

Core Strategy Issues and Options

**Economy and Employment Section
March 2009**



6. Economy & Employment

- 6.1. Babergh is an economically diverse area, with traditional retail sectors in the two towns, industrial areas at the Ipswich fringe, Sudbury, Hadleigh and Brantham and a tourism industry based around the historical villages of Long Melford, Lavenham, Kersey and the scenic Constable Country. There is a significant agricultural base, and historically, Babergh has had a relatively high proportion of manufacturing employment.

Context

- 6.2. National policy identifies the importance for economic growth and high quality environment to be considered together in order to develop sustainable economies. Emerging PPS4 places an emphasis on economic growth having regard to social and environmental considerations (including climate change). A variety of sites and properties (in terms of size, location and end use suitability) must be available to enable communities to raise productivity, provide opportunities for all people, and support a strong, stable and prosperous economy. These sites should be in the most sustainable locations and brownfield where possible. The agricultural sector also needs to be supported to enable it to be diverse and adaptable; allowing it to operate to high environmental standards where it can be sustainable, competitive and profitable for rural communities.



- 6.3. The RSS reflects national policy and places emphasis on the importance of minimising the need to travel and move goods, and where it is unavoidable, to use the most sustainable methods of transport available. It also sets out the importance of concentrating on the strengths and opportunities in areas, as well as increasing the opportunities for education and training to ensure that a skilled workforce is available. The Regional Economic Strategy sets eight strategic goals for the region to concentrate on: entrepreneurship; innovation; digital economy; resource efficiency; skills for productivity; economic participation; transport; and spatial economy, and it identifies the need for rural areas and market towns to provide employment space suitable for businesses to start up and grow.
- 6.4. One key economic aim for the County is to raise the Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of the population (*Expanding Suffolk's Horizons*), and Babergh's Economic Development Programme also identifies the need to increase the availability of managed workspaces at existing locations and to investigate new provision,

Issues and Options

particularly at Sudbury and Hadleigh. Other local targets are set out in the table below.

- 6.5. Local community priorities identified through Sustainable Community Strategies and the Babergh District Council Strategic Plan, for example developing a prosperous, vibrant and sustainable economy, have the following linkages to the economy and employment section of the Core Strategy as shown in the table below.

Transforming Suffolk 2008-2028 (Suffolk LSP)	Western Suffolk LSP	Babergh East LSP	BDC Strategic Plan
<p>A prosperous and vibrant economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use Suffolk's unique selling points to capture emerging markets - reduce inequalities across the country - transport and infrastructure to support sustainable growth 	<p>Develop a prosperous and sustainable economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Alleviate poverty and reduce health inequalities -Encourage sustainable tourism 	<p>Raise opportunities for local communities to access jobs and training.</p>	<p>A strong and sustainable Babergh economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -sustainable economic growth - higher paid jobs taken by residents -improved infrastructure
<p>Learning and Skills for the future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a workforce with the skills to meet the needs of Suffolk's economy - High aspirations and opportunities to realise them through quality learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improve skills and learning opportunities -Encourage achievement in children and young people 		<p>A strong and sustainable Babergh economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased education opportunities and improved attainment

Background (Employment Land studies)

- 6.6. The District's economy is characterised by small, single location, owner occupied businesses who have been in situ for a significant length of time. Babergh has had several recent employment studies- Chesterton's Babergh specific study (2002), Donaldson's Sudbury area study (2004) and DTZ's Haven Gateway study (2005). All of the studies show that the greatest unmet demand is centred at the largest settlements- Ipswich and Sudbury, and to a lesser extent, Hadleigh, but that there is a general shortage of available commercially attractive property and land. Babergh does not have a high demand for office buildings or rented property, and

there are low levels of speculative developments. There is, however, a generally high demand for serviced land and property. The 2005 DTZ study suggests that there is an oversupply of employment land, but there is no detailed qualitative demand assessment and neither the viability nor availability/deliverability of the sites was thoroughly examined. A new Employment Land Review and Strategic Sites study is being commissioned, with results expected in summer 2009. This study will combine both quantitative and qualitative assessments as well as a detailed site and market appraisals.

