

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Asset Management**GREATER NOTTINGHAM STRATEGIC PLAN: STRATEGIC DISTRIBUTION AND LOGISTICS PREFERRED APPROACH CONSULTATION****1. Purpose of Report**

As part of the review of their respective Part 1 Local Plans (Core Strategies) Broxtowe Borough, Gedling Borough, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe Councils are preparing the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan.

In January 2023, the Councils undertook a “Preferred Approach” consultation (Regulation 18) focusing on the Strategic Plan’s Vision, Strategy and the approach to housing and employment need.

The Councils are now seeking approval to undertake an additional consultation for a period of six weeks focusing on a Preferred Approach to strategic distribution and logistics.

In Broxtowe, an allocation for distribution and logistics is proposed at the Former Bennerley Coal Disposal Point. In Rushcliffe, it is proposed that part of the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site should be allocated.

The responses received will then be considered as part of preparing the final draft of the Strategic Plan.

2. Recommendation

CABINET is asked to RESOLVE that:

1. The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan: Strategic Distribution and Logistics Preferred Approach be approved, in so far as it relates to Broxtowe Borough, for public consultation; and

2. Authority is delegated to the Head of Planning and Economic Development to approve any minor changes (e.g. presentational, typographical and grammatical) required to the Preferred Approach document and the evidence base prior to consultation.

3. Detail

It is a statutory requirement for Councils to have a development plan in place which identifies the strategic priorities of the area. Policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every 5 years, and should then be updated as necessary. The Aligned Core Strategy was adopted in 2014 and is now being reviewed. This will result in the production of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan.

Having an up-to-date plan provides greater certainty in respect of planning for housing and economic development and delivering the required infrastructure.

Evidence of Need

As part of preparing the Strategic Plan, the Councils have been producing a detailed evidence base. As part of this evidence base, the Councils commissioned consultants to carry out an employment land study ([Nottingham Core and Outer HMA Employment Land Study 2021, Lichfields, May 2021](#)).

The study included a specific recommendation to give further consideration to assess the need for major logistics facilities.

Ashfield, Broxtowe, Erewash, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe Councils commissioned consultants to undertake a logistics study ([Nottinghamshire Core and Outer HMA Logistics Study, Icen, August 2022](#)) to assess the specific needs for strategic distribution and logistics facilities.

The study assessed the quantitative need for additional strategic distribution floorspace and also set out more specific locational criteria for locating strategic distribution and logistics. The study was undertaken from a “policy off” perspective, meaning that constraints such as the Green Belt or issues determining sustainability (historic and natural environment constraints and socio-economic factors) were not considered in the ability of the area to accommodate future logistic requirements. The study did not involve modelling capacity of the road network or individual junctions which will be addressed through future transport modelling work. The quantum of space estimated as being required is not viewed as a target but as guidance to the extent of which need may be met once account is taken of policy and environmental constraints.

The study concluded that there was a residual need for 137 – 155 ha, equivalent to “two to three large strategic logistic parks” across the study area. It should be noted that this covered a larger area than covered by the Strategic Plan and includes Ashfield, Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood.

Further details regarding the Logistics Study, including its relationship with other studies and to distribution and logistics need outside of the Strategic Plan area, are contained within a separate Background Paper.

Critically, the Background Paper has updated the supply of distribution and logistics developments with planning permission (commitments) and those without permission but are likely to come forward, for example within existing and local plans (pipeline sites). This update and the removing of sites that are

delivering general employment development (avoiding the double counting of sites as both distribution and general employment) has resulted in an identified residual remaining need of between 131 – 147 ha across the wider study area.

The Logistics Study identified Areas of Opportunity where new strategic logistic sites should be located. These are broad areas which: have good connections to the strategic road network; are appropriately located relative to the markets to be served; are located where there is a known under-provision of strategic sites; and are accessible to labour and located close to areas of employment need.

The following Areas of Opportunity are identified:

- Area adjacent to M1 Junction 28 and 27 (Sutton in Ashfield, Alfreton, Kirkby-in-Ashfield and towards Hucknall);
- Area adjacent to M1 Junction 26 (Langley Mill, Eastwood and Kimberley);
- Area adjacent to M1 Junction 25;
- Area adjacent to A453; and
- Area surrounding Newark (along A1 and A46).

