

HAMBLETON

A place to grow



Hambleton Industrial Estates Action Plan

Draft – November 2016

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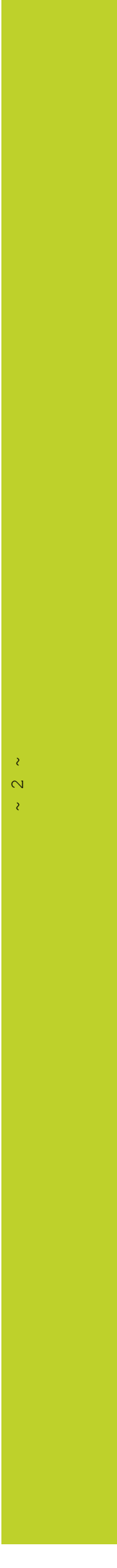
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Industrial Estates: a Summary of Key Issues

During the latter part of 2015 a review of Hambleton's Industrial was undertaken. The survey returned a number of common issues amongst estate residents. Some of the key issues are summarised here:

- Business rates**
 - Perceived as high in this area, that businesses get little in return for what they pay.
 - Barrier to expansion when full rates are demanded on speculative new build that is not fully occupied immediately.
- Recruitment**
 - Many businesses struggle to recruit the workforce they require to support their growth.
- Industry Skills**
 - Similarly businesses find it difficult to find people with the skills required for their industry.
- Training**
 - Linked to the above two points access to training to up skill the workforce is problematic.
- Competition**
 - Many businesses highlight they are facing stern competition.
- Land & Premises**
 - Land and premises requirements have come through well to feed into the Local Plan.
 - Low awareness of what is available locally in terms of land and premises.
- Broadband**
 - Some estates are still struggling to get high capacity connectivity.
- Mobile Coverage**
 - Considerable issues with mobile connectivity.
- Transport**
 - Getting the workforce to work is challenging in a rural environment.
- Roads and parking**
 - Many estates face issues with inappropriate parking especially by HGVs.
 - Others have issues with gritting and adoption and/or maintenance.

Developing an Action Plan

Each of the topics raised during the Industrial Estate review are examined here with a suggested course of action. Some will require modest interventions that can be implemented relatively quickly others require a long term approach which will need to be embedded within the policies contained within the emerging local plan. Accordingly the Business & Economy section is working closely with Planning Policy. Whilst work is in progress, a policy steer will be required from Management Team and Members on approaches to related key elements such as Inward Investment.

The rates of return of questionnaires provide confidence in many of the actions suggested. However, where there are issues flagged from estates with a lower level of returns on issues such as infrastructure, it would be prudent to undertake interviews with more businesses to validate results ahead of any actions being taken. This relates mainly to Northallerton and Easingwold estates; in the case of the Easingwold estates they are at the smaller end of the spectrum in terms of business numbers and are also privately operated.

A Place to Grow: Information Resources - a number of issues raised by businesses can be assisted through improved access to information and signposting to appropriate support services. As part of the Hambleton Economic Strategy the ‘A Place to Grow’ branding was created with the intention of developing a web resource that would promote the district and be a repository for information to assist local business growth. The brand and strapline is also a vehicle for potential inward investment promotion.

With the update of www.hambleton.gov.uk the potential now exists to have a ‘daughter’ website carrying the place to grow branding which can be dedicated to economic development and business support. This should include advice on export, regulatory issues, innovation, training, small business rate relief etc. Local government guidance suggests this resource should be linked to the hambleton.gov.uk domain but a separate domain may provide better scope for selling Hambleton the place if it is not tethered to Hambleton the council. This will be guided by Members’ ambitions in terms of inward investment ambitions.

Actions:

- Collate key information needs
- Research and Provide links to any available web resources or contacts for appropriate support organisations (how’s business, UKTI, Lets Grow, FSB, NFU etc.)
- Promote events which provide assistance on key areas. This could be a bespoke programme developed by HDC or signposting to trusted third events.
- If inward investment is a key focus of the site this would require:
 - o Detailed profile of the district (land, skills, demographics, key industries etc.)
 - o Land and premises availability
 - o Any ‘offer’ that the Council or partners have to support new investors
 - o Define district proposition

Timeline - Est. 2-3 months initially to set up plus approximately half day a week to keep site up to date

Resources required

- Team session(s) to review information needs and pool knowledge of available support resources, to outline district profile, define website structure etc.
- Web Project Officer time to make website template / design
- Business and Economy Support Officer / team time to populate web content
- Comms team, ED team, external partners to promote site when available
- Comms team input to develop key promotional pages/messages for inward investment facing elements

