

## STROUD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW INSPECTORS MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Matter 4 Statement  
Ecotricity Group Ltd

### Matter 4 Employment needs and requirement

**Issue 4 – Are the identified employment needs supported by robust and credible evidence, justified and consistent with national policy? Is the Plan’s proposal to accommodate 79 ha of employment land soundly based?**

The economic need for the District has been established through the Gloucestershire Economic Needs Assessment (2020) (ENA) (EB29), which examined a range of scenarios for future economic growth. The ENA recommends that the amount of additional employment land needed should be between 62 and 72 ha for the plan period, to accord with the highest two scenarios: a scenario based upon the expected labour supply and a slightly higher labour demand growth scenario based upon supporting growth in the key local industrial strategy sectors.

Within the Plan (page 37) the Council suggests that, once commitments from outstanding planning permissions (as at April 2020) and potential losses are factored in, the minimum residual employment land requirement for the plan period is a range between 50.9 and 60.3 ha.

**5. The minimum employment land requirement range of 50.9 to 60.3 ha does not appear to be set out in policy. Instead Core Policy CP2 states that ‘Stroud District will accommodate....at least 79 hectares of additional employment land to meet the needs of the District for the period 2020-2040...’, which is above the minimum requirement. This higher figure appears to be based on the proposed new employment land supply comprising eight strategic development site allocations. Whilst our questions on these site allocations and overall employment land supply are set out under later matters, is the provision of a higher level of new employment land than is necessary to meet the minimum requirement justified by robust evidence? Can the Council clarify the percentage of additional employment land being proposed above the identified requirement and explain the reasons for this?**

4.1 The Council’s evidence base within the Employment Needs Assessment (ENA – EB29) identifies the potential employment requirement for the Plan period ranged from an additional 44.5 hectares to 71.8 hectares. The Assessment recommended that the Council should consider meeting two of the highest scenarios: a scenario based upon the expected labour supply and a slightly higher labour demand growth scenario based on supporting further growth in the key Local Industrial Strategy sectors. This means supporting a net increase in employment land (offices, industrial and storage and distribution) of between 62 and 72 hectares for the Plan period. When commitments from outstanding planning

permissions, gains and potential losses, are taken into account, the minimum residual employment requirement is 50.9 - 60.3ha.

- 4.2 Core Policy CP2 allocates a number of sites to meet the employment needs of the area. These are considered fully within Matter 8. However, it is noted that the SDLPR looks to deliver additional land than is necessary, allocates 79ha of additional employment land.
  
- 4.3 This approach is supported as it provides a buffer to allow for losses of employment land, to other uses, to 2040. The Council's Employment Land Availability 2020 (ELA – EB28), identifies losses at 28.44 ha and potential losses to be an additional 18 ha and therefore this allows flexibility should this pattern continue. Stroud District Council has taken a positive approach to the allocation of employment sites, looking to provide a range of site sizes and types in order to allow for failure, provide flexibility, as well as choice for existing and future occupiers. As such, the plan has been positively prepared.