

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 21 JULY 2016

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

HERTFORD AND WARE EMPLOYMENT REPORT, JUNE 2016

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All Hertford and Ware and surrounding

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- To enable the panel to consider the Hertford and Ware Employment Study, June 2016

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLAN EXECUTIVE PANEL:**  
**That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:**

<b>(A)</b>	<b>the Hertford and Ware Employment Study, June 2016, be approved as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan; and</b>
<b>(B)</b>	<b>the Hertford and Ware Employment Study, June 2016, be approved to inform Development Management decisions.</b>

1.0 Background

1.1 The Council commissioned an Employment Study of the towns of Hertford and Ware earlier in the year. This follows earlier work of a similar nature in Bishop's Stortford and because of a range of issues related to the ongoing use of employment sites in the towns, most notably because of schemes coming forward for the redevelopment of employment sites for housing and their consequent loss.

1.2 The consultant engaged by the Council was asked to assess the current strengths and weaknesses of the two towns and how they can continue to prosper through the growth of business and employment. Advice on the requirement for employment sites in the towns was sought, based on an assessment of the quality of

existing sites. Thirdly the consultant was asked to set out an overall strategy for the provision of floorspace. The work was undertaken in the context of the Councils Economic Development Vision and Action Plan.

1.3 The report comprises a thorough assessment of the economic strength and potential of the two towns. It presents:

- an economic profile of the towns;
- an analysis of the existing and changes to the stock of employment floorspace in the towns;
- a summary profile of each of the employment sites (except GSK in Ware, as it is in single company occupation)
- an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the economy of the towns; and,
- makes recommendations on policy, strategy and planning for employment land in the towns.

1.4 The Executive Summary from the report is attached as **Essential Reference Paper B**

## 2.0 Report

2.1 The following details summarises some of the main elements of the report. It establishes that a high proportion of the residents of the towns, that are of working age, are economically active. The towns are characterised by a relatively well qualified workforce.

2.2 It is noted that the number of jobs available in the towns has decreased since 2009, down by around 600. This is contrary to the trend across the district and other benchmark areas. This implies that the towns have become a less important employment centre and that out-commuting has likely increased.

2.3 The report notes that 36% of the residents in the towns who are in work, also work in the towns. An additional 7% work elsewhere in East Herts and the remaining 57% commute out of the district to work.

2.4 With regard to employment floorspace the report notes that the current provision of floorspace in the towns essentially provides for the needs of local businesses. The towns are unable to compete for large occupiers with the floorspace in the main transport corridors (M11, A1(M) and M25). Hertford and Ware should be able to compete however for medium and small

occupiers looking for space in south east Herts. The report introduces the potential need to plan for the provision of good quality B1 floorspace in a well accessed strategic location, potentially on the A414 or A10 road corridors.

### 3.0 Strategy

3.1 The report sets out that it is important for the Council to develop a strategy for dealing with ongoing pressure to release employment sites for residential development. A key element of this will be achieving progress on the delivery of the District Plan and establishing a clear housing land supply position. Where this does not require the release of employment land, those sites can thereafter be protected.

3.2 The report also suggests that a strategy be devised for the re-provision of sites for employment in the towns, and in the vicinity, depending on the aspirations of the Council in the future.

### 4.0 Conclusion

4.1 The report provides a cogent and well researched basis on which to consider both short and longer term employment matters relating to the towns. It is recommended that it be endorsed by the panel as part of the evidence base for the District Plan and be relied upon in development management decisions.

### 5.0 Implications/Consultations

5.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

### Background Papers

Hertford and Ware Employment Study, June 2016

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