of 2011 Census migration data suggests that 66.1% of all (i.e. including long-distance) household moves are within Wyre Forest District area (or 73.1% if moves from outside the West Midlands are excluded) and 62.2% of residents in employment work within the District. Therefore, it is a largely self-contained housing market area.

*It is concluded, therefore, that it is appropriate for Wyre Forest District to be considered to be a housing market area for the purposes of Local Planning Policy although cognisance needs to be had of the interactions with other areas of Worcestershire and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull and Black Country areas, both in terms of net in-migration and travel to work patterns.*³⁴

3.57 In the wider region, Wyre Forest is considered by the GBSLEP and Black Country Local Authorities Strategic Housing Needs Study (2014) to be part of a sub-regional HMA composed of GBSLEP and Black Country LEP [BCLEP]. This suggests that the District has wider housing market linkages with the Greater Birmingham urban area and GBSLEP local authorities.

3.58 Wyre Forest's relationships with authorities in the local and wider HMAs are highlighted by the most recent ONS Internal Migration data³⁵. The top five largest flows of people migrating to and from Wyre Forest were mainly linked to local authorities located in either the local or wider HMA (see Table 3.5). Migration flows in both directions between Wyre Forest and Birmingham and the Black Country authorities were particularly strong in 2017, indicating the housing market linkages assumed in both HMAs are still present today.

Table 3.5 Wyre Forest In and Out Migration (2017)

	In Migration		Out-Migration	
	Local Authority	Number of People	Local Authority	Number of People
Top Five In and Out Migration Authorities	Dudley	510	Shropshire	300
	Birmingham	420	Malvern Hills	290
	Wychavon	280	Wychavon	280
	Bromsgrove	270	Dudley	270
	Worcester	230	Worcester	250
Total	-	1,710	-	1,390

Source: ONS (2018) / Lichfields analysis

Note figures may not sum due to rounding.

3.59 Despite the linkages Wyre Forest has with a number of West Midlands local authorities, for the purpose of defining Wyre Forest's core HMA, the local HMA identified in the WFDC's OAHN is considered to be most appropriate. Whilst there is an acknowledgement that the District has a number of linkages with different local authorities, these linkages are more strategic in nature and do not take into account more localised housing market drivers.

Commercial Market Geography

3.60 Following on from discussions with commercial agents about Wyre Forest's property market geography, many of the agents stated that the industrial property market within the District is performing well with low vacancy rates. However, it is evident that much of the industrial market demand is local and generated by local firms that are looking to either expand or upgrade their premises and stay within their area.

3.61 In terms of the Wyre Forest's office market, again much of the demand is created by local firms. Demand for offices in Wyre Forest has decreased due to the lack of suitable premises and little development of new offices in recent years. Furthermore, competition from other West Midlands local authorities and more suitable office destinations has meant that the office market still lag behind other regional office market hotspots.

³⁴ Amion (2017): *Objective Assessment of Housing Need (OAHN)*, Paragraph 2.27-2.28

³⁵ ONS, (2018); Internal Migration

3.62 Considering the localised nature of Wyre Forest’s industrial and office markets, it is assumed the District’s commercial property market is primarily self-contained, with some linkages to the adjacent local authorities such as Hartlebury Business Park just over the administrative boundary in Wychavon.

Defining the FEMA

3.63 With respect to Wyre Forest’s FEMA a variety of data sources have been considered by Lichfields, with each presenting a different picture regarding the extent of the District’s economic relationships with the neighbouring authorities:

- **LEP Geography:** Wyre Forest sits within two separate LEP areas. Taken together, the GBSLEP and Worcestershire LEP cover an area which broadly corresponds to: much of West Midlands and all of Worcestershire;
- **ONS Travel to Work Area:** The ONS Travel-to-Work Area analysis suggests that the District looks principally to Wychavon and Worcestershire;
- **Housing Market Area:** Wyre Forest is largely defined as a self-contained HMA, despite there being an acknowledgement that there are a number of close linkages with neighbouring local authorities. This is due to the wider HMA being more strategic in nature and taking less account of localised housing market drivers.
- **Commercial Market:** Wyre Forest’s commercial property market is understood to be characterised largely by localised demand. This is driven by the District’s industrial property market, with increasing commercial inquiries from local indigenous business population.
- **Transport networks:** Wyre Forest is not directly connected to the strategic motorway network. It is located near to a number of major roads that provide access to towns in the wider region and has two train stations (Kidderminster and Blakedown Stations) on the mainline West Midlands Railway. The District’s lack of strategic infrastructure means that there are some connections to neighbouring authorities, but it is largely self-contained.

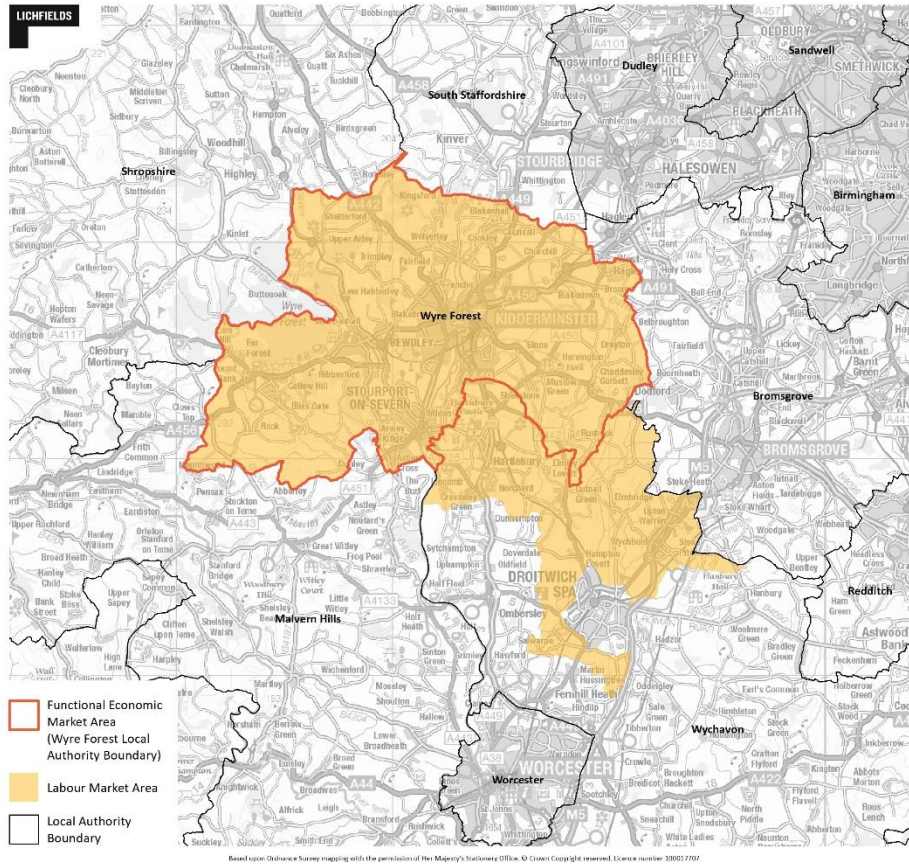
3.64 Whilst Wyre Forest may initially appear to be part of a much wider, strategic TTWA that includes Worcester and southern parts of the County, on balance, it is considered that the FEMA predominantly aligns with the boundary of Wyre Forest’s administrative boundary and the northern part of Wychavon District.

3.65 The recommended FEMA is largely influenced by two major areas of employment located immediately to the south of Wyre Forest’s borders in Wychavon District – Hartlebury Trading estate and Summerfield, with the latter actually cut in half by the administrative boundary.

3.66 Both of these areas are likely to employ a significant number of Wyre Forest’s residents and it is possible that a small extension of the District’s boundary to the south (north Wychavon) would encompass these two sites in full would substantially increase the self-containment level under the FEMA test #1.

3.67 Therefore, it was concluded that for the purposes of forecasting employment land in accordance with the previous Practice Guidance, it is reasonable that Wyre Forest comprises a FEMA in its own right. Wyre Forest’s self-contained FEMA is shown in Figure 3.18

Figure 3.18 Wyre Forest Functional Economic Market Area



Source: Lichfields analysis

4.0 Overview of B-Class Employment Space

Introduction

4.1 This section provides an overview of the current stock of B-Class employment space in Wyre Forest, while also summarising recent trends and changes to the supply of this employment space. The amount of employment land and floorspace has been considered across the three main types of employment uses (i.e. office [B1a/b], manufacturing [B1c/B2], and warehousing & distribution [B8]).

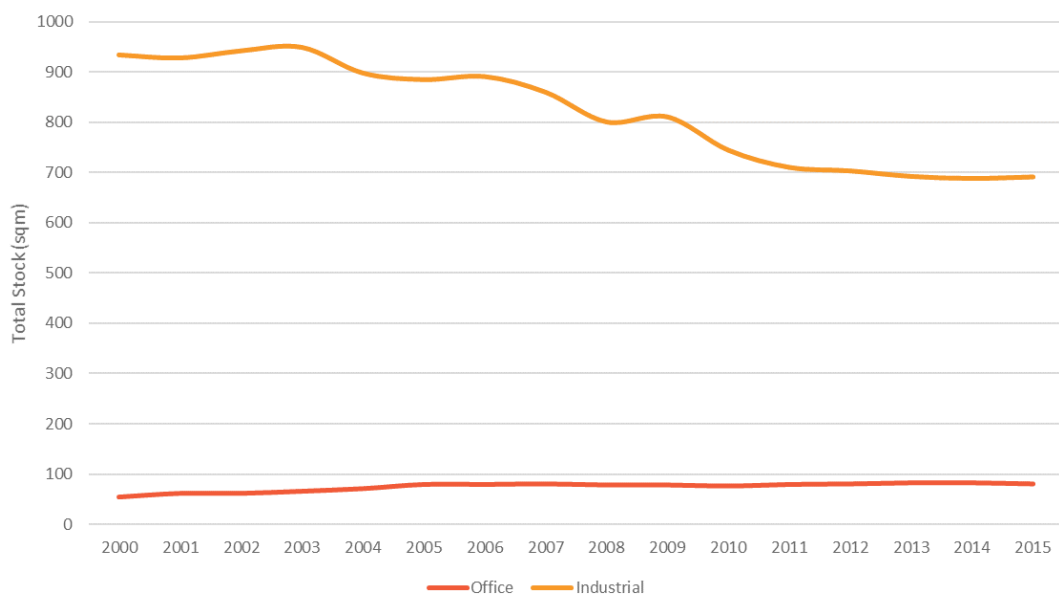
4.2 This analysis uses data from the following sources:

1. Commercial floorspace data from the ONS and various datasets from the Valuation Office Agency [VOA];
2. Monitoring data on commercial space from WFDC; and,
3. EGi Property Link database and other commercial property sources.

Employment Space

4.3 In total, Wyre Forest has approximately 772,000 sqm of employment floorspace, of which 90% is industrial. Figure 4.1 shows that over the period 2000/01 to 2015/16, commercial office space in Wyre Forest increased by 44.5% to approximately 80,000 sqm. In comparison the increase across the West Midlands region was 16.0%. Total industrial space shrank by 25.9% to approximately 692,000 sqm over the same period, compared with a decrease of 8.2% across the West Midlands as a whole. Since the previous ELR, it is evident that the quantum of commercial floorspace within the District has fallen by 24.4% (from 1,308,000 sqm in 2012 to 989,000 sqm in 2016) demonstrating the impact of permitted development rights and the ongoing restructuring of the District’s manufacturing economy.

Figure 4.1 Stock of Employment Space (2000/01 to 2015/16)

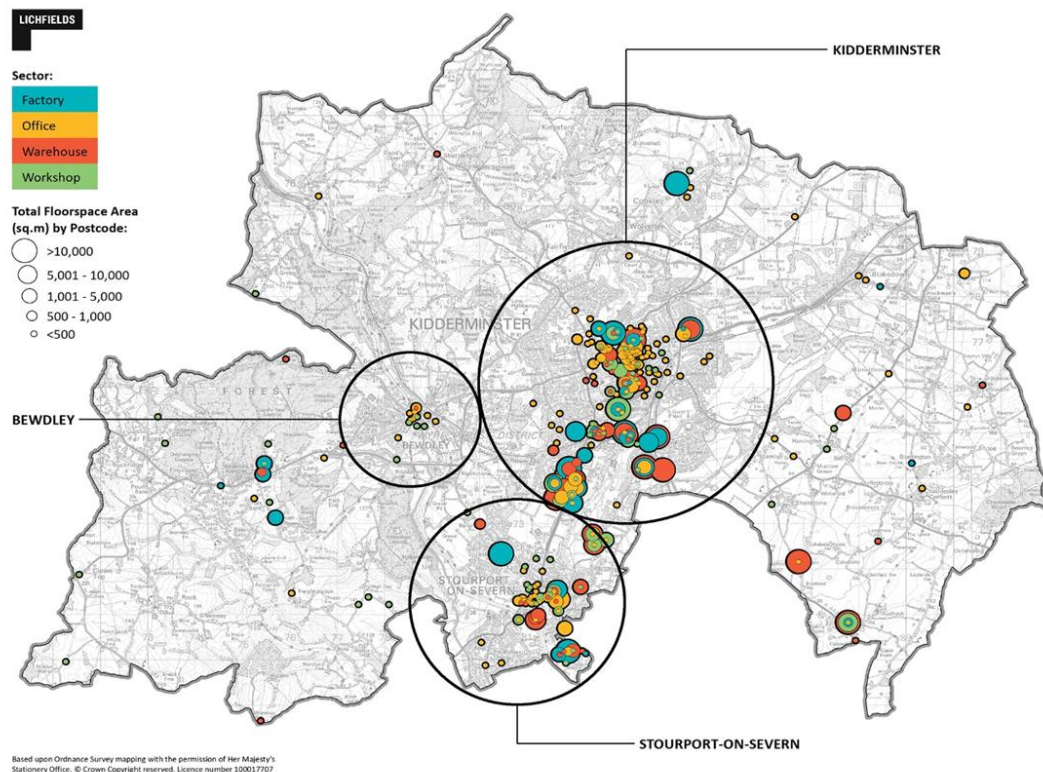


Source: Valuation Office Agency (2016) Floorspace Statistics

Spatial Distribution

- 4.4 Figure 4.2 presents the spatial distribution of B-class employment space across Wyre Forest using the latest available VOA data. This indicates that the majority of employment sites are located in Kidderminster, Stourport and within the two main employment corridors between the two. There is a small hub of office floorspace within Bewdley, along with a limited quantity employment floorspace scattered across the rural areas of the District. The vast majority of the District’s office stock is located in Kidderminster. The two employment corridors (between Kidderminster and Stourport) have large clusters of manufacturing floorspace, but include a cluster of office units.

Figure 4.2 Spatial Distribution of Employment Floorspace in Wyre Forest, 2016



Source: VOA 2017 / Lichfields Analysis

Development Rates

Completions

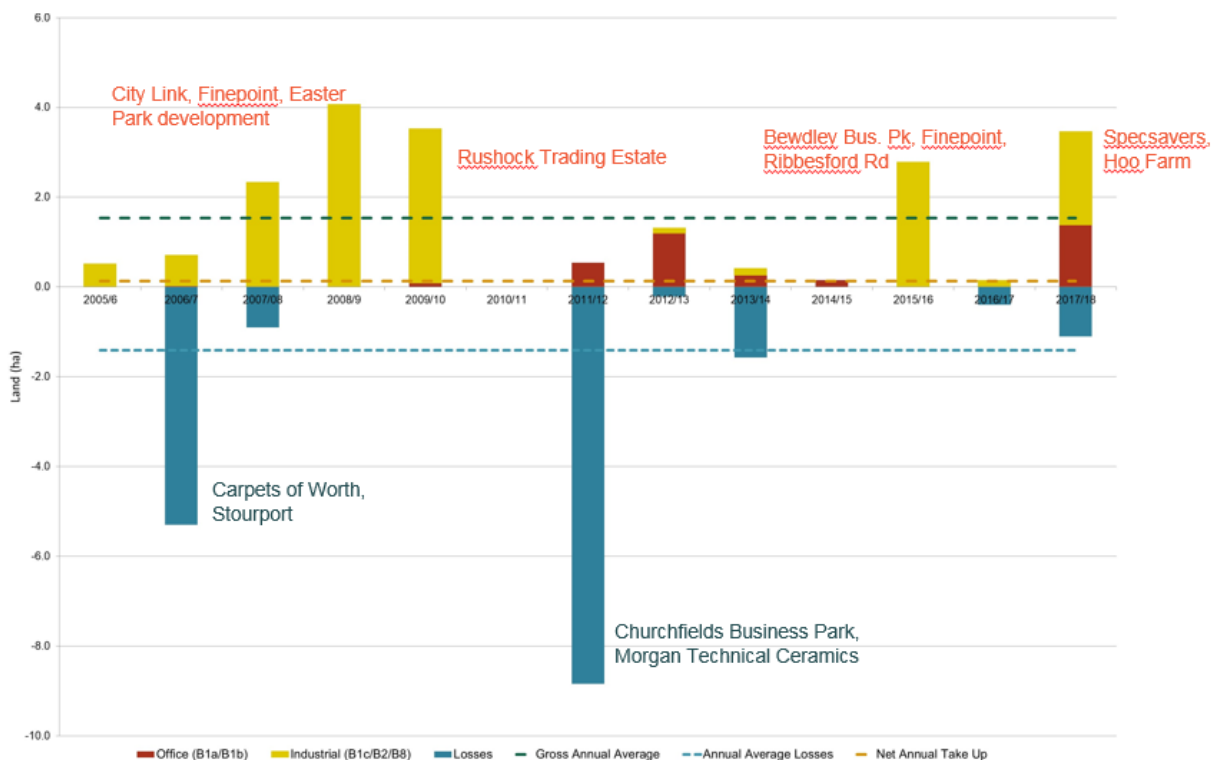
- 4.5 WFDC collates data on the development of employment land for annual monitoring purposes. Take-up (i.e. completions) of floorspace for employment development has been provided between 2005/06 and 2017/18. Gross completions have averaged around 1.54 ha each year over the past 13 years, predominantly in mixed use (B1/B2/B8) and B8 logistics sites across the District. However, it is worth noting that completions fluctuate from year to year; the annual average provides a ‘smoothed’ indication of delivery over the whole period.
- 4.6 According to records provided by WFDC, the gross amount of land developed for B-class employment uses in Wyre Forest during the period 2005/06 to 2009/10 was 11.16 ha, equivalent to an average of 2.23 ha per annum.

- 4.7 In the aftermath of the recession, however, development of land for employment uses dropped significantly, so that over the period 2010/11 – 2017/18 just 8.80 ha was developed, at an average of 1.10 ha per annum.
- 4.8 Whilst the level of new development has been modest in recent years relative to the rate seen prior to the recession, WFDC notes that there has been an increasing trend of companies starting to re-occupy existing employment space, in particular due to the South Kidderminster Local Development Order [LDO]. For instance, Specsavers has built a new distribution and manufacturing centre on the former Romwire site on Stourport Road, whilst new industrial units were built at Hoo Farm Industrial Estate. These developments are indicative of a renewed confidence and interest in the space available in Wyre Forest.
- 4.9 In summary, over the period 2005/2006 – 2017/2018, a total of 18.96 ha of employment land was developed at a rate of **1.54 ha a year**.

Losses

- 4.10 Losses are not recorded in WFDC's Annual Monitoring Reports (as past completions are), but WFDC has separately provided information relating to the losses of B-Class land for alternative uses. A total of 18.32 ha of B-Class employment land has been lost across the District over the period 2005/06 – 2017/18, which averages **1.41 ha a year**.
- 4.11 As can be seen in Figure 4.3 this high rate of losses is mostly due to a handful of large losses in a few individual years – the majority which relate to three sites - Carpets of Worth factory (5.3 ha in 2006), Churchfields Business Park North, Kidderminster (5.5 ha in 2011) and Morgan Technical Ceramics, Stourport-on-Severn (3.34 ha, 2012) as opposed to a sustained rate of losses over consecutive years.
- 4.12 Across the period as a whole the net development rate (i.e. taking account of losses of employment space) was marginally positive at 0.13 ha annually. This reflects a level of losses of employment space which, on average, has outpaced the level of new build B1, B2 and B8 (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 Net Development Rates in Wyre Forest, 2005/06-2017/18



Source: WFDC / Lichfields Analysis

Conclusions

- 4.13 Wyre Forest’s employment space is dominated by industrial (factory and warehousing) uses, although over time this has decreased whilst the level of office stock has increased. The majority of the Wyre Forest’s office stock is located in Kidderminster. The industrial stock is split between Kidderminster; Stourport; the employment corridors between the two settlements; and a smaller quantity within Bewdley and other rural parts of the District.
- 4.14 Over the 12 years between 2005/06 and 2009/10 the District witnessed a relatively large rate of employment land development (with an average of 2.23 ha developed annually). Following this, however, development reduced significantly to just 0.83 ha over the period 2010/11 – 2017/18. The employment land losses within the District (18.32 ha between 2005/06 – 2017/18, at an average of 1.41 ha a year) have been large enough to ensure net development rates have been positive over the period examined (0.13 ha per annum) – driven in part by the South Kidderminster LDO.
- 4.15 A number of key drivers and macro trends are likely to influence the type, scale and locational of requirements for employment space in the District over the plan period, including self-employment and homeworking and increasing use of technology amongst many growth sectors. It is therefore important that WFDC monitors and responds to these changing preferences, to ensure that business needs can be met within Wyre Forest.

SWOT Analysis

- 4.16 Drawing together the above analysis, the study area’s economic strengths and weaknesses, together with the potential opportunities and threats which will influence future demand for employment space, are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 SWOT Analysis of the Wyre Forest Economy

Current Strengths	Current Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive countryside and market towns – desirable residential location • Higher economic activity rate than both regional and national averages, • Lower unemployment levels relative to the regional average • Higher proportion of workers within skilled occupations compared to the West Midlands and UK • Lower commercial property rental values relative to other competitor locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pockets of deprivation • Fewer high-skilled residents with NV4+ qualifications (relative to national averages) • Workplace-based wages are lower than resident-based wages, suggesting ‘brain drain’ • Net outflow of commuters to nearby conurbations • Relatively remote from strategic motorway network and large conurbations, contributes to a lack of strategic inward investment • Ongoing restructuring from historic legacy of carpet manufacturing in Kidderminster
Current Opportunities	Current Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewed Local Development Order [LDO] is likely to boost investment at the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park • Attractive location of the authority offers an opportunity to draw business leaders into the area to live/work • Buoyant Leisure and Tourism sector (i.e. the Wyre Forest, West Midlands Safari Park / Severn Valley Railway) • Local Industrial Strategies - opportunity for local areas to make a strong and compelling economic case to secure the resources for growth priorities • Unmet need in the Black Country may encourage potential occupiers to look further afield. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous property market resulting in relatively low values and demand for employment space, impacting on scheme viability • Competition from inward investment within neighbouring employment centres • Ongoing cutbacks in public spending • Continued macro-economic uncertainty re: Brexit • Lack of industrial sites • Stronger office markets in other local authorities within the West Midlands • Substantial investment in logistics in South Staffordshire

Source: Lichfields analysis

5.0 **Commercial Property Market**

5.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the property market from a national and local perspective. It looks at the key office and industrial employment locations in Wyre Forest, and provides an opinion on rents and land values. This has been informed by a review of market trends and secondary data, as well as consultations with a number of stakeholders such as commercial agents and developers active in Wyre Forest and the wider market area. Furthermore, this section also provides additional information from the stakeholder discussions.

National Economy

5.2 At the time of writing the United Kingdom's [UK] commercial market remains confident despite the economic uncertainties of Brexit. Following the result of the European Union [EU] referendum in June 2016, the Bank of England made the unprecedented step of reducing the base rate to 0.25%. They have since increased this to 0.5%. Some economists are anticipating further increases to take the cost of borrowing to 1% before the end of 2018.

5.3 Having a relaxed monetary policy and injecting £435 billion of quantitative easing into the economy in the aftermath of the recession, the Bank has stated they will not hesitate to take additional measures as required as the markets adjust and the UK economy moves forward. This includes supporting the functioning of markets by being ready to provide more than £250 billion of additional funds as Britain prepares to leave the EU.

5.4 In March 2018 the Office for Budget Responsibility [OBR] published its Economic and Fiscal Outlook. Economic growth and employment performed broadly as expected since November 2017 and OBR made only small revisions to our economy forecast. The vote to leave the EU appears to have slowed the economy, but by less than the OBR expected immediately after the referendum – thanks in part to the willingness of consumers to maintain spending by reducing their saving.

5.5 This OBR's stated that the latest data shows real GDP growth slowing down from 1.9% in 2016 to 1.7% in 2017 with an expectation of growth in 2018, slowing a little more in 2019, then picking up modestly over the subsequent three years.

5.6 With the current market uncertainty surrounding the UK's decision to leave the EU and activating Article 50; buying, selling and lending has become riskier because the market is more turbulent and less predictable. Immediately following the vote, institutional retail funds froze trading to mitigate losses, although confidence has since returned to the market with trading resuming. However, the lending institutions are braced for a rush of re-finance applications as loans could become cheaper with a potential fall in interest rates. This would likely have an adverse knock on effect on commercial property lending.

5.7 The sentiment behind consumer spending has started to decline, but there is no defined reason why long-term success should be impacted by the referendum outcome.

5.8 The increased uncertainty around how (and when) the UK will leave the EU will inevitably have an effect on both the office and industrial occupational market with occupier behaviour being stifled over the short-term until there is more certainty in the market. Over the medium-term, history has shown business to be highly flexible and adaptable to changing operating environments. Real estate professionals have reported that the initial shock has been overcome and as the economy stabilises, businesses will reconnect with the underlying qualities of the UK as a business location. Strengths range from low corporate tax rates, a strong and equitable legal system, the large consumer market, and its skilled and educated workforce.

- 5.9 How Britain negotiates its trade deals and border control will have a significant impact on the industrial market in particular, as the UK exported over £270 billion to the EU in 2017 alone³⁶. If the EU waits until the UK's formal withdrawal, these negotiations may drag on for another five years or more, leaving the potential for prolonged uncertainty over the industrial occupational market.

Wyre Forest Overview

- 5.10 In terms what this economic uncertainty means on a micro level, agents were upbeat about how Wyre Forest's commercial market has recovered from the recession. They consider that this has been spurred on by the increasing number of modern units constructed and planned over the past five years. The most popular locations are situated around the key two employment corridors (Stourport Road and Worcester Road) – these two economic areas have benefited from the completion of Silverwoods Way which directly connects the two A-roads and the renewal of the South Kidderminster LDO (to 2021) by the Council.
- 5.11 The SKEP area with its LDO is a key employment and regeneration focus for the Wyre Forest. It is difficult to say precisely how much of the recent development along the corridors would have taken place without the LDO. However, agents were generally of the view that the relaxed planning regime in this area has certainly facilitated growth and helped ensure a positive pro-development sentiment in this part of Wyre Forest.

Industrial and Logistics Space

- 5.12 Wyre Forest is characterised by a relatively large supply of industrial premises, a legacy of its carpet manufacturing days, which continue to provide employment space for indigenous firms. The distance to the M5 (relative to other nearby business locations, such as Bromsgrove or Redditch) generally makes Wyre Forest a less desirable location for logistics firms. Industrial occupants tend to be indigenous in nature, serving local communities. However, there are some positive examples of inward investment within the District. Wyre Forest has witnessed a limited number of recent industrial developments completed over the past couple of years since the previous ELR in the two employment corridors (Stourport Road and Worcester Road) which may have been driven by the South Kidderminster Local Development Order [LDO]. A number of these employment premises include:
- IGS / LOL (Specsavers) – A £12m investment for the development of two warehouse buildings for Specsavers on the former Romwire site, totalling 80,000 sq. ft;
 - Ratio Park, Finepoint – A £3 million investment for the erection of dual class use B1c and B8 units; and,
 - Finepoint Business Park – A highly successful modern industrial estate/ business park comprising a mix of commercial and office buildings, with surrounding occupiers including Wyre Forest Council and Movianto.
- 5.13 Industrial units located within Finepoint Business Park, Hoo Farm Industrial Estate, Hoo Brook Industrial Estate and Easter Park Industrial Park remain popular due to their accessibility and proximity to Kidderminster and strategic A-roads. In particular, units at Finepoint and Easter Park are popular as they provide modern B1 / B2 units.
- 5.14 Beyond the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park there are a number of popular rural industrial parks such as Bewdley Business Park, Wilden Industrial Estate, and Ruscock Trading Estate.

³⁶ House of Commons Library (May 2018): *Statistics on UK-EU trade*

- 5.15 A large amount of the current industrial B2 stock was built in the 1960s and is relatively dated, whereas the stock of B8 distribution units tends to be more modern. Newer developments at Easter Park Industrial Park, and Finepoint Business Park have added a variety of modern B2 and B8 premises to the market.
- 5.16 A key driver in this sector has been indigenous firms outgrowing their current premises or microbusinesses seeking starter-units. These businesses generally seek locations with good connectivity to the strategic A-roads. Agents stressed that there remains an established demand for industrial units ranging between 2,000 and 5,000 sq. ft. suitable for B2 uses followed by B8 uses. Agents noted that there is a strong demand for premises between 5,000 to 10,000 sq. ft, this demand rarely extends to any industrial property over 20,000 sq. ft. This is likely to be due to the fact that Wyre Forest's economy is dominated by small and medium-sized businesses.
- 5.17 Wyre Forest has experienced very limited levels of activity in terms of speculative new industrial and/or warehousing in recent years. The effects of this are now evident in the shortage of good modern quality spaces across the District. This was a pressing issue that was raised by all of the commercial agents who contributed to this study. Many stated that the District is struggling to retain industrial premises as they are being lost to residential or other alternative uses through permitted development rights [PDR].
- 5.18 There remains an acute shortage of modern, purpose-built premises. This has led to an increase in demand for good quality, well-located, second-hand industrial accommodation within Wyre Forest. As a result of this, agents are seeing a growing preference for many larger businesses to become owner-occupiers in the District, with companies looking to purchase the freehold interest in industrial buildings. This is partly due to indigenous companies seeking to take advantage of current low interest rates. Local start-ups and SMEs are more likely to prefer leasehold properties in Wyre Forest.
- 5.19 The shortage of industrial space reported by agents is supported by data from the VOA which shows that there has been a reduction in the amount of industrial floorspace in Wyre Forest by 25.9% between 2000/01 and 2015/16. Similarly, the number of industrial properties which have a rateable value has decreased from 930 to 900 properties over the same time period³⁷, suggesting that these industrial buildings that have been lost from the portfolio have been larger than average.
- 5.20 Typical industrial rental levels in the Wyre Forest are around £3.50 to £4.50 per sq. ft. for basic second-hand industrial accommodation. This increases to £5.50 to £7.50 per sq. ft. for more modern high-spec industrial premises. This reflects the relatively strong demand for such premises in Wyre Forest and the lack of comparable supply.
- 5.21 Agents confirmed that vacancy rates on modern industrial estates in Wyre Forest are now at a low level (between 7-10%) having recovered from much higher void rates during, and in the immediate aftermath of, the recession. An improvement in the UK economy, and the ensuing boost to investor and occupier confidence, has been coupled with very limited levels of new development since 2008, enabling most landlords in the area to reduce void levels across a range of sizes and ages of stock.
- 5.22 However, the distance to the motorway network remains a constraint to future development. This has led to a number of existing businesses seeking premises elsewhere in the West Midlands that are in closer proximity to the motorway network (this includes Bromsgrove, Wychavon and Dudley). This competition has forced property owners in Wyre Forest to suppress rents.

³⁷ Valuation Office Agency (2016): *Non-domestic rating - business floorspace 2000/01 – 2015/16*

5.23 There has been limited recent speculative new build development across the district – as such the majority of B class space on the market is second-hand.

Office Space

5.24 Wyre Forest has never been perceived by the market as a major office location, with only a small number of major office occupiers. This is demonstrated by the District having a smaller proportion (10.4%) of office space compared to the West Midlands (13.2%) and (22.0%) as a whole. This is primarily due to Wyre Forest’s economy being dominated by local SMEs and micro-businesses that tend to have modest requirements. Attractive though its environment and heritage assets are, Wyre Forest does not benefit from convenient access to the motorway network connection and is consequently less attractive destination for nationwide companies or multi-nationals looking for larger labour pools. Generally, it is acknowledged that there are other established office centres in neighbouring local authorities such as Bromsgrove, Dudley and Greater Birmingham which have better quality office stock and accessibility to the motorway network.

5.25 Agents consider that Wyre Forest’s office market is primarily driven by existing local occupiers expanding, resulting in their relocation elsewhere within the District. Office space that has proven to be successful generally benefits from close proximity to the two major employment corridors (Stourport Road and Worcester Road) within the District or in Kidderminster Town Centre itself (i.e. Church Street and Green Street). Historically, the principal office location was centred around Kidderminster Town Centre, with the surrounding areas such as Stourport-on-Severn, providing additional (and secondary) office space.

5.26 The vast majority of offices in Wyre Forest are located in Kidderminster and are characterised by either being:

1. Office accommodation above retail units within the town centre;
2. Ancillary office units within industrial estates (often outside of the town centre); and
3. Converted residential units or refurbished industrial premises (such as Elgar House).

5.27 There are very few purpose built Grade A office units, with much of the existing space serving an indigenous market. Much of the stock that does exist in the District tends to be older, with a significant proportion built in the 1960s. The lack of modern, Grade A office space contributes to the low rents observed within the District, although this does vary. Poor quality, tertiary offices tend to achieve a rental value of around £4-5/sq. ft, whereas the higher quality office accommodation that does exist in the District in Elgar House on Green Street (which despite being a former industrial building has been refurbished to a high specification), can reach up to £10-12 sq. ft. Green Street is an area where a large number of the District’s main office units are located. Whilst agents commented this stock tends to be of a reasonably good quality, its lack of on-site car parking is a restraint on its popularity.

5.28 Other established areas of office accommodation in Kidderminster include the Church Street area, which tends to be used by local professional occupants, such as solicitors, accountants etc. Limited volumes of office development have come forward recently, due in part to finance being hard to access. Notable exceptions include a small number of office units that have recently been developed at the Finelight site on Stourport Road, most of which are currently occupied by Wyre Forest Council.

5.29 Moving away from the public sector, Wyre Forest’s local office market is generally driven by smaller occupiers seeking offices of 500 to 1,000 sq. ft. Any office requirements of 2,000 sq. ft. and above are seen as being significant requirements in the local market. Agents’ experience is that office spaces above 2,000 sq. ft. generally take longer to occupy than smaller units. Within

the District the demand for serviced office premises is generally more limited and there is currently not a significant demand for this market.

- 5-30 Since the previous ELR, similar issues persist in relation to Permitted Development Rights [PD] which allows for change of use from B1 (a) offices to residential, whereby premises can undergo change of use without the need to obtain planning permission. If demand for offices in an area is limited, the owner of the property is incentivised to change its use. Some agents noted that they expected owners of large offices within District to be under pressure to convert such properties to residential purposes, due to the lack of demand for large office premises.
- 5-31 Vacancy rates across the District are higher for office premises and are estimated to be around 20% with agents stating that enquires for offices are generally 60% for freehold and 40% for leasehold on availability.
- 5-32 The office market is generally not one that would be driven by speculative-led developments and agents stated that gap funding would be required if further modern office stock would come forward in the future.

Rural Employment Space

- 5-33 There are a number of sites in Wyre Forest's rural areas serving the local business population such Bewdley Business Park, Rushcock Trading Estate and Cursley Business Park. The size and quality of these sites varies, although in general they tend to comprise older and poorer quality stock, such as converted former general industrial or agricultural buildings. Many are in more peripheral or less accessible locations where occupancy levels are generally high. This is predominantly due to the shortage in the supply of sites and the popularity of such premises from local microbusinesses / SMEs.
- 5-34 Consultations with agents confirmed that whilst these sites receive interest and are attractive to local SMEs but demand is still very much focused on sites in larger settlements. Agents were generally of the view that whilst the maintenance of smaller sites in the rural areas was important, demand was very localised and future supply should be focused around the prime areas of Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley above more peripheral locations.