The Study recommended that sites should be sufficiently large and flexible in configuration with a minimum size of 25 hectares being recommended although sites of 50 hectares or more are preferred.

A “Call for Sites” was undertaken in Autumn 2022 which sought sites over 25ha in size and within the Areas of Opportunity.

In Broxtowe, ten sites were submitted (see Appendix 1 for map):

- BBC-L01: Former Bennerley Coal Disposal Point
- BBC-L02a: Gilt Hill (smaller site)
- BBC-L02b: Gilt Hill (larger site)
- BBC-L03: Gin Close Way
- BBC-L04: Land at Kimberley Eastwood Bye Pass
- BBC-L05: Land at Low Wood Road, Nuthall
- BBC-L06: Land at New Farm Nuthall
- BBC-L07: Land at Shilo Way
- BBC-L08: Land to the south-east of M1 junction 26, Nuthall
- BBC-L09: Land at Waterloo Lane, Trowell

A two stage assessment was then undertaken. The first stage considered whether the sites were of a sufficient size, were in proximity to the Areas of Opportunity and had good connections to the highway network. Sites which met the criteria were considered as “Reasonable Alternatives” and were subject to more detailed assessments following a set of criteria. The criteria were selected to assess whether the sites have the potential to deliver sustainable development, including whether development on the site could potentially utilise low carbon measures, whether the site could enable the transfer of freight onto the rail network, whether the site is located close to centres of population and potential employees and consideration of other policy designations such as Green Belt, heritage, ecology and flooding.

The detailed assessments are contained within a separate Background Paper. The sites have also been subject to assessments as part of the Sustainability Appraisal. Both of these documents, together with a main consultation document, will form part of the consultation.

Preferred Sites

Following the detailed assessments, two preferred sites have been identified:

Site Reference	Site Name	Site Area	Estimated Floorspace
BBC-L01	Former Bennerley Coal Disposal Point, Broxtowe	68 ha	74,000 sq metres
RBC-L01	Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station (part), Rushcliffe	36.4 ha (wider site area is 265 ha)	180,000 sq metres

The Former Bennerley Coal Disposal Point site is considered preferable to alternative sites for a number of reasons. The site contains areas of previously developed land due to the former use as a coal disposal point. It has access to the strategic highway network but is also located adjacent to a railway line with access potentially achievable via a disused spur and railway bridge that crosses the River Erewash. The potential to deliver a rail access is a substantial benefit as it will enable low carbon transportation of rail freight. This is consistent with the Government’s commitment as set out in the Department for Transport’s plan to reduce emissions from transport called [Decarbonising Transport - A Better Greener Britain](#) which commits to support and encourage modal shift of freight from road to more sustainable alternatives, such as rail, cargo bike and inland waterways. It would also provide rail access for distribution and logistics within the wider area, including existing strategic distribution sites to the north at M1 junctions 27 and 28.

The site is located close to centres of population at Eastwood, Awsworth and Ilkeston/Cotmanhay. It is also near to Kimberley/Nuthall and Nottingham. The site is close to areas of high deprivation within Eastwood, Ilkeston/Cotmanhay and also near to areas of deprivation in Nottingham. The development of this site for distribution and logistics would bring economic benefits to these areas. Active travel links in the area, including Bennerley Viaduct, could also be utilised and enhanced. It is considered that the above factors distinguish the site from the other sites assessed.

It is noted that there are a number of site constraints. The site is located within the Green Belt between Awsworth/Eastwood and Cotmanhay/Ilkeston. It is also located adjacent to Bennerley Viaduct, which is Grade II* listed. The site also crosses the Erewash Valley, which is identified as a primary and secondary green infrastructure corridor. There are three Local Wildlife Sites within the site and one Local Wildlife Site within 250m. Development would have to be carefully designed to address these constraints.

Notwithstanding these constraints, the site will make a significant contribution to meeting identified distribution and logistics needs, is located adjacent to the railway line and opportunities to deliver a lower carbon distribution and logistics development, contains areas of brownfield land, has no substantial highways access constraints and is in proximity to existing populations (including areas of deprivation). It is considered that these constitute exceptional circumstances which are required to remove this site from the Green Belt.

