

Cannock Chase Local Plan (2018-2040)

Employment Topic Paper

December 2023





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1. Introduction

1.1. Local Plans contain strategic policies which should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development (NPPF, para 20). This Topic Paper sets out the evidence used to determine the employment requirements for the Local Plan and sets out the sources of supply over the plan period 2018-2040.

2. Policy context

2.1. The NPPF (Sept 2023) provides the overarching framework for economic growth from a planning perspective. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to "the achievement of sustainable development". Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out the three objectives in order to achieve sustainable development, which includes an **economic objective**, which states that:

"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".

- 2.2. Paragraph 81 of the NPPF sets out that Planning Policies should play an active role in building a strong, competitive economy. It states that Planning Policy "should help create the conditions which businesses can invest, expand and adapt". Paragraph 82 states that planning policies should:
 - Set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
 - Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
 - Seek to address potential barriers to investment; and
 - Be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan.
- 2.3. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further guidance on how local authorities should approach both housing and economic land reviews (HELAA). This provides a detailed breakdown of and methodology of identifying suitable land for employment through the HELAA process.

3. Establishing economic need

Introduction

- There have been three Economic Development Need Assessments (EDNA's) produced since preparation of the Local Plan commenced in 2018. Each EDNA has informed various stages of the Local Plan process as follows:
 - Cannock Chase Economic Development Needs Assessment (2019) -Informed the Issues and Options Consultation
 - Cannock Chase Economic Development Needs Assessment Covid-19 Update Report (2020) - Informed the Preferred Options Consultation
 - Cannock Chase Economic Development Needs Assessment Update (2023) -Informed the Pre-Submission Consultation

Economic Development Needs Assessment Final Report (Lichfields - April 2019)

- The Economic Development Needs Assessment (referred to as '2019 EDNA' 3.2. in this report) was commissioned in April 2019. This identified a range of scenarios for future economic growth to establish the future employment needs for the District.
- The 2019 EDNA identified a need ranging from 46 to 66 hectares (ha). No 3.3. target was included in the Issues and Scoping Local Plan given that this pre-dated the 2019 EDNA and was the first stage of the Local Plan Process.
- The 2019 Local Plan Issues and Options did not identify a specific target or options for the employment requirements but released the EDNA for comment alongside the consultation which suggested a range of between 30Ha and 67Ha between 2018 and 2036 and between 33Ha and 74Ha to 2038.

EDNA (2020)

- The Covid pandemic had immediate implications for the global economy and led to the need to reassess the employment growth forecasting in the EDNA. Additionally, the UK had left the European Union and the West Midlands Interchange has been approved (Approved 4th May 2020, Ref:2020 No. 511¹). This set a different context for the economy which was considered in the 2020 update.
- 3.6. The EDNA 2020 identified a range of between 46 and 66Ha of Employment Land over the period of 2018-2038. This is spilt between 80% industrial employment land, with 20% office space. The minimum and maximum split is as follows:

¹ The West Midlands Rail Freight Interchange Order 2020 (planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

Table 1: Minimum and Maximum Employment Land Ranges

Employment Floorspace Range	Industrial (80%)	Office/ Use Class E (20%)			
Minimum (46Ha)	36.8Ha	9.2Ha			
Maximum (66Ha)	52.8Ha	13.2Ha			

3.7. The range identified is between 36.8Ha to 52.8Ha for Industrial and 9.2Ha to 13.2Ha for office/ Use Class E.

EDNA Update 2023 (Lichfields)

3.8. The EDNA was further updated in 2023 to inform the final version of the Local Plan to ensure that the most up to date information was used to inform the final employment land requirements. This increased the range to between 52Ha and 74Ha. When taking into account potential employment land losses over the plan period, this increases the range between 74 and 96 Ha over the plan period (taking into account an annual loss of 1Ha per annum).