Business Rates – as devolution will mean rates are retained locally this already sensitive issue with businesses is likely to be exacerbated. A lot of businesses already feel the rates in the area are high compared to other areas. As they are not determined locally an education process may be useful, certainly an explanation of this should be on the Council and/or A Place to Grow website. If control over charging comes down to the local level it is likely there will be pressure from businesses for the Council to take some action to relieve businesses from what they see as a burden. One area however that the Council may be well placed to assist with if it gains powers over setting or discounting of rates is the current position on speculative builds. Developers building speculative units or businesses developing new factory extensions are charged full rates from day 1 irrespective of the level of occupancy. More development may be encouraged if this punitive approach can be softened.

Actions:

- Research our rates and ‘offer’ in relation to other areas
- Define the arguments,
- Engage with rates & finance teams,
- Develop draft policy,
- Write MT & Cabinet reports
- Augment information resources part of place to grow website to ensure it covers other tools which may be available to businesses to reduce their costs e.g. [Enhanced Capital Allowances](#)

Timeline - related to the devolution of business rates

Resources required - Officer time, Economic Development, Revenues & Benefits, Corporate Finance.

Workforce – ranks alongside infrastructure as one of the most significant issues of concern, an issue that deserves prioritisation.

Recruitment - the ability to locally recruit a workforce to feed growth ambitions is a major issue for our larger businesses. A range of actions are required on this issue including developing better school-industry links and ensuring people in lower skilled or entry level occupations can afford to live in the area. This has obvious links to Local Plan policy on affordable housing. Encouraging better links between businesses and the Job Centres may also be useful.

Actions:

- Engagement with Job Centres - utilise available labour pool effectively with support for up skilling/reskilling where necessary
- Keep developing school & industry links - demonstrate to young people it is possible to develop a good career within Hambleton
- Work with universities to develop degree apprenticeships
- Shape planning policy especially on Affordable Housing to ensure workforce can afford to live in the district
- Develop a Hambleton job site as part of the Place to Grow information resource?
- Extend apprentice and graduate schemes?
- Develop work experience scheme corporately in HDC with businesses/schools
- Increase contact databases for local businesses to improve awareness of initiatives and increase two way communication

Timeline - 6 months - 3 months planning, 3 months to implement

Resources required: Officer time, partners including schools, JC+, training providers and business partners

Skills & Training - as well as struggling to find workforce businesses struggle to find appropriately skilled individuals. This is at a number of levels including managerial levels. The survey results indicate a clear market demand in the area just among the industrial estates. This demand may be wider than the estates and a wider business analysis of training needs may be beneficial if the council wishes to further engage with Higher Education providers and encourage them to have a presence in the district.

Actions:

- Engage with appropriate Universities and FE colleges to provide access to training to meet needs of business e.g. Sheffield Hallam for Food manufacturing, University of Teesside for Managerial, IT etc.

- Encourage development of internships and degree apprenticeships in key sectors
- Determine if there is demand and resource (e.g. LEP Growth Deal Skills Infrastructure Funding) to support a physical facility in the district to serve workforce and perhaps school leavers too.

Timeline - time to coincide with academic cycle, therefore preparation in 2016, early 2017 and delivery from end of 2017 summer terms.

Resources required - officer time, engaged partners in Universities, FE colleges and schools

Transport - even when a workforce can be recruited locally there are barriers to getting people to the jobs due to the challenge of being a rural district with limited public transport provision. Work could be undertaken to demonstrate to transport providers that a market exists on the estates to encourage them to extend their services or adapt their timetables to serve estates better.

Where this isn't possible new or improved community transport initiatives like Wheels to Work could be explored. Car share schemes or even estates businesses collaborating to provide private transport provision may be options to explore.

Actions:

- Improve pedestrian and cycle links to business parks and industrial estates
- Research schemes elsewhere to see if any social car / transport schemes have been successful in supporting growth of rural industrial locations
- Extension of Wheels to work moped and car schemes
- Pickup -apprentice / collect-a-colleague car share schemes?
- Consider BID's to raise funds to provide transport services or to subsidise existing services to better serve estate needs
- Review public transport services and see if timetables could be enhanced to provide an improved service that fits with shift patterns etc.