Marketing Guidance

- 5-35 An important consideration for WFDC is the length of marketing time periods within its emerging employment land policies. The District has lost a significant number of B-Class sites to alternative uses, notably residential – partly as a consequence of permitted development rights.
- 5-36 In order to protect employment space, it is suggested that the Council implements a policy to ensure that premises that were formerly in B-Class employment use are actively promoted before alternative uses are considered. It is important owners are encouraged to seek prospective occupiers for commercial floor space for a 'reasonable period of time' prior to an application for change of use being submitted.
- 5-37 There is no formal guidance in either the revised NPPF or PPG as to the length of time that might be considered appropriate. Nevertheless, it is clearly important that WFDC ensures that any commercial property considered for change of use should be marketed in a manner that would genuinely test the market and bring it to the attention of likely purchasers.
- 5-38 As part of this Study, Lichfields has reviewed typical marketing periods within West Midlands authorities' adopted local plans – which are out lined in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Duration of the Required Marketing Period

Council	Marketing Period for Employment Space	Within Adopted Local Plan
Birmingham City	2 years	Policy TP20
Bromsgrove	12 months	BDP12 / BDP14
East Staffordshire Borough	6 months	Supporting text Paragraph 3.163
Herefordshire	12 months	Policy E2
Malvern Hills District	12 months	SWDP 8
North Warwickshire	12 months	LP11
Shropshire	12 months	Supporting text Paragraph 3.86
Tamworth	12 months	Policy EC7
Warwick District	2 years	Supporting text Paragraph 3.38
Worcester City	12 months	SWDP 8
Wychavon District	12 months	SWDP 8

Source: Relevant local authorities

- 5.39 As can be seen from Table 5.1, there is some variation in the marketing period, from a low of 6 months in East Staffordshire Borough, to a high of 2 years in Warwick District and Birmingham City. 8 of the 11 authorities examined require a 12-month period of marketing.
- 5.40 Lichfields has held discussions with local commercial agents with regard to appropriate marketing periods for former B-Class employment space in the context of Wyre Forest District. The majority of commercial agents stated that the extent of the marketing periods will differ depending on the type of property in question and should be based on average disposal periods for the sector in question. Many of the commercial agents specifically mentioned that commercial properties (both industrial and office) within the District tend to be occupied after 12-18 months after initially being marketed (for sale / let).
- 5.41 Given the generally indigenous local market, the view was expressed that if the site was not occupied within a year then there were likely to be specific issues regarding its suitability for ongoing B-class use, particularly for industrial units, which tend to have very low vacancy rates. Some agents even considered that 12 months was too long a period in Wyre Forest District to require owners to market their site before alternative non B-Class uses could be considered.
- 5.42 On the basis of the analysis above, we do not consider that there is clear evidence that would justify Wyre Forest District pursuing a marketing period in excess of the 12 months the majority of West Midlands local authorities that have such a policy in place require. This 12-month period is considered to be reasonable and sufficient to protect existing B-Class employment sites within the District.

Future Growth Potential

- 5.43 Local property agents considered that despite improved market conditions, speculative industrial development was very unlikely to occur in the area for the foreseeable future. This is partly due to the previous economic/development cycle. Following the 2008/09 recession, developers required rents to increase to justify the risk of speculatively developing additional B-class premises especially when set against the modest increases in land values. Agents state that the recent increase in land values is largely due to the shortage of available (and suitable) land for sale.

- 5.44 Much of this of course relates to the fact that speculative development in Wyre Forest is difficult without a degree of state intervention/assistance. The viability of development is dependent on a range of factors including:
- availability and cost of finance;
 - high costs of site preparation;
 - high infrastructure costs;
 - void periods;
 - construction costs;
 - rental levels;
 - yields;
 - ability to secure pre-lets or forward sales; and,
 - availability of gap funding.
- 5.45 Going forward, agents considered that further employment land supply is required within Wyre Forest. There is a particularly strong need for new industrial development of varying sizes and to a lesser extent small-scale move on office development (subject to the office occupier market showing further signs of improvement). The A449 / A451 (Stourport Road and Worcester Road) Corridor have long been the focus of development and this is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, with ongoing occupier demand for more employment space along the Corridors which benefit from good access to Kidderminster, Stourport and the wider sub-region. In the longer term there was a general view that one or more significant employment sites would be required with good access to the strategic road network.
- 5.46 Agents considered that future take up is likely to follow similar historic trends, with future development for warehousing and industrial uses and a need to protect future employment uses against further losses through PDR to residential or alternative uses.

Conclusions

- 5.47 The District's commercial property market is centred around Kidderminster, Stourport and the employment corridors connecting the two settlements.
- 5.48 The District lacks the necessary critical mass to attract and sustain larger office occupiers and faces strong competition from larger, more established and growing office centres with better links to larger conurbations (such as Birmingham) and the strategic road network (particularly the M5). As a result, the office market remains very localised, and what limited demand there is generally comes from local SMEs for good quality, small, modern premises. Rents also tend to be lower and this restricts speculative development, which has not occurred in the District for many years.
- 5.49 The industrial market, whilst suffering from some of the same problems as the office market (characterised by stock which tends to be older and is not always suitable for the needs of modern businesses), has recently seen an increase in inward investment. This particularly relates to companies operating in the advanced manufacturing sector, and has also been assisted by the streamlined planning process of the SKEP's LDO.
- 5.50 Agents highlighted the need for high quality industrial premises which are suitable for the needs of modern businesses, located on strategic transport routes. These need to offer flexibility, both in terms of the uses such premises can be harnessed for and also with flexible terms of contract. This is especially relevant for SME firms; which Wyre Forest has an above average representation of. Demand for rural employment space in Wyre Forest is reported to be low,

but steady. There is scope for greater provision of modern, industrial accommodation (ideally with flexible contracts with shorter leases, as is the case elsewhere) for start-up and small businesses, of which Wyre Forest has a disproportionately large number in order to enable local firms to expand and/or upgrade.

6.0 **Review of Employment Sites Portfolio**

Introduction

- 6.1 This section presents the findings from the employment land supply assessment. This analysis considered the characteristics and quality of land and sites in Wyre Forest and their suitability and deliverability to meet future employment development needs.
- 6.2 The review focused upon sites and land currently in existing / allocated employment use or undeveloped employment sites within the adopted Local Plan. It therefore represents Wyre Forest's current employment land supply.
- 6.3 Additional potential sites were assessed to determine their suitability for employment use; the findings from these assessments are summarised in Section 8.0. These sites are not currently part of Wyre Forest's allocated employment land supply and not in existing employment use but were assessed to determine whether they are suitable for such uses. These sites were either suggested in the 'call for sites' process of the emerging Local Plan consultation or of particular interest to the Council.
- 6.4 This ELR Update will take into consideration 59 allocated and non-allocated existing employment sites as part of the analysis for the District's existing employment portfolio. In consultation with WDFC, Lichfields has identified 23 allocated and non-allocated sites (out of the 59 sites) for re-assessment within this ELR Update. These have been identified due to changes in circumstances at a number of these sites since their original appraisal in the previous 2016 ELR. Furthermore, additional new employment sites have been identified via WFDC's Call for Sites exercise associated with the emerging Local Plan.
- 6.5 It was agreed that the assessment findings for the remaining 36 (out of 59) allocated and non-allocated sites that were assessed in the previous 2016 ELR would not be re-appraised as part of this ELR Update. It was considered that such an exercise would be disproportionate as WDFC Officers considered that there had been no material change in the status of these sites.
- 6.6 It is important to note that 17 out of these 23 allocated and non-allocated employment sites identified for re-appraisal were appraised in the previous 2016 ELR. These are:
- 1 3 Sandy Lane, Titton (as part of Sandy Lane Industrial Estate) – Ref. WF1;
 - 2 Former Ceramaspeed site - Ref. WF4;
 - 3 Cheapside Business Park -Ref. WF5;
 - 4 Churchfields Business Park – Phase 3a (Ref 7 in the previous 2016 ELR) – Ref.WF6;
 - 5 Churchfields (Higgins Baler) (part of the Churchfields Business Park) – Ref. WF7;
 - 6 Crossley Park – Ref. WF8.
 - 7 Cursley Distribution Park, Shenstone Ref. WF9;
 - 8 Oakleaf (part of Finepoint Business Park –Ref 7 in the previous 2016 ELR) – Ref. WF10;
 - 9 Ratio Park Phase 1 (part of Finepoint Business Park –Ref 7 in the previous 2016 ELR) - Ref. WF11;
 - 10 Former British Sugar Phase 2 (part of Silverwoods - Ref 16 in the previous 2016 ELR)) – Ref. WF12;
 - 11 Former British Sugar Plot D – Phase 1 (part of Silverwoods - Ref 16 in the previous 2016 ELR) – Ref.WF13;

- 12 Land at adjacent SDF, Stourport Road - Ref. WF16;
- 13 Parcel on Hoo Brook Industrial Estate (former Frenco site – as part of Hoo Brook Industrial Estate) – Ref. WF.18;
- 14 Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 1) - Ref. WF19;
- 15 Rock Works (as part of Park Street Industrial Estate Ref. 33 in the previous 2016 ELR)- Ref WF22;
- 16 Land at Wilden Industrial Estate (as part of Wilden Industrial Estate) – Ref. WF25; and,
- 17 Worcester Road, Stourport - Ref. WF26.

6.7 A further six allocated and non-allocated employment sites are being appraised for the first time as part of this ELR Update:

- 1 Alton Nurseries (Ref. WF2);
- 2 Frank Stone (Ref. WF14);
- 3 Green Street (Ref.WF15);
- 4 North of Wilden Industrial Estate (Ref. WF21);
- 5 Parsons Chain (Ref. WF23); and,
- 6 VOSA Site (Ref. WF24).

Overview of Assessed Sites

6.8 In consultation with the Council it was agreed that the assessment should be focused on 23 employment sites (19 allocated sites and four non-allocated existing employment sites) and three potential sites that will be focused on in Section 8.0 (excluding five sites being assessed through desktop assessment at the request of WFDC). These alongside the other 36 previously assessed sites. The location of these sites is presented in Figure 6.1, with detailed site pro-formas for the assessed sites provided in Appendix 4.

Figure 6.1 Map of Revisited and New Employment Sites Assessed



Source: Lichfields Analysis

Committed Supply of Employment Space

- 6.9 The committed stock of employment space in the study area comes from three key sources:
- 1 Proposed allocated employment sites: sites proposed for employment allocations for development under policies in the emerging Local Plan Review (2016-2034) Preferred Options Document (June 2017), Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (both adopted July 2013);
 - 2 Non-allocated employment sites: sites which are in use for employment purposes but which have not been formally allocated for such a purpose; and,
 - 3 Sites with extant planning permission: other sites with extant planning permission (i.e. permissions that have not yet expired and could be implemented) for employment development (as of August 2018).
- 6.10 The committed supply of employment space has been identified by WFDC as falling within the above categories. A full list of the category each site falls within is available in the site assessment matrix Appendix 4.

Allocated Employment Sites

- 6.11 This ELR Update assessed 17 allocated employment sites. The adopted Sites Allocations and Policies Plan (adopted 2014)³⁸ allocates and retains 42 sites assessed as part of this study for employment use or mixed-use for new or continued employment use throughout the plan period. 11 out these 42 sites were re-assessed for this ELR Update at the Council's request.
- 6.12 These employment areas not only provide space for current employers and businesses, but they also provide opportunities for new investment and rejuvenation, through intensification or reuse. All of these sites have been assessed as part of this ELR.
- 6.13 The Kidderminster Central AAP also allocates 11 sites³⁹ suitable for office and industrial uses, only six of the 11 sites were re-assessed as part of this study.
- 6.14 In total the gross area of these 53 allocated sites equate to 332.91 ha (although as the vast majority of them are occupied, the net developable area comes to 16.78 ha).

Non-Allocated Existing Employment Sites

- 6.15 This ELR Update assesses six non-allocated employment sites out of the total 59 allocated and non-allocated existing employment sites:
- 1 Alton Nurseries (Ref. WF2);
 - 2 Cursley Distribution Park, Shenstone (Ref: WF9);
 - 3 Mitton Mill Industrial Estate, Mill Road, Stourport (Ref 27- assessed in the previous 2016 ELR);
 - 4 North of Wilden Industrial Estate (Ref.WF21);
 - 5 Titan Steel Wheels, Cookley (Ref 41 – assessed in the previous 2016 ELR); and,
 - 6 VOSA Site (Ref. WF24).

³⁸ Wyre Forest Council (2017) *Local Plan Review (2016-2034) Preferred Options, Policy 30- 35*

³⁹ Policy KCA.GPB5; KCA.Ch7 KCA.WG1; KCA.CW1; KCA.HP3 and KCA.HP4

Sites with Extant Planning Permission

- 6.16 WFDC monitoring data records the amount of employment space with extant planning permissions for B-Class uses. At the time of writing, WFDC confirmed that there were no B-Class employment sites with extant planning permission (excluding allocations with extant planning permissions which have already been assessed as part of this ELR, in order to avoid double counting).

Approach

- 6.17 It is vital that LPAs identify a future supply of land which is suitable, available and deliverable for economic development uses over the plan period. Identifying such a supply will help enable the District to respond to business requirements and meet its objectively assessed economic development needs.
- 6.18 The 23 existing/allocated sites were inspected for their suitability for employment use in line with the former Practice Guidance. This focused on the following criteria:
- 1 Physical limitations or problems such as strategic road/local access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risks, pollution or contamination (where known);
 - 2 Potential impacts including the effect upon nature and heritage conservation;
 - 3 Appropriateness and likely market attractiveness (including vacancy and market activity on site) for the type of development proposed;
 - 4 Proximity to labour and services;
 - 5 Barriers to, and timescales for, delivery; and,
 - 6 Environmental/amenity impacts experienced by would be occupiers and neighbouring areas.
- 6.19 In addition to the above criteria, the assessment also considered other site-specific factors such as their policy status, planning constraints and suitability for specific uses. Although flood risk was considered as a part of this assessment, it is recognised that being in a flood zone does not necessarily preclude some types of commercial uses from coming forward for development. The assessment of gross site areas to net developable areas was based upon standard plot adjustment assumptions as set out in Appendix 3, except where site specific factors required adjustments, for example if steep topography further limited the net developable area. Sites that are fully developed are given a net developable area of 0 ha. Fully developed sites recommended as being suitable for employment use do not contribute to the District's future employment land supply.
- 6.20 The site visits were supplemented by discussions with key stakeholders including commercial agents, developers and Council Officers. The assessments also reviewed data provided by WFDC such as flood risk, listed buildings status, conservation areas, remediation constraints such as pollution control areas and oil pipelines, and relevant planning history.
- 6.21 Individual sub area maps for the assessed sites are included in Appendix 5, while details of the criteria used to rate these sites are contained in Appendix 3. Tables summarising the assessment of each site against these appraisal criteria are also included at Appendix 4. Appendix 6 provides a series of site pro-formas containing photographs, red-line boundaries on aerial maps, descriptions, assessments, the final rating and recommendation for each of the assessed sites.

6.22 The criteria rating categories of ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘average’, ‘poor’ and ‘very poor’ are intended to provide a broad indication of the overall quality of employment land supply rather than a comparison of one site against another.

6.23 It should be noted that the assessment process in itself does not necessarily provide a complete picture of the local significance of certain sites. For example, a site could be assessed to have the potential to satisfy particular business and sector needs (i.e. which can be important reasons for retaining the site) even if it does not perform well against conventional site assessment criteria. A wider commentary is therefore provided to supplement the formal rating exercise.

Overview of Sites

6.24 As summarised in Table 6.1, in overall terms 347.95 ha of gross employment land, with a net developable area of 17.32 ha reviewed.

Table 6.1 Distribution of employment sites

Location	Number of sites	Total Gross Site Area (ha)	Total Net Developable Area (ha) (estimated)
Kidderminster	41	223.77	13.84
Stourport	13	48.65	1.34
Rural	5	75.53	2.14
Total	59	347.95	17.32

6.25 In terms of the assessed sites within this ELR, 332.91 ha (gross) relates to 53 sites which are wholly or partly allocated for employment use. The remaining 15.04 ha of land assessed comprised the other six sites which are in use for employment, with no allocated protection for that purpose in the existing Local Plan documents.

Site Assessment Results

6.26 The final recommendation for each site is informed by the site assessment and commentary (in Appendices 5 and 6) but is essentially based on a rounded qualitative judgement which reflects a detailed consideration of the following key issues:

1. **Sustainability** –whether a site demonstrates characteristics that make it sustainable, such as being: previously developed land; accessible by public transport; compatible with neighbouring uses; and in an area at a lower risk of flooding;
2. **Market Attractiveness** - whether a site is: likely to be commercially attractive from a developer’s perspective (taking into account the possible need for site remediation, levelling and off-site and on-site infrastructure work); in an area of strong demand; and likely to be viewed as attractive by agents/occupiers;
3. **Policy Adherence** - whether there are any known policy constraints affecting the site or immediate surrounding area. These may relate to the natural, built and/or historic environment, such as whether the site lies within the Green Belt.

6.27 Overall, the site assessments indicate that the District has a reasonable range of employment sites of varying quality and type. The majority of sites assessed accommodated a mix of B2 and B8 uses. B1 office sites were nearly all within and around Kidderminster.

6.28 A summary of site rankings is provided in Table 6.2 and Table 6.3. Table 6.3 only focuses on the re-appraised sites as part of this Study.

6.29 Table 6.2 is a cumulation of site assessments from the 2016 ELR and 2018 ELR Update which focus on 59 sites. Table 6.3 sets out the site assessments rankings for the 23 sites that were reappraised as part of this ELR Update Study.

Table 6.2 Site Scoring Summary

Site Score	Number of sites	Size (ha) (gross)	Size (ha) (net)
Very Good	16	96.67	11.32
Good	20	117.50	4.46
Average	19	110.08	1.18
Poor	4	23.70	0.36
Very Poor	0	96.67	11.32
Total	59	347.95	17.32

Source: Lichfields analysis

Table 6.3 Summary of Site Assessments for 2018 ELR Update

Site reference	Site name	Size (net ha)	Site rating (no. sites)	Recommendation
Ref 1 -46	Total of 36 Sites previously assessed in the 2016 ELR	4.78	36	Existing Employment / Mixed-Use Sites
WF10	Finepoint Way, Kidderminster (Oakleaf)	1.04	Very Good (4)	Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF11	Finepoint Way, Kidderminster (Ratio Park Phase 2)	0.69		Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF12	Former British Sugar Site, Stourport Road, Kidderminster (Phase 1)	1.82		Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF13	Former British Sugar Site, Stourport Road, Kidderminster (Phase 2)	2.99		Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF2	Alton Nurseries	0.90	Good (7)	Existing Employment Site – Retain allocation for mixed use with an element of B-Class employment
WF4	Ceramaspeed (former) Zortech Avenue, Kidderminster	0.00		Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF8	Crossley Park	1.86		Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF15	Green Street Depot	0.45		Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF18	Land at Hoo Brook Industrial Estate, Silverwood Way	0.25		Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF23	Parsons Chain	1.00		Existing Employment Site – Retain allocation for mixed use with an element of B-Class employment
WF24	VOSA Site	0.00		Existing Employment Site – Retain

Site reference	Site name	Size (net ha)	Site rating (no. sites)	Recommendation
WF1	3 Sandy Lane, Titton (as part of Sandy Lane Industrial Estate)	0.00	Average (9)	Existing Employment Site – Release for alternative uses
WF5	Cheapside, Stourport	0.00		Existing Employment Site – Retain allocation for mixed use with an element of B-Class employment
WF6	Churchfields Business Park (Phase 3a)	0.00		Existing Employment Site – Retain allocation for mixed use with an element of B1-Class employment (Ref WF6)
WF7	Churchfields Business Park (Higgins Baler)	0.00		Existing Employment Site – Release for alternative uses
WF14	Frank Stone	0.00		Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF16	Land adjacent SDF, Stourport Road	0.0		Existing Employment Site – Retain allocation for mixed use with an element of B-Class employment
WF19	Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 1)	0.84		Existing Employment Site – Retain allocation for mixed use with an element of B-Class employment
WF21	Land north of Wilden Lane Industrial Estate	0.00		Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF25	Wilden Lane Industrial Estate, Wilden Lane, Stourport on Severn	0.34		Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF9	Cursley Distribution Park, Shenstone	0.00	Poor (3)	Existing Employment Site – Retain
WF22	Rock Works	0.36		Existing Employment Site – Retain allocation for mixed use with an element of B-Class employment
WF26	Worcester Road, Stourport	0.00		Existing Employment Site – Retain allocation for mixed use with an element of B-Class employment
Total		17.32	59 Sites	17.32 ha after recommendations

6.30

The vast majority of the sites rated either ‘good’ or ‘average’. Whilst there are a few reappraised sites which score poorly, even these sites fulfil wider functions that would justify their retention, in particular by providing cheap, cost effective accommodation for local businesses. Two sites have been recommended to be de-allocated which include the following sites:

- 3 Sandy Lane, Titton (Ref.WF1):** The site comprises of an existing residential dwelling and a former haulage yard situated near the entrance to within Sandy Lane industrial Estate with residential to the east. The former haulage yard is overgrown and in poor condition. The site is surrounded by employment uses and some residential to the east, with a public footpath running along the site boundary. The site is part of the Sandy Lane Industrial Estate which is an allocated employment site within the adopted Wyre Forest Site and Allocations and Policies Local Plan. The site was submitted as part of the Council’s ‘Call for Sites’ for the emerging Local Plan for future residential development. It is recommended that the site be removed from the adopted employment allocation and should be redeveloped for residential or mixed use. The boundary of the employment allocation (Sandy Lane Industrial Estate – Policy SAL.GPB1) should be revised to exclude this site.
- Churchfields Business Park – Higgins Baler (Ref. WF7):** This site consists of small industrial units (occupied by Higgins Balers) to the north, a former basketball court and open space. The majority of the site is under the ownership of WFDC and the northern part of the site is owned by Higgins Baler. The site is allocated for a mix of residential and some small scale A3 uses in the adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (2013) and Churchfields Masterplan. This site is in close proximity to Kidderminster Town Centre and

has very good access to labour and services. The site benefits from strategic road access and bus stops, although there are notable traffic congestion issues. It is recommended that in accordance with Policy KCA.CH6 the site should be redeveloped for residential and retail uses.

- 6.31 The recommended site portfolio in the following sections is presented on a “without prejudice” basis as evidence to inform the preparation of the new Wyre Forest Local Plan. It does not constitute Council policy, and future employment allocations will be determined through formal consultation as part of the Local Plan preparation process.

Conclusions

- 6.32 Overall, the assessment of identified employment sites indicates that the District contains a reasonable range of employment sites of differing qualities and types, with low vacancy levels. The sites vary from large industrial estates in established employment areas to remote rural sites, some containing dozens of firms, and others with large, single occupiers.
- 6.33 Nearly all of the sites have some form of planning policy status/protection or are safeguarded for employment uses and are therefore afforded a degree of protection from competing land uses. Most sites accommodated a combination of industrial (B1c/B2) and low-grade warehousing (B8) uses, often with ancillary offices, although some specific office (B1a/b) sites were also evident (the majority of which were located within Kidderminster).
- 6.34 The vast majority of the sites rated ‘very good’ / ‘good’ or ‘average’. Whilst there are a few sites which score poorly, even these sites fulfil wider functions that would justify their retention, such as providing a sustainable source of employment for rural residents, or enabling indigenous companies seeking low overheads to remain in the local area. For instance, whilst many of the rural sites tend to be of a lower quality (such as Cursley Distribution Park) and are characterised by higher vacancy rates, they nevertheless fulfil important local needs. Furthermore, certain sites which are currently poorly performing have been earmarked for comprehensive redevelopment as part of wider masterplans. Furthermore, two existing allocated sites (3 Sandy Lane, Titton – Ref .WF1 and Higgins Baler Ref WF7) have been recommended to be de-allocated due to various reasons as outlined in their respective pro-formas.
- 6.35 The completion of Silverwoods Way to connect Stourport Road and Worcester Road has unlocked a number of sites within South Kidderminster Enterprise Park (such as Easter Park, Finepoint and Hoo Farm Industrial Estate) and enhanced the market attractiveness of multiple sites in and around the Stourport Road and Worcester Road employment corridors.
- 6.36 One common theme amongst the sites assessed was that of low vacancy rates. This is a feature even amongst some of the most poorly rated sites. These low rates of vacancy prevent the churn, intensification and upgrading of existing sites that would be expected to take place within a ‘normal’, or fluid, market environment.
- 6.37 Whilst most of the sites have good access to the strategic road network (defined as A-roads in the Wyre Forest context) a recurring theme with many of the sites (especially those within and around the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park) especially in relation to the Local Development Order [LDO] which has streamlined planning applications within the area.

7.0 Future Employment Land Requirements

Introduction

- 7.1 This section considers the quantitative future economic growth needs in Wyre Forest. A number of different growth scenarios are considered to test the likely need for employment land generated over the plan period 2016 to 2036. These scenarios consider the need for office and industrial (i.e. manufacturing and warehousing) floorspace.
- 7.2 As well as considering the baseline forecast growth, the scenarios take into account past delivery of B-class employment space, the potential labour supply generated by housing growth scenarios, and aspirational ‘policy on’ growth.
- 7.3 The forecast demand scenarios are based on a quantitative requirement and do not take into account qualitative factors that may influence the actual requirement. For example, the assessment has not considered the quality of Wyre Forest’s existing employment space, nor has it consulted with commercial property agents to test market demand. The aspirational ‘policy on’ growth scenario has, however, involved consultation with key economic development stakeholders, and a review of developments and intervention projects that are likely to generate additional demand for B-class employment space.

Methodology

- 7.4 The Framework requires local authorities’ strategic policies to “*set out overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for: housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development*” [§20].
- 7.5 Considering this in evidence base terms, the Framework states that:

“*Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.*” [§80]
- 7.6 Within this context, a number of potential economic scenarios have been developed in this study to provide a framework for considering future economic growth needs and B-Class employment space requirements in Wyre Forest up to 2036.
- 7.7 As discussed in Section 2.0, Lichfields has followed the approach outlined in the previous Planning Practice Guidance, modelling a range of scenarios including:
1. projections of employment growth in the main B-Class sectors (**labour demand**) derived from economic forecasts produced by Experian;
 2. consideration of **past trends in completions of employment space** based on monitoring data collected by WFDC, and how these trends might change in the future; and,
 3. estimating future growth of **local labour supply** based on the latest housing requirements contained in WFDC’s emerging SHMA⁴⁰, and the amount of jobs and employment space that this could support, based on the SHMA’s demographic model runs.

⁴⁰ Arc4 (2017): *Draft Wyre Forest SHMA*

- 7.8 All these approaches have limitations and consideration needs to be given as to how appropriate each is to the circumstances in Wyre Forest. Further, to be robust, the economic growth potential and likely demand for employment space in Wyre Forest needs to be assessed under a variety of future scenarios, to reflect both lower and higher growth conditions that could arise in the future.
- 7.9 It is important to acknowledge that there will be an element of landless growth / contraction here, whereby job growth / decline will not automatically give rise to an immediate increase/decrease in floorspace, or land, requirements. This is due in part to the current spare capacity across many firms in the Midlands, where companies that have laid off staff in the immediate aftermath of the recession, have been operating out of the same building and hence can accommodate a return to past staffing levels without having to physically expand their operations. Such latent capacity will have a bearing on the extent to which WFDC may wish to tailor its B1/B2/B8 allocations going forward, and should be monitored over time.

A. Econometric Job Forecasting

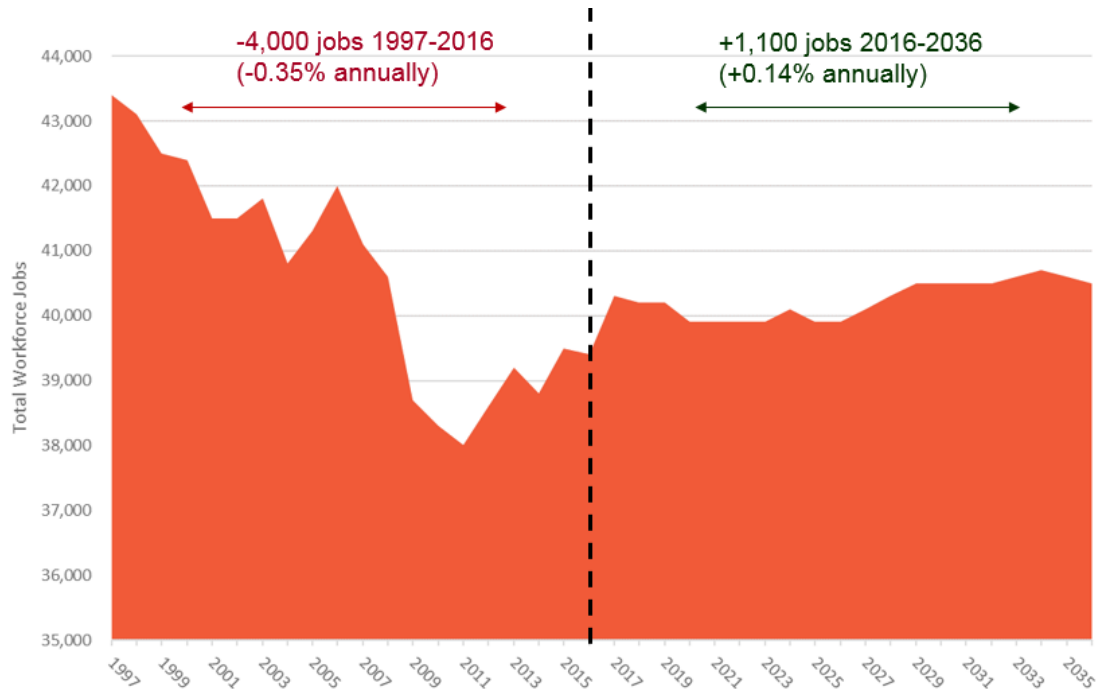
- 7.10 Forecasts of total workforce employment growth in Wyre Forest for the period up to 2036 were obtained from Experian's June 2018 release. It is important to note that there are inherent limitations to the use of economic forecasts of this type, particularly within the context of recent changes in the economy. National macro-economic assumptions are taken as the starting point and then modelled down to the regional and local levels by reference to the existing economic profile and sectoral composition of an area.
- 7.11 Local level data is less comprehensive and reliable than at national and regional levels, which can affect how the modelling is calibrated. Similarly, top-down forecasts do not take account of specific local factors that might influence employment growth. However, forecasts are seen as a valuable input to indicate the broad scale and direction of future economic growth within different sectors, which helps assess the future land requirements of a local area.
- 7.12 Population projections are just one of several inputs used to produce economic forecasts both in terms of future changes in working-age population (i.e. which directly impacts on the demand for jobs) and total population (i.e. which create demand for consumption activities). It is also important to note that population projections are frequently revised, as are assumptions around future working-age populations, economic activity rates and national changes to the pension age.

Scenario 1) Experian Economic Forecasts (June 2018)

- 7.13 The forecasts of job growth by sector reflect recent trends and are based upon projections at the regional level and how sectors within Wyre Forest have fared relative to historic growth in the region. For example, where particular sectors have performed well compared with the regional average (i.e. West Midlands) the forecasts generally assume that these sectors will continue to drive growth within the District in the future. These projections also reflect the current post-recession economic climate.
- 7.14 Experian's December 2017 Data Guide to its UK Regional Planning Service Model, setting out how its projections have been calculated, is included in Appendix 8.
- 7.15 For Wyre Forest, the June 2018 Experian baseline workforce employment projections reported a period of sustained employment growth between 1997 and 2016 (see Figure 7.1). There was a fall of 4,000 workforce jobs over this period, at a rate of -0.35% annually. In 2016 the total number of workforce jobs were 39,400 in Wyre Forest. Going forward, the total number of jobs is forecast to experience modest growth of 1,100 over the 20 years to 2016 and 2036. In

comparison, both the West Midlands and UK as a whole are projected to experience significant job growth of 12.5% and 11.3% respectively, over the same time period.

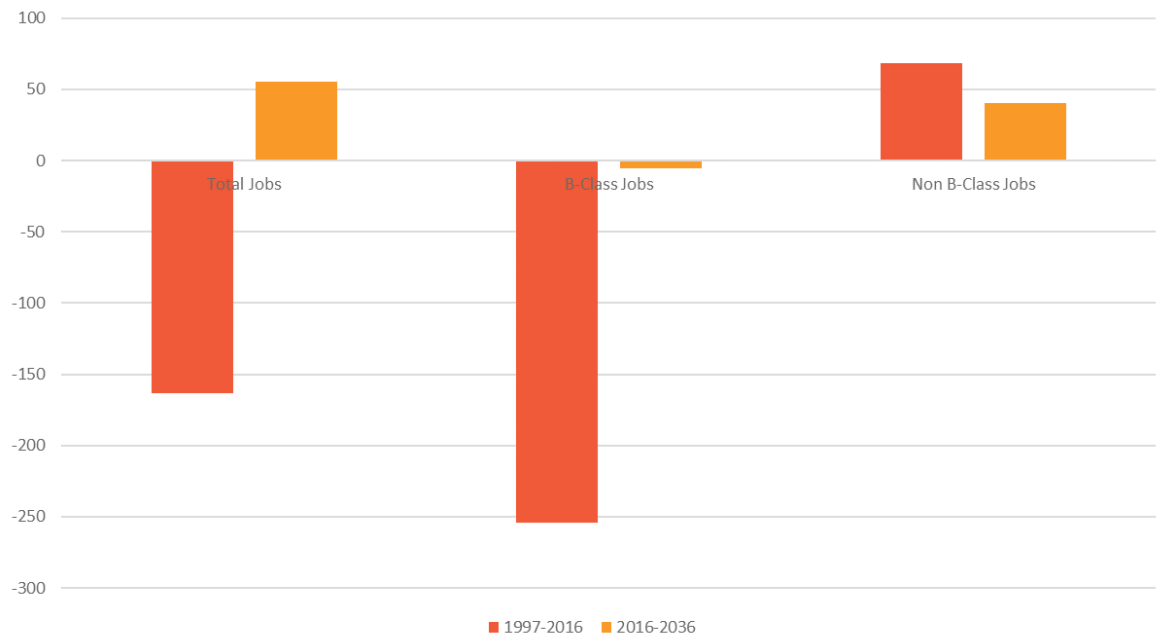
Figure 7.1 Employment change in Wyre Forest (historic and projected) 1997 to 2036



Source: Experian (2018)

- 7.16 Table 7.1 summarises those sectors expected to experience the largest absolute increases or reductions in employment over the next 20 years in Wyre Forest.
- 7.17 This analysis indicates that Residential & Social Care, Accommodation & Food Services and Health sectors are expected to be key drivers of economic growth within the District over the next 20 years. Sectors forecast to incur the largest employment losses during this period include Manufacturing (specifically Textiles and Clothing) as well as Wholesale, Retail and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.
- 7.18 This projected net increase of 1,100 workforce jobs (and decline of 103 B-Class jobs) up to 2036, which underpins this estimate of future employment space needs, may appear modest. However, this level is a marked improvement relative to the level of job growth that was observed in Wyre Forest during the period 1997-2016, which Experian data indicates declined by 3,100 jobs (Figure 7.2).
- 7.19 Total B-Class job growth, whilst negative, is much less severe than the level of (negative) growth recorded in the Wyre Forest between 1997 and 2016 which, at around 5 workforce jobs per annum from 2016-2036, is forecast to be far lower than the 254 workforce job reduction per annum experienced in historic trends.

Figure 7.2 Annual Workforce Job Growth implied by the Experian Baseline forecasts (versus historical data)



Source: Experian June 2018 / Lichfields Analysis

Table 7.1 Fastest growing and declining sectors in Wyre Forest (2016 to 2036)

Sector	Use Class	Job Change* (2016 to 2036)
Residential Care & Social Work	RED	+700
Accommodation & Food Services	RED	+600
Health	RED	+500
Administrative & Supportive Services	ORANGE	+300
Recreation	RED	+200
Computing & Information Services	PURPLE	+100
Finance	PURPLE	+100
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	RED	-400
Wholesale	PURPLE	-400
Textiles & Clothing (manufacture of)	PURPLE	-300
Retail	RED	-300

Source: Experian (June 2018) / Lichfields analysis

Key: PURPLE = B-Class sector ORANGE = Part B-Class sector RED = Non-B-Class sector

7.20

It can be seen that there is not a match between the sectors that the Worcestershire or GBSLEPs are aiming to target (as outlined in their respective SEPs) and those in which the baseline econometric forecasts project employment growth within.

7.21 These LEP priority sectors (these priority sectors are for Worcestershire LEP and GBSLEP) include:

- 1 Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering;
- 2 Life Sciences;
- 3 Digital and Creative Industries;
- 4 Business, Professional and Financial Services;
- 5 Low Carbon and Environmental Technologies;
- 6 Cyber security/defence/IT;
- 7 agri-tech; and,
- 8 Visitor and Destination Economy.

7.22 However, Wyre Forest shows growth in sectors which both LEPs have highlighted as being higher value sectors within which the region has an opportunity to develop a competitive advantage in. For instance, there is forecast to be a +16.7% increase in those employed in the manufacture of transport equipment. Furthermore, employment within computing and information services, another high-value sector, is projected to be boosted by 25.0%.

7.23 Employment in the Recreation sector is likely to experience growth, and this is a sector (which includes Tourism-related industries) in which Wyre Forest, as an attractive semi-rural authority, with numerous attractions is well placed to benefit the visitor economy. For example, the West Midland Safari Park (between Bewdley and Kidderminster) is the 2nd most visited paid attraction in the West Midlands with 700,000 visitors in 2016⁴¹. The park has been granted planning approval to develop a conference centre, hotel and water park at the existing site, which is likely to boost visitor numbers still further.

