

Core Strategy Partial Review – Preferred Options

Economy and Jobs Workshop – Tuesday 17th September 2019 – 2-4pm

Victoria Hall, Hard Ings Road, Keighley

Workshop Notes

Strategic Economic Growth

Questions:

- What are your thoughts on the overarching approach to economic growth across the District over the plan period?
- Do you think the policy will provide the basis of creating a strong competitive local economy?

Table 1:

- Businesses looking for land – amount is about correct.
- The district is constrained by hills and valleys – we have a different typology to other areas and districts.
- Must make space for logistics and distribution.
- What are Bradford's incentives for remaining / relocating? Other areas provide incentives for businesses to relocate.
- Cycle initiatives (Valley Road & Hillam Road) has restricted access and provided disincentives for business investment.
- Already demand for medium sized sites – is it sensible to reduce allocations for employment? There is a need for strong allocations and ambition.
- Is there an argument for financial assistance to enable land use?
- Good existing connectivity to Leeds – which is a positive.
- Need flexibility in major employment applications to get best for indigenous businesses – some local businesses have been looking for land / relocation options for a long time.

Table 2:

- Can Bradford be compared to other cities – such as Liverpool, Hull and Newcastle?
- Look to each centre, city, town – different performance – Bradford suited to growth industries, Shipley out-performing other areas, Keighley – manufacturing.
- Providing sites throughout the District may not work.
- Need to think about route to M65.
- Transport is a big constraint to employment growth – existing railway network – need for more capacity. Bradford ring road not finished and not adequate. Esholt transport routes not great.
- Bingley and Keighley – potential land availability.
- Need to improve the City centre encourage more knowledge based sectors.
- The road networks need improving and the motorway networks e.g. M65 – Colne-Aire Valley motorway.
- There are problems with the expansion of Bingley as can only accommodate small scale developments. There is no employment land availability.
- There are incentives for businesses to expand or come to the area e.g. reduced business rates and grants.

- Need to improve Broadband connectivity across the District for businesses.
- There needs to be a corporate responsibility to join all the strategies up.
- Bradford was identified 10 years ago as best City – what has happened?
- There needs to be the right environment for businesses to invest e.g. proximity to the motorway, location, transport, skills (HR departments now decide where businesses will move to)
- There is a problem with call for sites as it produces a pepper pot approach which is not necessarily the right locations for businesses to expand.

Table 3:

- Statistics which feed in to the economic job growth model are inaccurate.
- How is Bradford going to attract the right skilled population without the adequate transport infrastructure.
- The Core Strategy Partial Review (CSPR) identifies high growth sectors across the District (i.e. Digital and Media) but Bradford has lower rates of the population with qualifications compared regionally.
- Bradford was identified in The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) as the most attractive economic market in the Yorkshire region. However, the CSPR significantly reduces Bradford’s economic growth ambitions. 60 hectares of new employment land is significantly lower than the adopted 175 hectares in the Kirklees Council Local Plan.
- There should be strong performance indicators to check progress/effectiveness of Core Strategy Policies.
- There’s a lack of corporate responsibility for joined-up approach to address Bradford’s housing, infrastructure, low-skill issues.

Employment Land and Skills Requirement

Questions:

- What is your feedback on the broad levels jobs and employment land to meet our minimum economic growth needs?
- What are your thought on the spatial distribution of employment land across the three sub-areas of the District (City of Bradford, Airedale, and Wharfedale)?

Table 1:

- Econometrical models are different – with different starting points and breakdown of sectors.
- Some potentially large sectors are difficult to track in the models – such as tourism. Uncertainty over whether tourism is an economic development issue.
- A650 key feature and also a problem.
- Skills issues are a significant problem – employee interest, access to high quality labour market and competition with jobs in Leeds.
- Big cities have traditionally over the last few years outperformed smaller cities and other centres – the Leeds / Bradford dynamic is not unique. There are however unique opportunities for smaller cities and we need to capitalise on these.
- Small / micro business spaces such as Dean Clough provide varied ways to house and assist businesses.
- Permitted development rights have led to an erosion of office uses.
- Do we prioritise a strategy around projects that are within our control or pursue larger scale ambitious projects? Opportunity to build upon existing growth successes.

Table 2:

- Development zones do work.
- City centre – offices at the moment but what will be the demand in the future is unknown.
- Jobs for people in the District is important
- Each area of the District will need a different approach.
- Need to improve communication with potential growth businesses. New approach required of matching opportunities to growth potential.
- Important for planning policy to link to economic strategy.
- Businesses go where they can make money.
- The problem with the questions regarding economic growth is that it is a very complex issue. What land available is what guides this. There are not many alternatives.
- Could there be a policy that protects employment land from future housing development?
- There are constraints on expanding existing sites so need to find alternatives.
- Try and make existing areas work more efficiently. Keep where they are, better use of assets.

Table 3:

- Forecast shouldn't take account of past take-up trend.
- It is not accurate for the current forecast model to assume that the net domestic migration of the most economically active group will remain unchanged.
- Combined authority's views appear to be very much Leeds-centric which is a barrier to secure effective intervention to help Bradford's need to address employment and skill issues.
- RSS to LEP- Bradford's economic ambitions seems to have been declined without any reasonable justification or evidence.
- Local Plan should be aspirational.
- All the areas of search appear to be close to the border with the adjoining authorities and without having any clear benefit of good transport infrastructure.
- Protection of the Green Belt appears to be the sole reason for almost halving the employment land requirement from 135 ha to 60 ha.

Delivery

Questions:

- What are your views on how the Council will look to deliver the future jobs and employment land requirement over the plan period?
- What sort of strategies do we need to put in place to help support economic growth within the City of Bradford, Airedale and Wharfedale? (i.e. Tackling barriers to growth)

Table 1:

- It is likely that public expenditure will be required to deliver the best version of the plan.
- Housing squeezing employment – might need intervention to support land availability. Landowners holding out for housing values.
- Need to be consistent and ambitious over time.
- Projects are often long term and complicated / complex to realise benefits.
- Plan must represent the best opportunities for the District and wider area.
- Concentrate business around population and skills.
- Concentrate or package the offer / investment opportunities – not just what is submitted.

Table 2:

- There is not much opportunity in West of city centre, i.e. along Thornton Road. It is a difficult area regarding infrastructure.
- Need to take in to account the Clean Air Zone and the impact on environmental issues.
- Could tourism and skills invest in to some of these sites – public money intervention?
- Also, see table above

Table 3:

- Skill-uplifting of the local workforce is vital as this directly links with high quality job and retention of workforce.
- Educational attainment of young people of all demographic background is another factor that should be closely monitored.
- There should be more and active collaboration between MPs of neighbouring local authorities to address issues re: employment growth, job creation etc. as these have cross boundary implications on people and communities.
- Delivery of projects linked with NPR is vital to secure sustainable job growth.