West Midlands Strategic Employment Site Study (May 2021)

The study considered Strategic Employment Land using a 25 hectare (gross) minimum threshold, a scale of site that which would not normally be considered to be under the bracket of a 'local' employment need to be delivered through Local Plans. The study sought to audit the existing allocated and committed sites in the study area and was used as evidence to determine if the demand for strategic scale employment sites was being met in the West Midlands. The original Strategic Employment sites study was undertaken in 2015, which was further updated in May 2021.

- 3.9. The Study provides a commentary on take-up rates in the industrial and office markets in the Study area over the period 2015-2108, as well as providing an audit of existing allocated and committed sites in the Study Area (defined on Figure 1.1) which meet the definition of 'Strategic Employment.
- 3.10. The report also considers the conclusions that were reached by the 2015 Study in relation to those locations in the Study Area that have the potential to provide a supply of additional strategic employment sites in the future. The Study does not seek to predict future need (Purpose of the EDNA); however, a high-level assessment as to the extent to which certain locations / sites might be able to contribute to identified shortfalls in supply was examined. As such, it provides a first step contribution to the evidence base that will inform future Local Plan reviews across the sub region.
- 3.11. The report (Paragraph 1.16) defines a Strategic Employment Site as a "Business development site that can bring net additional activity and jobs to the region by:
 - Attracting nationally or internationally mobile business activity;

- Providing accommodation that would not otherwise come forward through the local planning system, principally because
 - o They are large sites, providing at least some 25Ha and often much more
 - o they may be in greenfield locations

In regards to Cannock, a site was promoted for 25Ha (Table 6.2 - Industry Promoted Sites) but the Council have no further feedback from the site promoter. A site was also identified at the M6 Toll Junction 7, but this was also not promoted in the Local Plan.

3.12. Whilst two sites were identified, these sites have not come forward through the Call for Sites and other site identification exercise. Therefore the high level need identified in this report would be met on land outside the district. A further update is in progress.

4. Assessing economic supply

Local Plan - Issues and Scope Consultation

- 4.1. The Local Plan Issues and Scope Consultation was the first consultation on the new Local Plan, which ran from Monday 2nd July until Tuesday 28th August 2018. This document set out what the current policy was from the adopted Local Plan (2014) (Policy CP8). The document outlined what issues the Council needed to consider, including the need to provide an up to date employment land requirement (Paragraph 5.73) and the implications and opportunities of the closed Rugeley Power Station (Paragraph 5.78).
- 4.2. As this was the first consultation stage of the Local Plan, no detailed need figures were included in this early stage.

Issues and Options Local Plan

- 4.3. The Issues and Options Local Plan Consultation ran from 13th May to the 8th July 2019. Objective 4 of the Issues and Options Local Plan entitled "Encourage a vibrant local economy and workforce" set out the Council's broad approach to meeting this objective, including to provide for the employment needs of existing local businesses and facilitate a range of sizes and types of employment sites to meet modern business needs.
- 4.4. Chapter 8 of the Issues and Options Document sets out the Council's more detailed approach to addressing employment needs. It provides feedback on the consultation responses received during the previous Issues Consultation.
- 4.5. Paragraph 8.21 outlines that the most recent ELAA had identified that there was 25Ha of Employment Land available. No needs were specified in this version of

the Local Plan. The Plan proposed five options to meet the future employment needs:

 Option A: Urban areas - Use sites already identified for employment developments within the urban areas and explore opportunities for further supply on urban sites.

Option B (Rugeley Power Station)

- Option B1: Urban Areas and employment-led/mixed use redevelopment of former Rugeley Power Station
- Option B2: Urban Areas and housing-led redevelopment of former Rugeley Power Station

Option C: Green Belt sites

- Option C1: In combination with the options for the Urban Areas and former Rugeley Power Station consider Green Belt sites. Prioritise extensions to Kingswood Lakeside followed by extensions to other existing employment sites
- Option C2: In combination with the options for the Urban Areas and former Rugeley Power Station consider all Green Belt site options across the District with no prioritisation to Kingswood Lakeside.
- 4.6. The Council asked the opinion as to which option the Council should pursue to meet employment needs ahead of the Preferred Options Local Plan.
- 4.7. A preferred target of 50Ha was determined under Policy 4.2 (Provision for New Employment Uses). This was due to the 2020 EDNA having a much lower need figure identified than the present EDNA.