7.24 However, in terms of B-Class employment growth, this is expected to be negligible. This is because the forecast decrease in B1c/B2 related employment is largely offset by increases in B1a/b, B8 and non B-Class employment. This is summarised in Table 7.2.

7.25 Industrial-related employment occupying B1c and B2 class space is forecast to lose 242 jobs over the period to 2036. The office (B1 a/b) sector is forecast to experience an increase of 462 jobs, whereas there is expected to be a decline of 277 jobs in the distribution sector (B8). There is also projected to be an increase of 1,157 jobs in non B-Class sectors. These forecasts suggest that the structure of employment in Wyre Forest is unlikely to change significantly from its current composition.

7.26 The analysis includes an allowance for jobs in other non B-class sectors that typically utilise industrial or office space, such as some construction uses, vehicle repair, courier services, road transport and cargo handling and some public administration activities. This is because a certain proportion of these jobs will occupy premises falling within the B-Class sectors.

⁴¹ Visit England (2016): Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions: Latest results

Table 7.2 Forecast workforce change in Wyre Forest 2016-2036

Use class	Wyre Forest Workforce Jobs		Change
	2016	2036	2016-36
Offices (B1a/b)	4,119	4,581	462
Industrial (B1c/B2)	6,295	6,053	-242
Distribution (B8)	3,608	3,331	-277
Total B-class Jobs	14,022	13,965	-57
Other non B-Class Jobs	25,378	26,535	+1,157
Jobs in All Sectors	39,400	40,500	+1,100

Source: Experian/ Lichfields Analysis 2018. Note figures are rounded

7.27 These figures indicate moderate overall net decline in B-Class sectors (- 57 jobs) within Wyre Forest up to 2036, with moderate growth in office activities counteracted by declines in manufacturing and distribution jobs. This is within the context of total job growth of 1,100 jobs forecast for the District over the plan period, predominantly in the Residential & Social Care, Accommodation & Food Services and Health sectors. It should be noted that these key growth sectors will also require additional floorspace to accommodate an increase in employment over the period to 2036 (including some conventional office space), although the spatial implications of this growth are considered using different methodologies and other forms of technical evidence.

7.28 To translate the resultant job forecasts into estimates of potential employment space, it is necessary to allocate the level of employment change forecast for office, industrial, and wholesale / distribution uses as follows:

- 1 The office floorspace requirement is related to job growth / decline in the financial and business service sectors⁴²;
- 2 The industrial floorspace requirement is related to job growth / decline in the manufacturing sectors⁴³; and,
- 3 The wholesale / distribution floorspace requirement is related to job growth / decline in the industrial sectors of wholesale and land transport, storage and postal services.⁴⁴

7.29 In order to translate the resulting figures into employment land projections standard employment densities have been applied to the forecast job change figures (based upon the latest HCA⁴⁵ Guidance on employment densities). These translate FTEs into workforce jobs, and plot ratios by use class.

7.30 For the purposes of this ELR Update it was assumed that:

- 1 One B1a/b general office workforce job requires 12.5 sqm of employment floorspace [Gross External Area, or GEA]⁴⁶;
- 2 One B1c light industrial job requires 53.5 sqm of employment floorspace [GEA];
- 3 One B2 industrial workforce job requires 36 sqm of employment floorspace [GEA];

⁴² i.e. BRES Sectors 58-75, Office administration and support and 10% of Public Administration and Defence

⁴³ Manufacturing sectors, plus car repair, some construction and waste and remediation activities.

⁴⁴ Wholesaling less car repairs, retail car sales, plus post/couriers and land transport

⁴⁵ HCA (November 2015): *Employment Densities Guide, 3rd Edition*

- 4 A combined B1c/B2 factor of one job per 45 sqm was obtained by averaging the aforementioned B1c/B2 GEA equivalents; and,
- 5 One job per 65 sqm for general, smaller scale warehousing ⁴⁷.

7.31 This guidance takes account of recent trends in terms of the changing use of employment space, the main change being the more efficient utilisation of office space due to increased flexible working and hot-desking. This has resulted in a decrease in the amount of floorspace per office worker compared to previous guidance.

7.32 These assumptions are based on the latest HCA/OffPAT 3rd Edition guidance on employment densities. The guidance takes into account recent trends in changes of employment space usage, with the main change being the more efficient use of office space through flexible working and hot-desking.

7.33 The resultant floorspace estimates are provided in Table 7.3. They indicate an overall net loss B-Class floorspace in Wyre Forest of -8,660 sqm between 2016 and 2036. Where a reduction in jobs is forecast (e.g. manufacturing), the associated negative floorspace was halved (in line with common methodological practice amongst ELRs undertaken elsewhere across the country), to reflect the fact that job decline at a particular company does not automatically translate into a comparable loss of floorspace, at least not in the short-medium term, due in part to companies being locked into leasing agreements etc.

Table 7.3 Experian workforce job growth net employment floorspace requirements 2016-2036

Use class	Wyre Forest floorspace (sqm)
Offices (B1a/b)	5,778
Industrial (B1c/B2)	-5,450
Distribution (B8)	-8,988
Total	-8,660

Source: Experian / Lichfields Analysis

Scenario 2) Experian Job Growth: Policy On

7.34 An alternative job-based estimate of future needs has been compiled which was termed the Regeneration, or ‘Policy-On’, scenario. Following discussions with WFDC Officers, and making reference to the LEP Target Growth Sectors for both LEPs that Wyre Forest falls within (Worcestershire LEP and GBSLEP).

7.35 Detailed classifications used in the Experian workforce projections were reassessed to test whether there were any concrete policy justifications for modifying any of the categories. It is recognised that limited conclusions can be drawn from the results of such an approach, as the Experian forecasts for Wyre Forest are complex and internally consistent with those of other authorities in the regions.

⁴⁷ Given that the majority of B8 warehousing has been low bay warehousing in recent years, around 100% of future demand is estimated to be for ‘small’ warehousing and the remainder for larger high bay warehousing.

7.36 With this caveat in mind, Officers confirmed that work underpinning the two LEPs identified several core growth sectors that should be promoted and supported in the years ahead across the two LEP areas:

Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP [GBSLEP] Priority Sectors

- 1 Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering;
- 2 Life Science;
- 3 Digital and Creative Industries;
- 4 Business, Professional and Financial Services; and,
- 5 Low Carbon and Environmental Technologies.

Worcestershire LEP Priority Sectors

- 6 Advanced Manufacturing;
- 7 Cyber Security / Defence / IT;
- 8 Agri-Tech;
- 9 Visitor and Destination Economy; and,
- 10 Professional and Business Services.

7.37 As there is considerable overlap with some of the sectors and the standard industrial classifications used by Experian, it was assumed that the seven broad categories would broadly align as set out in Table 7.4.

7.38 It is important to note, that discussions with Council Officers and stakeholders stated that the following LEP priority sectors should not be included in the ‘Policy-On’ scenario. This is largely due to the District not having a strong representation in these sectors which include:

- Low Carbon and Environmental Technologies; and,
- Agri-Tech.

Table 7.4 Comparison between GBSLEP and Worcestershire LEP Target Growth Sectors and SIC2 sectors

GBSLEP and Worcestershire LEP Target Growth Sectors	Approximate Comparable Standard Industrial Classifications
Advanced Manufacturing / Engineering	The wider Manufacturing sector has been used as forecast employment data for Wyre Forest’s manufacturing sub-sectors are statistically unreliable due to the relatively low numbers of people employed in certain sectors
Business and Professional Services / Financial Services	Finance; Insurance & Pensions, Real Estate, Professional Services
Digital & Creative Industries	Media Activities; Telecoms; Computing & Information Services
Cyber Security / Defence / IT	Computing & Information Services
Visitor and Destination Economy	Accommodation & Food Services and Recreation

Source: Lichfields Analysis

7.39 Reflecting the ambition for economic growth, it was considered that these sectors could anticipate growth rates close to the West Midlands or UK rates identified in the Experian baseline job forecasts. If the projected growth rates for UK or the region were higher than Wyre Forest’s, then these were applied to the sectors identified in Table 7.4 for the period 2016 to 2036.

- 7.40 The adjustments to the Experian forecasts outlined above result in an overall increase of 2,227 (1,837 higher than the baseline) jobs and an increase in B-Class jobs of 390. This compares to a forecast net decrease of 57 B-Class jobs in the baseline Experian scenario. Most notably however, the forecast growth in non B-Class jobs is much higher in the policy on scenario compared to the baseline Experian scenario (+1,410 and +1,157 respectively). Table 7.5 summarises the forecast job growth in the policy on scenario.

Table 7.5 Policy-on workforce job change in Wyre Forest 2016-36

Use class	Wyre Forest Workforce Jobs		Change
	2016	2036	2016-36
Offices (B1a/b)*	4,119	4,993	874
Industrial (B1c/B2)**	6,295	6,053	-207
Distribution (B8)***	3,608	3,331	-277
Total B-class Jobs	14,022	14,377	+355
Other Non B-Class Jobs	25,378	26,788	+1,410
Jobs in All Sectors	39,400	41,165	+1,765

Source: Experian / Lichfields Analysis. Note data are rounded

* includes a proportion of public sector employment and administration & support services

** includes vehicle repair and some construction activities

*** includes elements of transport & communications sectors

- 7.41 These employment forecasts were then converted to floorspace requirements in the manner to the Experian baseline forecast. The resulting forecasts are more optimistic in terms of office job growth and less pessimistic regarding industrial decline. These are set out in Table 7.6.
- 7.42 Overall, they forecast B-Class job growth in Wyre Forest by 2036, although there is still a net increase in the requirement for B-Class floorspace.

Table 7.6 Policy On jobs based (net) employment space requirements in Wyre Forest 2016-2036

Use class	Wyre Forest floorspace (sqm)
Offices (B1a/b)	+10,922
Industrial (B1c/B2)	-5,450
Distribution (B8)	-8,988
Total	+3,517

Source: Lichfields Analysis

B. Labour Supply

- 7.43 It is also important to take into account how many jobs, and hence how much employment space, would be necessary to broadly match the forecast growth of the resident workforce in the District. In contrast to the other approaches, these scenarios focus on the future supply of labour rather than the demand for labour. These scenarios indicate the amount of new jobs needed to align with the future working-age population, and how much employment space would be needed to accommodate these jobs.
- 7.44 At the time of writing, an Objective Assessment of Housing Need in Wyre Forest is being undertaken by consultants on behalf of the Council. As part of the Labour Supply scenarios, two

scenarios have been included within the assessment (provided by the Council’s SHMA consultants Arc4) which are:

- **SNPP-2016:** this scenario focuses on the 2016-based SNPP which underpins the 2016-based sub-national household projections [SNHP], providing the baseline in the PPG housing need figure (HNF). = **968** jobs growth; and,
- **Dwelling-led (HNF):** this scenario uses the 2016-based household representative rate assumptions to convert the new homes into population = **2,190** jobs growth.

7.45 Both scenarios follow Arc4’s annual household growth rate of +276 has been applied in each year of the forecast period. Under both scenarios, the following economic assumptions have been applied by Arc4 throughout the forecast period:

- 1 Wyre Forest economic activity rates (16–89 years old), with adjustments made to all age groups in line with the OBR analysis;
- 2 2011 Census fixed commuting ratio for Wyre Forest (1.24); and,
- 3 2017 unemployment rate of 3.9% for Wyre Forest, fixed throughout the forecast period.

7.46 To translate this job growth into employment floorspace requirements, similar assumptions concerning vacancy rates and employment densities as per the econometric demand side forecasting work were applied to the job projections. It has been assumed that the projected floorspace split of B1a/B2 and B8 jobs will mirror the Experian projections in 2016 and 2036.

7.47 Under these scenarios, addressing the future employment requirements of local residents would result in a requirement of between -9,644 sqm and -540 sqm of B-class employment space (net) between 2016 and 2036 in Wyre Forest, depending upon the level of housing growth pursued by WFDC.

Table 7.7 Wyre Forest B-Class net floorspace required from labour supply growth scenarios 2016-2036 (sqm)

Demographic scenario	Offices (B1a/b)	Industrial (B1c/B2)	Warehousing (B8)	Total B-Class
Scenario 3) SNPP-2016	5,592	-5,894	-9,341	-9,644
Scenario 4) Dwelling-led (HNF)	7,320	-1,785	-6,075	-540

Source: Lichfields analysis

Estimating the Land Requirement

7.48 The next step involves translating floorspace into land requirements for office, industrial and warehousing uses. Land requirements have been calculated by applying appropriate plot ratio assumptions to the floorspace estimates. The resulting net land requirements for the labour demand and labour supply scenarios are set out in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8 Wyre Forest net land requirements by labour demand and supply led scenarios (ha) 2016-36

Scenario	Offices (B1a/b)	Industrial (B1c/B2)	Warehousing (B8)	Total B-Class
1) Experian Baseline	1.44	-1.36	-2.25	-2.17
2) Experian Job Growth: Policy On	2.73	-1.36	-2.25	-0.88
3) 2016-SNPP	1.40	-1.47	-2.34	-2.41
4) Dwelling-led (HNF)	1.83	-0.45	1.52	-0.14

Source: Lichfields Analysis

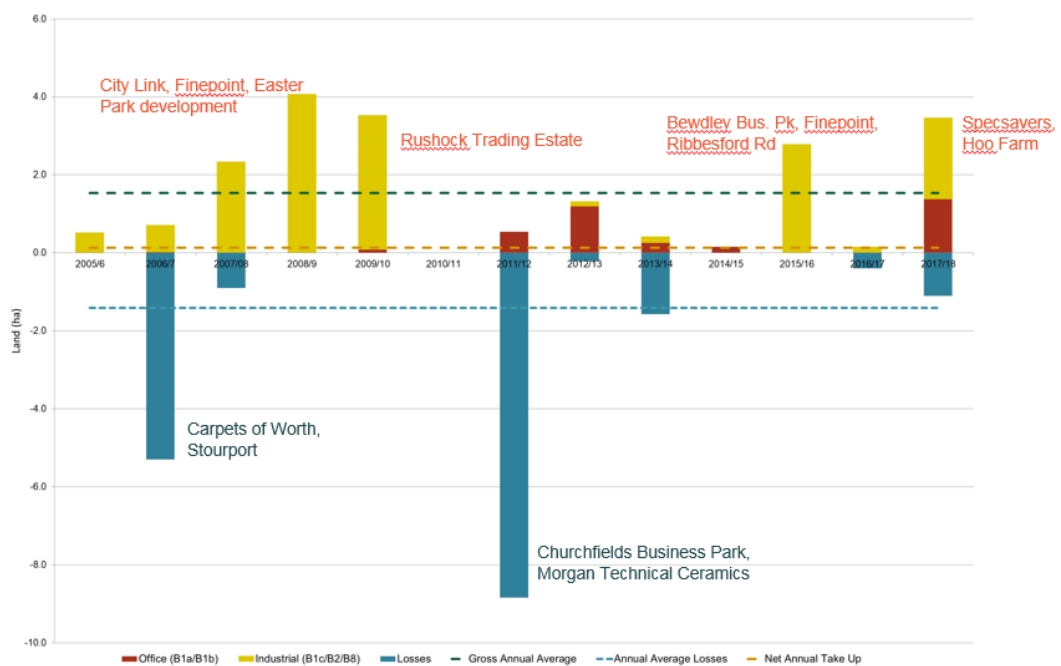
C. Past Development Rates

7.49 Because they reflect market demand and actual development patterns on the ground, in some situations long term completion rates of employment floorspace can provide a reasonable basis for informing future land needs, particularly where land supply or demand has not been unduly constrained historically. However, the future demand picture may not necessarily reflect past trends and some adjustments may be needed.

Scenario 5) Past Developments Rates

7.50 Monitoring data on past completions by B-Class uses between 2005/06 and 2017/18 was provided by WDFC. Between the period 2005/06 and 2009/10, average annual net completions for B-Class uses in Wyre Forest amounted to 11.16 ha of employment land. Following 2009/10 there was a large drop in development, such that the average yearly take-up drops from 2.23 (over the period 2005/06 and 2009/10) to 1.26 ha (over the period 2010/11 – 2017/18). On average, the 12-year overall rate of take up was **1.54 ha**. Over the same time period, a total of 18.32 ha of B-Class employment land has been lost across the District over the period 2005/06 – 2017/18, which averages **1.41 ha** a year. This equates to a net growth of 0.13 ha per annum. The annual gross take-up rate is presented in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3 Take-Up of B-Class employment land in Wyre Forest District, 2005/05 - 2017/18



Source: WDFC / Lichfields Analysis

7.51 Table 7.9 presents the net annual take-up for the District by B-use class and projects this rate forward over the 20-year plan period. The data suggests that if past trends were to be replicated in future, this could justify the provision of around +2.52 ha (net) in Wyre Forest.

Table 7.9 Net Employment Space Requirements Based on Past Completions Trends, 2016-2036

		Annual Net Land Change (ha)	Total Net Land Requirements (2016-2036) (ha)
Wyre Forest	Offices (B1a/b)	0.16	3.20
	Industrial (B1c/B2)	-0.02	-0.47
	Warehousing (B8)	-0.01	-0.21
	Total	0.13	2.52

Source: WFDC / Lichfields Analysis

7.52 This approach assumes that past trends of development would continue unchanged, which may not fully reflect changes in the economy as it returns to growth. On the other hand, future development rates for industrial space may be lower than has been achieved historically as the sector rationalises and/or makes more efficient use of space. Clearly the recession and prolonged economic downturn and decline in carpet manufacturing had a significant effect on the development of B-Class space in Wyre Forest in recent years.

7.53 Nevertheless, the Experian modelling work demonstrates limited (and indeed negative for B1c, B2 and B8) prospects for growth for the B-class employment sectors.

7.54 In addition, all of the following suggest that past take up rates may not significantly increase in the future:

- 1 The move towards a more Business Services-orientated economy with significantly higher employment densities;
- 2 The continued restructuring of the traditional manufacturing economy with the potential for 'recycling' of older sites;
- 3 The Government's measures to facilitate the change of use from B1a office, B1c light industrial and B8 warehousing to residential without the need for planning permission;
- 4 The long-term impacts of the economic downturn and uncertainty surrounding Brexit;
- 5 The significant reduction in public sector spending available to deliver difficult brownfield sites; and,
- 6 The need to consider alternative uses for existing B-class sites (i.e. for waste and recycling).

7.55 On balance, for Wyre Forest, it is suggested that the 0.13 ha net annual past take up rate represents a valid figure going forward over the remainder of the plan period. This should be regularly monitored by WFDC Officers and amended as necessary.

Convert Net to Gross Floorspace Requirements

7.56 To convert the net requirement for employment space into a gross requirement (the amount of employment space or land to be allocated), an allowance is also typically made for some replacement of losses of existing employment space that may be developed for other, non- B-Class uses in future. This is a widely accepted approach in planning for future employment land needs.

7.57 A judgement was therefore made on the suitability and degree of the allowance for future losses which it would be appropriate to apply here based on the consultants' understanding of supply-

side deliverability factors in Wyre Forest and current trends in the market. Not all losses need necessarily to be replaced as some will reflect restructuring in the local economy as less space may be needed in some sectors in future. However, some replacement is needed to refresh the quality of the stock and to avoid the employment land supply continually declining.

- 7.58 There is an argument that not all such losses of employment land should necessarily be replaced or reflected in an increased gross land requirement. This would be on the basis that the stock of employment land in Wyre Forest contains some older sites less likely to meet future needs and is of a scale that reflects past industrial patterns, rather than the amounts of land needed in future.
- 7.59 However, against this argument is the likelihood that other sites may also be lost by 2036, and these will represent losses to the overall land portfolio, reducing choice within the market. The introduction of Permitted Development Rights streamlining ‘office to residential’ conversion may exacerbate losses over the long term. This was highlighted in discussions with commercial agents that suggested that there remains very limited demand for large office premises in the District – which is similar to the message in the previous 2016 ELR.
- 7.60 However, when analysing past rates of losses this has not yet been the case, with only 0.24 ha out of the 18.32 ha of losses observed over the period 2005/06 to 2017/18 related to losses of B1a/b office stock.
- 7.61 Whilst the rate of past losses in Wyre Forest (1.41 ha annually) covers a recessionary period, and since then the economy has largely recovered. This rate of losses is above the amount of employment land that WFDC identifies could be lost to residential uses in the future (1.18 ha).
- 7.62 On balance, it is considered that, given the uncertainties involved, it is prudent to plan for a replacement figure halfway between past losses (1.41 ha annually) and future losses (1.18 ha annually). Consequently, allowance has been made for the replacement of around **1.29 ha** of employment land annually in Wyre Forest, or 25.84 ha over the 20-year plan period. This should be monitored by WFDC over the coming years and adjusted as necessary.

Safety Margin

- 7.63 To estimate the overall requirement of employment space that should be planned for in allocating sites, and to allow some flexibility of provision, it is normal to add an allowance as a safety margin for factors such as delays in some sites coming forward for development. This margin is a contingency factor, providing a modest additional land buffer so that supply is not too tightly matched to estimated demand, and so that shortages of land do not arise if future demand turns out to be greater than the forecasts. Such flexibility is sensible given the uncertainties in the forecasting process and the scope for delays in developing employment space.⁴⁸
- 7.64 The former South-East England Planning Partnership Board [SEEPB] guidance on employment land assessments recommended an allowance that is equivalent to the average time for a site to gain planning permission and be developed, typically about two years. For Wyre Forest, the margin set out in Table 7.9 and the 1.29 ha annual loss replacement were added for B-Class uses, based on two years of average gross take-up and is considered to be an appropriate level relative to the estimated scale of the original requirement.

⁴⁸ This safety margin is separate from the consideration of vacancy rate.

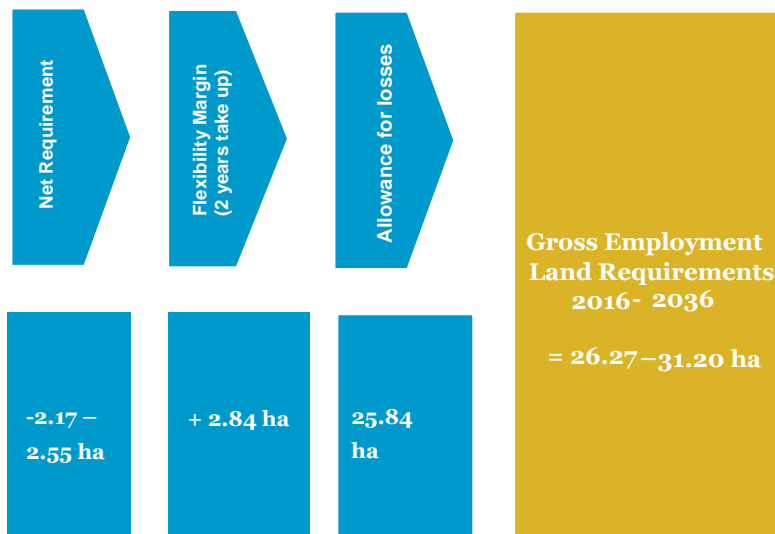
Table 7.10 Wyre Forest Safety Margin Allowances

Uses	Gross Average Annual Take-up (ha)	2-year Safety Margin Added 2016-2036
Offices (B1a/b)	0.20	0.40
Industrial (B1c/B2) & Warehousing (B8)	1.22	2.44
Total	1.42	2.84

Source: Lichfields Analysis

7.65 The model steps are summarised in Figure 7.4. The same steps described above to convert the net employment projections from net to gross (with a 2-year margin of choice) have been applied to the net historic take up figures described above for consistency.

Figure 7.4 Staged Approach to Employment Land Requirements (2016-2036)



7.66 In summary, the demand-led range of total gross land requirements to 2036, factoring in a 2-year margin of choice, results in the following demand projections for Wyre Forest:

- 1 Econometric demand led projections: 26.5 ha – 27.8 ha;
- 2 Labour Supply Projection: 26.3 ha – 28.5 ha; and,
- 3 Past Take Up: 31.2 ha.

Table 7.11 Wyre Forest Gross Employment Land Comparisons 2016-2036

		B1a/b	B1c/B2	B8	TOTAL
1) Experian Baseline	2016-2036 (net)	1.44	-1.36	-2.25	-2.17
	2016-2036 (gross)				17.69
	+ Flexibility factor				26.51
2) Experian Job Growth: Policy-On	2016-2036 (net)	2.73	-1.36	-2.25	-0.88
	2016-2036 (gross)				17.69
	+ Flexibility factor				27.80
3) SNPP-2016	2016-2036 (net)	1.40	-1.47	-2.34	-2.41
	2016-2036 (gross)				17.58
	+ Flexibility factor				26.27

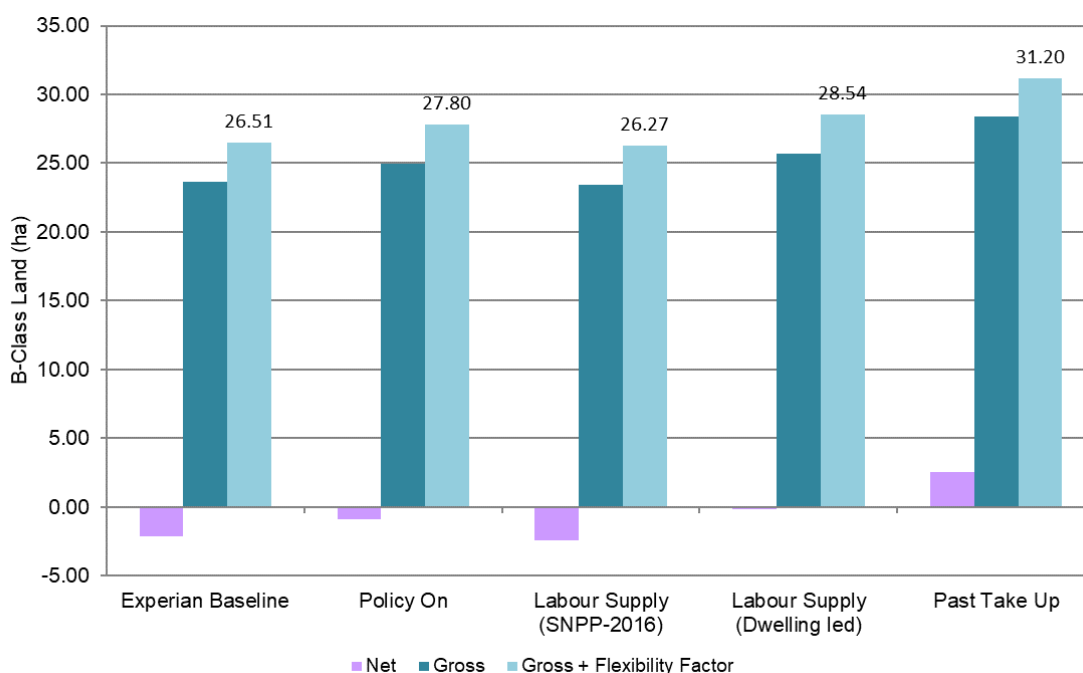
		B1a/b	B1c/B2	B8	TOTAL
4) Dwelling-led (HNF)	2016-2036 (net)	1.83	-0.45	-1.52	0.14
	2016-2036 (gross)				18.61
	+ Flexibility factor				28.54
5) Past Take Up Rates	2016-2036 (net)	0.16	-0.02	-0.01	0.126
	2016-2036 (gross)				28.36
	+ Flexibility factor				31.20

Source: Lichfields Analysis

7.67

The labour supply projections for Wyre Forest are illustrated alongside the econometric and past take up projections in Figure 7.5. The labour supply projections (scenarios 3 and 4) range from 26.27 to 28.54 ha (gross). This is comparable to the demand led scenarios 1 and 2 (Experian baseline and Policy On), which range from 26.51 to 27.80ha (gross). Scenario 5 (Past Take Up Rate), at 31.20 ha (gross) is higher than the other scenarios due to the net gain of employment completions over the past 12 years.

Figure 7.5 Comparison of scenario requirement for B-Class land 2016 to 2036



Source: Lichfields Analysis

Reality Check

7.68

Clearly the levels of future demand for B-use class land projected by the various projections differ. The projections are largely trend-based; in particular, the past take up has been (at least partly) recorded during an unprecedented recession in the commercial market nationally. It is likely that the actual performance of Wyre Forest's economy and commercial property market will lie somewhere between the econometric and past trends projections.

7.69

In order to provide a clearer steer as to what level of growth Wyre Forest should be planning for, it is important to apply reality checks.

Adjustments to Plot Ratios

- 7.70 The estimates of land requirements are clearly highly sensitive to the various assumptions used. The job / floorspace ratios and plot ratios adopted here reflect those in the former ODPM guidance⁴⁹. At present, it is assumed that the plot ratio⁵⁰ of 40% is generally applied to out-of-centre office space, industrial space and warehousing.
- 7.71 However, Wyre Forest is moving away from a more traditional industrial economy and towards an economy focused more towards the service sector (as can be seen by the priority sectors pursued by the LEPs that cover Wyre Forest) which tend to have higher plot densities. With the Framework's requirement for office space to be located in town centres rather than out of centre, this could point to plot densities increasing, rather than decreasing in future. On this basis, it is considered reasonable to assume that the majority of future development in the districts will be at plot ratios closer to 40% than 30%.

Adjustments to the Margin of Choice

- 7.72 A significant assumption in terms of sensitivity testing is the 2-year safety margin added. A 2-year margin of choice may ordinarily be seen as being reasonable, particularly in the light of uncertainties in the commercial property market and the need to provide market ready sites to prevent occupiers from moving beyond the authority areas when searching for appropriate sites. Hence an increased margin of choice would help to provide a balanced portfolio.
- 7.73 In summary, it is suggested that the approach taken in defining a two-year margin of choice remains valid.

Conclusions

- 7.74 This report has appraised a range of employment land projections for Wyre Forest using a variety of methodologies in accordance with the former Planning Practice guidance.
- 7.75 It is important to identify an appropriate level of need that achieves a balance between realism and economic and planning policy objectives. A range of factors have been considered within this report that can help to inform a judgment on the appropriate level of need, with the key issues set out below:
- 1 The Experian baseline scenario projects that there will be a modest loss in B-Class jobs between 2016 and 2036. In comparison, the demand-led Policy On scenario would generate more substantial increases in B-Class jobs due to economic restructuring and increased local demand for premises.
 - 2 There has been a small net annual gain of employment land each year between 2005/06 and 2017/18. If this trend continues then it would result in a negligible increase in the supply of employment land.
 - 3 There is a net outflow of 37,685 residents who commute out from Wyre Forest to work in other areas⁵¹. Wyre Forest has a lower job density ratio of 0.64 compared to the West Midlands average of 0.79 and neighbouring authorities (0.89 in Wychavon). Rebalancing the land uses of the District to ensure that more (and better quality) jobs are provided could help to reverse this trend and 'claw-back' out-commuters, reducing net out-commuting

⁴⁹ Employment Land Reviews Guidance Note, ODPM (2004)

⁵⁰ A plot ratio is the total building square footage (building area) divided by the site size square meterage (area of the plot). Therefore, a plot ratio of 150% would indicate that the total floor area of a building is 1.5 times the gross area of the plot on which it is constructed. For practical purposes, this would equate to a 3-storey building with fifty percent plot coverage, the remaining plot area being occupied, for example, by access roads, parking and landscaping.

⁵¹ ONS 2011 Census

rates. This is already a strategic target specified in the emerging Local Plan. This scenario generates a higher requirement for B-Class employment land compared to all the other scenarios.

- 4 Both of the labour supply scenarios indicate that the labour force (the number of economically active people of working age) is forecast to increase to 2036. On this basis between 26.27 and 28.54 ha (gross) could be required.

7.76

Consequently, on the basis of these considerations, it is recommended that Wyre Forest District's B-Class employment land OAN should be 29 ha up to 2036. This equates to the Labour Supply (Dwelling-Led) scenario, which aligns with the Council's housing OAN. It also sits broadly in the middle of a wider OAN range between Scenario 3 (SNPP-2016), at 26 ha at the lower end, and Scenario 5 (Past Take-Up Rates) at 31 ha at the upper end.

7.77

In terms of how the 29 ha employment land requirement for Wyre Forest District could be split between the B1a/b, B1c/B2 and B8 uses, it is not possible to directly translate the net split into gross requirements, as the data is not sufficiently robust to enable a precise breakdown of land lost/margin of choice by use type. The following quantitative and demand-based factors can be taken into account to understand the potential requirement for different B-Class employment space:

- 1 Historical changes to the stock of existing employment space show that the level and share of office space has increased by 44.5% in recent years to more than 80,000 sqm between 2000/01 to 2015/16, whilst the level of industrial space has decreased by 25.9% over the same period;
- 2 The decreasing stock of industrial premises in recent years is highlighted by vacancy rates for industrial premises being less than half that of office premises;
- 3 By 2036 approximately 33% of B-Class jobs are projected to be in the higher employment density B1 office space, compared to 67% in lower density industrial space (B1c, B2 and B8);
- 4 Enquiries for B-Class employment space show that the bulk of demand is for industrial space, although overall there has been considerable volatility in the numbers of enquiries recorded over the past ten years; and,
- 5 The prioritised sectors identified in the review of key growth drivers suggests that demand will be particularly focussed towards office-based sectors such as Creative & Digital and Business Services, although it is noted that industrial sectors such as Advanced Manufacturing are also targeted.

7.78

Taking the above factors into account, it is suggested that the following indicative split of B-Class employment space could be appropriate for Wyre Forest over the period 2016 to 2036:

- 1 14% for B1a/B1b office; and,
- 2 86% for B1c/B2/B8 industrial/distribution.

7.79

This study has only considered the demand for employment space and has not reviewed the supply. Whilst the key projects and sectors driving demand have been validated with economic development stakeholders, levels of market demand and qualitative issues regarding the stock of sites have not been tested with commercial agents.

7.80

WFDC should therefore seek to consult with commercial agents and review its supply of sites in order to test the likelihood of achieving the proposed distribution of B-Class employment space, and how this may be delivered over the plan period.

This report does not seek to make a planning or policy judgement; this is a matter for WFDC when taking account of the information before them. The report therefore represents a first stage for further consideration of all relevant factors through the Local Plan process.

On this basis, the recommended employment land requirement for WFDC is:

29ha ha between 2016 and 2036

Of this range, it is suggested that around 86% should be identified for B1c/B2/B8 industrial/warehousing, and the remaining 14% for new office space.

- 7.81 The selection of the final employment land requirement will depend upon the preferred level of employment growth for Wyre Forest and the extent to which Officers consider that this aligns with the Council's economic aspirations and housing targets, including the need to reduce net out commuting. The selection of the job target will be based upon the identification of policy aspirations relating to the promotion of key sectors in accordance with the economic and spatial vision for the area.

8.0 Demand / Supply Balance

Introduction

- 8.1 This section draws together the forecasts of future employment land needs in Section 7.0 and the estimates of land available on the area's existing and allocated employment sites in Section 6.0 to identify whether there is any need for additional employment space, or whether there is a surplus of it, in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

Quantitative Balance

- 8.2 Section 7.0 identified a need for 29 ha of employment space up to 2036, comprising of:
- B1c/B2/B8 – 25 ha (equivalent to 86%); and,
 - B1 Office– 4.0 ha (equivalent to 14%).

Pipeline Supply

- 8.3 The detailed site surveys discussed in Section 6.0 and Appendix 6 provide a snapshot of the current available employment land within the District. This section compares actual levels of available land with anticipated requirements to understand the extent to which new allocations may be required.
- 8.4 In terms of how the employment land requirements relate to the current employment land portfolio, various factors make any such quantitative analysis an inexact science. On the supply side of the equation the total amount of land available at any given point in time is indeterminate. The exact amount depends upon:
- 1 The size of private reserves (i.e. industrial land held with existing buildings for expansion). These are normally excluded from the analysis as they are not generally available for development;
 - 2 The number of windfall sites arising which are not presently allocated for employment uses, but which may become available for such uses in future; and,
 - 3 The number of further sites becoming available through the recycling of land currently in industrial use.
- 8.5 Bearing these points in mind, and as set out in Section 6.0, the detailed site surveys provide a snapshot of the current available employment land across the authority. This comprises:
- 1 Sites allocated for employment use in the Local Plan that are currently in employment use or remain undeveloped;
 - 2 Current employment sites not formally allocated in the Local Plan; and,
 - 3 Non-allocated sites are not currently part of Wyre Forest's allocated employment land supply but were assessed to determine whether they are suitable for such uses. These sites may not currently be employment sites or were suggested in the 'call for sites' process; and,
 - 4 Other sites with extant planning permission for B-Class uses.
- 8.6 The 2016 ELR stated that there was an existing employment floorspace supply of 23.55 ha (net), as set out Table 8.1 . At the time of writing, the current existing supply of employment space is 17.32 ha, which represents a decrease of 8 ha from before. The revised supply of employment land differs from the previous 2016 ELR due to:
- A number of sites have been developed since the previous 2016 ELR; and,

- WFDC has re-evaluated the employment floorspace of the British Sugar site.