There are a number of other sites within Broxtowe which could also provide significant distribution and logistics floorspace. These sites are located within close proximity to the strategic highway network and some of the sites also benefit from good connections to existing settlements. However, these sites do not have potential rail access, are greenfield and it is considered that these sites have not demonstrated a means of mitigating or offsetting the carbon emissions resulting from the development.

Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station in Rushcliffe is also identified as a preferred site due to it being a designated Freeport, is subject to an adopted Local Development Order that identifies approximately 36 ha of storage and distribution, contains extensive areas of brownfield land and has a rail connection.

Combined these sites will deliver 104 ha of strategic distribution and logistics development, making a significant contribution to meeting assessed needs within the Logistics Study area.

Meeting the Overall Need

The Logistics Study recommends providing for approximately 425 ha of strategic warehousing and logistics facilities within the study area which, in addition to Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan area, includes Ashfield, Erewash, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood. The extent of this area emphasises the flexibility of strategic distribution and the contributions (although not quantified) that development beyond the study area (most notably along the M1 and A1) will make to the study area's need.

There is a considerable amount of "committed" and potential "pipeline" supply already identified by the Councils across the Nottingham Core and Outer HMAs. A significant quantity of which will be delivered within the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan area. Taking into account this supply, a residual need of between 131 and 147 ha has been identified.

The estimate of need is considered to be guidance and not a target as all the Councils must balance meeting demand for strategic distribution and logistics against planning policy and environmental constraints, principally the importance of protecting Green Belt.

The Councils have taken into account the various operational criteria and planning policy constraints and have identified two preferred sites which broadly meet the relevant criteria. This provision, combined with the identified "commitments" and potential "pipeline" supply across the entire study area (including within neighbouring authorities) would provide for significant growth in the delivery of strategic distribution and logistics facilities in the Study Area and an increased market share of the wider strategic distribution market.

Next Steps

Subject to approval by all four of the Councils, the aim is to consult in late September/ early October 2023. Following the consultation, the responses received will be considered as part of preparing the Strategic Plan's publication draft.

Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

The production of a Local Plan is a statutory duty. It will ensure a consistent and coherent planning policy approach across the wider area. It would be possible for the Borough Council to prepare a Local Plan without the involvement of the partner councils, but this has been rejected as significant cost savings are achieved in preparing a joint document covering more strategic matters.

In respect of the Preferred Approach, all reasonable alternatives have been assessed through the sustainability appraisal and site selection work undertaken as part of Plan preparation.

Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to review the Aligned Core Strategy would result in the Borough not having an up-to-date Development Plan. The absence of which would increase the risk of speculative unplanned development in Broxtowe and could weaken the Council's ability to effectively deal with all planning applications.

It is considered that not making provision for distribution and logistics development would increase the likelihood of the Strategic Plan not being found 'sound'.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

The present workload required in preparing the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan, in terms of the Council working jointly with partner authorities, will be undertaken utilising existing resources within Planning Policy. As such, there are no additional financial implications for the Council at this stage with any costs being contained within existing budgets. Any significant budget implications that might be required as the review progresses, over and above virement limits, would require approval by Cabinet.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

It is a legal requirement of local planning authorities that they exercise their plan making functions (under s.39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Consultation forms an essential part of the local plan process. Authorities are legally required under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 to consult at two stages before submitting draft plans for examination. Firstly, the initial Regulation 18 stage when the strategy is in its early stages and the later Regulation 19 phase just before it is sent to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.

6. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Not applicable.

7. Union Comments

The comments from the Union were as follows:

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

The comments from were as follows:

The Former Bennerley Coal Disposal Point site is considered preferable to the other alternative sites discussed in the report due to the following: its adjacent to a railway line which offers opportunities to potentially decarbonise transport links to the site (transport in Broxtowe Borough accounts for 30% of the Borough's Carbon emissions), some of the area is brownfield land, there are no highways access constraints and is close to existing populations reducing the need to travel significant distances to the site when it is operational. However, this land sits within Green Belt and is in close proximity to local wildlife sites. Any development would need to be sensitive to this and should include considerable off set and sustainability measures to mitigate any negative impacts.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any [OFFICIAL (SENSITIVE)] information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As this is a new policy an equality impact assessment is included in the appendix to this report.

11. Background Papers

Nil

APPENDIX 1

Broxtowe: Location of Sites