Preferred Options Local Plan

- 4.8. The Preferred Options Local Plan consultation was held between 19th March and 30th April 2021. This provided the first details of the employment needs which were identified in the EDNA, which had been published since the Issues and Options Local Plan.
- 4.9. The document sets out the responses that were received in relation to the five options that were presented in the Issues and Options consultation.
- 4.10. In regards to the overall level of need, Paragraph 6.259 sets out that the 2019 EDNA had identified a total range need of between 46 and 66 Ha. The EDNA also sets out that the figures should be split 80% industrial distribution and 20% class E. Table 1 above sets out the split based on the above ranges.

4.11. The Preferred Options Local Plan has also identified that as part of the EDNA, 77 sites were considered (Paragraph 6.261) and identify their scope to contribute to the employment needs. The sites that are considered most suitable from the EDNA and ELAA were incorporated into the various employment policies of the Preferred Options Local Plan.

Regulation 19 Local Plan

4.12. The Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation is being held between the 5th February and 16th March 2024. This has identified a need of 74Ha.

Economic Land Availability Assessment

4.13. The ELAA is published annually. In the latest ELAA, a total of 13 sites were submitted for consideration by the Council. The total potential employment floorspace that could be met through these sites totals 50.9Ha. These sites have however been rejected for various reasons, as set out in the ELAA.

West Midlands Strategic Rail Freight Interchange - Issues Paper²

- 3.13. The West Midlands Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (referred to as the SFRI for the purposes of this Topic Paper) is a 193Ha Rail Freight Interchange located within South Staffordshire District. A Development Consent Order for the SFRI was issued on the 4th May 2020³. The scale of development at the SFRI will serve to benefit a much wider area than the locality of South Staffordshire District in terms of the amount of employment land and number of jobs generated.
- 3.14. The "West Midlands Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Employment Issues Response Paper Whose need will the SRFI serve? (February 2021)" commissioned by the Black Country authorities and produced by Stantec, sets out the overall supply sub-divided for each Local Authority area.
- 3.15. Table 5 of the Response Paper (Distribution of Total Land Share (net additional plus displacement) sets out that the Market share for Cannock Chase is 10Ha. Discussions have been had throughout the development of the Local Plan with South Staffordshire District Council under the Duty to Cooperate. It has been agreed that 10ha is appropriate to contribute towards the employment land supply for Cannock Chase District. This figure is therefore used to meet the overall employment needs identified in the EDNA.

5. Meeting employment land requirements

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² Homepage | West Midlands Interchange

³ West Midlands Interchange | National Infrastructure Planning (planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

Chosen Target and Preferred Approach

- 5.1. The target of **74Ha Gross** has been used for the Local Plan from the 2023 EDNA. This target reflects the employment needs over the Plan Period. It is recognised that the figure used is at the top end of the range provided in the latest EDNA (52-74Ha net). This figure has been chosen for a number of reasons as follows:
 - The forecasting models for employment growth in the EDNA (econometric modelling) supports a higher employment target;
 - Identifying a higher target accounts for losses incurred when sites identified for employment are lost to alternative uses;
 - Whilst the district has a strong stock of employment land and business parks, not all of the existing areas are suited to the identified type of industry where growth is predicted. The logistics and distribution industry has higher land requirements;
 - The Council supports economic development and growth and this aligns with the Councils Corporate Plan (2022-2024);
 - The EDNA Identified a higher target of between 65 to 94Ha gross employment land (taking into account an annual loss of 1Ha per annum). By pursuing a higher target of employment target gives greater flexibility to account for losses and be within the gross need range;
 - The introduction of more stringent energy efficient targets means there could be a greater loss of stock in the plan period (taken into account with the loss figures, as set out in Paragraph 4.91 to 4.93 of the EDNA). By having a larger need figure gives the Local Plan greater flexibility to accommodate these losses;
 - The employment need based solely on the unmet Housing Need Identified in the current Local Plan (Standard Methodology+500 units (Scenario 4 of the EDNA) of 68.19Ha is BELOW the Experian baseline figure of 74.09Ha (Scenario 1 of the EDNA) (Table 4.19 of the EDNA).
 - The Experian Baseline growth figure of 74.09Ha is the minimum figure that should be provided for as this is based on the latest economic growth forecasts. There is no justification in the EDNA to plan for a need below this figure.