Table 8.1 Existing Supply of Employment Land within Wyre Forest

Source	WFDC ELR Update (2018)
Previous ELR (2016) – Allocated Employment Sites	22.50
Previous ELR (2016) – Other Sites with Extant Planning Permission (not assessed as part of this ELR)	1.05
Total (Previous 2016 ELR)	23.55
ELR Update (2018) - Allocated Employment Sites	16.42
ELR Update (2018) - Non-Allocated Existing Employment Sites	0.90
Other Sites with Extant Planning Permission (not assessed as part of this ELR)	0.00
Total (ELR Update 2018)	17.32

Source: WFDC / Lichfields analysis

- 8.7 Table 8.2 sets out the 23 sites (both allocated and non-allocated existing employment sites as set out in Section 6.0) that have been appraised as part of this ELR Update Study.

Table 8.2 Reappraised Site Rankings

Site Score	Number of sites	Size (gross) (ha)	Size (net) (ha)
Very Good	4	34.91	6.54
Good	7	15.86	4.46
Average	10	78.21	1.18
Poor	2	5.87	0.36
Very Poor	0	0.00	0.00
Previous 2016 ELR	36	213.10	4.78
Total	59	347.95	17.32

Source: WFDC / Lichfields Analysis

- 8.8 This judgement is not based solely on the grade given to a particular site but is informed by a rounded consideration of factors set out in the previous Practice Guidance including:
- 1 The suitability of the site in accordance with the development plan, emerging plan policy and national policy;
 - 2 Market and industry requirements in the FEMA;
 - 3 Physical limitations or problems such as access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risk, hazardous risks, pollution or contamination (as far as is practicable given the limited scope of this ELR and based on the information provided to Lichfields by WFDC Officers);
 - 4 Potential impacts including the effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation;
 - 5 Appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed;
 - 6 Contribution to regeneration priority areas in Wyre Forest; and,
 - 7 Environmental/amenity impacts experienced by would be occupiers and neighbouring areas.
- 8.9 It should also be noted that the site assessments have not been informed by detailed site investigation work or site ownership information (other than where this has been provided by the client) and no detailed viability analysis has been undertaken.

- 8.10 A basic quantitative comparison of estimated demand for B Class space against the identified supply is presented in Table 8.3. When set against any of the demand forecasts, Wyre Forest has a quantitative undersupply of employment land available. The potential shortfall of employment space under the Labour Supply (Dwelling-led) Scenario (4) at -11ha.

Table 8.3 Demand / Supply of B-Class Employment Space in Wyre Forest (to 2036)

	Demand / Supply Balance (ELR Update 2018)
Requirement for B Class Space (ha)	29 ha
Remaining Supply of Employment Space (net) (ha)	17 ha
Surplus (+) / Shortfall (-) (ha)	-12ha

Source: WFDC / Lichfields Analysis

Qualitative Factors

- 8.11 Even where no quantitative shortfall of employment space is identified, in some circumstances additional land may be needed for qualitative reasons, in order to:
- a Improve the choice of provision for occupiers;
 - b Meet gaps in the supply of particular types of premises;
 - c Improve or modernise the quality of current provision and so help attract more occupiers; and/or,
 - d Provide a better spatial distribution of employment sites to meet the needs of different settlements.
- 8.12 Qualitative needs are considered for each broad property type below.

Industrial

- 8.13 Commercial agents commented that occupier sentiment for industrial accommodation across the District remains strong and is likely to continue to be so for the foreseeable future. As mentioned in the previous ELR, there is stronger demand for freehold premises driven by the low interest rates. Furthermore, rental values are generally stable and cheaper compared to neighbouring local authorities, with agents suggesting that speculative development is unlikely to dominate anytime soon. Vacancy levels have also been modest for some time (around 7-10%), preventing the churn, intensification and upgrading of existing sites that might otherwise be expected to take place within a normal market environment (i.e. in a District that faces few land constraints).
- 8.14 According to commercial agents much of the demand is for industrial accommodation across the District is primarily from local indigenous businesses. Many of these local businesses are interested in expanding into larger good quality premises. Despite a number of modern industrial units coming to the market in employment corridors such as Easter Park Industrial Park and Finpoint Business Park. However, much of the industrial properties are relatively old and deemed sometimes unsuitable for the needs of modern businesses.
- 8.15 From discussions with stakeholders, future supply of commercial space in the District should focus on industrial space up to 20,000 sf ft. It is also particularly important that smaller workshops and terraced units of 2,000 to 3,000 sq. ft. are provided to the needs of local SMEs.

Offices

- 8.16 Whilst Wyre Forest is not perceived by the market to be a prime office location (particularly in the context of nearby competing areas such as Birmingham), there is still a sizeable amount of office stock within the District. Whilst some of this is higher quality, recently renovated, office stock, much of it comprises older, poorly specified units, which tend to accommodate smaller, lower value businesses looking for affordable premises. Agents noted that office occupiers have become more discerning since the recession and now expect accommodation to be presented to a good standard.
- 8.17 In terms of the District's office market, agents considered that demand is greatest for smaller office units of up to 1,000 sq. ft. (93 sqm). Stakeholders noted that whilst the District has a reasonable selection of premises for start-up industrial firms to locate in (usually around 100-200 sqm in size) there is a severe lack of 'follow-on' or 'grow-on' spaces (which tend to be around 200-400 sqm in size) which cater to firms which have outgrown these incubator spaces.
- 8.18 Agents also underlined the significance that office occupiers attach to the availability of on-site car parking, and this is something which many central sites in Kidderminster (which houses the vast majority of offices within Wyre Forest) struggle to offer.

Addressing the shortfall

Potential Employment Sites

- 8.19 Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses conclude that there is a need for new employment land allocations in Wyre Forest. Ensuring an adequate choice of types of sites is vital if the needs of different employment sectors are to be met.
- 8.20 As requested by WFDC, Lichfields assessed a number of sites which are not currently allocated, do not benefit from extant planning permission for B-Class employment development and are not part of any committed employment site. These sites were recommendations by WFDC Officers and identified in the call for sites process or of particular interest. In total three such sites have been identified and assessed. These potential sites include areas currently in non-employment use (such as mixed-use allocations) and undeveloped land.
- 8.21 Additional three potential sites were assessed to determine their suitability for employment use; the findings from these assessments. These sites are not currently part of Wyre Forest's allocated employment land supply but were assessed to determine whether they are suitable for such uses. These three additional sites include:
- 1 Burlish Golfcourse Clubhouse – Ref.WF3;
 - 2 Land adjacent Easter Park, Worcester Road, Kidderminster – WF17; and,
 - 3 Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 2) – WF20.
- 8.22 WFDC may choose to allocate a quantity of employment land over and above the identified requirement. For instance, if it was felt that the previous lack of allocations and therefore employment developments has resulted in unmet, or spatially imbalanced, demand across the District. Together, these sources amount to an estimated net developable area of 10.23 ha. This is in addition to the identified supply of 17.32 ha net, taking into account the recommendations for de-allocations and release to other uses. The potential sites were assessed following the same criteria and approach as for the existing and new employment Sites. Whilst further details are included in individual site pro-formas in Appendix 6, the attributes of the three assessed potential sites are summarised below:

- 1 **Land adjacent Easter Park, Worcester Road, Kidderminster (Ref.WF17), 2.53 ha (gross) 2.28 ha (net), overall rating ‘Average’** - This site is situated within the Green Belt and is currently farmland adjacent to Easter Park employment site. This site was put forward as part of the call for sites process of the 2017 Local Plan Preferred Options consultation (reference FPH/27). The site should be allocated for employment use dependent on Green Belt release. The site would complement adjoining employment uses such as an extension to Easter Park which is a well-occupied business park with modern units. This would benefit from a prominent position fronting the A449 Worcester Road approximately two miles to the south of Kidderminster and opposite the established and popular Hoo Farm Industrial Estate.
- 2 **Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 2) (Ref. W19), 54.57 ha (gross) 7.7 ha (net), overall rating ‘Average’** – This site comprises three parcels of agricultural land (all owned by Homes England). It is important to note that development of this site would be subject to delivering better infrastructure to support a sustainable community with a mixture of uses. This site is considered to be appropriate for mixed uses (with an element of B-Class employment). After discussions with Homes England it is understood that they are amenable to providing 7 ha of B-Class employment land on the Lea Castle site.
- 3 **Burlish Golf Course Clubhouse (Ref. WF3) 1.05 ha (gross) 0.95 ha (net), overall rating ‘Average’** – This site is a former golf course situated to the south west of the Former Cermaspeed (Ref. WF4). Burlish Park Golf Club was hit with financial problems and liquidators moved in early 2017 and the facility closed, resulting in the loss of around 10 jobs. Since then the vacant buildings suffered from a fire outbreak in late 2017. The site is within a well-established employment area and sits within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park. Despite undertaking a desktop assessment of the site instead of a site survey – WFDC has recommended that this site be considered for potential employment uses in the future to complement the existing occupiers in the area.

8.23 Of the three assessed potential sites, all are recommended to be allocated for B-Class employment use or mixed-use development with a component of B-Class use, with a combined net developable area of between 10.23 ha. This is summarised in Table 8.4. These sites have been assessed in the same way as the supply of committed employment sites and against the same criteria.

Table 8.4 Potential Employment Space (net) in Wyre Forest

Source	Potential new Employment Space (ha) (net)
Sites delivered between 2016-2018	
Sites delivered between 2016-2018	3.91
Existing Supply of Employment Land	
New Employment Sites	0.90
Existing Employment Sites	16.42
Sites with extant planning permission	0.00
Sub-Total	17.32
Potential Future Supply of Employment Land	
Potential future employment sites	10.23
Sub-Total	10.23
Total	27.55

Source: Wyre Forest Council / Lichfields Analysis

Conclusions

8.24 The matrix at Appendix 5 identifies site-specific recommendations for the employment sites in Wyre Forest. These are summarised in Table 8.5.

Table 8.5 Resultant Portfolio of Employment Land (net) in Wyre Forest to 2016-2036

	Number of Sites	Net Developable Area (ha)
Sites Delivered between 2016-2018	7	3.91
Sites Delivered between 2016-2018	7	3.91
Current Employment Land Portfolio (sites assessed by Lichfields)	59	17.32
Retain current employment allocations and existing non-allocated employment sites	41	12.49
Retain / Allocate Mixed-Use allocation, with an element of B-class employment use	16	4.83
Recommend for de-allocation / alternative uses	2	0.00
Potential new sites recommended to be allocated for B-Class employment uses	2	3.23
Potential new sites recommended to be allocated for mixed use development with an element of B-Class employment	1	7.00
Adjusted Employment Land Portfolio	60	27.55

Source: WFDC / Lichfields Analysis

- 8.25 Section 8.0 identified that 29 ha of B-Class employment land is required over the 20-year plan period to 2036 for Wyre Forest District. The analysis recommends three new sites to be allocated. This means that a shortfall exists of just over 1ha.
- 8.26 In regard to new potential sites coming forward, at present commercial demand is almost entirely from indigenous businesses, with limited inward investment. This may change in future depending on the extent to which very significant levels of unmet needs in nearby Dudley/Stourbridge encourage occupiers/developers to look further afield.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 This report forms part of the evidence base to inform the WFDC’s emerging Local Plan. In line with the Framework and PPG, it addresses the requirement set out in paragraph 20 which states that plans and decisions should be based on up-to-date and locally specific evidence. The estimates of future B-Class employment land requirement provide WFDC with the objective evidence necessary for it to determine whether the emerging Local Plan target delivery needs to be revised.

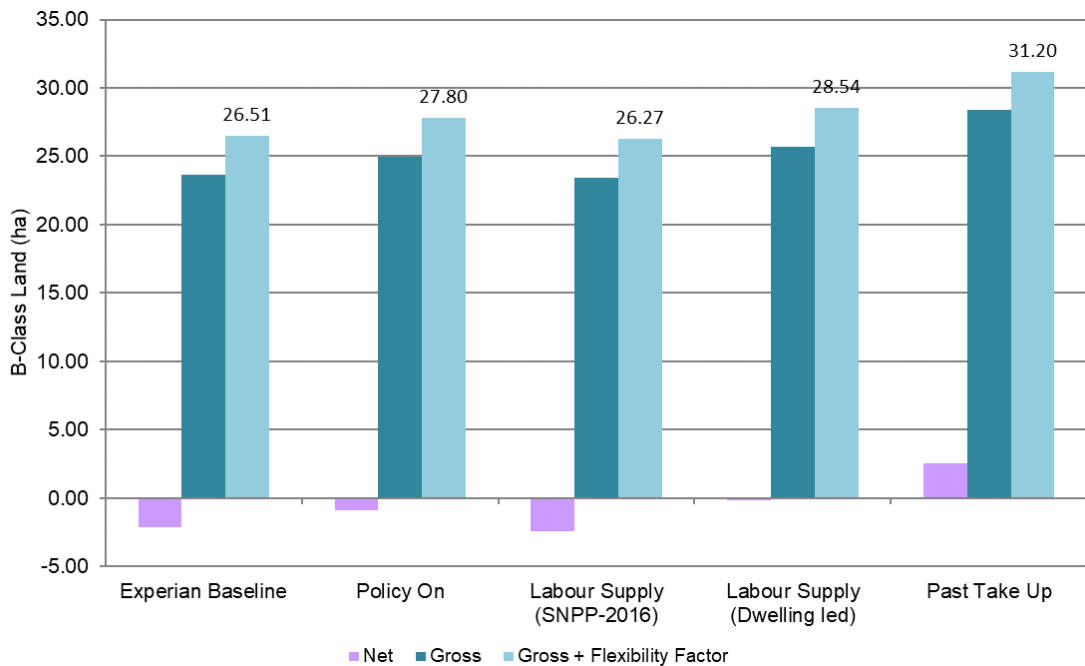
Demand / Supply Results

Demand

9.2 The previous 2016 ELR concluded that WFDC’s employment land OAN range was between 36.6 ha to 60.4 ha of employment land between 2016 and 2032. This was equivalent to the labour supply (254dpa) scenario at the lower end of the range, and the labour demand: Experian ‘Policy-On’ scenario at the top end.

9.3 We have since revisited the analysis using the latest Experian projections, new 2014-based household projections and up to date past take up/losses data. The results are summarised in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1 Wyre Forest Employment Land Projections (2016-2036)



9.4 The Experian Baseline scenario results in a gross employment land requirement of 27 ha, which is lower than the 37 ha previously suggested by the Experian Baseline projections in the 2016 ELR. The Past Take Up rate figure, at 32 ha, is similar to the 31 ha figure in the previous document. Aside from the different time period analysed (2016-2036 versus 2016-32 previously), there has been a slight increase in the rate of completions (1.49 ha per annum previously, compared to just 1.54 ha using the latest data) whilst projected losses have also reduced.

- 9.5 On this basis, we consider that the 37-60 ha OAN range identified previously is no longer robust. The new employment land OAN is **29 ha** based on the Labour Supply (Dwelling-led) scenario – which is broadly at the mid-point of the modelled scenarios (26 ha to 32ha). The recommended scenario may appear more conservative than previous analyses but should be seen in the context of an uncertain economy and low rates of net completions in recent years.
- 9.6 The analysis in Section 7.0 concluded that an indicative split of 14% for B1a/B1b office and 86% for B1c/B2/B8 industrial and warehousing would be appropriate for the District. This indicative split sought to provide for the current strong appetite for industrial stock.

Supply

- 9.7 A total of 23 Existing Employment Sites and New Employment Sites were re-assessed as part of this updated ELR Study. In addition, WFDC confirmed that the sites result for the remaining 36 sites (existing employment sites and new employment sites) that were not reappraised in this Study but were assessed in the previous 2016 ELR would remain the same. The recommended existing supply of employment land covers 347.95ha (gross) of land.
- 9.8 As set out in Section 6.0, the adjusted existing employment land portfolio amounts to a net developable figure of 17.32ha. Only two sites are recommended to be released from employment use: 3 Sandy Lane, Titton – Ref WF1 and Higgins Baler Ref.WF7.
- 9.9 In spatial terms, the majority of the District’s existing supply is located in the urbanised areas of the District such as Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley accommodating the next largest supply of employment space.
- 9.10 There is a particularly poor match between the available supply and the hotspots of demand, as Kidderminster - and South Kidderminster in particular - is the main focus for the B1c/B2 and particularly the B8 logistics demand, with high occupancy rates at present in some of the popular locations such Finepoint, Easter Park, Hoo Farm and Hoo Brook Industrial Estates.
- 9.11 WFDC’s existing employment land supply of 17.32 ha is insufficient to meet the estimated requirement of 29 ha over the Local Plan period to 2036. Consequently, three potential sites were assessed for their suitability to accommodate B-Class employment uses. All three sites are recommended to be allocated for B-Class employment use or mixed-use development with a component of B-Class use, with a combined net developable area of 10.23 ha. One of the sites, Lea Castle Hospital Phase 2, is expected to accommodate some significant employment B1 and potentially B2 needs, whilst the other sites are likely to appeal to a range of B2/B8 uses.
- 9.12 Taking into account the recommended gross employment land supply of 347.95 ha (with a net developable area of 17.32ha) and the recommended allocations of two new B-Class and one mixed use sites with a combined net developable area of 10.23 ha, the District has a recommended employment land portfolio of 27.55ha.

Policy Implications

- 9.13 To meet the future requirements for office and industrial space in Wyre Forest, it will be necessary for the Council to make choices about which employment sites to protect or allocate for employment development or which to bring forward as mixed-use schemes either in part or whole. These judgements need to consider:
- 1 the local benefits of B class employment sectors and the need to sustain a diversified and resilient economy that is able to capitalise on economic growth opportunities as they arise;
 - 2 the economic and market outcomes that would arise if particular sectors become displaced from the economy, or are otherwise constrained from expanding in the District;

- 3 the need to promote growth in high value employment roles / jobs that require a skilled worked force in Wyre Forest (and align with the Worcestershire LEP and GBSLEP Target Growth Sectors) and that meet the aspirations of resident workers; and,
- 4 the requirement to set targets for delivery of new B class employment space particularly on strategic sites to provide clarity and certainty for developers, which will require a practical assessment of what the market can deliver at any point in time.

- 9.14 For mixed-use allocations, masterplans and delivery strategies should be developed to help ensure that the indicative quantum of employment floorspace/land suggested is delivered in practice over the plan period. Without this additional clarity, these sites could present a higher risk in terms of their ability to meet business needs in Wyre Forest.
- 9.15 The future growth scenarios considered in this study indicate the broad scale and type of growth associated with different approaches to modelling employment space requirements for Wyre Forest over the period 2016 to 2036. To varying degrees, these scenarios reflect both the indigenous growth needs in Wyre Forest as well as a degree of footloose demand that operates within a wider sub-regional market. In the context of the Framework and the previous Planning Practice Guidance, the policy approach adopted by WFDC should aim to positively plan to support the employment needs of Wyre Forest so that the local economy is not unduly constrained over the plan period, but also recognises the issues around land supply and competing pressures on available development sites.
- 9.16 In order to ensure a flexible and responsive policy framework for the District, it will be necessary to not just concentrate on meeting the forecast quantitative requirements for office and industrial space in Wyre Forest, which will fluctuate over time, but to reflect on the opportunities and risks that flow from particular policy approaches. This could include how the delivery of B-class employment land can be prioritised in particular areas and for particular uses, or how scope can be created to deliver inward investment opportunities for Wyre Forest, in particular by drawing and capitalising upon the growth opportunities provided by the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park LDO and other, large, strategic sites with good access to the strategic road network. The Council should also consider the scope to which existing legacy estates and sites in the District are no longer productive for employment use and could be better placed to support non- B class employment uses in the future.
- 9.17 In this context, it is important that planning for B class employment growth in the District is balanced against pressures from other land uses. This is particularly relevant for Wyre Forest as the latest Experian projections suggest that the bulk of net employment growth over the next 20 years or so will be in non B-Class sectors, such as residential care & social work, retail and health. B class employment space also competes with a wide range of other non B-class uses (which fall outside of the remit of this study), much of which may also generate benefits to the Wyre Forest economy or have identified needs that the Framework indicates should also be duly supported.
- 9.18 The revised Framework supports the need to make provision for clusters or networks for higher value-added industries which are linked to the Worcestershire LEP and GBSLEPs' priority sectors (as identified in Section 3.0) and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and suitably accessible locations [§82]. This supports the case for WFDC needing to make future provision for industrial premises.
- 9.19 It is recommended that the Council should evidence how its portfolio of allocations and other development opportunities will support delivery of new space over the short, medium and long-term (structured broadly in five-year periods). This accords with the approach set out in the

former SEEPB guidance on employment land assessments which encouraged local authorities to demonstrate a five-year rolling supply of employment land.

9.20 The recommended OAN for employment land is 29 ha, is higher than the current supply of commitments (17.32 ha), potential new sites (10.23ha) and some existing, often poorer quality sites with available undeveloped/under-utilised land. To meet the future requirements for office and industrial space in Wyre Forest over the period to 2036 the Council will need to make choices in the emerging Local Plan about which employment sites to protect or allocate for employment or which to bring forward as mixed-use schemes either in part or whole. These judgements must ultimately take account of the following:

- 1 the local benefits of B class employment sectors and the need to sustain a diversified and resilient economy that is able to capitalise on economic growth opportunities as they arise;
- 2 the economic and market outcomes that would arise if particular sectors become displaced from the economy, or are otherwise constrained from expanding in the District;
- 3 the need to promote growth in higher value employment roles in Wyre Forest that meet the aspirations of resident workers and reduce levels of net-out commuting to Wychavon, Black Country, Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham and Sheffield, which can meet the Council's objective of maximising employment, skills and training opportunities;
- 4 The need to provide a flexible portfolio of sites that can respond quickly to currently unforeseen inward investment opportunities should they materialise; and,
- 5 the requirement to set targets for delivery of new B class employment space particularly on strategic sites to provide clarity and certainty for developers, which will require a practical assessment of what the market can deliver at any point in time.

9.21 The policy choices ultimately adopted by the Council should, as far as possible, seek to plan for a choice of employment sites and locations. This will support the various needs of particular businesses and sectors, for example ensuring that both large and smaller premises are provided to meet the needs of local SMEs and larger businesses.

9.22 Where any gaps are identified, the Council will want to consider options for how this can be addressed (potentially in the form of new allocations). It is helpful for sites to be assessed on a consistent basis in order to determine at broadly what point in the Plan period they may become available, and how important any individual site is for meeting either office or industrial needs within any rolling five-year period. It will also be important in establishing any potential mismatch between identified allocations and those areas of the District that attract the strongest levels of market demand.

9.23 In determining the likely timing and availability of land, this delivery trajectory should have regard to:

- 1 the planning status of sites (extant planning permission, allocation etc.);
- 2 development constraints/costs and known requirements for infrastructure (more detailed assessment work may be required);
- 3 current developer/landowner aspirations; and,
- 4 market delivery and viability factors.

9.24 The assessment provides the opportunity to identify and map out the Local Plan's 'when', 'whom' and 'how' employment space delivery actions for each site. In turn, it will also offer a basis to continually assess the potential role of a site in meeting employment land and other

Local Plan objectives (and, inter alia, the policy benefits that would accrue if earlier delivery of the site was encouraged). The trajectory should be linked to the annual monitoring process and periodically updated to ensure the rolling supply of employment land during the new Local Plan period.

Appendix 1 - Workshop Consultees

Name	Organisation
Adrian Becker	Worcester City Council
Andy Croot	Thomas Lister
Andy Plant	St Francis Group
Ben Horovitz	Worcester City Council
Chris Baker	Homes England
Chris Fletcher	Alton Nurseries
Daniel Atiyah	Wyre Forest District Council
David Holloway	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Helen Smith	Wyre Forest District Council
Helen Wills	Wyre Forest District Council
Helena Deville	Wood plc
Jane Berry	North Worcestershire EDR
John Andrews	Doolittle and Dalley
Jon Elmer	North Worcestershire EDR
Julian Tanser	Anglo House
Ken Wigfield	Federation of Small Businesses
Mark Martin	One Creative Environments
Matt Stanczyszyn	Bromsgrove & Redditch DC
Simon Hawley	Gemini Properties
Steve Singleton	North Worcestershire EDR

Appendix 2 – Site Assessment Criteria

Wyre Forest ELR Update

Employment Site Assessment Criteria

The proposed criteria for assessing the quality/condition of allocated and other existing sites reflecting the particular circumstances of the local authority area are set out below. These criteria mainly relate to the inherent value of a site rather than current conditions on it, although such characteristics would also be noted. Additional criteria would apply to undeveloped allocated/development sites although ownership and availability information may not be possible to obtain in many cases and a judgement may need to be made on these.

Scorings can reflect a combination of different factors applying to the same criteria and a balanced judgment has to be made on an appropriate overall score.

Strategic Road Access

For the purpose of this assessment strategic roads are defined as comprising the A-roads in the District.

Very Good = within 2 Km of usually free flowing strategic roads, via good unconstrained roads.

Very Poor = over 5 Km from strategic road junction/access, and/or through constrained/local roads, and/or through town centre or residential areas etc.

Local Accessibility

Very Good = local access: via free moving good roads avoiding residential areas/difficult junctions; unconstrained vehicle access to the site with good visibility/lack of queuing; close access to range of town centre public transport services.

Very Poor = difficult/narrow road access, via residential roads, difficult site access junction, congested local roads; low level/limited range/infrequent public transport services nearby

NB: this includes determining whether there is a bus stop or interchange within 400m of a site

Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services

Very Good = Within, or with good access to, a town centre/suitably large suburban centre offering a wide range of services; and also in close proximity to sizeable residential areas providing local labour supply

Very Poor = remote, isolated site, no local services or residential areas nearby

Compatibility of Adjoining Uses

Very Good = Within larger employment area/no incompatible surrounding land use

Average = B1 use adjoining residential/other sensitive uses

Poor - Very Poor = B2/B8 adjoining residential/other sensitive uses

Developmental and Environmental Constraints

Very Good = generally level site, regular shape, over 3 ha in size; low flood risk (Zone 1); no conservation or landscape constraints on scale of development; no adverse ground conditions or abnormal development costs; no other significant constraints on new development

Very Poor = sloping/uneven site; under 0.5 ha, irregular/narrow shape, other severe constraints; within flood risk Zone 3; conservation or landscape constraints on scale of development; adverse ground conditions or abnormal development costs

Market Attractiveness

Very Good = high profile/high quality appearance, managed site; good environment and quality of occupiers; under 10% vacant; viewed as attractive by agents/occupiers; recent investment/development activity, strong demand, units rarely available

Very Poor = run-down unattractive appearance/location; attracts lower end users and over 25% vacant space/buildings; vacant units not marketed; no recent investment; units remain vacant for lengthy period

Barriers to Delivery

Identify any factors that would constrain development of the site for employment uses e.g. site occupied, need for infrastructure and fragmented ownership

Planning Designations

Identify any planning designations or policy constraints that could affect development of the site for employment uses

Planning History

Identify any planning applications on or around the relevant sites.

Appendix 3 – Gross to Net Adjustments in ELRs

GROSS TO NET ADJUSTMENTS IN EMPLOYMENT LAND ASSESSMENTS

Take-up of employment land is typically recorded on a plot by plot basis, which equates to a net developable area. To be consistent, availability should be measured on the same basis. So for some sites, gross to net adjustments may be appropriate.

We have considered each site and estimated the proportion of land likely to be lost to servicing and landscaping, having regard to gross to net ratios achieved on industrial estates and business parks elsewhere in the region. Research by storeys:ssp has shown that ratios range from 100% where a site is in single occupation, to 56% for a business park on a sloping site with large areas set aside for landscaping and sloping banks between development plots.

Adjustments appropriate in different circumstances are set out below.

GROSS TO NET RATIOS ADJUSTMENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT LAND

Type	Ratio	Comment
Serviced plot on industrial estate fronting road.	100%	
Area of land that could easily subdivide into serviced plots with road frontage.	100%	
Large area of land on industrial estate too big for single scheme, having regard to other buildings on estate.	95%	Provision for spur road.
Major undeveloped part of industrial estate or extension to industrial estate.	90%	Provision for roads and landscaping to one or more sides.
Small local allocation, requiring infrastructure.	90%	Provision for spur road, but landscaping likely to be minimal.
Level site allocated for industrial estate.	85%	Provision for spur road and landscaping.
Site allocated for industrial estate where terracing or bunding required.	80%	Provision for spur road and landscaping.
Land allocated for business park with high landscape quality.	75%	Provision for spur road extensive landscaping, balancing ponds etc.
Land allocated for employment use where a single end user could be in the market.	100%	All land to be taken by single user, surplus areas to be kept for its expansion.

Appendix 4 – Site Assessment Matrix

Site Reference	Site Name	Strategic Road Access	Local Accessibility	Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	Compatibility with Adjoining Uses	Developmental and Environmental Constraints	Market Attractiveness	Overall Site Rating
WF1	3 Sandy Lane	Very Good	Average	Average	Good	Average	Poor	Average
WF2	Alton Nurseries	Very Good	Good	Poor	Good	Very Good	Good	Good
WF3	Burlish Golfcourse Clubhouse	Very Good	Good	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average
WF4	Ceramaspeed (former) Zortech Avenue, Kidderminster	Good	Very Good	Average	Average	Very Good	Good	Good
WF5	Cheapside Business Park	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Average	Average	Average	Average
WF6	Churchfields Business Park – Phase 3a	Very Good	Poor	Very Good	Average	Average	Average	Average
WF7	Churchfields Business Park – Phase 3b (Higgins Baler)	Very Good	Poor	Very Good	Average	Average	Poor	Average
WF8	Crossley Park, Kidderminster	Good	Average	Very Good	Average	Very Poor	Very Good	Good
WF9	Cursley Distribution Park, Shenstone	Good	Very Poor	Average	Average	Poor	Poor	Poor
WF10	Finepoint, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster (Oakleaf)	Very Good	Very Good	Average	Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
WF11	Finepoint, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster (Ratio Park Phase 2)	Very Good	Very Good	Average	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
WF12	Former British Sugar Site, Stourport Road, Kidderminster (Phase 1)	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Average	Poor	Very Good	Very Good
WF13	Former British Sugar Site, Stourport Road, Kidderminster (Phase 2)	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Average	Average	Very Good	Very Good
WF14	Frank Stone Building	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Poor	Poor	Average
WF15	Green Street	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Good	Poor	Average	Good
WF16	Land Adj SDF Stourport Road	Very Good	Good	Average	Average	Very Poor	Poor	Average
WF17	Land adjacent Easter Park, Worcester Road, Kidderminster	Very Good	Very Good	Average	Average	Poor	Average	Good
WF18	Land at Hoobrook IE, Silverwood Way	Very Good	Very Good	Average	Good	Poor	Good	Good
WF19	Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 1)	Good	Average	Poor	Average	Poor	Average	Average

Site Reference	Site Name	Strategic Road Access	Local Accessibility	Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	Compatibility with Adjoining Uses	Developmental and Environmental Constraints	Market Attractiveness	Overall Site Rating
WF20	Lea Castle Hospital Site (Phase 2)	Good	Average	Poor	Average	Poor	Average	Average
WF21	North of Wilden Industrial Estate	Average	Average	Poor	Poor	Average	Average	Average
WF22	Rock Works	Very Good	Average	Very Good	Average	Poor	Poor	Poor
WF23	Parson's Chain	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Average	Poor	Good	Good
WF24	VOSA Site	Very Good	Very Good	Average	Average	Good	Average	Good
WF25	Wilden Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport on Severn	Average	Average	Poor	Poor	Average	Average	Average
WF26	Worcester Road, Stourport	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Poor	Poor	Average	Average

Appendix 5 – Site Assessment Pro-Formas

REF WF1
3 Sandy Lane Titton



Gross Site Area:
0.32 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	The site comprises a residential property and undeveloped vacant land within its grounds (which was a former haulage yard) and is currently fenced off. The site is situated within the Sandy Lane Industrial Estate. The residential property appears to be in occupation. Currently the residential property forms around two-thirds of the site - whilst the former haulage site forms the remaining part of the site.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is approximately 300m from the A4025 (Worcester Road)	Very Good
Local Accessibility	No bus stops are located nearby; easy access via local/internal site roads to the strategic road network ensures that access for HGVs is adequate. The site can be accessed via Sandy Lane. The nearest bus stop is situated on the A4025.	Average
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	Located on the periphery of Stourport, and therefore has good access to the Stourport Town's labour force and services, although this is dependent on vehicular access.	Average
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bounded by Sandy Lane and industrial land to the north; a footpath and restaurant / residential properties to the east; a recycling / waste transfer station to the south and Lloyds Car Garage to the west.	Good
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	The site is predominantly undeveloped but has the potential for comprehensive redevelopment. The site's topography is generally level, and overgrown with vegetation. Due to a residential property being on the site this could limit the type of B-Class employment uses suitable for the site in future.	Average
Market Attractiveness	The site is situated adjacent to Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, which consists of predominately low value light industrial / warehousing uses. Sandy Lane Industrial Estate is a bustling industrial estate with only 17% of units currently vacant (29 of the 163 units). The existing residential property and vacant former haulyard on the site are in poor condition and in need of maintenance. Its loss would have limited impact on the supply of employment land in the District, despite this site forming a small part of Sandy Lane Industrial Estate.	Poor

REF WF1
3 Sandy Lane Titton

Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	There are no known barriers to delivery of the site. Given the size of the site, it is likely to be capable of being fully developed in 0 to 5 years.
Planning Designation	The site (part of Sandy Lane Industrial Estate) is currently allocated for employment use in Policy SAL.GPB1 of the adopted Wyre Forest Site and Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013). This site was also submitted via the Call for Sites (for residential purposes) as part of the Local Plan Preferred Options consultation in July 2017.
Planning History	There are no relevant planning applications to develop the site currently under consideration.
Overall Site Rating	Average
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The boundary of the employment site allocation for Sandy Lane Industrial Estate (Policy SAL.GPB1) should be revised to exclude this site which should be released for other alternative uses. Whilst the allocated employment use (Sandy Lane Industrial Estate) accommodates mostly average quality premises (a mix of units in need of maintenance and some relatively modern units), it is fully occupied by a number of local businesses and is an active location for employment use and therefore the boundary of the employment allocation should be revised.

Site Summary

The site comprises of an existing residential dwelling and a former haulage yard situated within Sandy Lane Industrial Estate. The former haulage yard is overgrown and in poor condition. The site is surrounded by employment uses and some residential to the east, with a public footpath running along the site boundary. Much of the site is hidden behind high hedging.

The site is part of the Sandy Lane Industrial Estate which is an allocated employment site within the adopted Wyre Forest Site and Allocations and Policies Local Plan. In addition, the site was submitted in the Council's 'Call for sites' for the emerging Local Plan for future residential use.

This site is accessible via Sandy Lane (off the A4025, Worcester Road), although the nearest bus stop is about a 1km away from the site and provides bus services to Stourport and Kidderminster. The site is approximately 1.5km from Stourport Town Centre, providing access to the local labour force, however this is mainly by vehicular access along the main road.

The Sandy Industrial Estate is a well-occupied industrial park with a vacancy rate of around 17%. However, this site is surrounded by sensitive uses with a residential property occupying two thirds of the site and surrounded by residential properties to the east.

It is recommended that the site be removed from the adopted employment allocation and redeveloped for a residential or mixed-use development. Therefore, the boundary of the employment allocation (Sandy Lane Industrial Estate – Policy SAL.GPB1) should be revised to exclude this site.