Employment numbers

- 6.7. In 2007, there were 41,000 jobs in Babergh (Office of National Statistics). The RSS sets a target for a net increase of 30,000 jobs in the Suffolk Haven Gateway sub-region, but the modelling used is not detailed enough to give district specific figures. The draft RSS (figures also used in DTZ's Employment Land Study in 2005) set a target of 3,400 for Babergh out of 23,000 for the Suffolk Haven Gateway. However, this has been superseded by the adopted RSS. We will consider the job growth targets for Babergh, along with the apportionment between industries and sectors, following the work for the ELR but we are not yet in a position where we are able to provide specific targets or options relating to these.

Question EMP1: Do you agree that we should wait until the findings of the Employment Land Review are published before setting a target for employment number growth?

Question EMP2: Do you have views on what sectors or industries we should be concentrating on attracting or developing?

Question EMP3: The aim set out in the RES is for economic growth to broadly match housing growth. Do you feel that maintaining the balance of jobs and housing growth is appropriate for Babergh?

If so, what indicators do you feel would be appropriate to measure the growth (e.g. jobs/household density or jobs/population density)?

Do you think we should be setting more ambitious targets to develop a more jobs led economy rather than housing led? Would this impact on housing delivery?

Employment Land

- 6.8. The approach in the Local Plan has been to retain employment land as a priority (Policy EM24 and SPD on Retention of Employment Land).

Issues and Options

Question EMP4: Do you feel that this is still the correct approach or that the policy needs revisiting? What amendments do you think need making?

6.9. It is a key priority for Babergh to ensure that a variety of land and property is available for a range of end users' needs to enable Babergh's economy to grow and to be able to provide members of the community with a range of employment and training opportunities. These sites should accommodate different uses, sizes and ambitions to allow for business start up, expansion and inward investment. Provision must also be made for training.

6.10. There is a risk of losing local facilities and services, the effects of which can be damaging to a community (often more acutely felt in the rural areas) and so it is vital that we cater for the demands for both smaller and larger sites, in a range of locations. Babergh is at risk of losing businesses and not attracting inward investment if we cannot provide the sites to meet the demand so we must ensure that sufficient land is available.

Question EMP5: Which of the following options do you support? Please indicate your reasons

Option EMP1: Maintain current allocations and seek to gain increases in land availability through extensions to the existing sites.

Option EMP2: Maintain current allocations and allocate new sites concentrated at towns and Key Service Centres

Option EMP3: Maintain existing sites and allocate at local service centres and more rural locations.

Option EMP4: De-allocate some sites not already developed and allocate elsewhere.

Option EMP5: Concentrate on provision of new employment land in the same locations as residential development, or through mixed use development.

Option EMP6: A mix of the above/other option- please provide details.

Question EMP6: Do you agree that new employment development should be on Previously Developed Land (PDL) unless evidence shows that the development is both valuable to the local economy and not feasible to be developed on PDL?

Question EMP7: Should we consider allocating strategic sites for employment/economic purposes? If so, what uses should we include for them?

Rural Issues

- 6.11. Babergh suffers from the same issues as many other predominantly rural areas: lower incomes, loss of jobs (to local towns and through improving agricultural technology), poor access to jobs and training, and limited public transport opportunities. As Babergh covers a large area geographically, the transport problems are exacerbated, with a reliance on the private car. Whilst we experience these difficulties, there are also many opportunities and strengths. Babergh has some good road and rail links, particularly to the south of the district, and the nearby ports at Felixstowe, Harwich and Mistley that provide economic opportunities as well as transport links.
- 6.12. Although the Council only has limited powers over the final use of land, we are keen to promote the renewable energy and sustainable economy sector and will take a positive view on farm diversification and reuse of redundant buildings in rural areas where proposals contribute positively to the local economy and are directly related to the development or generation of energy through low/zero carbon technologies.

Question EMP8: Do you support the Council's stance on rural economic growth in relation to the renewable energy industry?

Tourism

- 6.13. Babergh has a rich heritage and as a result, is an attractive tourist destination. The Council will support any proposals to encourage tourism as long as they are in compliance with other policies and promote sustainable tourism.

Question EMP 9: Do you think we should be actively promoting the District as a tourism location? What sort of tourism would you want to see promoted?