Meeting the Local Plan Identified Needs

5.2. As set out above, the Council have identified a total need of **74Ha Gross** over the period to 2040. This need will be met through a mixture of existing commitments and completions, the recent approval at the West Midlands SFRI and the allocations contained in the Local Plan.

Completions

- 5.3. Between the period 2018 to 1st April 2023, there has been a total of **16.59 Ha** Gross of Employment floorspace completed in the District. Further details can be found in the Annual Monitoring Reports over the monitoring years.
- 5.4. This leaves an overall outstanding need of **57.41Ha Gross**.

Under Construction

5.5. As of 1st April 2023, there was a total of **3.43Ha Gross** under construction. This leaves an outstanding need of **53.98Ha Gross**.

Planning Permission

- 5.6. As of 1st April 2023, there has been a total of **4.03Ha Gross** floorspace with outline planning permission and a further **5.32Ha Gross** with full planning permission in the District. Further details can be found in the Annual Monitoring Reports over the monitoring years.
- 5.7. This gives a total of **9.35Ha**. This leaves an overall outstanding need of **44.63Ha Gross** to be met.

West Midlands Strategic Rail Interchange

- 5.8. As set out in Chapter 3 above, the SRFI will contribute **10Ha** towards the overall employment needs of Cannock Chase.
- 5.9. This leaves an outstanding need of **34.63Ha Gross**.

Local Plan Allocations - New Sites

5.10. The Local Plan has identified eight new employment sites to assist in meeting the Employment Needs. This is referred to in Table F of Policy SO4.2 of the Local Plan (Provision for New Employment Sites).

Table 5 - New Employment Sites Allocated in the Local Plan

Site Ref	Site Name	Area (Ha)
SE1	Kingswood Lakeside Extension 2, Norton Canes	8.6
SE2	Watling Street Power Station, Norton Canes	7.36
E4	Former Power Station off A51 (adjacent to Towers Business	
	Park), Rugeley	
SM1	Rugeley Power Station, Rugeley	3.5
E6	Land at the Academy Early Years Childcare (Former Talbot	0.14
	Public House), Main Road, Brereton	
E14	Hill Farm, 84 Hayfield Hill, Cannock Wood, Rugeley	0.55
E16	Land Off Norton Green Lane, Norton Canes	0.56
Total		22.81Ha

5.11. The total area of the above sites is **22.81Ha Gross.** However, some of the sites already have planning permission and have been included in the outline/full planning permission figure in Paragraph 5.6 and have been highlighted in

- yellow above. These add up to **4.75Ha**, leaving the combined total new employment land allocations of **18.06Ha Gross**.
- 5.12. When subtracting this from the outstanding floorspace of **34.63Ha**, this gives a total of **16.57Ha Gross**.

Allocation of Sites in the Green Belt

The following sites strategic employment sites are located in the Green Belt:

- Kingswood Lakeside Extension 2, Norton Canes;
- Watling Street Business Park and Extension

Justification for Green Belt release is provided in the Green Belt Topic Paper.

Local Plan Allocations - Intensification of Existing Sites

5.13. The Local Plan has identified the following existing employment sites where there is the potential intensification of these sites. Further details of these sites can be found in employment land and ELAA site proformas which are contained in the Site Selection Methodology. This Table is referred to as Table G in the Local Plan.