**REF WF2
Alton Nurseries**



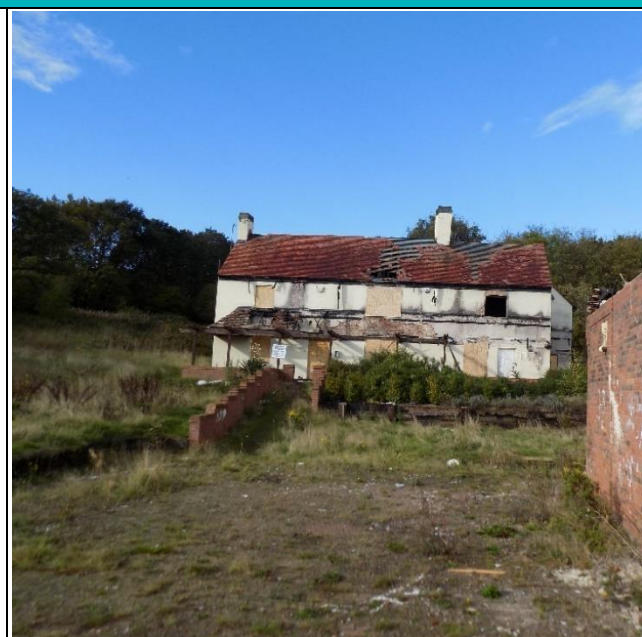
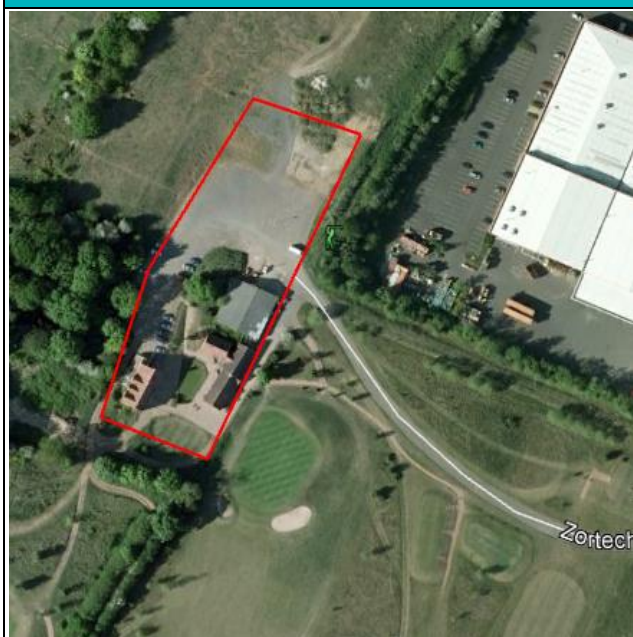
Gross Site Area:
0.95 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0.90 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	<p>The site is currently occupied by Alton Nurseries (consisting of abandoned glasshouses and ancillary buildings, which forms the bulk of the site); Cuttz4Muttz Grooming Parlour and Banbury Windows Ltd. Two residential properties are located to the south. The land adjacent and to the rear forms part of Bewdley Business Park.</p> <p>At the time of writing, Alton Nurseries had ceased trading at the premises and the buildings were vacant.</p>	
Strategic Road Access	The site has direct access to the A456 (Long Bank)	Very Good
Local Accessibility	The site is accessible via a sharp turn off the main road (A456). There is a bus stop close to the site (with services every 30 minutes), which provides regular public transport links to Bewdley and Kidderminster.	Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is located in a predominantly rural area which is relatively remote and isolated. It is located over 3km away from Bewdley and over 8km from Kidderminster.	Poor
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by commercial premises (Bewdley Business Park) to the north; green space is to the east, Long Bank (A456) and greenhouses to the south and commercial premises to the west (again, part of Bewdley Business Park).	Good
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	No identified development or environmental constraints	Very Good
Market Attractiveness	<p>The Alton Nurseries buildings have been vacated and are currently in need of repair. However, the other remaining employment buildings (within Bewdley Business Park) are relatively modern units and in good condition.</p> <p>The new commercial units (as part of Bewdley Business Park) to the north of the site have been occupied. Bewdley Business Park appears to be a well-occupied with a low vacancy rate. Any expansion of Bewdley Business Park would provide a good source of rural employment.</p>	Good
Barriers to Delivery	The buildings that were once occupied by Alton Nurseries are currently vacant. If the	

REF WF2 Alton Nurseries	
and Timescales	existing structures on the site were to be demolished and given the size of the site – it is likely that the site could be fully developed in 0 to 5 years.
Planning Designation	This site is currently unallocated for employment uses. However, the site (Ref. BR/RO/21) was assessed in WFDC's Housing And Economic Land Availability Assessment [HELAA] published in 2016.
Planning History	<p>The previous planning applications relate to the current employment uses on the site.</p> <p>However, there has a planning application for neighbouring sites (directly to the south of the site) which was approved in 2018 (ref. 18/0413/FULL) for the proposed development of four dwellings and creation of new vehicular access. Dependent on the decision this would affect the type of employment use potentially for the site.</p> <p>The site to the north of the site had been granted planning permission for additional units for Bewdley Business Park.</p>
Overall Site Rating	Good
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	It is therefore recommended that this site be designated as a mixed-use allocation with a B-Class employment element (preferably B1 office use) that is sensitive to the proposed residential properties to the south of the site.
Site Summary	
<p>This site currently accommodates disused small plant nursery (Alton Nurseries) and two businesses (); Cuttz4Muttz Grooming Parlour and Banbury Windows Ltd). The majority of the site contains glasshouses and ancillary buildings. The land adjacent and to the rear forms part of Bewdley Business Park where new units have been constructed. To the south of the site, there is a planning application that was approved for four dwellings.</p> <p>Whilst the site lies directly of A456, local access to the neighbouring business park is poor, with few signs directing drivers on the main road. A bus stop is located close to the site which provides frequent bus services (every 30-min service) to Bewdley and Kidderminster and there are car parking spaces available at the site. The site lies some way from the nearest Town Centre (Bewdley). No developmental or environmental constraints were identified.</p> <p>The newly constructed units on the neighbouring Bewdley Business Park (to the north of this site) consists of a mix of offices units with ancillary storage alongside good quality, modern workshops. These units at Bewdley Business Park provide a good source of employment for the District's rural population.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that this site be designated as a mixed-use allocation with a B-Class employment element. With B-Class space (preferably B1 office use) allocated to the northern part of the site – possibly as an extension to the existing units on Bewdley Business Park. Also, the southern section should be considered for residential properties.</p>	

**REF WF3
Burlish Golf Course Clubhouse**



Gross Site Area:
1.05 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0.95 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	<p>This site is a derelict former clubhouse that sits within the former Burlish golf course. The land is currently open land owned by WFDC. This site is within the Green Belt.</p> <p>WFDC took possession of the derelict golf clubhouse that had been subjected to repeated arson attacks since it closed in 2017. At the time of writing, the wider golf course area had become overgrown and in need of maintenance.</p>	
Strategic Road Access	The site is situated 500m from the A451 which provides accessibility to Kidderminster and Stourport.	Very Good
Local Accessibility	The site is situated in close proximity to the A451 which has high frequency service (every 20 mins) between Kidderminster and Stourport, via the A451. Bus stops are situated on Walter Nash Road West (leading directly off the A451).	Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is equidistant between Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn; good access to labour especially as residential properties are immediately adjacent to the site. However, Kidderminster and Stourport are around 2.5km away so there is poor access to local services/amenities.	Average
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is surrounded by open land as part of the former Golf Club. However, to the north of the site is the former Cermaspeed building and residential properties further north.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	<p>The site was previously developed albeit it is located within the Green Belt.</p> <p>There are no environmental constraints identified.</p>	Average
Market Attractiveness	<p>The site currently accommodates two burnt-out, derelict clubhouse buildings which may have to be cleared as part of any future redevelopment works.</p> <p>The site has a direct access (via Zortech Avenue) to Walter Nash Road and the A451, and is located immediately to the south west of an existing employment area. This site could be considered as a natural extension to the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park LDO area, immediately to</p>	Average

REF WF3 Burlish Golf Course Clubhouse	
	the north of the site.
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	The site is deliverable between 5 to 10 years dependent on release from the Green Belt designation.
Planning Designation	<p>This site is located on Green Belt land. It was not included in the Council's recent Green Belt Review.</p> <p>This site is currently owned by WFDC, who are exploring potential redevelopment opportunities for the site.</p>
Planning History	There are no recent planning applications to develop the site.
Overall Site Rating	Average
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	It is recommended that the Council includes this site in future Green Belt Reviews given that it has the potential to be a suitable B-Class employment site.
<p>This site is a derelict former clubhouse and sits within a former golf course owned by WFDC. The clubhouse is a previously developed site within the Green Belt. WFDC has taken possession of the wider derelict golf club since its closure in 2017.</p> <p>This site has direct access to the A451 (via Walter Nash Way and Zortech Avenue) which connects Kidderminster and Stourport. There is a bus stop along the A451 which connects the two settlements which is 500m away from the site. However, the sites access to services and amenities are poor.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Council includes this site in future Green Belt Reviews given that it has the potential to be a suitable B-Class employment site.</p>	

REF WF4
Ceramaspeed (former), Zortech Avenue



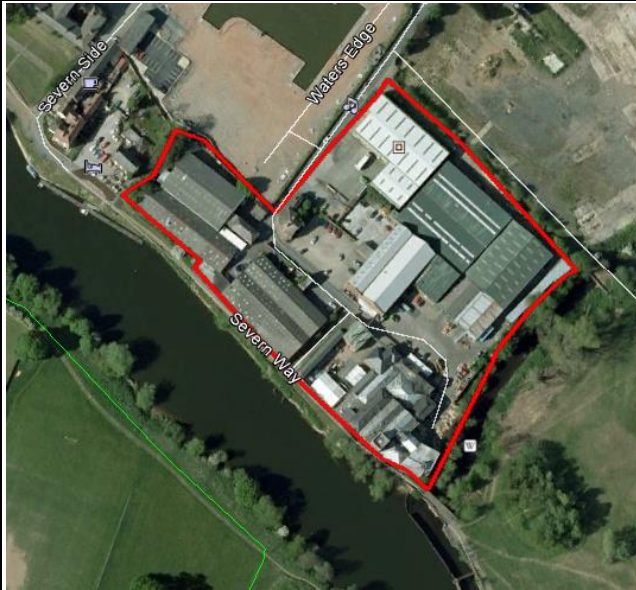
Gross Site Area:
3.25 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site is currently under construction involving the redevelopment of the former Ceramaspeed building, with the steel frame currently visible.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is approximately 500m from Stourbirdge Road (A451)	Good
Local Accessibility	The site is situated in close proximity to the A451 which has high frequency service (every 20 mins) between Kidderminster and Stourport, via the A451. Bus stops directly outside the site on Walter Nash Road West (leading directly off the A451).	Very Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is equidistant between Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn; good access to labour especially as residential properties are immediately adjacent to the site. However, Kidderminster and Stourport are around 2.5km away so there is poor access to local services/amenities.	Average
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is adjacent to a residential estate with a golf course to the rear (in Green Belt) to the south and west. A woodland to the north (Local Wildlife Site/Local Nature Reserve). The Continu Plus Academy and Finepoint Business Park are to the east.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	The relatively large site is level and no environmental constraints have been identified.	Very Good
Market Attractiveness	The site has extant planning permission for the redevelopment of the site to enable the existing roof height to be raised to make the building more suitable for future employment use. This work was underway at the time of the site visit. At the time of writing, the site is currently being marketed for employment uses to let or sell (for 130,800 sq. ft.) by commercial agents.	Good
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	There are no known barriers to delivery of the site. Given the size of the site, it is likely to be capable of being fully developed in 0 to 5 years.	
Planning Designation	The site is currently allocated for employment uses in the adopted Wyre Forest Site and Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013). It sits within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park and development at the site would be covered by the Local Development Order in place.	

REF WF4 Ceramasppeed (former), Zortech Avenue	
	The site was also brought forward through WFDC's 'Call for Sites' as part of their Local Plan Preferred Options consultation in July 2017.
Planning History	Full planning permission was granted in 2017 (ref. 16/0747/FULL) for the extension to part of new bay factory for B1(c), B2 and B8 uses
Overall Site Rating	Good
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The existing employment allocation should be retained. B-Class are considered to be most appropriate for the site.
Site Summary	
<p>This site is currently under construction after planning permission was granted for the use of B1(c), B2 and B8 uses – with the roof height of the existing building being raised to make the building more attractive for industrial users.</p> <p>This site was formerly home to Cermasppeed which used to make cermamic hobs for kitchen appliances. However, Cermasppeed closed and moved their operations to Poland resulting in the site being closed since 2008. This shows that the owner is actively promoting the site for B-Class employment uses. Whilst there is a residential area to the north of the site, it lies within an established industrial corridor. No environmental constraints were identified.</p> <p>This developed site, allocated for employment in the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan, has access to the A451 (via Walter Nash Road) which connects Kidderminster and Stourport, so access to the labour force is strong. There are bus stops along the A451 which connects the two settlements, although the access to services from the site is relatively poor.</p> <p>It is recommended that this site retains its designated employment allocation – in order to complement the existing employment uses within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park.</p>	

**REF. WF5
Cheapside Business Park**



Gross Site Area:
2.2 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	The site is currently in employment use and is occupied by a number of light industrial and ancillary offices. Cheapside Business Park is located at the end of Severn Road close to the Town Centre and to Stourport Basin overlooking both the River Stour and River Severn. The business park is in majority occupation with only a few vacant properties.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is approximately 400m from the A4025 (Worcester Road)	Very Good
Local Accessibility	The site is located near the centre of Stourport and is easily accessible from A4025 (which features bus stops near the site with regular services into Stourport and Kidderminster) via Discovery Road, although the A4025 can get congested at peak times. A recent new bridge over the River Stour provides good access directly off the Worcester Road (A4025).	Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is in close proximity to residential areas and has good access to the local labour force. It is located within walking distance to Stourport Town Centre. The site also benefits from good access to services/amenities (with a large Tesco supermarket immediately beside the site).	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by Discovery Road to the north; green space to the east; the River Severn to the south and residential properties to the east.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	Part of the site lies within a Conservation Area. The River Severn lies to the south west of the site, which is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3.	Average
Market Attractiveness	The site is occupied by light industrial units and ancillary offices. Current occupiers of the business units are on short-term leases which were identified through the WDFC's Housing Employment Land Availability Assessment [HELAA]. A few the buildings appear to be outdated and in need of repair/general maintenance. These buildings also appear to be vacant. At the time of writing, this site was being marketed for sale (by First City) with the potential for a residential-led development of up to 228	Average

**REF. WF5
Cheapside Business Park**

	<p>dwelling including some conversion. A design brief was published in First City in conjunction with WFDC to prepare a mixed-use masterplan with supporting opportunities and constraints appraisal.</p> <p>Due to the central, and prominent, location of the site it is an attractive location for mixed-use developments.</p>	
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	This site is currently in existing use.	
Planning Designation	The site is currently allocated for mixed use development in Policy SAL.EA2 of the adopted Wyre Forest Site and Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013).	
Planning History	The previous planning applications relate to the current uses on the site.	
Overall Site Rating	Average	
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	Retain the existing mixed-use allocation with an element of employment use to protect existing B-Class employment. It is important that future proposals complement the existing residential properties to the east of the site.	
Site Summary		
<p>This site occupies the old Vinger Works which is locally listed. There is also a fire damaged listed building on the site. Land to the north west of at Lichfield Basin has been redeveloped for housing and the cleared site to the north east has permission for a residential development.</p> <p>The site is located within close proximity to Stourport-on-Severn Town Centre and is occupied by a mixture of relatively low-quality light industrial units and ancillary offices. Cheapside Business Park is wholly allocated in the adopted Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan for mixed use (residential and employment).</p> <p>Cheapside Business Park is located at the end of Severn Road close to the Town Centre and to Stourport Basin overlooking both the River Stour and River Severn. A recent new bridge over the River Stour provides good access directly off the Worcester Road (A4025).</p> <p>The surrounding area is, and continues to be, subject to extensive regeneration. The site comprises a variety of different warehouse and industrial buildings together with offices. Much of the Business Park is currently occupied by existing businesses, whilst there is some accommodation available to let. In addition to the warehouse and industrial buildings, there is also office accommodation available. The site has a number of properties that are in need of maintenance.</p> <p>One of the main issues affecting the site is flooding. The southern part of the site, located nearest to the River Severn lies within Flood Zone 3. The remainder of the site is predominantly affected by Flood Zone 2. Therefore, any redevelopment proposals will need to ensure that flood risk is mitigated.</p> <p>It is recommended that this site retains its existing mixed-use allocation (with an element of B-Class employment). Despite the site being marketed for a residential-led development, retaining an element of employment on the site would protect existing businesses.</p>		

REF WF6
Churchfields Business Park (Phase 3a)



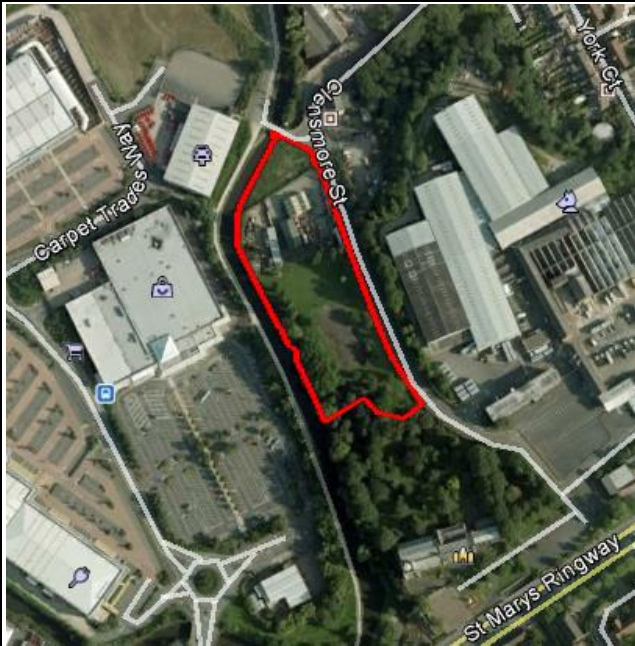
Gross Site Area:
7.09 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	The site comprises a number of buildings including some locally listed buildings and others that require repair. Only a small number of businesses remain, all of which are on short term business tenancies according to the WFDC's Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment [HELAA]. These companies include an electrical company and a Super Hand Car Wash.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is approximately 500m to the north of A456 (St Mary's Ring Road) /A451 (Stourbridge Road).	Very Good
Local Accessibility	The site is near to the centre of Kidderminster with good access to a number of facilities. However, the surrounding area suffers from significant traffic congestion at peak times and there are also air quality issues in Horsefair ward (where the site is situated). Bus stops are located on the A451 (Stourbridge Road).	Poor
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is located on the edge of, and is within walking distance to, Kidderminster Town Centre and has good access to the services and amenities therein. The site is in close proximity to established residential areas and therefore has excellent access to the local labour force.	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by residential properties and Clenmere Street to the north and west; Broad Street and residential areas to the east and Churchfields to the south.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	This is a large site that consists of a number of locally listed buildings. No environmental constraints have been identified. There are a number of issues with the site topography which includes a substantial drop in level to the north	Average
Market Attractiveness	Due to the site's central location, it would appear to be attractive for redevelopment should the last remaining tenants vacate. A number of the buildings are in poor condition and it is located in a predominately residential location. This site may be more suited towards a mixed-use redevelopment. Due to the congestion issues, additional infrastructure investment with a potential link road would be required.	Average

REF WF6 Churchfields Business Park (Phase 3a)	
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	There are no known barriers to delivery of the site. Given the size of the site it is likely to be capable of being fully developed in 0 to 5 years.
Planning Designation	The Churchfields Business Park site is allocated for mixed use in Policy KCA.CH5 of the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (AAP) and is expected to include: dwelling homes (C3); offices and workshops (B1); non-residential institutions (D1); small scale retail (A1-A3) and Hotel (C1)
Planning History	<p>An outline planning application (18/0285/OUTL) was submitted in 2018 for the development of up to 240 dwellings including the conversion of the 1902 building, creation of up to 670 sqm of mixed-use floor space, new points of access, open space and associated works.</p> <p>An outline planning application (ref: 15/0514/OUTL) was submitted in 2015 for the redevelopment of the Churchfields Business Park. This planning application includes the redevelopment of the site to construct approximately 95 residential dwellings, including conversion of one existing building to create 16 flats, along with approximately 669 sqm of (B1) office space</p>
Overall Site Rating	Average
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The mixed-use allocation should be retained. Employment uses would be suitable for the site to enable a sustainable community that includes both elements of residential and employment use.
Site Summary	
<p>This large site is allocated in the adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan for mixed use. It is also part of the wider Churchfield Masterplan which is located to the north of Kidderminster Town Centre which was highlighted as an important mixed-use regeneration site.</p> <p>The site is within walking distance to Kidderminster town centre and the train station, and is bordered by retail units to the west, residential to the north (bordered by trees), east and the south of the site. The site therefore has very strong access to labour and services. The site benefits from strategic road access and bus stops, although the local road network suffers from high levels of congestion. Vacant units (which appear very dated) on the business park were observed during the site visit.</p> <p>A planning application was submitted for the redevelopment of the site to to create up to 240 dwellings including the conversion of the 1902 building, creation of up to 670 sqm of mixed use floor space, new points of access, open space and associated works.. The majority of firms have vacated the buildings on the Churchfields Business Park, indicating that companies are winding down their operations on the site.</p> <p>It is recommended that the current mixed-use allocation for this site should be retained with an element of modest B1 office provision as per the planning application.</p>	

REF WF7
Churchfields Business Park – Phase 3b (Higgins Baler)



Gross Site Area:
1.16 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site consists of small industrial units (occupied by Higgins Balers), a former basketball court and open space. The majority of this site is owned by Wyre Forest District Council.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is approximately 500m to the north of the A456 (St Mary's Ring Road) /A451 (Stourbridge Road).	Very Good
Local Accessibility	The site is near to the centre of Kidderminster with good access to a number of facilities. However, the surrounding area suffers from significant traffic congestion at peak times and there are also air quality issues in Horsefair ward (where the site is situated). Bus stops are located on the A451 (Stourbridge Road) – this is not in walking distance but provides bus services to Kidderminster Town Centre	Poor
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is located on the edge of, and is within walking distance to, Kidderminster Town Centre and has good access to the services and amenities therein. The site is in close proximity to established residential areas and therefore has excellent access to the local labour force.	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by River Stour to the north and west, residential properties to the north east, Clensmore Street / Churchfields Business Park to the east and St Mary's Church to the south.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	The site sits within the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area and is near the Grade I listed St Mary and All Saints Church to south of site boundary. No other environmental constraints have been identified.	Average
Market Attractiveness	The majority of the site is under WFDC ownership. Redevelopment is being considered for the site which would include residential (C3) and retail (A3) uses. The Higgins Baler portion of the site appears relatively dated and comprises of low-quality units. Furthermore, the site is primarily used as an outdoor industrial storage and has poor kerb appeal.	Poor
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	There are no known barriers to the delivery of the site. Given the size of the site, it is likely to be capable of being fully developed in 5 to 10 years.	

REF WF7
Churchfields Business Park – Phase 3b (Higgins Baler)

Planning Designation	This site (as part of Churchfields Business Park) is allocated in Policy KCA.CH6 of the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (AAP). The allocation makes provision for dwelling houses (C3) and retail (A3).
Planning History	The previous planning applications relate to employment uses on the site.
Overall Site Rating	Average
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	It is recommended that this site should not be allocated as an employment site but should be released for other alternative uses such as residential / retail as set out in Policy KCA.CH6.

Site Summary

This site consists of small industrial units (occupied by Higgins Balers), a former basketball court and open space. The majority of the site is under the ownership of WFDC and the northern part of the site is owned by Higgins Baler. The site is also adjacent River Stour and St Marys' Church.

The site is allocated for a mix of residential and some small scale A3 uses in the adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (2013) and Churchfields Masterplan SPD. This site is in close proximity to Kidderminster Town Centre and has very good access to labour and services. Furthermore, the site benefits from strategic road access and bus stops, although there are notable traffic congestion issues.

It is evident that the site is in a dilapidated condition and consists of low quality industrial units with poor kerb appeal. It is recommended that the site should follow Policy KCA.CH6 and be released for alternative uses (such as residential and retail) rather than future employment use.

**REF WF8
Crossley Park**



Gross Site Area:
2.64 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
1.86 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site consists of an open land and a Royal Mail Sorting Office. Part of the site (north of the Royal Mail Sorting Office) is owned by Wyre Forest District Council.	
Strategic Road Access	This site is approximately 600m to the A456 (St Mary's Ringway) / A451 (Stourbridge Road).	Good
Local Accessibility	The site is near the centre of Kidderminster with good access to several facilities. However, the site's wider area suffers from traffic congestion and air quality issues in Horsefair ward (where the site is situated). Also, the site can only be accessed from Carpet Trades Way which is also the access point for Crossley Retail Park.	Average
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is located on the edge of Kidderminster Town Centre. The site is in close proximity to residential areas providing good access to labour and is within walking distance to Kidderminster Town Centre. providing good access to services/amenities.	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by open land (Puxton Marshes SSSI) to the north, Crossley Retail Park to the south, residential properties to the east and River Severn to the east and west.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	The site lies adjacent to the River Stour and most of the site is in Flood Zone 3. There are flood alleviation measures currently in place. However, improvement works will be required to alleviate traffic congestion between Carpet Trades Way junction and St Mary's Ring Road. Due to the irregular shape of the site – there may be topology issues. In addition, Puxton Marshes SSSI to the north of the site – which could restrict certain developments in the future.	Very Poor
Market Attractiveness	The site is within Phase 4 of the Churchfields Masterplan which proposes that Crossley Park will be important in facilitating the proposed new bridge link to Churchfields. Due to the site being situated close to Kidderminster Central – this site would be attractive due to close proximity to labour and amenities.	Very Good
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	The site is partly developed and in existing use (Royal Mail) – the vacant open land could be delivered in 0 to 5 years.	
Planning Designation	This site is allocated for office development (B1) in the Policy KCA.Ch7 in the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan and within the Churchfields Masterplan SPD.	
Planning History	The previous planning applications relate to the employment uses on the site.	

REF WF8 Crossley Park	
Overall Site Rating	Good
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The employment use should be retained to protect the existing uses (Royal Mail) and encourage other B-Class uses to come forward preferably B1 office uses.
Site Summary	
<p>This mostly undeveloped site and accommodates a Royal Mail Depot and is allocated for office development in the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan¹ and is part of phase 4 of the wider Churchfield masterplan². The site has very good access to the strategic road network, lying around 0.6km from the A456, and whilst there are bus stops outside of the retail park which lies to the south west of the site, the only access to the site is via Carpets Trades Way both share the same access road, and so it the site would be likely to suffer congestion if it was developed upon.</p> <p>The site suffers from a number of environmental and developmental constraints, namely around a third of the site is in use as a royal mail site, and the remainder has in an unusual shape (which would limit its net developable area). The site contains bushes and trees and has a path running leading from the woods to the north through the site.</p> <p>In terms of incompatible uses the site is close to residential uses to the east and west of the site (although this is buffered by a car garage to the east of the site and Churchfields Business Park [Ref: 7a] to the west). Because it is within walking distance to Kidderminster town centre the site has excellent access to labour and local services/amenities, with a supermarket and other shops beside the site.</p> <p>This site should retain its employment allocation to encourage an element of B-Class employment uses.</p>	

¹ KCA.Ch7

² For further details please see the Churchfields Masterplan SPD (Adopted 2011), available online: <http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/media/105872/Churchfields-Master-Plan-FINAL-reduced-Adoption-.pdf>

**Ref WF9
Cursley Distribution Park, Curslow Lane**



Gross Site Area:
9.98 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This former MoD site is currently occupied by B8 storage and distribution units and ancillary office. It has not been formally allocated for employment use.	
Strategic Road Access	This site is approximately 1 km from the A442 (Kidderminster Road) via Curslow Lane.	Good
Local Accessibility	This site can be accessed from Curslow Lane which is a narrow road that is not ideal for frequent HGV usage. There are no bus stops near the site.	Very Poor
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is situated in a remote rural location and services / amenities are in short supply. However, the site provides a good source of employment for the District's rural population.	Average
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by two residential properties to the north, with farmland beyond.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	The site sits within the Green Belt which could be a constraint on future expansion.	Poor
Market Attractiveness	<p>The site is partly occupied by a range of local users such as White Foot Forward, Savilles Garage and Tigertuf (UK), which are predominately in low / average quality premises. Whilst some of the premises appear well maintained – the majority of premises appear to be outdated.</p> <p>At the time of writing, Unit 1 (58,061 sq. ft.) was being marketed to let – 6 out of 15 units were vacant at the site. However, the site still provides a good source of employment for the District's rural population.</p> <p>It is understood that the owner of Cursley Distribution Park may be considering releasing some of the site for housing and redevelop other areas of the site for new employment uses.</p>	Poor
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	The site is fully developed and partly occupied.	
Planning Designation	This site is not formally allocated for employment uses.	

Ref WF9 Cursley Distribution Park, Curslow Lane	
Planning History	Previous planning applications relate to the existing employment uses.
Overall Site Rating	Poor
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The site should be allocated for B-Class employment uses to protect the current occupiers - as this site is a good source of employment for the District's rural population.
Site Summary	
<p>This site is currently in use for employment purposes but not formally allocated for such uses within the Local Plan, lies within the Green Belt and is in close proximity to Rushock Trading Estate. Both of these sites are former military sites. Neither are particularly sustainable sites, as they are situated some distance away from the main towns and amenities in the District. Nevertheless, commercial property agents highlighted that it serves as a good source of employment for the District's rural population. The site is characterised by dated logistics/storage sheds, and the local accessibility is very poor due to the narrow country lane leading to the site off the A road.</p> <p>Around 40% of the site is vacant, which is likely to be partly due to the poor market attractiveness of the site (with its peripheral location and lack of 'kerb appeal'). On balance, given the number of occupants still on the site and its importance in producing employment for local rural residents it is recommended that the site be retained for employment purposes. The owner is considering releasing some elements of the site for housing and redevelop other areas for new employment uses. Importantly, this site should be monitored closely and if some of the units remain vacant for a prolonged period and not restored, an alternative use could be considered such as residential.</p> <p>It is recommended that this site is allocated that the site be retained for employment purposes. Despite there being proposals to allocate some of the site for alternative uses.</p>	

REF WF10
Finepoint, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster
(Oakleaf)



Gross Site Area:
1.04 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
1.04 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	<p>The site comprises an undeveloped vacant land which is owned by Oakleaf Commercial Services and adjoins the company's existing premises. This site is intended to accommodate office premises for Oakleaf Commercial Services.</p> <p>This site is situated within Finepoint Business Park, a modern and popular business park that has a high level of occupancy.</p>	
Strategic Road Access	The site is approximately 250m from the A451 (Minster Road) and can be directly accessed via Walter Nash Road.	Very Good
Local Accessibility	The site is serviced by high frequency bus services (every 20 mins) between Kidderminster and Stourport, located on the A451. Bus stops are located directly outside the site, on Walter Nash Road West (leading directly off the A451).	Very Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	This site is equidistant between the urban areas of Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn with a good access to labour. However, there is poor local access to shops and services/amenities which are not in the immediate vicinity.	Average
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is adjacent to an education facility (Continu Plus Academy) to the north, a commercial building (Oakleaf Commercial Services) and Finepoint Way to the east, Zortech Avenue to the west and sports pitches and golf driving range to the south.	Good
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	No environmental constraints have been identified, and the topography of the site is level. There is limited expansion land available due to the close proximity of existing buildings and infrastructure.	Very Good
Market Attractiveness	This site is located in an established and accessible business / industrial area with modern high-quality units. Only 1 unit appears to be vacant within Finepoint Business Park. This site would be an attractive location for a suitable development and is highly visible from the adjacent A451.	Very Good
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	There are no known barriers to the delivery of the site. Given the size of the site, it is likely to be capable of being fully developed in 0 to 5 years.	
Planning Designation	The site is currently allocated for employment uses in the adopted Wyre Forest Site and Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013). It also sits within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park and development at the site would be covered by the	

**REF WF10
Finepoint, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster
(Oakleaf)**

	Local Development Order [LDO] in place.
Planning History	<p>Planning permission was granted (14/3058/PNLDO) by the South Kidderminster LDO for the construction of Industrial Unit (Class B2) and separate office building (Class B1a) and associated works.</p> <p>Planning permission was granted for (ref. 18/0398/FULL) in 2018 for the temporary approval for the siting of a modular two bedroom / 2 storey demonstration show home (Not for residential Occupation) for a period of two years.</p>
Overall Site Rating	Very Good
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	Retain existing employment designation. B-Class uses are considered appropriate for this site.

Site Summary

This site is situated within Oakleaf Commercial Ltd's premises on Finepoint Business Park, which is an established modern business / industrial location. The site currently has planning permission in place through the South Kidderminster LDO to construct a separate office building (Class B1a) on the site. However, in the meantime OakLeaf have been granted a temporary planning permission to erect a modular demonstration show home.

The site is serviced by a high-frequency bus service between Kidderminster and Stourport via the A451. The surrounding area is predominately modern commercial buildings. The site is roughly equidistant from Kidderminster and Stourport and access to labour is good although there are few services and amenities nearby. No environmental constraints were identified.

It is recommended that this site retains its designated employment allocation – in order to complement the existing employment uses nearby at Finepoint Business Park.

REFWF11
Finepoint, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster
(Ratio Park Phase 2)



Gross Site Area:
0.69 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0.69 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	The site is an undeveloped vacant land that comprises Phase 2 of the Ratio Park development. Ratio Park Phase 1 neighbours the site and is completed and partly occupied. The site is situated adjacent to Finepoint Business Park, a modern and popular business park that has a high level of occupancy.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is approximately 400m from the A451 (Minster Road) and can be directly accessed via Walter Nash Road.	Very Good
Local Accessibility	The site is serviced by high frequency bus services (every 20 mins) between Kidderminster and Stourport, located on the A451. Bus stops are directly outside the site, on Walter Nash Road West (leading directly off the A451).	Very Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	Equidistant between the urban areas of Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn with a good access to labour. However, there is poor local access to shops and services/amenities which are not in the immediate vicinity.	Average
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by Finepoint Way and the new Council Offices to the north, Stourport Road (A451) to the east, a golf driving range to the south and employment uses to the west.	Very Good
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	The site is flat and has no identified development or environmental constraints evident.	Very Good
Market Attractiveness	This site is located in an established and accessible commercial area featuring modern units. Only 1 unit appears to be vacant. This site would be an attractive location for a suitable development and is highly visible from the adjacent A451.	Very Good
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	There are no known barriers to delivery of the site. Given the size of the site, it is likely to be capable of being fully developed in 0 to 5 years.	
Planning Designation	The site is currently allocated for employment uses in the adopted Wyre Forest Site and Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013). It sits within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park and development at the site would be covered by the Local	

**REFWF11
Finepoint, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster
(Ratio Park Phase 2)**

	Development Order in place.
Planning History	Planning permission was granted in 2016 (ref. 16/0098/PNLDO) for the erection of 22 dual class use B1(c) & B8 units with ancillary external works, landscaping and external lighting across the wider area within which Ratio Park Phase 2 sits. In total, 11 units have been constructed (as part of Ratio Park Phase 1) and this is one of the few sites that remains to be built out within Ratio Park and Finepoint Business Park.
Overall Site Rating	Very Good
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The existing B-class employment allocation should be retained in line with the extant planning permission for this site.

Site Summary

This site is situated is located adjacent to Finepoint Business Park (comprising a mix of commercial and office buildings, with surrounding occupiers including Wyre Forest District Council, Movianto and Specsavers) and Ratio Park Phase 1 which are established modern business / industrial parks.

This site currently has extant planning permission through the South Kidderminster LDO to construct 22 B1(c) & B8 units as Phase 2 of the Ratio Park development. The site is serviced by a high-frequency bus service between Kidderminster and Stourport via the A451. It lies within an established industrial area, and because it is roughly equidistant from Kidderminster and Stourport access to labour is strong although there are few services and amenities nearby. No environmental constraints have been identified.

It is recommended that this site retains its designated employment allocation – in order to complement the existing employment uses nearby at Finepoint Business Park and Ratio Park Phase 1.

