

Neighbourhood Plan

Employment Land Sub-Group

Background:

Historically, although employment land has been allocated in VWHDC development plans, it has not always been developed for employment. Over time, employment land has been largely lost to residential development and today, Faringdon faces a situation where it consistently hovers on becoming a dormitory town. This has a detrimental effect on the local economy and the commercial viability of the town.

If Faringdon does nothing (Option 1) and follows recommendations within the existing VWHDC Core Strategy, the total provision of jobs will be 42 jobs for an estimated population expansion of 2,572 people. This is felt to be unsustainable.

The group has used a factor of 38% of those of working age to be employed locally, in order to forecast the amount of land required for employment. There is no set Government guideline but the group can demonstrate evidence to show that this is an acceptable factor for Faringdon.

Objective:

- To locate sites as employment land to meet a job requirement of between 800 – 1000 jobs.

NB: This figure has been reached using 2 different methods of calculation and draws on existing statistical information.

Recommendations:

Sites to be campaigned against turning to housing:

- The SEEDA site at the corner of Park Road and Volunteer Road should not be lost as an employment location.
- The employment site opposite Willes Close should not be lost as an employment location.

Sites to be promoted through phased development:

- Wicklesham Quarry for all B uses.
- Sandshill infill between new Bloors development and A420 – only after the development of 4&20 Business Park.
- Willes Close for B1 use.
- Sudbury House – allocation as HQ for a prestigious employer

Rural sites identified for employment and tourism:

- Pridnell Farm – moorings, camp site and organic centre
- Church Farm – barn conversions to organic centre and/or high density employment and/or nursery

Other sites:

- An increase of 20,000 sq. ft of retail within the centre of town (subject to a retail assessment and provision for Tesco).
- To provide around 0.25 ha of town centre offices ideally located as part of the Faringdon House development off Gloucester Road which will help to provide footfall in the town centre during lunch hours and after work.
- To encourage the change of Regal Way from B2/B8 to favour trade counter, which will improve the entrance into Faringdon.
- To encourage the re-development of Pioneer Road from B2/B8 to B1/B2, which will increase employment density.

Planning Policy Reviews:

- To resist office/shop space in the town centre being lost to offices
- Where there is a loss of employment land elsewhere, it needs to be reinstated at another location in order to prevent net loss of employment land.
- Windfall sites need to be managed e.g. to help with any net loss of employment land

Development gain to include:

- Shuttle bus to link to external/rural sites
- Bridge over A420 especially if Wicklesham Quarry becomes employment site

Design guide for buildings to include:

- Sustainability – “Eco-Parks” or pockets of “Eco-Buildings”. Wicklesham Quarry could be an industrial eco-park, which in itself could be a tourist attraction together with a fossil walkway/Fossil Trail.
- Landmark buildings in high visibility areas to help show that Faringdon is an attractive employment centre/location for business.
- Use of technology to future proof Faringdon and attract businesses to the town e.g. developments to have fibre optic/good technology infrastructure ready to connect to BT.

Requirements for Housing Developments:

In order to encourage entrepreneurship, business start-up, reduction in travelling miles to work and meeting the needs of business leaders, the new residential houses should be built to be capable of:

- Accommodating the needs of business leaders relocating businesses to Faringdon – i.e. executive homes of a minimum size of 5 bedroom.
- Making greater and above average provision for SOHO workers – both those who will always remain at home and those who will eventually move into small starter units, when available – i.e. minimum 4 bedroom/space for garden “shed/office”.
- To set-aside some live/work units within the affordable housing allocation in order to encourage entrepreneurship from all sectors of the community.