Table 6 - Employment Sites for Intensification in the Local Plan

Site Address	Site Area
Ridings Park (plots 8-10), Eastern Way, Hawks Green, Cannock	0.69
Former Hawkins Works, Watling Street, Bridgtown, Cannock	0.78
Gestamp, Watling Street/Wolverhampton Road, Cannock	8.0
Delta Way Business Park, Longford Road, Cannock	0.47
Albion Works, Gestamp Tallent, Wolverhampton Road, Cannock	0.69
Towers Business Park Phase II, Wheelhouse Lane, Rugeley	0.53
Granurite Ltd and Rugeley Tyre Service, Bostons Industrial Estate,	0.7
Power Station Road, Rugeley	
Power Station Road, Rugeley (ELAA site RE4a)	0.31
The Lead Mill, Rolling Mill Road, Cannock, WS11 9UH	0.17
Former JCB, Rugeley	3.00
Former Porcelain Works, Old Hednesford Road, Hednesford	0.54
Former ATOS Origin Site, Walsall Road, Cannock	3.2
Northwood Court, Hollies Avenue, Cannock	0.1
Unit 12, Conduit Road, Norton Canes	0.7
Cannock Wood Industrial estate	1.85
Yates Bros Sports and Social Club, Lime Lane, Pelsall WS3 5AS	1.38
Total	15.91

5.14. The total area of the intensified sites is **15.91Ha**. This leaves an overall outstanding need of **0.66Ha Gross**.

Safeguarded Employment Sites

- 5.15. The following sites have been safeguarded as part of Policy S04.1 (Safeguarding Existing Employment Areas for Employment Uses) and shown on the Local Plan Policies Map.
- Kingswood Lakeside;
- A5 Corridor North;
- A5 Corridor South;
- Bridgtown Business Area;
- Hawks Green North;
- Hawks Green South:
- Hollies Business Park;
- Intermodal Site;
- Keys Business Park;
- Park Plaza/Heritage Park;
- Walsall Road;
- Anglesey Business Park;
- Watling Street Business Park;
- Chasewood Park Business Centre;
- Cannock Wood Industrial Estate; and
- EDS Couriers, Wimblebury Road.

Rugeley and Brereton Employment Areas:

- Towers Business Park:
- Brereton Business Park: and
- Power Station Road Business Area.

Norton Canes Employment Areas:

- Norton Canes Business Area; and
- Lime Lane.

Delivery and Monitoring

5.16. The Council will monitor the delivery of employment land through the Annual Monitoring Report to establish that the targets are being met. In addition, the sites which have either been allocated for intensification, or new sites that have been identified.

The Current AMR's monitor both the delivery of employment land over the currently adopted plan period (since 2006/7) as well as over the monitoring year period. The data from the AMR's is as follows:

Table 7 - Annual Monitoring Data

Monitoring Period	Plan Period	Annual Plan Period
2017-2018	60.98Ha	N/A
2018-2019	69.95Ha	8.97Ha
2019-2020	73.45Ha	3.5Ha
2020-2021	75.78Ha	2.33Ha
2021-2022	77.59 Ha	1.79Ha
Total		16.59 Ha

- 5.17. No study was undertaken in the 2018/2019 period. However the 2017/18 ELAA recorded that 60.98Ha land was completed. The 2019/20 ELAA outlined that 73.45Ha of employment land was completed between 2006/07 and 2019/20. Subtracting the 3.5Ha completed from the 73.45Ha leaves a figure of **69.95Ha** completed between 2006/07 and 2018/19.
- 5.18. The 2017/18 AMR outlined that 60.98Ha was completed between 2006/07 and 2017/18. Based on this, subtracting the 69.95Ha figure from the 60.98Ha leaves a figure of **8.97Ha**
- 5.19. Once the current Local Plan is adopted, the indicators will be amended to reflect the adopted Local Plan.