REF WF12
Former British Sugar Site
(Silverwoods - Phase 1)



Gross Site Area:
1.84 ha

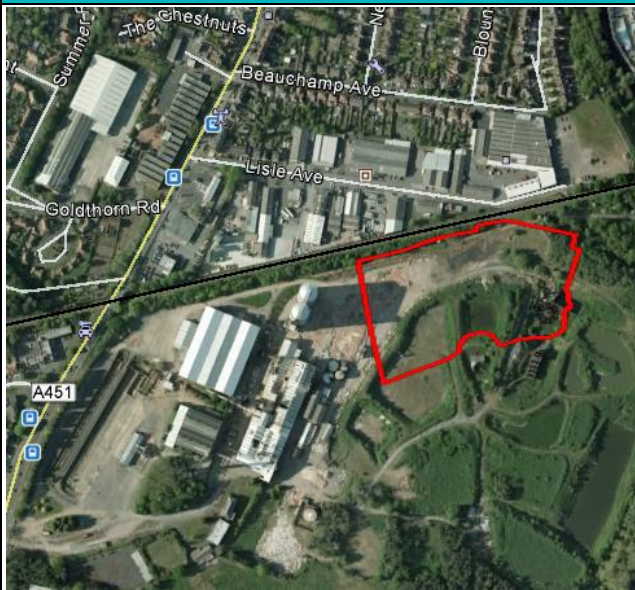
Estimated Net Developable Area:
1.82 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site is an undeveloped parcel and forms part of the former British Sugar Phase 1 development. This site has outline planning permission for a mixture of employment uses.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is equidistant by approximately 600m between A442 / A449 (Worcester Road) and A451 (Stourport Road)	Very Good
Local Accessibility	This site benefits from excellent infrastructure, including direct access to the new 'Silverwoods Way' link road. Furthermore, the site benefits from high frequency bus services between Kidderminster and Stourport with bus stops directly outside the site (off the A451).	Very Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is located to the south of Kidderminster Town Centre and has excellent local labour market catchment with access to a wide range of services. This is strengthened due to the large residential and commercial element of the wider mixed-use site and close proximity to Kidderminster town.	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by Silverwoods Way to the North, green space to the east, commercial units to the south (occupied by 'Flogas' – a gas supplier) and green space to the west.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	Part of the site is covered Health and Safety Executive [HSE] consultation area [PADHI] due to the close Flogas (gas suppliers) to the south of the site. The site is also close to the Widen Marsh and Meadows SSSI and proposals will need to ensure that there are no adverse impacts as a result of development.	Poor
Market Attractiveness	The site sits within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park (Local Development Order). Furthermore, the site is part of a mixed-use development that encourages sustainable community and has been granted outline planning permission. The site is also located near the Worcester Road and Stourport Road –	Very Good

REF WF12 Former British Sugar Site (Silverwoods - Phase 1)	
	being near to Kidderminster town centre.
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	The site has been granted outline planning permission. Given the size of the site it is likely to be capable of being fully developed in 0 to 5 years.
Planning Designation	The site is currently allocated as an employment site under Policy SK2 under adopted Wyre Forest Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan. Also, the site is covered by the South Kidderminster Local Development Order.
Planning History	Outline planning permission (ref: 12/0146/EIA) was granted in 2012 for the redevelopment of the British Sugar Factory / Silverwoods (Phase 1). This planning permission includes an employment development of up to 4 hectares (class B1, B2 and B8)
Overall Site Rating	Very Good
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The existing mixed-use allocation should be retained to encourage an element of B-Class employment uses.
Site Summary	
<p>This site forms part of the former British sugar site (Phase 1), with a total size of 19.0 ha being allocated for mixed use within the WFDC Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan. Since the 1920s the site was historically used for the production of sugar and operated until the British Sugar Corporation closed the factory in 2002. This site is ideal for employment uses due to its close proximity to Vale Industrial Estate.</p> <p>The site is now largely cleared and characterised by a flat area of overgrown green space, containing a large tree which is growing on a slightly sloping piece of land. However, part of the site is covered by a HSE PADHI³ zone, due to its proximity to the gas suppliers 'Flogas' on the Vale Industrial Estate, which may prohibit certain forms of development. The site is also close to the Widen Marsh and Meadows SSSI, and proposals will need to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on the SSSI as a result of a proposed development.</p> <p>The commercial agents marketing the site have stated that serviced plots are available from 1 acre upwards, alternatively build to suit opportunities will be considered from 50,000 sq. ft. upwards on either a freehold or leasehold basis.</p> <p>This site should retain its mixed-use allocation to encourage an element of B-Class employment uses.</p>	

³PADHI: Planning Advice for Developments near Hazardous Installations

REF WF13
Former British Sugar Site
(Silverwoods - Phase 2)



Gross Site Area:
3.20 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
2.99 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	<p>This site is an undeveloped land which forms part of the Phase 2 of Silverwoods development on former British Sugar Site. This site is currently allocated for employment use and is situated off Silverwoods Way.</p> <p>Phase 1 of the site (Rf.16b) has outline planning permission for a mixture of residential and employment uses. Whereas, Phase 2 is proposed solely for employment uses.</p>	
Strategic Road Access	The site is equidistant by approximately 300m between A442 / A449 (Worcester Road) and A451 (Stourport Road).	Very Good
Local Accessibility	<p>The site benefits from excellent access infrastructure, including being situated the new Silverwoods Way.</p> <p>High frequency bus services between Kidderminster and Stourport via the A451; bus stops directly outside the site (off the A451).</p>	Very Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is located to the south of Kidderminster Town Centre and has excellent local labour market catchment with access to wide range of services. This is strengthened due to the large residential and commercial element of the wider mixed-use site and proximity to Kidderminster Town.	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	This site is bound by a railway line to the north, green land to the east, Silverwoods Way to the south and Wyre Forest Leisure Centre to the west.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	The site has a number of minor topographical issues. However, no environmental or development issues are anticipated.	Average
Market Attractiveness	<p>The site sits within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park (Local Development Order).</p> <p>Furthermore, the site is part of a mixed-use development that encourages a sustainable community. The site is also located near the</p>	Very Good

**REF WF13
Former British Sugar Site
(Silverwoods - Phase 2)**

	Worcester Road and Stourport Road – being near to Kidderminster Town Centre which has good accessibility to labour and amenities. .	
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	There are no known barriers to delivery. This site could be delivered over 0 to 5 years	
Planning Designation	This site is currently allocated as a mixed-use site including employment elements and therefore is protected under adopted Wyre Forest Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan. Also, the site is covered by the South Kidderminster Local Development Order [LDO].	
Planning History	There are no recent planning applications for the site. However, it is expected an application will be submitted in due course.	
Overall Site Rating	Very Good	
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The existing mixed-use allocation should be retained to encourage an element of B-Class employment uses.	

Site Summary

This site forms part of the former British Sugar site (Phase 2), with a total size of 2.96 ha and is allocated for mixed uses within the WFDC Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan. Since the 1920s the site was historically used for the production of sugar and operated until the British Sugar Corporation closed the factory in 2002. The site is now largely cleared and designated to accommodate B-Class uses.

This site is characterised by a flat area of overgrown hardstanding and is currently being marketed for employment (B1, B2 and B8) uses and forms part of Phase 2 of the Silverwoods development. The site has benefited from an extensive remediation strategy and road improvement works which is likely to improve the market attractiveness of the site. The site is currently being marketed as a development plot of up to 7.4 acres. At the time of writing, development has yet to occur in the areas of land highlighted in the aerial photograph above.

This site should retain its mixed-use allocation to encourage an element of B-Class employment uses.

**REF WF14
Frank Stone Building**



Gross Site Area:
0.32 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	<p>This site is currently occupied by a vacant carpet manufacturing building adjacent to an industrial estate and supermarket. The Frank Stone building has been vacant for a significant period and is currently being marketed for sale for both residential and commercial uses.</p> <p>The site is situated amongst a mix of industrial and office buildings, many of which are relatively dated. Even so, the area appears to be busy with the majority of buildings within the industrial estate being well occupied by a variety of local businesses.</p>	
Strategic Road Access	The site is approximately 300m to the south of A451 (The Ringway). Direct access to the A451 is provided via Green Street.	Very Good
Local Accessibility	This site can be accessed from Green Street. There are a number of bus stops located on Green Street and the A451 (The Ringway). Furthermore, Kidderminster Train Station is 750m away from the site and provides train services to Birmingham and other key locations within the wider region.	Very Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is within walking distance to Kidderminster Town Centre with good access to a number of facilities and benefits from proximity to residential areas providing good access to labour.	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	This site is bound by a mix of light industrial and office buildings (which form part of Meadow Mills) to the north; Dixon Street / office building (Elgar House) to the east; River Stour and Former Boucher Engineering Works (Chlidema Works) to the west and Green Street to the south.	Good
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	<p>This site is within the Green Street Conservation Area. The Frank Stone building is on the Council's Heritage List. Council policy requires any redevelopment of the building to retain its existing frontage.</p> <p>The site lies adjacent to the River Stour, whilst most of the site is located within Flood Zone 3.</p>	Poor
Market Attractiveness	<p>This site is currently for sale and we understand that the site has been on the market for over 12 months.</p> <p>The Frank Stone building is in poor condition and in need of significant maintenance. There are numerous broken windows on the frontage</p>	Poor

REF WF14 Frank Stone Building	
	<p>whilst there is also evidence of graffiti and vegetation in the brickwork.</p> <p>However, setting to one side the buildings very poor physical appearance and dilapidated state, it is located within a key employment location where there are few vacant premises.</p>
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	Given the size of the site, it is likely to be capable of being fully developed in 0 to 5 years.
Planning Designation	<p>This site is allocated in Policy KCA.HP2 of the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (AAP). The allocation states the following uses would be acceptable for the site: dwelling houses (C3), office (B1a), light industrial (B1c) and non-residential institutions (D1).</p> <p>Policy KCA.HP2 should be read in conjunction with the wider Heritage Processions Area policy KCA.HP1.</p>
Planning History	There appears to be no recent planning applications for this site.
Overall Site Rating	Average
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	This site's mixed-use allocation should be retained. Whilst B-Class employment uses would be suitable for the site to complement other existing B-Class uses in the area (such as Meadow Mills and Elgar House), there are likely to be clear viability issues in bringing forward the site for B1a/c uses in isolation. The Council should take a flexible approach to future development schemes for this site to ensure that the allocation has a realistic prospect of coming forward over the plan period.
Site Summary	
<p>This site is allocated in the adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan for a range of uses including: dwelling houses (C3), office (B1a), light industrial (B1c) and non-residential institutions (D1).</p> <p>This site has access to the A451 (The Ringway) via Green Street. Congestion is an issue due to the commercial nature of the area which includes two supermarkets.</p> <p>The Frank Stone building is situated within Kidderminster Town Centre, hence the site has excellent access to labour, services and amenities.</p> <p>The Frank Stone building is dated and is in a state of general disrepair that would require significant levels of investment. The building itself is designated on the Council's Heritage List. Policy requires the site's frontage to be retained in any redevelopment scheme, facing onto Green Street.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that the current mixed-use allocation should be retained. There are likely to be clear viability issues in bringing forward the site for B1a/c uses in isolation. The Council should take a flexible approach to future development schemes for this site to ensure that the allocation has a realistic prospect of coming forward over the plan period.</p>	

**REF WF15
Green Street Depot**



Gross Site Area:
1.27 ha

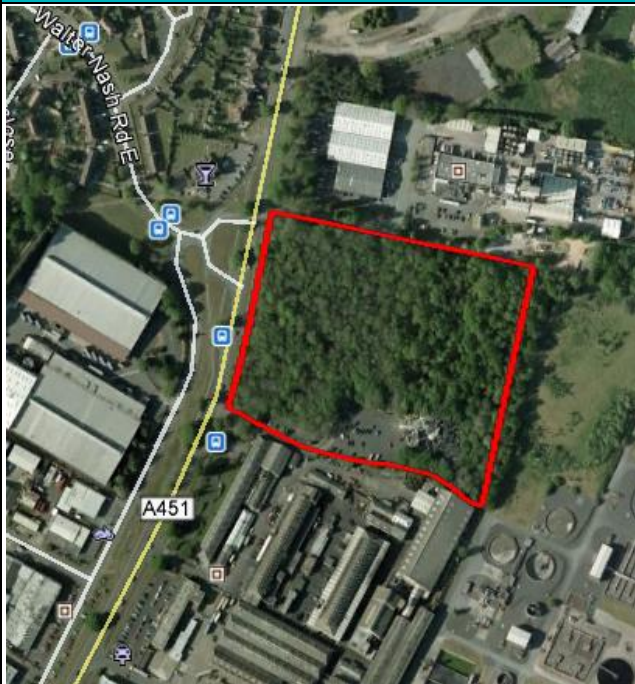
Estimated Net Developable Area:
0.45 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site is owned by the Wyre Forest District Council and is currently used as offices and a service depot for the Council's operations.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is situated 200m away from the A451 (Stourport Road / Ringway) and Worcester Road (A442) accessed via Green Street. Both the A451 and A442 provide good accessibility to Kidderminster and key regional areas.	Very Good
Local Accessibility	This site can be accessed from Green Street. A number of bus stops are located on Green Street and the A451 (The Ringway). Furthermore, Kidderminster Train Station is 1km away from the site and provides train services to the wider West Midlands region. However, there are congestion issues between Pump Street / Green Street and the ring road. It is important that any future redevelopment of this site encourages a positive relationship with the ring road to tackle the ongoing congestion problem.	Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is within walking distance to Kidderminster Town Centre with good access to a number of facilities and benefits from proximity to residential areas providing good access to labour.	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by commercial buildings, Green Street and Pump Street to the north; a car park and B&Q retail store to the east; a roundabout to the west and A451 (The Ringway) to the south.	Good
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	This site is located within the Green Street Conservation Area. Policy requires the former Pumping Station and Sewage Works buildings to be retained within any future redevelopment plans for the site. The majority of the site sits on a Ground Source Protection Area (SPZ1) which is the inner zone. The site is therefore sensitive to land use / contamination which may require the remediation of this site.	Poor
Market Attractiveness	The majority of the buildings on the site are currently in poor condition and in need of repair which detract from the aims of the Green Street Conservation Area. However, this site also benefits from a prominent road frontage which is an attractive feature of the site.	Average

**REF WF15
Green Street Depot**

	<p>In 2018, a planning application (ref. 17/0732/REGS3) was approved for the development of five industrial units and new car park, refurbishment of locally listed buildings and associated works.</p> <p>This site should be commercially attractive due to the close proximity of the site to Kidderminster town centre and the ring road.</p>	
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	This site is in existing use.	
Planning Designation	<p>This site is allocated in Policy KCA.HP3 of the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (AAP). This policy requires any redevelopment of the site to incorporate the former Pump House and Sewage Works buildings.</p> <p>Policy KCA.HP3 should be read in conjunction with the wider Heritage Processions Area policy KCA.HP1.</p>	
Planning History	<p>Planning permission was granted in 2018 (ref. 17/0732/REGS3) for the demolition of existing frontage block and creation of new car park and landscaping. The application also sought the refurbishment of existing locally listed buildings to create new Customer Contact Centre, refurbishment of existing single storey storage building to create 5 light industrial units and rationalisation and resurfacing of existing Waste Transfer Facility including alterations to existing vehicular access points</p>	
Overall Site Rating	Good	
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	<p>This site's allocation should be retained. Employment uses would be suitable for the site to complement the other existing B-Class uses by adjoining employment uses in within the Green Street Conservation Area. Ideally this site should include elements of B1(a) or B1(c) employment uses.</p>	
<p>This site is allocated in the adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan and is part of the Green Street Conservation Area (southern section of the Conservation Area). This site consists of the Council Depot and accommodates a number of buildings such as the former water and sewage pump house which are both protected by WFDC's Local Heritage List.</p> <p>The Green Depot is within walking distance to Kidderminster Town Centre and the train station with good access to labour and services. The site benefits from strategic road access and bus stops, although the local road network suffers from high levels of congestion during peak periods.</p> <p>This site currently has planning approval for the construction of five light industrial units, new car park and refurbishment of existing locally listed buildings. It is therefore recommended that the site should retain its allocation and support local B-Class employment uses as per the planning application approval.</p>		

REF WF16
Land adjacent SDF Stourport Road



Gross Site Area:
4.28 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site consists of a small area of woodland fronting Stourport Road (A451) with car parking and industrial storage to the southern part of the site.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is directly accessible from the A451 (Stourport Road)	Very Good
Local Accessibility	The site is situated on the A451 (Stourport Road) which provides good accessibility to Kidderminster which is less than 2km away.	Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is strategically placed between Kidderminster and Stourport meaning access to labour is strong. However, the site is not within walking distance of many amenities or services.	Average
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by Vale Industrial Estate to the north, green space to the east, industrial units to the south and Stourport Road to the west.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	Part of the site may be covered by the Health and Safety Executive [HSE] consultation area [PADHI] due to the close proximity to Flogas's site (gas suppliers) which is to the north of the site. A Tree Prevention Order [TPO] also covers the site which could restrict future developments on the site.	Very Poor
Market Attractiveness	<p>The site sits within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park (Local Development Order) – this could be an attractive location for potential developers.</p> <p>However, there are clear environmental and development constraints for the site. The industrial storage element of the site does not benefit from major road frontage (Stourport Road – A451)</p> <p>The Council stated that proposals for small-scale employment uses was being drawn up.</p>	Poor
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	This site could be brought forward dependent on environmental constraints– if these issues are resolved the site could be delivered between 0 to 5 years.	
Planning	The woodland element of the site is currently allocated as a 'Natural and Semi Natural	

REF WF16
Land adjacent SDF Stourport Road

Designation	<p>Open Space' in Policy SAL.UP4 of the adopted Wyre Forest Site and Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013).</p> <p>Also, the industrial storage element of the site (southern part of the site) is currently allocated as an employment space in Policy SAL.GPB1.</p> <p>The site sits within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park (Local Development Order). Furthermore, this site was also brought forward through WFDC's 'Call for Sites' as part of their Local Plan Preferred Options consultation in July 2017.</p>
Planning History	There appears to be no recent planning applications for this site.
Overall Site Rating	Average
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The southern part of the site which is currently an industrial storage facility should retain its allocation for employment use. Whereas the woodland (which dominates the vast majority of the site) should remain as a Natural and Semi Natural Open Space allocation due to the TPO and PADHI covering part of the site which is predominately woodland.

Site Summary

This site is comprising of a woodland area fronting Stourport Road with car park and industrial storage to the southern part of the site. The site is surrounded by chemical plant, sewage works and general industrial uses. This site is within close proximity to Kidderminster and other services / amenities. The site should be retained for employment use to enable the site to complement a number of well-established employment sites such as Vale Industrial Estate and wider South Kidderminster Enterprise Park.

The site was put forward for employment development as part of the WFDC's Local Plan Preferred Options consultation. There have been a number of environmental constraints to the site is covered by a Tree Protection Order and part of the site is a HSE consultation area [PADHI] due to the close proximity to Flogas's site (gas suppliers) to the north of the site.

Due to these environmental factors, it is therefore recommended that only the southern part of the site (currently used as industrial storage) should retain its employment allocation and the woodland element of the site should be remain designated as an 'Natural and Semi Natural Open Space' allocation.

REF WF17
Land adjacent Easter Park Worcester Road



Gross Site Area:
2.53 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
2.28 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	The site is situated within the Green Belt and is currently farmland adjacent to Easter Park employment site, between the A449 and the rail line.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is directly accessible from the A449 (Worcester Road)	Very Good
Local Accessibility	There is a bus stop on the A449 which provides bus services every 30 mins to Kidderminster Central. The A449 (Worcester Road) forms part of the strategic employment corridor which connects the site to Kidderminster Town Centre.	Very Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is close to the Hoo Brook and Easter Park areas, and benefits from strong access to labour. However, it is over 3km away from the centre of Kidderminster and as relatively poor local access to shops and services/amenities	Average
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	To the north of the site are vacant land and commercial premises (part of the Easter Park Industrial Park); railway line to the east, the A449 (Worcester Road) to the west and residential properties to the south.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	<p>The site is located within the Green Belt; however, this designation was examined as part of the District-wide Green Belt Review in April 2017. The Green Belt Review concluded that the site provides limited contribution to Green Belt purposes strategically and locally, being strongly bounded on all sides and largely visually isolated from the Green Belt to the east and south. The Review also acknowledged that the site could be an extension to adjacent commercial development to the north.</p> <p>The Preferred Option Consultation document included the site as a proposed allocation for employment use. This is largely due to the findings of the Green Belt Review which could potentially see this site being an extension to Easter Park.</p>	Poor

REF WF17		
Land adjacent Easter Park Worcester Road		
Market Attractiveness	Development for employment uses is achievable subject to the site being taken out of the Green Belt. This site could be considered as a natural extension to Easter Park.	Average
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	The site is deliverable between 0 to 5 years dependent on release from the Green Belt Policy and allocation for development. The site has not been submitted via Call for Sites and the intentions of its landowners are currently unknown.	
Planning Designation	The site is within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park (covered by the Local Development Order). Also, the site is a Green Belt site and subject to Wyre Forest District Council's Green Belt policies.	
Planning History	There are no recent planning applications for the site.	
Overall Site Rating	Good	
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	This is a potential site for employment use dependent on Green Belt release	
Site Summary		
<p>This site is farmland land adjacent to Easter Park employment sites and is designated within the Green Belt. Any form of development on the site would require a removal of the site's Green Belt status. This land could be a natural fit for employment land due to the adjacent employment sites located nearby. It was also highlighted in WFDC's Green Belt Review that the site made limited contribution to the Green Belt –this supported the argument that the site should be considered as a potential extension to the well-established Easter Park employment site.</p> <p>The site has directly access to the A442 (Worcester Road), although this road can become congested at peak times – there are bus stops directly outside the site which provide regular bus services. Nonetheless, the site has poor access to shops, service and amenities, but has reasonably good access to a local labour force due to the proximity to Kidderminster.</p> <p>It is recommended that this site is allocated as a potential site for future employment uses dependent on Green Belt policy release.</p>		

REF WF18
Land at Hoobrook IE, Silverwood Way



Gross Site Area:
0.25 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0.25 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site is a vacant plot owned by the Wyre Forest District Council and is a small development plot on the Hoobrook Industrial Estate.	
Strategic Road Access	The site has direct access off the A442 (Worcester Road) via Silverwoods Way.	Very Good
Local Accessibility	This site benefits from bus services between Kidderminster and Stourport, via the A451. This site is situated off Silverwoods Way which connects Stourport Road and Worcester Road by improving congestion issues in the area. Bus stops are located on the A442 (Worcester Road) and provide frequent bus services to Kidderminster Town Centre.	Very Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	This site is located to the south of Kidderminster Town Centre and has excellent local labour market catchment with access to wide range of services. This is strengthened due to the large residential and commercial element of the wider mixed-use site (Silverwoods) and close proximity to Kidderminster Town Centre.	Average
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	This site is bound by Silverwoods Way to the north, commercial premises (as part of the Hoobrook Enterprise Centre) to the east, Road No.1 to the west and commercial premises to the south.	Good
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	This site was a former Frenco site which means there is likely to be contamination issues with the site. No other development or environmental constraints have been identified.	Poor
Market Attractiveness	The site is situated within Hoobrook Industrial Estate which is occupied by industrial units that look fairly dated. Neighbouring employment uses to the site are predominately indigenous, low-tech users (i.e. industrial /plumbing/cleaning suppliers). Vacancy of units appear relatively low within the Hoobrook Industrial Estate. The new Silverwoods Way road has increased the connectivity and attractiveness of this site.	Good

REF WF18
Land at Hoobrook IE, Silverwood Way

	Situated within South Kidderminster Enterprise Park where LDO applies. Suitable for employment development.
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	There are no known barriers to delivery of the site except the sites possible contamination issues from its former use. Dependent on the contamination issues, the site is likely to be fully developed in 0 to 5 years.
Planning Designation	The site is currently allocated for adopted Wyre Forest Site and Allocations and Policies Local Plan (2013). The Site is also within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park (covered by the Local Development Order).
Planning History	There are no recent planning applications for the site.
Overall Site Rating	Good
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The existing employment allocation should be retained to encourage B-Class employment uses in the future.

Site Summary

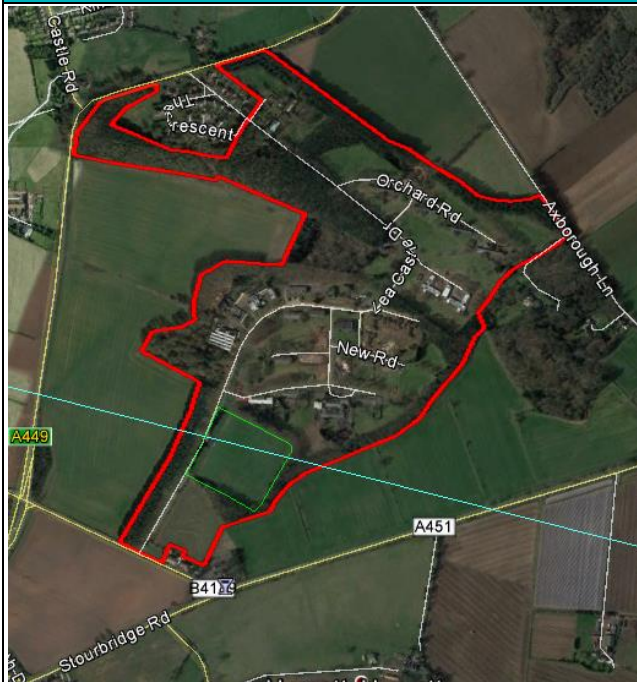
This site is a small development plot within the Hoobrook Industrial Estate and is allocated for employment in the Sites and Allocations and Policies Local Plan. Furthermore, the site sits within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park where the LDO applies.

The site has direct to the new Silverwoods Way road is likely to improve the market attractiveness of the site by connecting the two employment corridors of Worcester Road and Stourport Road – both have well established industrial parks nearby such as Hoo Farm and Easter Park.

This site was a former Frenco site and could have contamination issues which could be a constraint on future deliverability.

It is recommended that this site retains its allocated employment land designation. In particular, as it forms part of the Hoo Brook Industrial Estate which is a relatively popular employment site meeting the District's employment needs.

**REF WF19
Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 1)**



Gross Site Area:
48.51 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0.84 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site is a mix of greenfield and PDL with a number of unoccupied hospital facilities, bat houses and hardstanding areas. Also, the site includes playing pitches along with a club house used by local football clubs located towards the southern extreme of the site.	
Strategic Road Access	This site is accessible though the B4189 which is located off the A451 (Stourbridge Road) towards the south of the site. Further access points towards the north of the site via A449.	Good
Local Accessibility	In terms of local accessibility, the site is situated in a remote location outside of Kidderminster Town Centre. There are two bus stops located within 500m of the site – that provide relatively frequent bus services to Kidderminster Town Centre.	Average
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site sits within a rural location. Cookley and Blakedown are the nearest settlements which are both designated as Villages in the settlement hierarchy. The rural location of the site means that there is limited range of services and a small local labour supply.	Poor
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by residential properties and Axborough Lane to the north, agricultural fields to both the west (towards the A449) and east (towards the A451) and residential properties to the south.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	This site is situated within the Green Belt. This is a large site that has different topography levels. However, demolition of dilapidated buildings has already started.	Poor
Market Attractiveness	The site has already been granted outline planning permission. Agents have stated that this site could work as a mixed-use development.	Average
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	This is already being brought forward with demolition and groundworks underway (at the time of writing, 80% of the site had been demolished). Furthermore, it is anticipated that the site would be delivered between 0 to 5 years.	
Planning Designation	The site previously developed site in the Green Belt and is allocated within the adopted Wyre Forest Site Allocations Local Plan (Policy SAL.PDS1) for a mixed-use development which includes B1 employment space.	

**REF WF19
Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 1)**

	The site was assessed in WFDC's Green Belt. In concluding, the Review acknowledged that the site is PDL and strongly bounded physically and visually, meaning that the overall impact of development on its current built footprint on Green Belt purposes would be limited.
Planning History	Outline planning permission (17/0205/OUTL) was granted in 2017 for up to 600 dwellings (C3), up to 3,350sqm of Class B1 employment uses, 150sqm of Class A1/A3/D1 uses (local shop/café/community space), public open space, ecological mitigation, drainage works, infrastructure and ancillary works.
Overall Site Rating	Average
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	Retain for mixed use scheme incorporating an element of B1 class employment use.

Site Summary

The former Lea Castle Hospital site (owned by Homes England) lies just beyond the north-eastern fringe of Kidderminster Town, between the A449 Wolverhampton Road and the A451 Stourbridge Road. At the time of writing, 80% of the site had been demolished with only a few derelict boarded up buildings still remaining on the site (which will be demolished). Currently there is a sports pitch and club house located immediately to the south of the main hospital site. The site is very large with some areas of the site having significant inclines.

The site was developed from the 1950s onwards and was used for a number of years by a variety of National Health Service users. In early 2008, the Primary Care Trust relocated residents and closed down operations, and the site has lain dormant ever since.

Access to the site is via the B4189 to the south of the site (which itself is just off the Stourbridge Road (A451) in addition to a right of way road to the north of the site via the A449. The site is in a remote location, outside of Kidderminster, and is close to Cockley which provides a limited range of shops and services and is not located near to any bus routes.

The site sits within the Green Belt and was reviewed as part of WFDC's Green Belt Review which states *'that whilst development would constitute an extension of the developed footprint of previously developed land at Lea Castle, it would not create sprawl or encroachment, although the extent of visual intrusion (and hence impact on openness) would depend upon the nature of the built form introduced.'*⁴

In 2017, planning permission was granted for a mixed used development that included 600 new dwellings and 3,350 sqm of B1 use. The B1 employment use is anticipated to be located on the southern section of the site. The proposed employment space will be accessed through Park Gate Road (B4189).

It is recommended that this site should retain its mixed-use allocation with an element of B1 class employment space that is sensitive to the surrounding areas.

⁴ AMEC Foster Wheeler / Wyre Forest District Council: Green Belt Review Part II Site Analysis

**Ref WF20
Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 2)**



Gross Site Area:
54.57 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
7.00 ha⁵

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site consists of three parcels of agricultural land (all owned by Homes England) which include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parcel A – is the Green Belt land to the north of Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 1); Parcel B – is the land to the west of Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 1); and, Parcel C – is the Green Belt is land to the east of the Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 1) 	
Strategic Road Access	This site is accessible though the B4189 which is located off the A451 (Stourbridge Road). Further access points towards the west and north of the site via A449.	Good
Local Accessibility	In terms of local accessibility, the site is situated in a remote location outside of Kidderminster Town Centre. There are two bus stops located within 500m of the site – that provide relatively frequent bus services to Kidderminster. The eastern parcel of the site would provide an alternative access into the larger site (Lea Castle Hospital Phase 1 - Ref.24) which would avoid the junction by the Park Gate PH.	Average
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site sits within a remote rural location. Cookley and Blakedown are the nearest settlements which are both designated as Villages in the settlement hierarchy. The rural location of the site means that there is limited range of services and a small local labour supply.	Poor
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by Axborough Lane to the north, A451 to the east, Park Gate Road to the south and the A449 to the west. Overall the site is surrounded by green land and Lea Castle Hospital Phase 1.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	The site is situated within the Green Belt. This is a large site that has with different topography levels. Any proposed development of this site would have to take into consideration sensitivity as it would create new gateways into Kidderminster Town and would be highly visible along the A451 (Stourbridge Road).	Poor
Market Attractiveness	There is potential for employment interest on the site as part of a wider mixed-use scheme. To improve the market attractiveness of the site – it	Average

⁵ In discussion with WFDC the total area allocated for employment land within the Lea Castle Hospital Site (Phase 2) amounts to 7 ha of employment space.

**Ref WF20
Lea Castle Hospital (Phase 2)**

	<p>is evident that major infrastructure improvements are needed for the site.</p> <p>At present commercial demand is almost entirely from indigenous businesses, with very little inward investment. This may change in future depending on the extent to which very significant levels of unmet needs in nearby Dudley/Stourbridge encourage occupiers/developers to look further afield.</p> <p>If the site was made available and serviced as part of a wider development (including Lea Castle Hospital Phase 1), including a range of incentives such as gap funding and perhaps a more flexible planning environment, then this could encourage the market to deliver the necessary units on the site.</p>	
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	Development of this site would be subject to delivering better infrastructure to support a sustainable community. Due to the large size, the site could come forward for phased development over the next 10 years.	
Planning Designation	Parcel C of the site (the eastern part of the site – bordered by the A451) has been included within WFDC's Preferred Options as a proposed allocation and was reviewed in WFDC's Green Belt Review.	
Planning History	There have been no previous planning applications for this site.	
Overall Site Rating	Average	
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	Allocate this site for mixed use developments (with an element of B-Class employment). After discussions with Homes England and WFDC, it was concluded this site could accommodate 7ha of B-Class employment space.	

Site Summary

This site comprises of three parcels of land owned by Homes England. Parcel A (north of Lea Castle Hospital – Phase 1) extends beyond a very strong landscape boundary to the south.

Parcel A of the site extends well beyond a very strong landscape boundary to the south, and, given the topography of the land, will be highly visible to nearby settlements further north and west. Parcel B could largely be anticipated to accommodate residential uses due to visual impacts and close proximity to Cookley.

The likelihood is that any potential B1 employment allocation needs to be consolidated and enlarged. Parcel C's location on the frontage of A451 Stourbridge Road could be deemed appropriate due to accessibility and road frontage. However, it is vital that it is re-planned so that all of the employment space is brought together as a single block and is sensitive to the neighbouring residential uses. This should be flexible B Class employment space with an awareness of the proximity of sensitive residential uses hence it will need careful master planning to avoid conflicts.

Whilst there is a clear 'need' for additional employment land within Wyre Forest District, it is much more difficult to demonstrate how this translates to latent 'demand' in the vicinity of the Lea Castle site as it is not an established employment location at present. As such, it will be vital to ensure that the scale of employment land that is made available at the site is of a sufficient critical mass to make it attractive to the market. Whilst this is difficult to quantify, after discussions with WFDC and Homes England it was of the view that this would be 7 ha and may be significantly higher.

It is therefore recommended that this site be designated as a mixed-use allocation with a B-Class employment element.

REF WF21
Land off Wilden Industrial Estate



Gross Site Area:
0.22 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	<p>This land is used for storage and distribution purposes and is part of the industrial estate. The land is used by McVeigh Parker.</p> <p>At present, the land is currently within the Green Belt land but has a certificate of lawfulness for B8 uses.</p>	
Strategic Road Access	The site is approximately 2.5km from the A449 (Worcester Road)	Average
Local Accessibility	<p>Several bus stops are located adjacent to the site on Wilden Lane. Bus services are every 30 mins to Kidderminster and Stourport.</p> <p>Access to the site is difficult along Wilden Lane as the road is relatively small and narrow. This is likely to pose a problem for heavy HGV traffic.</p>	Average
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is around 2km to Stourport and 4km to Kidderminster; over 3km to Hartlebury train station. A small residential area is located near to the site, but otherwise access to labour and services is poor.	Poor
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by open land to the north; Wilden Lane and shrubs to the east; River Stour to the west and industrial units (as part of Wilden Lane Industrial Estate) to the south.	Poor
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	<p>The site is currently designated as Green Belt land. It is not located within Flood Zones 2 or 3.</p> <p>The Council's Preferred Option Consultation document has included this site as a proposed allocation for employment use (Ref. MI/18). This is attributable to the fact the site could comprise an extension to Wilden Lane Industrial Extension and is already in employment use.</p>	Average
Market Attractiveness	<p>The site is already in B-Class use and is part of the Wilden Lane Industrial Estate which includes relatively modern industrial stock; around 17% (6 out of 35 units) appeared vacant at the time of the site visit.</p> <p>This industrial estate appears attractive to indigenous local firms and provides affordable commercial premises and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future.</p>	Average

REF WF21
Land off Wilden Industrial Estate

Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	The site is already in existing employment use.
Planning Designation	The site is located in the Green Belt. This site was also submitted via the Call for Sites (for employment purposes) as part of the Local Plan Preferred Options consultation in July 2017.
Planning History	There are no recent planning applications to develop the site.
Overall Site Rating	Average
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	This site should be protected for B-Class employment uses to formalise the existing use and act as an extension to the existing Industrial Estate.

Site Summary

This site is currently used for storage and distribution purposes and is an extension of the Wilden Industrial Estate. This site is designated as a Green Belt land. In 2017, the site was submitted for consideration for employment use through the Council's Call for Sites.

Access to the site is via Wilden Lane, a relatively narrow road, which has bus stops that provide services to Kidderminster and Stourport. The site is just over 3.2km from Hartlebury Train Station.

It is recommended that this site is protected for B-Class employment uses to formalise the existing use and act as an extension to the existing Industrial Estate.

**REF WF22
Rock Works**



Gross Site Area:
0.36 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0.36 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site consists of the former Rock Works factory which is a redundant former factory building. It is on the Local Heritage List, but is in a poor state of repair. The site is located on Park Lane and lies near to Park Street Industrial Estate.	
Strategic Road Access	This site is immediately accessible via a roundabout which connects the A432 and A456.	Very Good
Local Accessibility	<p>The site can be accessed via A432 / A456 – however the roundabout that connects the two A-roads tends to get congested during peak times.</p> <p>There are no bus stops in the immediate vicinity of the site. The nearest bus stop is located 750m away at Kidderminster Bus Station which provides services to Stourport-on -Severn and other areas of Kidderminster approximately every 20 mins at peak times.</p> <p>The former Rock Works and the industrial estate are separated by a steep embankment with the only through access being in the form of steep pedestrian steps.</p>	Average
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	This site is within walking distance to Kidderminster Town Centre and residential areas; hence it has excellent access to local labour supply, services and amenities.	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	This site is bound by a shop to the north (The Treasury Kidderminster); retail store (Matalan) to the east, industrial units (as part of Park Street Industrial Estate) to the west and green land to the south.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	<p>The Rock Works building is a locally listed building. This requires any redevelopment of the site to retain the building and incorporate it into any new development. This may pose viability issues.</p> <p>The existing woodland to the south of the site is identified within the Council's Park Lane Canalside policy (KCA.WG2).</p>	Poor
Market Attractiveness	Due to the steep topography between Park Street and Park Lane there are clear barriers to movement, whilst the building itself is depilated, has very poor kerb appeal and has numerous broken windows.	Poor

REF WF22 Rock Works	
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	Development is achievable subject to acquisition costs and viability of redeveloping the site. Given the wider masterplanning of the site, it is considered that it is likely to be capable of being fully developed in 5 to 10 years.
Planning Designation	<p>This site (part of the Park Street Industrial Estate and Rock Works) is allocated for mixed use in Policy KCA.WG1 of the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (AAP). The allocation makes provision for residential institutions (C2), dwelling houses (C3), office and workshops (B1), non-residential institutions (D1) and assembly and leisure (D2).</p> <p>The reasoned justification to the Policy states that the Rock Works is a redundant former factory building that is in a poor state of repair: <i>“First preference will be for the building to be retained and incorporated into any new development. However its reuse may pose a significant viability issue and therefore it is important that it is considered as part of the future redevelopment of the wider Western Gateway area”.</i></p>
Planning History	There are no recent planning applications to develop the site.
Overall Site Rating	Poor
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The mixed-use allocation for the wider site, incorporating Park Street Industrial Estate and Rock Works, should be retained. A realistic and flexible approach should be taken to the redevelopment of the Rock Works site given clear viability concerns and the poor physical appearance of the building. This may mean that although the site would ideally be developed for B-Class uses given its location, it may only realistically come forward for higher value uses.
<p>This site consists of the former Rock Works factory is near Park Street Industrial Estate which is currently vacant. The former Rock Works building is allocated in the adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan, as part of the wider area (Park Street Industrial Estate and Rock Works).</p> <p>The site is located near to Kidderminster town centre and has been highlighted as a mixed-use regeneration site. The Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan states that any proposals considered for the wider Park Street Industrial Estate and Rock Works site should contain a mix of residential dwellings, care homes, leisure uses along with B1 offices and workshops.</p> <p>The Rock Works building is in poor condition and requires significant investment and repair. The Rock Works site is separated from the wider Park Street Industrial Estate by an embankment with the only through access being in the form of steep pedestrian steps.</p> <p>Access to the site is via Park Lane which is off the A456, and is within walking distance of a substantial residential area to the south of the site, hence access to labour, services and amenities is very strong.</p> <p>The nearby Park Street Industrial Estate is characterised by relatively modern light industrial units, with no vacant units visible. No environmental or developmental constraints were observed, although there are likely to be viability issues with developing the site.</p> <p>It is recommended that the current mixed-use allocation for this wider site should be retained, which could ideally include an element of B-Class provision. However, this is clearly dependent on viability issues and the Council should ensure that they follow a flexible approach to ensure that the site can be brought back into use in the medium term.</p>	

**REF WF23
Parsons Chain**



Gross Site Area:
6.03 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
1.00 ha*

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	This site is a former industrial area located on the eastern side of Stourport-on-Severn. This site is currently vacant and was cleared of buildings in 2008 and has remained vacant since this time. It also comprises a former railway embankment which forms the eastern boundary of the site.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is directly off the A4025 (Worcester Road) which connects the site to Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn.	Very Good
Local Accessibility	The site can be accessed via the A4025 and Hartlebury Road (B4193). There is a bus stop approximately 200m from the site on Worcester Road with services to Stourport-on-Severn and Kidderminster approximately every 30 mins at peak times.	Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	This site is on the edge of Stourport Town Centre with good access to the wider local labour market and services / amenities.	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by Hartlebury Road to the north; residential properties to the east; OGL Computer / Worcester Road and residential properties to the west and commercial properties to the south.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	The northern section of the site is located within Flood Zone 2. The site is also located on a principal aquifer and total protection zone, with shallow groundwater. The site has an industrial history and there is a high potential for land contamination issues. Any future proposals would need to adequately address these issues.	Poor
Market Attractiveness	This site is situated on a strategic road providing good connectivity to Kidderminster and Stourport. Furthermore, the site has prominent frontage on the A4025 with direct access to a wider labour market. There are a number of adjoining employment uses that are fully occupied and are in modern condition.	Good
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	There are no known barriers to delivery of the site except possible contamination issues from its former use. Dependent on the extent of contamination issues, the site is capable of being fully developed in 5 to 10 years.	
Planning Designation	This site forms part a designated mixed-use allocation in Policy SAL.EA3 of the adopted WFDC's Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan.	

REF WF23 Parsons Chain	
	Current adopted policy requires the embankment to be removed and a section of the Stourport Relief Road to be implemented along its length.
Planning History	There are no recent planning applications to develop the site.
Overall Site Rating	Good
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	This site should be retained for mixed-use development with an element of employment use (B1).
Site Summary	
<p>This site is allocated for mixed-use including an element of B-Class employment space within the Sites Allocations and Policies Local Plan. The site is located off the A4025 and B4195 and has excellent access to the strategic road network, although local roads in the vicinity of the site suffer from congestion at peak times.</p> <p>This site is currently vacant and comprises of a former railway embankment which forms the eastern side of the site. This site is within walking distance to Stourport Town Centre and has good access to services and amenities.</p> <p>It is recommended that the site's allocation for mixed-uses including an element of B-Class employment space be retained.</p>	

*Note – Wyre Forest District Council provided a net developable figure of 1ha which allows for the provision of additional spur roads and landscaping on the site

REF WF24
VOSA site Worcester Road



Gross Site Area:
1.72 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	<p>This site comprises of mixed use buildings with occupants including Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and Summerfield Commercials Limited.</p> <p>The DVSA premises occupies the majority of the site whereas Summerfield Commercials Limited occupies the remaining section of the site (to the north) and specialises in car sales.</p>	
Strategic Road Access	The site is directly accessible from the A449 (Worcester Road)	Very Good
Local Accessibility	Bus stop on the A449 which provides bus services every 30 mins to Kidderminster Central. The A449 (Worcester Road) forms part of the strategic employment corridor which connects the site to central Kidderminster.	Very Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	Close to the Hoo Brook area, so good access to labour. Over 3km away from the centre of Kidderminster hence poor local access to shops and services/amenities which are not in immediate vicinity.	Average
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	To the north of the site is undeveloped land owned by Roxel (as a buffer zone -Roxel is a company specialises in producing rockets and tactical and cruise missiles); Worcester Road and greenfield to the east, industrial units owned by Roxel to the west and residential properties and green fields to the south.	Average
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	There is a gentle incline on the undeveloped land to the north of the site, although this is used as a buffer zone and will not be developed upon whilst Roxel occupy the site. Given the nature of Roxel's business operations, future development will have to be sensitive to the Roxel's premises.	Good
Market Attractiveness	This site is well located to the A449 and Kidderminster town centre and near well established and high quality industrial parks such as Hoo Farm Industrial Estate. However, future development would have to be sensitive towards Roxel's operations.	Average
Barriers to Delivery	The site is fully occupied by existing employers.	

REF WF24
VOSA site Worcester Road

and Timescales	
Planning Designation	The potential site does not currently have a planning designation and has been asked by the Council to be assessed.
Planning History	The previous planning applications on the site relate to the existing employment uses.
Overall Site Rating	Good
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	The existing employment allocation should be retained. However, if the current use ceases, then the site could be suitable for redevelopment for small office / light industrial units compatible with neighbouring estates.

Site Summary

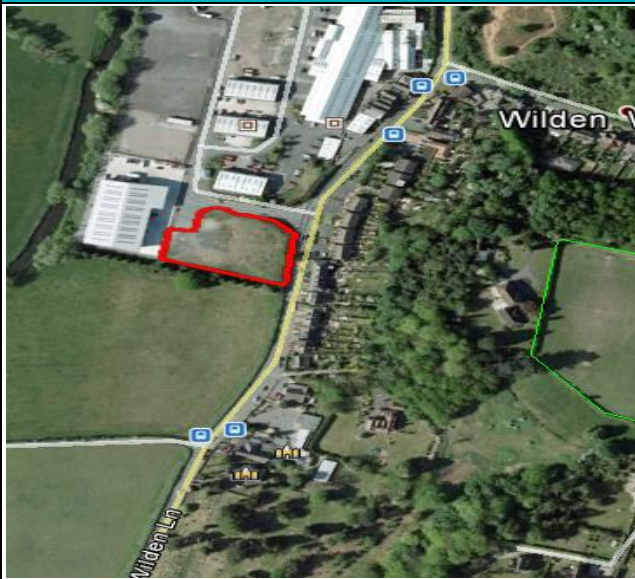
This fully developed site is in existing employment use – despite not being an allocated site. The site features a large DVSA building with two storeys building with associated car parking which occupy the majority of the site. The north of the site comprises of a Summerfield Commercial Limited (a motor vehicle sales business) which occupy the remaining elements of the site.

The site is directly accessed of the A442 (Worcester Road), although this road can become congested at peak time – there are bus stops directly outside the site which also has regular bus service running along it. The site has poor access to shops, service and amenities, but has reasonably good access to a local labour force due to proximity to Kidderminster.

The site is bound by an undeveloped land owned by Roxel, a rock propulsion firm to the north and lies within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park. It is likely this site owned by Roxel will remain undeveloped to act as a buffer zone due to explosives being used within the site. Given the sensitive nature of Roxel’s operations – it is likely that any future proposals for the VOSA site would have to be sensitive to Roxel.

Despite the site not currently accommodating B-Class employment uses. it is recommended that this site retains its employment uses to protect the status of current occupiers.

REF WF25
Wilden Lane Industrial Estate



Gross Site Area:
0.34 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0.34 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	The site is an undeveloped vacant land near the entrance of Wilden Industrial Estate. The owners of the vacant land appear to be Polyplas Extrusions Ltd. Polyplas Extrusions Ltd occupy premises adjacent to the vacant land.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is approximately 2.5km from the A449 (Worcester Road)	Average
Local Accessibility	Several bus stops are located adjacent to the site on Wilden Lane. Bus services are every 30 mins to Kidderminster and Stourport. Access to the site is difficult along Wilden Lane as the road is relatively small and narrow. This is likely to pose a problem for heavy HGV traffic.	Average
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	The site is around 2km to Stourport and 4km to Kidderminster; over 3km to Hartlebury train station. A small residential area near to the site, but otherwise access to labour and services is poor.	Poor
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	Wilden lane and residential properties lie to the east. Open land and commercial units (on Wilden Industrial Estate) surround the remainder of the site.	Poor
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	No developmental constraints identified; lies next to the River Stour although it is not within a Flood Zone.	Average
Market Attractiveness	Relatively modern industrial stock; around 17% (6 out of 35 units) appeared vacant. This industrial estate appears attractive to indigenous local firms and provides affordable commercial premises and will likely remain the same in the future.	Average
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	There are no known barriers to delivery of the site. Given the size of the site it is likely to be capable of being fully developed in 0 to 5 years.	
Planning Designation	This site is currently allocated as a parcel within Wilden Industrial Estate which is allocated as an employment site. Therefore, is protected under Policy SAL.GPB1 of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan.	
Planning History	There are no recent planning applications to develop the site.	
Overall Site Rating	Average	
Recommendation and Potential	The existing employment allocation should be retained to protect the important local employment uses that are anticipated for this site.	

REF WF25
Wilden Lane Industrial Estate

Future Uses

Site Summary

This is located within Wilden Industrial Estate and is allocated for Employment in the WFDC's adopted Sites Allocations and Policies Local Plan. The vacant land appears to be owned by Polyplas Extrusions Ltd. Access to the site is via Wilden Lane, a relatively narrow road, which has bus stops that provide services to Kidderminster and Stourport. The site is just over 3.2km from Hartlebury Train Station.

No developmental and environmental constraints were identified. The site is adjacent to relatively modern units, situated in the Wilden Industrial Estate that appears to have a vacancy rate of around 17%.

It is recommended that this site retains its employment allocation to encourage future B-Class employment on this site.

REF WF26
Worcester Road Stourport



Gross Site Area:
0.36 ha

Estimated Net Developable Area:
0 ha

Criteria	Comment	Rating
Current Use and Land Type	The site is occupied by Top Job Car Wash & Valet and a vacant building. The neighbouring sites contain a number of old industrial buildings which were once part of the power station complex.	
Strategic Road Access	The site is directly off the A4025 (Worcester Road) which connects the site to Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn.	Very Good
Local Accessibility	The site can be accessed via A4025. There is a bus stop approximately 200m from the site on Worcester Road with services to Stourport-on-Severn and Kidderminster approximately every 30 mins at peak times.	Good
Proximity to Urban Areas and Access to Labour and Services	This site is on the edge of Stourport Town Centre with good access to the wider local labour market and services / amenities.	Very Good
Compatibility of Adjoining Use	The site is bound by a light industrial building (Morecraft Ltd) to the north, A4025 (Worcester Road) to the east, Discovery Road to the south and residential properties to the west.	Poor
Developmental and Environmental Constraints	This is a small site that sits within Flood Zone 2.	Poor
Market Attractiveness	The site has not been submitted via the WFDC's Call for Sites so the landowner's intentions are not known. The majority of the buildings on the site are outdated and require maintenance. The site benefits from good access and road frontage on the A4025 (Worcester Road) which will remain attractive to potential occupiers and firms.	Average
Barriers to Delivery and Timescales	The site is fully developed with no room for expansion or intensification. However, partial redevelopment is considered achievable subject to a viable scheme being drawn up.	
Planning Designation	This site forms part a designated mixed-use allocation in Policy SAL.EA4 of the adopted WFDC's Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan.	

**REF WF26
Worcester Road Stourport**

Planning History	All previous planning applications relate to the existing employment uses on the site.
Overall Site Rating	Average
Recommendation and Potential Future Uses	This site should be retained for mixed-use development with an element of employment use (B1).

Site Summary

This is a small site located towards the east of Stourport-on-Severn which currently consists of dated small scale industrial units and a small area of hard-standing which is used as a temporary hand car wash area.

The site is in a sustainable location with good links to the town centre providing access to services and amenities, along with bus stops beside the site. Site constraints include its small size and Flood Zone 2, as well as a large number of residential dwellings to the south and east of the site (despite also being in close proximity to a substantial amount of employment land along Worcester Road).

The site provides an opportunity to deliver a mixed-use development to regenerate the more dated parts of the site and provide residential space, as considered in Policy SAL.EA4 of the adopted Wyre Forest Site Allocations & Policies Local Plan.

It is recommended that this site retains its mixed use allocation with an element of employment use. Future employment uses should be sensitive to any potential residential properties anticipated for the site.

Appendix 6 – Definition of B Class Sectors

The method used for re-categorising the employment forecasts by sector into B-Class uses is summarised below

Apportionment of B Class Sectors to Land Uses – Experian

Experian Sector	Proportion of Jobs by Use Class		
	B1 office	B2 industrial	B8 warehousing
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing		Non B-Class	
Extraction & Mining		Non B-Class	
Food, Drink & Tobacco	0%	100%	0%
Textiles & Clothing	0%	100%	0%
Wood & Paper	0%	100%	0%
Printing and Recorded Media	0%	100%	0%
Fuel Refining	0%	100%	0%
Chemicals	0%	100%	0%
Pharmaceuticals	0%	100%	0%
Non-Metallic Products	0%	100%	0%
Metal Products	0%	100%	0%
Computer & Electronic Products	0%	100%	0%
Machinery & Equipment	0%	100%	0%
Transport Equipment	0%	100%	0%
Other Manufacturing	0%	100%	0%
Utilities		85%	
Construction of Buildings		Non B-Class	
Civil Engineering		Non B-Class	
Specialised Construction Activities	0%	65%	0%
Wholesale	0%	21%	69%
Retail		Non B-Class	
Accommodation & Food Services		Non B-Class	
Land Transport, Storage & Post	0%	0%	76%
Air & Water Transport		Non B-Class	
Recreation		Non B-Class	
Media Activities	100%	0%	0%
Telecoms	100%	0%	0%
Computing & Information Services	100%	0%	0%
Finance	100%	0%	0%
Insurance & Pensions	100%	0%	0%
Real Estate	100%	0%	0%
Professional Services	100%	0%	0%
Administrative & Supportive Services	19%	0%	0%
Other Private Services		Non B-Class	
Public Administration & Defence	10%	0%	0%
Education		Non B-Class	
Health		Non B-Class	
Residential Care & Social Work		Non B-Class	

Source: Experian / Lichfields Analysis

Appendix 7 – Experian Baseline Forecasts

Experian Sector	Workforce Jobs		
	2016	2036	Change (2016-2036)
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing (Thousands)	500	100	-400
Extraction & Mining (Thousands)	0	0	0
Food, Drink & Tobacco (manufacture of) (Thousands)	0	0	0
Textiles & Clothing (manufacture of) (Thousands)	600	300	-300
Wood & Paper (manufacture of) (Thousands)	400	400	0
Printing and Recorded Media (manufacture of) (Thousands)	0	0	0
Fuel Refining (Thousands)	0	0	0
Chemicals (manufacture of) (Thousands)	0	0	0
Pharmaceuticals (manufacture of) (Thousands)	0	0	0
Non-Metallic Products (manufacture of) (Thousands)	300	300	0
Metal Products (manufacture of) (Thousands)	700	700	0
Computer & Electronic Products (manufacture of) (Thousands)	200	200	0
Machinery & Equipment (manufacture of) (Thousands)	400	400	0
Transport Equipment (manufacture of) (Thousands)	600	700	100
Other Manufacturing (Thousands)	800	800	0
Utilities (Thousands)	400	400	0
Construction of Buildings (Thousands)	1,000	900	-100
Civil Engineering (Thousands)	200	200	0
Specialised Construction Activities (Thousands)	1,600	1,600	0
Wholesale (Thousands)	3,300	2,900	-400
Retail (Thousands)	5,300	5,000	-300
Land Transport, Storage & Post (Thousands)	1,700	1,700	0
Air & Water Transport (Thousands)	0	0	0
Accommodation & Food Services (Thousands)	2,700	3,300	600
Recreation (Thousands)	2,000	2,200	200
Media Activities (Thousands)	0	0	0
Telecoms (Thousands)	0	0	0
Computing & Information Services (Thousands)	400	500	100
Finance (Thousands)	500	600	100
Insurance & Pensions (Thousands)	0	0	0

Real Estate (Thousands)	800	900	100
Professional Services (Thousands)	1,800	1,900	100
Administrative & Supportive Services (Thousands)	2,500	2,800	300
Other Private Services (Thousands)	1,200	1,100	-100
Public Administration & Defence (Thousands)	1,000	1,000	0
Education (Thousands)	3,900	3,800	-100
Health (Thousands)	2,400	2,900	500
Residential Care & Social Work (Thousands)	2,200	2,900	700
Total	39,400	40,500	1,100

Appendix 8 – Experian’s Data Guide to its UK Regional Planning Service Model

Data Guide

UK Regional Planning Service
December 2017



Our main subscription website:
<http://economics.experian.co.uk/>



Data Guide

UK Regional Planning Service
December 2017

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Executive summary

This document outlines the current variable coverage in the December 2017 version of the UK Regional Planning Service, and the methodology behind the history and forecast.

[Appendix A](#) includes a glossary of terms.

[Appendix B](#) includes our definitions of the sectors.

[Appendix C](#) has the geography definitions.

[Appendix D](#) contains the most common Frequently Asked Questions

Contact us

Sadia Sheikh

Head of UK Regional Forecasting

T 44 (0) 207 746 8250

E sadia.sheikh@experian.com

Rebecca Snow

Managing Economist

T 44 (0) 7966 874 720

E rebecca.snow@experian.com

Thomas Crowdy

Senior Economist

T 44 (0) 207 746 8250

E thomas.crowdy@experian.com

Sunil Joshi

Managing Economist

T 44 (0) 207 746 8230

E sunil.joshi@experian.com

Ragini Madan

Senior Econometrician

T 44 (0) 207 746 8219

E ragini.madan@experian.com

Jon Rawson

Business Development Director

T 44 (0) 7811 270 989

E jon.rawson@experian.com

Experian

Cardinal Place

6th Floor

80 Victoria Street

London SW1E 5JL

www.experian.co.uk/economics

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1 Variable Coverage

To avoid implying spurious accuracy, we now round all county and local series to the nearest tenth of a unit. This means that people or job counts are now to the nearest 100 people or jobs and money counts are to the nearest £100,000, and rates are now to the nearest 0.1 percentage points. Forecasts for series with very small levels may appear to be very volatile when growth rates are considered. We, therefore, recommend viewing series with small values in levels not growth rates or considering growth rates over longer intervals than annually. Very small levels have been set to zero as they are essentially statistical artefacts.

Figure 1.1: Variable coverage in the RPS

- ✓ indicates that the variable is available in both the search query tool and the xls files.
- Xls indicates that the variable is available in the xls but not the search query tool.
- UK monthly forecast indicates that the variable is not produced as part of the RPS but can be found in the monthly UK macro forecast on our website.

Variable	UK	Region	County & Local Authority
PRODUCTION			
GDP	UK monthly forecast		
GDP by component of demand	UK monthly forecast		
Gross Value Added	✓	✓	✓
GVA by sectors	✓	✓	✓
LABOUR MARKET			
Employees by sector	✓	✓	✓
Self-employed by sector	✓	✓	✓
Government Trainees by sector	xls	xls	Upon request
Her Majesties Forces Total	xls	xls	Upon request
FTE Employment by sector	✓	✓	✓
Total ILO Employment – Residence based & Workplace based	✓	✓	✓
ILO Unemployment	✓	✓	✓
Unemployment rate	✓	✓	✓
Labour Force	xls	xls	Upon request
Activity Rate	xls	xls	Upon request
Inactivity Rate	xls	xls	Upon request
DEMOGRAPHICS			
Population: Total, Adult (16+)	✓	✓	✓
Age bands: 0-15, State Working age, State retirement 16-64, 65+	✓	✓	✓
Population by single or 5 year age band	Upon request	Upon request	Upon request
HOUSEHOLDS			
Nominal disposable Income	✓	✓	✓
Real disposable income	✓	✓	✓
Nominal income by component	xls	xls	Upon request
Nominal consumer spending	✓	✓	✓
Real consumer spending	✓	✓	✓
Consumer spending by COICOP category	Upon request	Upon request	
Cost of Living Index	✓	✓	
House price Index	✓	✓	Upon request
Hours worked	Upon request	Upon request	Upon request

Please note we are no longer publishing Claimant Count for Regional and Local Areas. This is due to the fact that complete data are no longer available due to the shift to Universal Credit.

2 Historical End-points

Figure 1.2: Last historic data point

Variable	UK*	Region	County & Local Authority
Gross Value Added	2017q3	2015q4	2015q4
GVA by sectors	2017q2	2015q4	2015q4
Labour market variables	2017q2	2017q1	All 2015q4 except ILO 2017q1
Income	2017q2	2015q4	2015q4
Consumer spending	2017q2	2016q4	2015q4

*UK data for GVA, consumer spending and incomes is consistent with the 2013-based ONS data, for which historical estimates are available to 2017q1.

The historical end-point represents the last period in time for which we apply our processes to collect, calculate or derive data, details of which can be found in chapter 3: Methodology. All time-periods that are in the past but follow the historical end-point are Experian Economics' estimates.

We have not used any regional data published after July 12th 2017 in producing this update of the RPS. It is possible that between this date and the release of the RPS some new history may have been released and/or revised.

Population

The population data provided are the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2014 mid-year estimates for 1997-2014 (as revised in 2016¹). For England, Scotland and Wales, the 2014-based sub-national population projections for England are used.

UK forecast

This forecast is consistent with an Experian Economics' November 2017 macroeconomic forecast which includes GVA for 2017q3. We explore this further in [section 4](#).

Geographic boundaries

As communicated in previous data guides, we publish data on post-2009 local authority boundaries.

With the ONS gradually phasing out the publication of data on the pre-2009 local authority boundaries, it had become increasingly less credible for Experian to publish up-to-date historical data on these definitions. The table below shows those local authorities which no longer exist as individual entities (2nd column) and the name of the new local authority that has been created by their merger.

¹ In 2016, a correction was published to the 2014 mid-year estimates for Scotland.

Region	Disbanded local authorities	Merged to form:
<i>North East</i>	Chester-le-Street, Derwentside, Durham, Easington, Sedgfield, Teesdale, Wear Valley	County Durham
	Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale, Wansbeck	Northumberland
<i>North West</i>	Congleton, Crewe & Nantwich, Macclesfield	Cheshire East
	Chester, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Vale Royal	Cheshire West & Chester
<i>West Midlands</i>	Bridgnorth, North Shropshire, Oswestry, Shrewsbury & Atcham, South Shropshire	Shropshire
<i>East of England:</i>	Mid Bedfordshire, South Bedfordshire	Central Bedfordshire
<i>South West</i>	Caradon, Carrick, Kerrier North Cornwall, Penwith, Restormel	Cornwall
	Kennet, North Wiltshire, Salisbury, West Wiltshire	Wiltshire

3 Methodology

3.1 UK Methodology

The approach for the regional planning service takes the UK variables as exogenous, imposed from the monthly UK forecast.

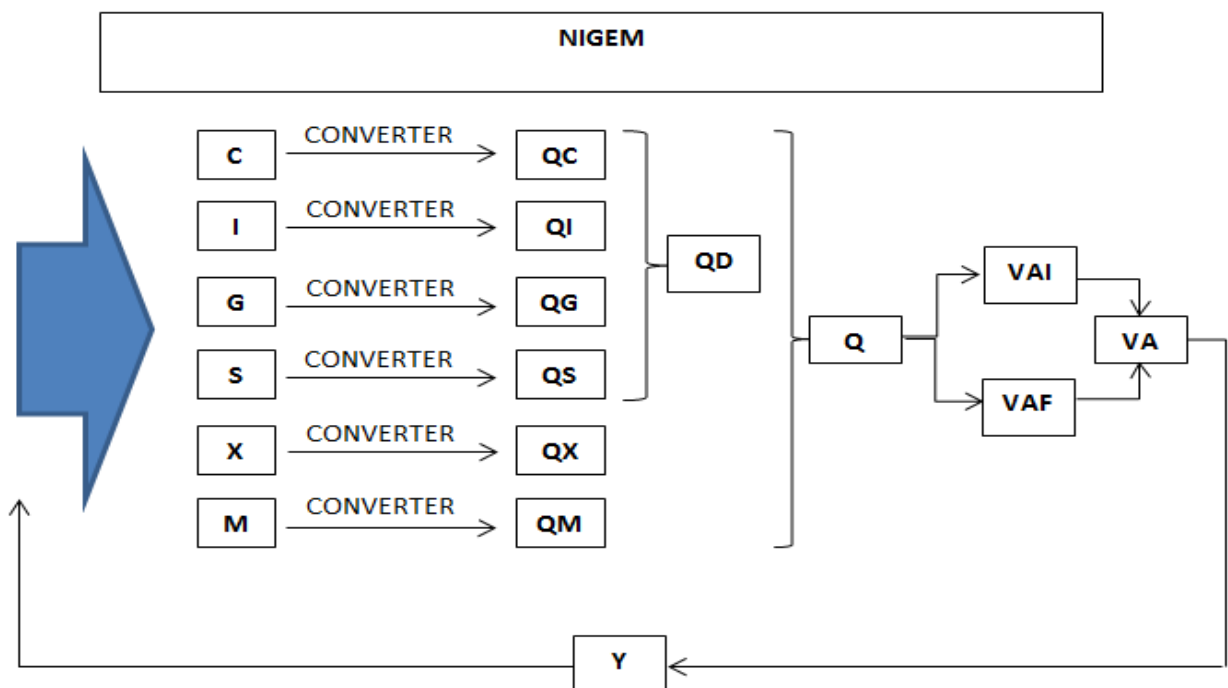
To produce the UK forecast we use a heavily customised version of the National Institute of Social & Economic Research's (NISER) model called NIGEM to provide our core macroeconomic forecast.

NIGEM is a general equilibrium model of the UK and World economy which forecasts, amongst other variables, aggregate GVA, expenditure, income and employment based on the UK National Accounts published by the Office of National Statistics.

To split this core forecast out into industries and sub-sectors we have a Sectoral Model which expands on the forecasts from the core NIGEM model.

We disaggregate total consumption (C), investment (I), government spending (G), stocks (S), exports (X) and imports (M) from NIGEM to a finer level of detail. This provides a highly detailed model of demand (Q) for industry GVA in the UK economy. Using converters derived from the ONS Supply and Use Tables, we convert demand into intermediate (VAI) and final (VAF) value added for each sector. This provides a comprehensive view of how value added is distributed across sectors. The growth rate of total value added (VA) for each industry determines its GVA (Y) growth rate. GVA is constrained in order to forecast total GVA from NIGEM. This Input-Output based model is iterative and captures intra-industry demand.

The industry GVA forecast is used together with wage forecasts to forecast employment by sector (E).



3.2 Regional methodology

3.2.1 History

All economic history used in the RPS is derived from official statistics published by the UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS). Our approach is to use existing statistics in the form they are published to the greatest extent possible. However, this is subject to the following exceptions:

- where there is a lag between an update of aggregate data and the corresponding disaggregation, the disaggregate data is constrained to match the latest aggregates;
- where ONS data is not published at quarterly frequency (for instance it is only annual data), we use a consistent methodology (described below) to construct quarterly data;
- where ONS data is not published at the geography required or in the detail required, we use a consistent methodology to add the necessary data ensuring that it constraints to published data at a higher level of geography or detail;
- on occasion, where ONS data is internally inconsistent we apply techniques to remove these inconsistencies.

The most timely and reliable data at the regional level is the workforce jobs series, published on a quarterly frequency by the ONS. There have been revisions to estimates of Workforce Jobs going back several years caused by benchmarking to the latest estimates from the annual Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), updating seasonal factors and taking on board late information. There have been further revisions going back to the start of the series in 1959 resulting from some methodological improvements.

Employee jobs, self-employed jobs and government trainees are published at the level of the SIC 2007 Section providing us with 22 sectors.¹ In order to disaggregate this Section-level data to 2-digit sectors from which we can construct the Experian 38 sectors we use official survey data:

- In the case of employee jobs, we use the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) and Business Register & Employment Survey (BRES). These are annual surveys which are not updated after being published – further the methodology has changed over the lifetime of these surveys. We apply a principled set of rules to derive consistent employee job shares within the Sections from the surveys.
- The December 2017 RPS uses the 2015 BRES, which provides data up to 2015. Pre-2010 we have made a working-owners adjustment, based on an overlapping year published by NOMIS in February 2013, in line with their recommended techniques for dealing with discontinuities.
- In the case of self-employed jobs, we use data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Workforce jobs is the sum of employee jobs, self-employed jobs, government trainees and Her Majesty's Forces (who are assigned at the sector level to Public Administration and Defence).

To estimate full-time equivalent employment (FTE), we use data on hours worked in each sector and region derived from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). ASHE is also used to derive wage data for each region and sector.² We also use, for this purpose, compensation of employee data from the regional accounts. The total hours worked series has been revised slightly compared to June 2017 due to revised employee jobs and, as a consequence, FTE history has been revised too.

¹ The ONS has ceased publishing official 2-digit employee jobs data for the regions. The approach we have taken is consistent with the approach recommended by the ONS to derive 2-digit estimates.

² We do not routinely publish sector level wage forecasts; however, it is available on request.

GVA measured on the income basis is published in the regional accounts at an annual frequency in current prices. Total GVA and GVA by industry lag the latest complete year by 12 months. With the exception of manufacturing, the industry detail is only at the section level. Beginning with the December 2013 Regional Accounts (which were first incorporated in the March 2014 RPS), manufacturing GVA is available at the sub-section level. To construct the Chain Volume Measure data we follow these steps:

- the data is disaggregated and made quarterly using workforce jobs data;
- the data is deflated at the industry level using the UK deflators for the industries;
- the data is aggregated to produce a regional total – this implicitly creates a regional deflator by taking into account the different weightings of industries within a region.

Income is published in the regional accounts on an annual basis with a full breakdown of income sources and deductions.

Income sources are:

- compensation of employees : wages and salaries *plus* employers social contributions
- self-employment income
- Net Property Income : made up of property income received *less* income paid
- transfers from the State (i.e. benefits and pensions)
- other Transfers

Income deductions are:

- taxes
- social contributions
- transfers to others

The sum of income sources *less* income deductions constitutes disposable income. To convert this annual data to quarterly jobs we use (depending on the component) employee jobs, self-employee jobs or the UK quarterly pattern. We constrain these quarterly series to the official UK published data. Real disposable income is obtained by deflating disposable income by the consumer price deflator. Note that the income data is different compared to June 2017 RPS due to:

- changes in the methodology of imputed rent by ONS, gross operating surplus have been revised all the way back to 1997
- and minor revisions to other components throughout the period, mainly compensation of employees,

Household spending is derived by sharing out UK nominal expenditure using regional shares of expenditure reported in the Living Costs and Food Survey by type of expenditure. Nominal regional spending is deflated by published UK deflators and then aggregated to produce a regional total. This again implicitly creates a regional cost of living measure which we also publish.

Population projections are obtained from the ONS, based on the 2014 sub-national projections for England, and also for Scotland and Wales for the first time. These are spliced onto the 2014 mid-year estimates and constrained to the latest national 2014-based projections. The revisions back to 2002 due to the 2011 census were taken into account in the December 2014 RPS.

Our working-age definition incorporates all announced future changes in the state pension age:

- The state pension age for women is rising from 60 to 65, equal with males. Both will then rise, in step, to 67 in our current forecast period.
- Female state retirement age started to increase from 60 in April 2012 and will reach 65 by 2018q4.

- From April 2019, both men and women will see their state retirement age rise from 65 to 66, with men reaching 66 by April 2020, and women a few months later in October 2020.
- The move from 66 to 67 is scheduled from April 2026 until April 2028 for both men and women.

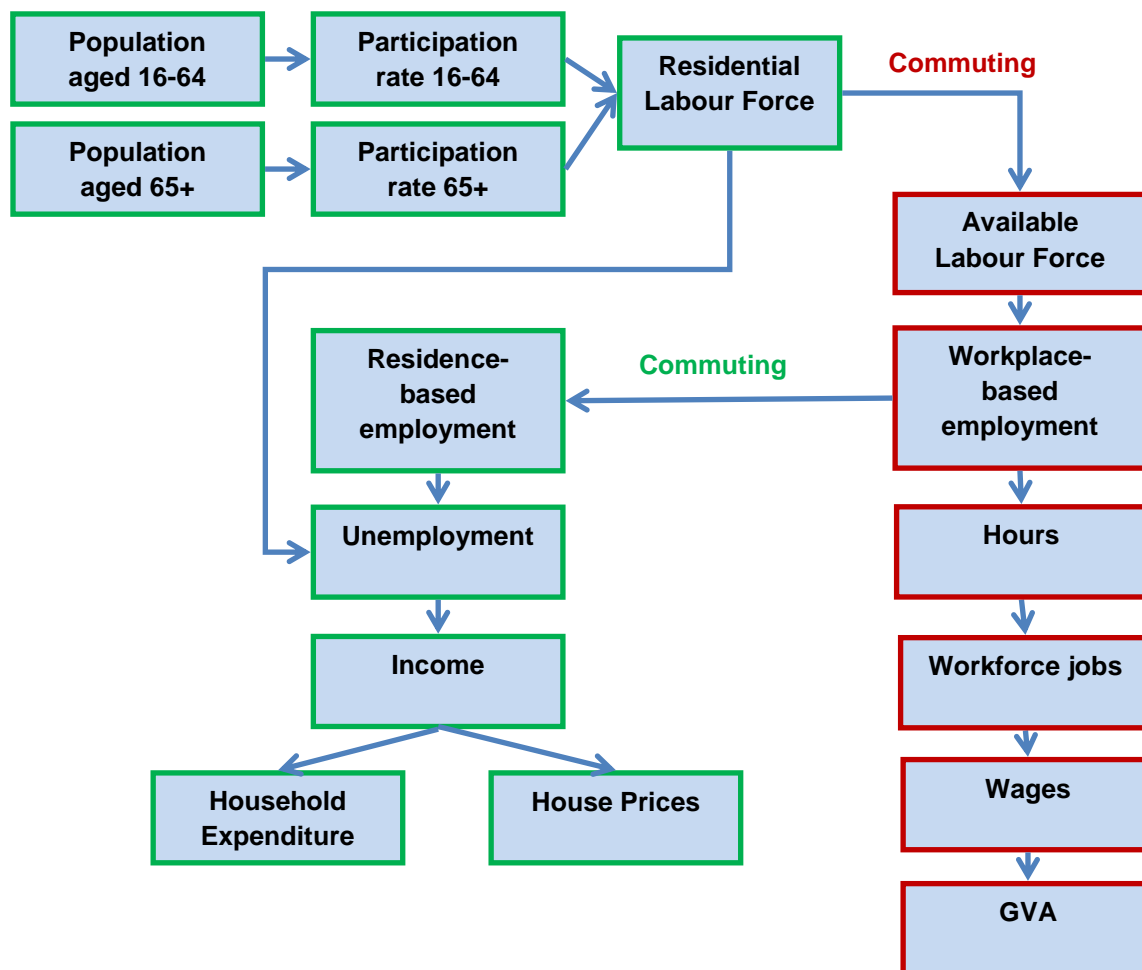
The 2013 Autumn Statement stated that the rise in state pension age to 68 would be moved forward from 2046 to the mid-2030's. However, with no firm date, we have not yet incorporated this into our working age and state retirement age definitions.