Conclusion

- 5.20. This Topic Paper has set out how the Council has identified its employment requirements. It has set out how the development needs and supply have been considered based on evidence. This has informed the final policies on employment in the new Local Plan.
- 5.21. The employment requirements for Cannock Chase District will be met through a mixture of site with planning permission (commitments) and identified new site allocations in the Local Plan, as well as counting completions since 2018. The implementation of these policies will require monitoring which will be reported in the Authorities Monitoring Report.

Appendix 1 - Employment Completions in Cannock Chase

County Site ID	CCDC Ref	Site Name/Location	Easting	Northing	Previous Use (see notes)	Completed (ha)	Completed (sqm)	Use Class	Notes
43050	CE4(h) Part 1	Kingswood Lakeside, Blakeney Way, Cannock	399674	308217	4	3	13,154	E(g)/B2/B8	Completed 2018/19 (CH/16/465)
-	CE66	A T P Industries Group Ltd, Cannock Wood Industrial Estate, Cannock Wood	402970	312659	3	0.07	600	B8	Completed 2018/19 (CH/17/328)
43076	CE7(a)	Former Hawkins Works, Watling Street, Bridgtown, Cannock	397577	308700	3	0.5	2,373	B8/E(g)(i)	Completed 2018/19 (CH/17/164)
-	CE7(e)	Former Hawkins Works, Watling Street, Bridgtown, Cannock	397552	308655	3	0.5	1,983	B8/E(g)(i)	Completed 2018/19 (CH/16/457)
43091	CE5(a)	Kingswood Lakeside-zone E, Kingswood Lakeside, Cannock	399095	308443	4	2.3	9,146	B2/B8	Completed 2018/19 (CH/17/150)
43096	CE8	Former Bowmur Haulage Site, Watling Street, Cannock	397082	308869	3	2.6	13,223	E(g)/B2/B8	Completed 2018/19 (CH/16/260)
43050	CE4(h) Part 2	Kingswood Lakeside, Blakeney Way, Cannock	399674	308217	4	3.5	13,154	B8/E(g)(i)	Completed 2019/2020 (CH/16/465)
-	CE59	Land adjacent to, Unit 2, West Cannock Way, Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre, Hednesford	400762	314105	3	0.07	212	Sui Generis/ E(g)(i)/B2	Completed 2020/2021 (CH/15/0162)
-	CE67	Land at Lakeside Boulevard, Cannock	398356	308307	3	0.72	855	Sui Generis/B2	Completed 2020/2021 (CH/17/430)
-	CE68	110 Walsall Road, Cannock, WS11 0JB	398284	309319	3	0.05	165	E(a),E(b) & E(g)	Completed 2020/2021(CH/19/270)
43050	CE4(a)	Plot D, Blakeney Way, Cannock, WS11 8LD	400036	308203	4	1.49 14.8	6,132	B2	Completed 2020/21 (CH/19/274)
-	CE78	Asda, Avon Road, Cannock, WS11 1LH	398030.6	309790	3	0.21	191.8	B8	Completed 2021/22 (CH/20/179)
43052	RE2 (a)	Towers Business Park Phase II, Wheelhouse Lane, Rugeley	404992	317626	4	1.4	1074	B2	Completed 2021/22 (CH/17/255)
_	NE13	Norton House, Norton Canes Business Park, Norton Green Lane, Norton Canes	401752	307664	3	0.18	390	E(g)/B8	Completed 2021/22 (CH/19/029)
						1.79			
-	CE77	Partsworld Group Ltd, Orbital Way, Cannock, WS11 8JB	399071	308679	3	0.35	2228	B8	Completed 2022/23 (CH/21/0050)
-	CE79	Land off Progress Drive, Cannock, WS11 0JE	398448	309050	3	0.24	40	E(g)	Completed 2022/23 (CH/21/0353)
-	CE80	Units 4-10 Lakeside Business Park, Cannock, WS11 0XE	397,775	308231	3	0.26 0.85	2310	E/B2/B8	Completed 2022/23 (CH/21/0399)
						17.44			
		New sites	11.93						
		Redevelopments	5.51						
			17.44						