Under the current law, the State Pension age is due to increase to 68 between 2044 and 2046. Following a recent review, however, the government announced plans to bring this timetable forward. The State Pension age is now set to increase to 68 between 2037 and 2039. The policy change was announced as of July 2017

We publish the following breakdown of population: school age (ages 0-15), state working age, state retirement age, adult population (16 and over) and total. Beginning in the March 2015 RPS, we also publish both the population aged 16-64 and 65 and over. Although their respective participation rates are not published, they can be derived. Our overall participation rate is based on a ratio of the total labour force to the entire adult population (not only the working age population).

3.2.2 Forecast

The regional model is sequential. Each variable is dependent only on variables earlier in the sequence and not variables later in the sequence. Variables are either workplace-based (**red outlined boxes**) or residence-based (**green-outlined boxes**.) Workplace-based and residence-based variables are linked by commuting relationships derived from the 2011 Census.



The population – split into two age ranges – is taken from the National and Sub-National Population Projections. We forecast participation rates for these age bands separately as they are subject to different trends. The total residential labour force is the sum of the labour force aged 16-64 and 65-plus. The aggregate participation rate is determined by two factors:

- The participation rate of the two age bands; and
- The share of each of the two age bands in the adult population.

The participation rate for those aged 16-64 is expected to remain relatively stable throughout the forecasting period. However, the rate for those aged 65 and over will grow strongly due to factors such as increasing life expectancy and rising state pension ages.

At the UK level, the share of the adult population aged 65 and over is projected to rise sharply over the next twenty years. There is, however, considerable variation at the regional level. Greater London – the youngest region in the UK – is projected to have a stable share.

These factors combine to produce substantial variation in the labour force forecasts for different regions.

Commuting flows are used to derive the available labour force for a region. This is:

Workers Resident in the Region – Workers Commuting Out + Workers Commuting In

In the case of Greater London, the South East and the East of England, these flows lead to a substantial difference between the residential labour force and the available labour force. The effect is still present but less pronounced in other regions.

The available labour force is one of the drivers in forecasting workplace-based employment. The other drivers include the industry mix and the performance of industries at the UK level. If industries with a high share in the region are performing well at the UK level, this will benefit the region.

The workplace-based employment is converted back into residence-based employment. This is:

Workplace-based Employment – Workers Living Elsewhere + Residents Working Elsewhere

From this point, residence and workplace based variables are solved in parallel with residence-based variables dependent on residence-based employment and workplace-based variables dependent on workplace-based employment.

The residential labour force and residence-based employment are used to calculate unemployment. Residential income is driven by employment; and itself drives house price and household expenditure forecasts.

Workplace-based employment drives aggregate hours worked, wages and GVA. These aggregate variables feed into the detailed part of the model, which produces forecasts for each industry:



In each case, we forecast shares of the region within the UK industry. We then share out the UK industry data subject to the constraint of the total that has already been determined and the UK total.

3.3 Local methodology

3.3.1 History

As at the regional level, all local economic history used in the RPS is derived from official statistics published by the ONS. Our approach to using this data is identical to that given above at 3.2.1. However, data at the local level is more likely to be incomplete¹ or inconsistent² than is the case at the regional level. For this reason, there is greater call for the application of techniques to construct missing data and to remove inconsistencies than is the case at the regional level.

¹ For some local areas, publication of certain data by the ONS is restricted because to do so would effectively disclose individual responses to ONS data-collection surveys (e.g. if there are only one or two firms in a certain industry in a particular locality.)

² In some cases, sample sizes in ONS data-collection surveys at the local level are very small. This leads to data of comparatively poor quality and relatively high volatility.

In all cases, local area data in a particular region is constrained to match the regional total for the same variable. This has two particular advantages:

- Local data is made consistent with regional data of the same vintage.
- Where local data has been estimated or constructed, the regional data ensure that the estimates together are consistent with more reliable data.

The ONS do not publish a workforce jobs series at the local level. Accordingly, we construct workforce jobs series for each local area using BRES/ABI in the same way that BRES is used at the regional level to disaggregate section estimates. The BRES share for a particular industry of a local area in its parent region is used to disaggregate the regional workforce jobs series for that industry. As BRES is a survey, the figures over time for a particular local area industry combination can be volatile¹. Further, certain years' results may be withheld to prevent disclosure of confidential data. Accordingly, to obtain sensible data it is necessary for us to smooth out this volatility and to interpolate over the gaps.

At the local level, the most timely and comprehensive data are Annual Population Survey (APS) for residence and workplace-based employment and unemployment data². These data are obtained directly from NOMIS and then constrained to the national numbers.

In September 2015, we re-visited the relationship between local workforce jobs and workplace-based employment. The local workforce jobs (which make use of BRES shares) was benchmarked to the ILO workplace-based employment which itself has first been benchmarked to the Census 2011 point with the pattern in years either side preserved.

Regional accounts data is provided at sub-regional level for both GVA and income as it is at the regional level. The same methods are used at the local level as at the regional level to process these data. However, sub-regional data is only published for NUTS2 and NUTS3. Since not all local authorities constitute a NUTS3, it is necessary to disaggregate these data to local level. Further, the data provided at NUTS3 are less comprehensive than those provided at NUTS2³. We make use of this NUTS2 data by constraining our disaggregated NUTS3 estimates to their parent NUTS2. We then disaggregate these constrained NUTS3 data to local data³.

In the case of GVA, the data provided at NUTS2 is at the section level with sub-sectional data for manufacturing. For NUTS3, several sections are aggregated. In particular, there is less detail in the service sectors. Disaggregation (of industrial data and from NUTS3 to local data) takes place using workforce jobs data at the industry level.

In the case of Income, the data provided at NUTS2 has the same level of detail as at the regional level. For NUTS3, the ONS has previously only released data at the primary and secondary level. They have now produced the full breakdown of income, which we have included since our September 2015 RPS. Disaggregation from NUTS3 to local level takes place using employee jobs, self-employed jobs, unemployment or population.

No estimates of household spending are provided at the local level. Household spending is, therefore, derived by using the share of local disposable income in regional disposable income.

Since June 2016, we have applied a moving average procedure to smooth the Annual Population Survey data which has resulted in revisions to our historical data.

¹ The volatility represents sampling variability rather than actual volatility in the population data.

² In line with ONS guidelines, we use the official model-based estimates of local unemployment that are more accurate than survey data which suffers from volatility.

³ NUTS2 is provided at the same level of detail as NUTS1 (i.e. regional) level.

3.3.2 Forecast

The local authority model is run separately for the local authorities in each region and takes the regional forecast as given. Accordingly, as with local history, local forecasts are constrained to the regional forecasts of the parent region.

Our local model is based on the resolution of demand and supply for labour and it takes into account commuting between local areas within a region and across the regional boundary. The properties of the model are these:

- When unemployment is low, labour supply growth is the key determinant of growth.
- When unemployment is high, growth in demand for labour is the key determinant of growth.
- As unemployment decreases,
 - Labour supply growth becomes relatively more important
 - Growth in demand for labour becomes relatively less important
- An area's workplace employment growth depends on labour supply not only in the area but also
 - Labour supply growth in other local areas in the region from which it has historically drawn inward commuters.
 - Its historic share of incoming workers across the regional boundary.
- An area's residence based employment growth depends on demand for labour not only in the area but also
 - Growth in demand for labour in other local areas in the region to which it has historically supplied commuters.
 - Its historic share of outgoing workers commuting across the regional boundary.
- Workplace based employment drives GVA growth.
- Residence based employment drives Income and, accordingly, spending growth.

The starting point is an estimate of the growth in the participation rate of those aged 16-64 and 65-plus in a local area. These are used to derive labour force growth.

In parallel, demand for labour is estimated. This is done at the industry level by linking job growth¹ in a local area to growth in the same industry at the regional level and then constraining demand for jobs by industry to demand for jobs for the same industry at the regional level. The effect of this is:

- Demand for jobs at the local level is fastest in those industries which are performing best at the regional level.
- Total demand for jobs at the local level depends on its industrial structure. Those local areas which have a more than proportionate share of the best performing industries will perform best overall.

The supply and demand for labour is then resolved in the following way:

- Total demand² for jobs for each local area is converted into demand for workers according to the historic ratio between jobs and workers into that local area.
- The inflow and outflow of workers across the regional boundary is shared out between local areas according to their historic commuting patterns leading to an adjustment in
 - The remaining demand for labour for a local area (*inflow*)
 - The remaining available labour for a local area (*outflow*)
- Workplace demands for workers are converted into residence-based demands according to historic commuting patterns.

¹ Separately for employee jobs, self-employee jobs, government trainee jobs and Her Majesty's Forces.

² i.e. all industries and job types aggregated.

- If unemployment is sufficiently high, these demands are satisfied out of the growth in the labour supply and the pool of available (unemployed) workers.
- If unemployment is sufficiently low, these demands can only be satisfied out of the growth in the labour supply.
- If unemployment is above its lower bound but not too high, a proportion of demands are satisfied out of the pool of available workers and the rest are satisfied out of the growth in the labour supply.
- The model makes short-term adjustments in the labour supply in response to demand conditions to reflect the economic reality that
 - When demand is high, the participation rate rises as potential workers are drawn into the labour force by the relatively buoyant conditions;
 - When demand is low, the participation rate declines as disillusioned workers leave the labour force because of the poor job market conditions;
- The unemployment rate, accordingly, behaves as expected.
- The satisfied residence supply for labour is converted back into workplace demands and workplace based employment is calculated for each local area. This is then converted back into jobs and used to produce final workforce jobs estimates for each local area.

The consequence of this is that:

- Local areas with high demand may not see all of that demand satisfied if there is insufficient available labour supply to meet those needs. Jobs growth will, accordingly, be slower.
- Local areas with high labour supply may not see higher growth in residence employment if there is insufficient demand for labour to use it up.

GVA growth is then forecast based on growth in workplace-based employment according to equations, which link GVA growth to workplace-based employment. Income is forecast by component based on residence based employment (in the case of compensation for employees or self-employment), unemployment (in the case of benefits) and population in any other case. Spending depends on income by component.

4 Key changes since September 2017 RPS

4.1 UK forecast

The December RPS forecast is consistent with the November 2017 UK macro forecast.

Over the last year, the UK has shifted from being one of the fastest growing G7 economies to among the slowest. The economic recovery has lost momentum due to a weaker performance from consumer spending and investment. Household incomes have suffered from the combination of higher inflation and sluggish wage growth. Alongside this, companies continued to hold back on investment decisions due to uncertainty over Brexit negotiations.

These factors are set to keep the economy on a slower growth trajectory into next year. However, inflation should begin to unwind and allow for some recovery in household incomes and spending over the second half of 2018. Meanwhile Brexit negotiations will enter their second year and our baseline projections assume a transition arrangement will eventually be agreed. However, with so much still to be decided, uncertainty will persist over the final agreement for some time and investment decisions set to remain cautious. Given this, we project GDP growth to be around 1.5% in 2017 and 2018, down from close to 2% in 2016 and 2015.

The September 2017 RPS was consistent with the August 2017 UK macro forecast. The main change between the December 2017 and September 2017 forecasts is a slight downgrade to the near term unemployment rate, reflecting the stronger than expected labour market statistics seen in the third quarter.

December RPS forecast. Previous forecast (November 2017 macro = December 2017 RPS) in brackets.

UK	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019-2026	2027-2036
GDP growth	2.2% (2.2%)	1.8% (1.8%)	1.6% (1.6%)	1.4% (1.4%)	2.3% (2.3%)	2.0% (2%)
Workforce Jobs growth	1.5% (1.5%)	1.6% (1.6%)	1.1% (0.9%)	0.3% (0.3%)	0.6% (0.6%)	0.6% (0.6%)
Unemployment rate	5.4% (5.4%)	4.9% (4.9%)	4.4% (4.6%)	4.5% (4.8%)	4.6% (4.9%)	4.4% (4.7%)
Real Income growth	3.6% (3.6%)	1.5% (1.5%)	-0.5% (-0.5%)	1.1% (1.1%)	1.9% (1.9%)	2.3% (2.3%)
Spending Volumes growth	2.4% (2.4%)	2.8% (2.8%)	1.8% (1.9%)	0.9% (0.9%)	2.1% (2.1%)	2.1% (2.1%)
House price growth	6.0% (6%)	7.9% (7.9%)	3.7% (2.3%)	2.6% (1.7%)	3.3% (3.4%)	4.1% (4.1%)

November UK Outlook

The following was the outlook in November, consistent with the regional forecast. Our UK macro view is updated monthly and can be found on our website <http://economics.experian.co.uk>.

The second estimate of GDP for 2017q3, showed that the economy grew by 0.4% q-on-q in real terms, against 0.3% in the previous two quarters.

Service sector activity continued to drive the gains, but at 0.4%, q-on-q growth has decelerated compared to 2016h2, and is growing around one or two tenths slower compared to the two years prior to 2017. Pressure on household budgets from rapidly rising inflation and stagnant wage growth has constrained gains in the consumer facing services industries.

The production sector grew by 1%, with the manufacturing component also increasing by 1%, after a weak second quarter of the year.

Despite the acceleration in growth in the third quarter of the year, on an annual basis the improvements remain unimpressive. In the year to 2017q3 the rise was 1.5%, in line with the quarter two gain, but well down on the average increases of 1.8% in 2016 and 2.4% in 2015.

If GDP growth is to accelerate further in the final quarter of the year, a continued improvement in manufacturing outturns will need to offset the slowdown in consumer spending. Exporters have the opportunity to capitalise on enhanced price competitiveness linked to sterling's weakness.

The uptick in manufacturing output in 2017q3 is encouraging, though in the coming quarters it is unlikely to make-up for a slowdown in the much larger services sector

Key risks

Brexit uncertainty stifles the anticipated improvement in business investment.

A sterling crisis has become a key risk given the magnitude of the balance of payments current account deficit (representing almost 7% of GDP). If capital flows deterred by political and economic uncertainty are insufficient to cover this, the exchange rate will have to take the strain.

Risks to the forecast of modest GDP growth reflect uncertainties beyond the EU referendum. While business investment might recover in the second half of 2017 once Brexit uncertainties are removed, the fundamental weaknesses of sluggish earnings growth, weak productivity and faltering employment creation remain. Adverse developments in these areas would hamper consumer confidence and spending, constraining growth in 2017 and beyond.

While risks are still skewed to the downside, there is an upside risk. If the UK can turn its weak trade performance round in the wake of sterling decline, there would be a boost to growth prospects.

4.2 Regional Forecast

We have not used any regional data published after July 12th 2017 in producing this update of the RPS. It is possible that between this date and the release of the RPS some new history may have been released and/or revised.

December 2017 RPS forecast. Previous forecast (September 2017 RPS) in brackets.

Regional forecast 2017-36 ave. growth	SW	SE	GL	ET	EM	WM	NW	NE	YH	SC	WA	NI
GDP growth	2.1% (2%)	2.3% (2.3%)	2.5% (2.5%)	2.2% (2.2%)	2.0% (2%)	1.9% (1.9%)	1.8% (1.8%)	1.6% (1.6%)	1.9% (1.9%)	1.7% (1.7%)	1.8% (1.7%)	1.7% (1.6%)
Workforce Jobs growth	0.7% (0.7%)	0.8% (0.8%)	0.9% (0.9%)	0.7% (0.7%)	0.6% (0.6%)	0.6% (0.6%)	0.4% (0.4%)	0.3% (0.3%)	0.6% (0.6%)	0.3% (0.3%)	0.3% (0.3%)	0.5% (0.4%)
Unemployment rate	3.7% (4%)	3.3% (3.6%)	6.1% (6.4%)	4.2% (4%)	3.9% (4.1%)	5.5% (5.6%)	4.4% (4.6%)	5.7% (6.1%)	4.8% (5%)	4.2% (4.5%)	4.3% (4.6%)	4.8% (5.1%)
Real income growth	1.9% (1.9%)	2.2% (2.2%)	2.1% (2.1%)	2.2% (2.2%)	2.0% (2%)	1.7% (1.7%)	1.7% (1.7%)	1.5% (1.5%)	1.8% (1.8%)	1.5% (1.5%)	1.6% (1.6%)	1.7% (1.7%)
Spending volumes growth	2.0% (2%)	2.3% (2.3%)	2.6% (2.6%)	2.2% (2.2%)	2.0% (2%)	1.8% (1.8%)	1.9% (1.9%)	1.6% (1.6%)	2.0% (2%)	1.8% (1.8%)	1.7% (1.7%)	1.9% (1.9%)
House price growth	3.9% (3.9%)	4.4% (4.4%)	4.3% (4.4%)	4.4% (4.4%)	3.7% (3.7%)	3.7% (3.7%)	3.5% (3.5%)	2.9% (2.9%)	3.2% (3.2%)	3.4% (3.4%)	3.4% (3.4%)	3.3% (3.3%)

5 A note from the ONS on volatility

A change in methodology behind Office for National Statistics (ONS) employment surveys has produced widespread volatility in the historical data, particularly from 2010.

The following is an explanation directly from the ONS, please see [section 3](#) for more information on how we deal with volatility in the official data:

“A fundamental redevelopment of Workforce Jobs sources, classifications, methods and systems was recently undertaken and is explained clearly in the article ‘Revisions to Workforce Jobs’ (Barford 2010). One of the key changes highlighted in this article was the replacement of a matched-pairs estimator with a point-in-time ratio estimator, ONS’s standard method. This change was aimed at removing the bias caused by the matched-pairs method. A matched-pairs method tends to underestimate change over time, as it excludes the births and deaths of businesses in the sample. In essence, only those businesses sampled in two consecutive periods are used to produce estimates of change. This bias used to cause large revisions when the short-term employment surveys series were benchmarked retrospectively to Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) estimates. BRES is an annual survey which selects a larger sample and also uses a point-in-time ratio estimator. The point-in-time estimator includes all sampled businesses in each and every period, which reduces the bias over-time. The trade-off is an increase in volatility caused by the inclusion of the rotated part of the sample for small and medium sized businesses. Sample rotation spreads the administrative burden; ensuring businesses are selected for a limited number of periods.

Unfortunately, the volatility of regional estimates at an industry level has been far greater than anyone anticipated and in general has been met unfavourably by users, particularly those that are interested in regional data. There are a number of instances, for example, whereby businesses have been ‘rotated in’ to a particular region and served to distort the level of jobs for a particular industry, usually for a period of 5 quarters, which is the time a rotated business remains in the sample of the STES.”

Regional employment is the most timely and only source of quarterly data at this level of geography and is used to derive the quarterly profile of other variables in our regional models. Therefore this volatility is reflected in output as well as employment. Please see [section 3](#) for more information on how we deal with volatility in the official data.

Appendix A....Glossary of terms

Glossary of terms

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Total work done in an economy in a period measured in one of three ways:

- Output Measure: Output of all goods and services less inputs
- Income Measure: Income earned by all parts of the economy
- Demand Measure: Demand for goods and services comprised of
 - Expenditure by Households, NPISH and Government
 - Investment (Gross Fixed Capital Formation) by business and Government
 - Changes in Inventories and Acquisitions less disposals of valuables
 - Exports less imports

GDP is measured in market prices: this means that the prices used to convert output of goods and services into money include taxes and subsidies by the government. Distributors' margins are credited to the industry producing the goods and services not to the distribution industry.

Gross Value Added (GVA) GVA is identical to GDP except that it is measured in basic prices. These prices do not include taxes and subsidies imposed by the government. Distributors' margins are credited to the distribution industry. GVA for an industry is described by either of the following identities:

- GVA is identical to output of the industry less inputs of the industry
- GVA is identical to the sum of
 - Compensation of Employees in the industry
 - Gross Operating Surplus (i.e. profit) earned by capital in the industry

When looking at GVA for an industry, it is important to realise that it only includes the output of that industry (i.e. the value added by that industry.) For example retailing GVA only includes the value added by retailers (e.g. customer service etc).

GVA in the RPS is measured by the place where the work is done (workplace based) and not where the worker resides.

Current Price / Chain Volume Measure (CVM) Data where the unit of measurement is money are available either in Current Price (or Nominal) terms or CVM (or Real) terms. The distinction is important because the buying power of money changes over time. For current price data, no adjustment is made for this fact. CVM data adjusts all figures in a time series to be consistent with the buying power of money in a given year (the reference year). Current Price data, thus, measures values while CVM data measures volumes. For example, Current Price GDP is the money value of production in a given period while CVM GDP is the amount of production. For years before the reference year, CVM data is not additive (thus the sum of GVA for all sectors will not equal total GVA.) In all other years, CVM data is additive.

Productivity A measure of efficiency calculated by estimating output per unit of input

Workforce Jobs A count of the total number of jobs in the UK, a region or industry. It is comprised of

- Employee Jobs: The number of jobs where the occupant is an employee.
- Self-employee Jobs: The number of jobs where the occupant is self-employed
- Government-Sponsored Trainees: The number of jobs where the occupant is on a government training scheme.
- Her Majesty's Forces: The number of jobs in the armed forces (part of Public Administration & Defence).

Workforce jobs and all its components count jobs and not people. This means that where a person has two or more jobs they are counted once for each job that they have. This can be contrasted with the ILO employment measures. Another consequence of counting jobs is that Workforce Jobs is based on the place of work not the residence of the worker

Full Time Equivalent Employment: Our definition is based on total hours worked and is as follows:

FTE = (HOURS) divided by (37.8*13)

Here a constant yard-stick of full-time employment for all industries, regions and industry-region based on thirteen working weeks in a quarter at 37.8 hours a week. 37.8 hours is the average hours worked by a full-time worker in the UK between 1990 and 2009.

ILO Employment The International Labour Organisation (ILO) provides an international standard method of measuring employment. In the UK this is implemented by means of a survey known as the Labour Force Survey (LFS) or Annual Population Survey (APS). It is a people count based on the main job that a person has. Employment comprises:

- Employees: People whose main job is as an employee.
- Self-employed: People whose main job is as a self-employed person.
- Government-Sponsored Trainees: People whose main job is on a government training scheme.
- Unpaid Family Workers: People whose main job is as an unpaid worker in a business owned by their own family.

There are two measures:

- Residence based, which depends on the place of residence of the worker (irrespective of where they work.)
- Workplace based, which depends on the place of work of the worker (irrespective of where they reside.)

The ILO Employment reported is based on the entire population in work ages 16+.

ILO Unemployment The International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of unemployment covers people who are: out of work, want a job, have actively sought work in the previous four weeks and are available to start work within the next fortnight; or out of work and have accepted a job that they are waiting to start in the next fortnight.

ILO unemployment is only available on a place of residence basis and is based on the entire unemployed population ages 16+.

Labour Force / Economically Active The sum of ILO Unemployment and ILO Employment. That is all people who are in work or who are looking for a work. A person who is in the labour force is said to be Economically Active.

The Labour Force includes the entire Economically Active population ages 16+.

Economically Inactive A person who is not economically active. The principle categories are retirees, students, children, long-term sick or disabled, homemakers and carers. This does not include school-aged people.

Claimant Count Unemployment Measures the number of people who are claiming Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA). This is always less than ILO Unemployment because not everyone who is ILO unemployed is eligible to claim JSA and not all who are eligible claim. Particular important cases are:

- People whose partners work more than 16 hours a week – they cannot claim JSA but may be ILO unemployed.
- People who are past state retirement age – they cannot claim JSA but may be ILO unemployed.

Extra Regio In addition to the 9 English regions and the nations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the UK's economic boundary includes the continental shelf and UK government operations abroad (i.e. embassies and HMF abroad). The ONS does not assign income or GVA attributable to these sources to any region or nation. Therefore, the sum of regional Income or GVA does not equal the UK. This also impacts on two industries Extraction & Mining and Public Administration & Defence.

School Age Population Population aged 0-15.

Working Age Population Population above the age of 15 but below the current state retirement age for their gender.

Retirement Age Population The population above state retirement age. The precise retirement date depends on date of birth and, for those born before 6th November 1953, on gender. At present, there is a phased equalisation in progress. After 6th November 2018, both men and women will retire at 65. This will rise to 66 between 6th March 2019 and 6th September 2020 and 67 between 6th April 2026 and 6th March 2027. Our forecasts take account of these changes to retirement legislation.

Adult (16+) Population Number of all people aged 16 and above.

Household Consumer Spending The accounts relate to consumption expenditure by UK resident households, either in the UK or the rest of the world. Spending by non-residents in the UK is excluded from the total

Household consumption includes goods and services received by households as income in kind, in lieu of cash, imputed rent for the provision of owner-occupied housing services and consumption of own production

For national accounting purposes, households are individuals or groups of people sharing living accommodation

Household Disposable Income Household disposable income is the total payment to households (from wages, interest, property income and dividends) less taxes, social security, council payments and interest

Cost of living index Regional consumer spending deflator. Gives an indication of how the value of consumer spending has grown in comparison to the volume.

NUTS (Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques – Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) A European Union standard for classifying the subdivisions of member states. In the case of the UK, the English regions and the three nations are classified as NUTS1. The next level – NUTS2 – typically consists of aggregations of local authorities in the same region. The level below that, NUTS3 consists either of single local authorities or a small aggregation of local authorities in the same NUTS2. In Scotland, some local authorities are divided between NUTS3. NUTS4 and NUTS5 also exist but are not used in the RPS.

Appendix B...Sector definitions

Sector definitions

Experian 38-sector	SIC-2007 division	Falls within Experian 12-sector
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	01 Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities	Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing
	02 Forestry and logging	
	03 Fishing and aquaculture	
Extraction & Mining	06 Extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas	Extraction & Mining
	05 Mining of coal and lignite	
	07 Mining of metal ores	
	08 Other mining and quarrying	
	09 Mining support service activities	
Food, Drink & Tobacco	10 Manufacture of food products	Manufacturing
	11 Manufacture of beverages	
	12 Manufacture of tobacco products	
Textiles & Clothing	13 Manufacture of textiles	
	14 Manufacture of wearing apparel	
	15 Manufacture of leather and related products	
Wood & Paper	16 Manufacture of wood and of products of wood and cork, except furniture; manufacture of articles of straw and plaiting materials	
	17 Manufacture of paper and paper products	
Printing and Reproduction of Recorded Media	18 Printing and reproduction of recorded media	
Fuel Refining	19 Manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products	
Chemicals	20 Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products	
Pharmaceuticals	21 Manufacture of basic pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical preparations	
Rubber, Plastic and Other Non-Metallic Mineral Products	22 Manufacture of rubber and plastic products	
	23 Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products	
Metal Products	24 Manufacture of basic metals	
	25 Manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment	
Computer & Electronic Products	26 Manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products	

	27 Manufacture of electrical equipment	
Machinery & Equipment	28 Manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c.	
Machinery & Equipment	29 Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers	
	30 Manufacture of other transport equipment	
Other Manufacturing	31 Manufacture of furniture	
	32 Other manufacturing	
	33 Repair and installation of machinery and equipment	
Utilities	35 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	Utilities
	36 Water collection, treatment and supply	
	37 Sewerage	
	38 Waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery	
	39 Remediation activities and other waste management services. This division includes the provision of remediation services, i.e. the cleanup of contaminated buildings and sites, soil, surface or ground water.	
Construction of Buildings	41 Construction of buildings	Construction
Civil Engineering	42 Civil engineering	
Specialised Construction Activities	43 Specialised construction activities	
Wholesale	45 Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Wholesale & Retail
	46 Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	
Retail	47 Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	
Land Transport, Storage & Post	49 Land transport and transport via pipelines	Transport & Storage
	52 Warehousing and support activities for transportation	
	53 Postal and courier activities	
Air & Water Transport	50 Water transport	
	51 Air transport	
Accommodation & Food Services	55 Accommodation	Accommodation, Food Services & Recreation
	56 Food and beverage service activities	
Recreation	90 Creative, arts and entertainment activities	
	91 Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities	
	92 Gambling and betting activities	
	93 Sports activities and amusement and	

	recreation activities	
Media Activities	58 Publishing activities	Information & communication
	59 Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities	
	60 Programming and broadcasting activities	
Telecoms	61 Telecommunications	
Computing & Information Services	62 Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	
	63 Information service activities	
Finance	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	Finance & Insurance
	66 Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities	
Insurance & Pensions	65 Insurance, reinsurance and pension funding, except compulsory social security	
Real Estate	68 Real estate activities	Professional & Other Private Services
Professional Services	69 Legal and accounting activities	
	70 Activities of head offices; management consultancy activities	
	71 Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis	
	72 Scientific research and development	
	73 Advertising and market research	
	74 Other professional, scientific and technical activities	
	75 Veterinary activities	
Administrative & Supportive Activities	77 Rental and leasing activities	
	78 Employment activities	
	79 Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities	
	80 Security and investigation activities	
	81 Services to buildings and landscape activities	
	82 Office administrative, office support and other business support activities	
Other Private Services	94 Activities of membership organisations	
	95 Repair of computers and personal and household goods	
	96 Other personal service activities	
	97 Activities of households as employers of domestic personnel	
	98 Undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of private households for	

	own use
Public Administration & Defence	84 Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
	99 Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies
Education	85 Education
Health	86 Human health activities
Residential Care & Social Work	87 Residential care activities
	88 Social work activities without accommodation

Appendix C...Geography definitions

We forecast at the following geographic breakdowns:

- UK
- Regions (12)
- Counties (64)
- Local authorities...post-2009 boundaries (347+33 London boroughs)

A full lookup in excel form can be found [here](#)

Appendix D...FAQ's

- Why does Experian's history for variable x differ from another source / raw survey data?
 - There are several possible reasons.
 - The first is a vintage mismatch. The ONS frequently revises its economic data in order to take account of new information or improved methodology. The date at which Experian has taken data for the current RPS is given in the body of this guide. Another source may have used earlier or later data.
 - The second relates to data processing. As explained in the body of this guide, it is sometimes necessary at the regional level and (particularly) at the local level to process or construct data. Our approach to doing this is explained in the body of this guide. We apply consistent methodologies to process the data. Other sources may carry this out in different ways. When compared against the raw source, our data may differ because, for example:
 - It has been constrained to other sources.
 - It has been converted into CVM data or quarterly data.
 - It has been made consistent with other data or a later vintage of data.
 - The third relates to raw survey data. Raw survey data is often volatile and does not take into account information outside the survey. Official statistics and our data are constructed from the raw survey data to take into account volatility, sampling issues and all available data sources.
- Why does Experian's job history differ from the *ABI* or *BRES*?
 - The *ABI/BRES* are surveys taken from a particular year; they are not updated.
 - *ABI/BRES* is a source for ONS' workforce jobs but it is not the only source.
 - *BRES* does not include government supported trainees, HM forces jobs and every self-employed small business. As a result, *BRES*'s employment numbers (mainly consisting of total employees and working owners e.g sole traders) would be lower than the ONS's workforce jobs.
 - Experian's workforce job history is designed to be consistent with the latest available ONS workforce jobs estimates, which includes a broad range of jobs (i.e. employee jobs, self-employment jobs, government supported trainees and HM forces).
 - Raw survey is often incomplete and suffers from sampling variability, which does not represent true volatility in the underlying population data. This must be removed to ensure high quality data.
- How often are data updated?
 - We always use the latest available data at the cut-off date for history.
 - New GVA data is available from the ONS
 - At the UK Level, three times a quarter.
 - At the Regional and Local level, annually (normally in December.)
 - New Expenditure data is available from the ONS at the UK level twice a quarter.
 - New LFS Employment data is available from the ONS once a quarter.
 - New Workforce Jobs data is available from the ONS once a quarter.
 - New *BRES* is published once a year (normally in December.)
 - New Income data is available from the ONS
 - At the UK level, once a quarter.
 - At the Regional and Local level, once a year (normally in April.)
 - Population projections are published once every two years.
 - New mid-year population estimates are published annually.
 - New LCFS is published annually.
- How do revisions to historical data affect your history and forecasts?
 - As explained above, we always take into account the latest historical data.
 - The monthly UK macro forecast is updated after each ONS revision of GDP for a quarter.
 - The RPS is based on a particular UK macro forecast and includes the latest available regional and local data.

- Forecasts are updated to be consistent with the latest historical data. While this will typically only affect the short-to-medium term, there are times when the long-run is necessarily affected. This will usually be when there has been a substantial revision to history.
- How are past growth trends captured in the forecasts?
 - All our models are econometric models.
 - An econometric model is a model estimated on historical data.
 - The coefficients (i.e. interactions) in the model embed historical relationships between variables and historical growth rates in a variable.
 - Where we believe that the forecast relationships may differ from history, we make appropriate adjustments to the forecast. This may be the case, for example, where an area has been substantially redeveloped in recent years.
- How are industry/regional/local developments and policies reflected in forecasts?
 - If past developments and policies are reflected in model inputs (for example population) or in history then they will be automatically captured by the model.
 - Our forecasts are policy-neutral in the sense that in our baseline assumes that sufficient projects, infrastructure, jobs etc. will be provided in order to meet the needs of the population in the long term. Thus although the project may not be explicitly included, an assumption that a project of its nature may have been included in the baseline.
 - It is important to realise that many developments or policies may not be sufficiently large enough to affect growth rates or may be implicitly included in the forecast from a higher level of aggregation.
 - We are able to make appropriate adjustments to the forecast to take into account certain large projects.
 - At the industry level we can take into account announced developments in that industry which are large enough to affect the growth in the industry at the national, regional or local level (as the case may be).
 - At the regional and local, we taken into account announced developments or policies which are large enough to affect growth at the regional or local level. The local model, in particular, has the facility to take into account the impact of additional population or jobs in a particular area.
 - The final forecast will show the net effect of the adjustment, after the effects of population constraints, job cannibalisation, commuting patterns etc.
- How does population relate to the employment forecasts?
 - This is discussed in detail in the methodology section above for the regions and the locals.
 - It is important to remember that employment is forecast on both a residence and workplace basis.
 - Residence based employment depends on local population (labour supply) growth but also on demand for work throughout the region and across the regional boundary.
 - Workplace based employment depends on labour supply throughout the region and across the regional boundary.
- What is working age?
 - The definition of working age used based on the state pension age.
 - As the state pension age for men and women changes in line with announced policy, the working age population will change to take this into account.
 - The key changes to the state pension age that have been announced are:
 - A gradual equality in state pension age for men and women.
 - A gradual rise in state pension age for both men and women to 67 (and 68 after the forecast horizon.)
- What is the participation rate / economic activity rate?
 - The participation rate or economic activity rate is the proportion of the population who are either employed or seeking employment (i.e. unemployed.)
 - The participation rate used in our models is based on the entire adult population (16+). This differs from earlier versions of our models which used only the working age population.
 - The participation rate is an endogenous variable in all our models. It is not a fixed assumption.
- What assumptions have been made regarding commuting in the local model?
 - Commuting in the local model is based on estimates given by the ONS.

- These are based on the Census 2011.
- Commuting assumptions are fixed over the forecast.
- However, the outcome for commuting may differ from the assumption because (for example) there is insufficient demand or supply for labour to provide as many workers across a particular commuting relationship.
- How is Full-Time Equivalent employment derived?
 - This is based on the total hours worked (please see the glossary.)
 - The relationship between FTEs and hours is fixed by definition.
 - In different industries, the hours worked per job will differ.
 - Historical data for this is taken from ASHE (please see the body of the guide.)
 - The forecast takes into account changing trends in hours per job. This will necessarily alter the relationship between Full-Time Equivalent employment and jobs.
- How does the weighting of different factors change over the forecast period?
 - There is no fixed rule about the changes in this time.
 - The coefficients of the econometric equations are fixed over time
 - However, at the local level population growth becomes more important as unemployment decreases.

Appendix E...About us



Our economic forecasting expertise

Experian's team of 18 economists is a leading provider of global, national, regional and local economic forecasts and analysis to the commercial and public sectors. Our foresight helps organisations predict the future of their markets, identify new business opportunities, quantify risk and make informed decisions.

Experian's economics team is part of a 140-strong analytics division, which provides an understanding of consumers, markets and economies in the UK and around the world, past, present and future. As part of the Experian group, the analytics division has access to a wealth of research data and innovative software solutions. Its statisticians, econometricians, sociologists, geographers, market researchers and economists carry out extensive research into the underlying drivers of social, economic and market change.

For more information, visit www.experian.co.uk/economics

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Bristol
0117 403 1980
bristol@lichfields.uk

Cardiff
029 2043 5880
cardiff@lichfields.uk

Edinburgh
0131 285 0670
edinburgh@lichfields.uk

Leeds
0113 397 1397
leeds@lichfields.uk

London
020 7837 4477
london@lichfields.uk

Manchester
0161 837 6130
manchester@lichfields.uk

Newcastle
0191 261 5685
newcastle@lichfields.uk

Thames Valley
0118 334 1920
thamesvalley@lichfields.uk