Timeline - Dependant on actions required

Resources required -Dependant on actions required, as a minimum officer time to research best solutions

Competition – a significant proportion of businesses flagged competition as an issue. This resonates with a finding of the Economic

Strategy that Hambleton businesses were on average less productive than the UK generally. Measures to help increase productivity and innovation in the local economy could assist with competitiveness. Increased productivity would potentially help reduce issues around recruitment too. If staff are upskilled to increase productivity, growth may be possible with a reduced demand for further staff. Closer working with organisations such as InnovateUK and skills providers, especially those with specialism that suit our businesses, should be explored further.

Actions:

- Work with a range of agencies (InnovateUK, Universities, etc.) to develop a programme to assess and improve business productivity
- Develop a series of events to help with generic (e.g. marketing) and industry specific productivity issues. Further engagement with businesses will be required to isolate the key issues.
- Signposting
- Business to Business
- Encourage closer links between local businesses - facilitate events where businesses can learn about what they do, their history and evolution etc.
- Encourage local procurement to help local businesses support each other

Timeline - tbc

Resources required - Officer time, events/training budget, key partner engagement

Infrastructure - significant infrastructure issues were flagged in the survey though there is significant variation between estates.

Broadband - there some estates that still struggle to get high capacity connectivity. They are known to the council and actions are already being taken to identify solutions for estates where they are required. In April 2016 the results of a study identifying issues with estates was produced and forwarded to those affected with poor connectivity. Providers of potential solutions to improve connectivity have been identified.

Actions

- Investigate costs from providers to provide improved connectivity to estates with issues.
- Work with businesses, estate owners and broadband providers to find appropriate solutions for their needs

Timeline - 4-6 months to cost and implement solutions

Resources required - staff time, potentially capital investment may be required

Mobile Coverage - as great an issue as broadband and one flagged in the Economic Strategy as requiring improvement. Engagement is required with mobile operators to encourage greater coverage of the district and to understand if it is possible to make a business case for them improving coverage of the industrial estates. Some may be too small to do this, but larger estates with significant numbers of employees on site, especially if they sit near other settlements, may present an attractive case.

Research provider's programmes for investment in the networks

Actions

- Research providers programmes for investment in the networks
- Lobby for service improvements, or for earlier implementation if planned.

Timeline - tbc

Resources required - staff time

Roads & Parking - is well known as an issue and that is it difficult to resolve. However it is so prevalent in the returns that it would be difficult not to re-examine this issue and seek solutions. Maintenance and adoption needs to be examined and dealt with on an estate by estate basis. HGV parking is a particular issue too. Where alternative provision can be identified in the vicinity perhaps using third party land e.g. in the case of Thirsk the Auction Mart. Third parties offering good facilities for overnight parking at no cost or a modest cost combined with more enforcement or dis-incentivising inappropriate parking may help alleviate the issue. Different estates will no doubt require bespoke solutions.

Actions:

- Research estate parking solutions in other areas
- Examine if third party options are available in the locality
- Assess parking enforcement options where HGV parking
- Verify on estates with issues if it is a generic issue or if it is caused by specific businesses
- Input to planning policy, see if there are allocations that are/could be made to support additional capacity for parking
- Trial concept of parking being improved through development of a BID on estates where greatest issues faced

Timeline - Research 2-3 months, developing and implementing solutions - tbc

Resources required - Officer time, remainder tbc

Utilities - need to be considered in more detail on an estate by estate basis and over a longer time period than the survey was considering. The time span should match that of the Local Plan and estates utilities capacity to meet growth requirements over this period considered. Utilities improvements are costly, time consuming and require significant lead times to resolve so need a particular long term focus and strategy to ensure they are not a growth restraint.

Actions:

- Review in detail the industrial estate returns to determine any key areas of need
- Revisit the industrial estates infrastructure review brief produced by lan
- Determine if review can be done internally or if external support is required
- Link into Local Plan

Timeline - tbc

Resources required - tbc

Premises – the industrial estates survey demonstrated there is significant ambition for our businesses to grow. Many are backing up this ambition by securing land to facilitate their growth. There are however a number of businesses that do not have land secured and provision should be made within the district if possible to assist their growth aspirations.

It also needs to be borne in mind that the returns at best only represent a quarter of the industrial estate residents and further that the review only covered a 5 year period. To feed into the employment allocations in the local plan we need to consider the growth potential for a 20 year period. Consideration also needs to be given to the growth predictions arising from the Employment Land Review undertaken as part of the Local Plan. This looks to be at odds with the growth aspirations of local businesses.

Additional consideration will need to be given in the Local Plan to ambitions for inward investment. If Hambleton is to have the ability to attract significant investment from outside of the district it will need land and premises available to meet the requirements of the types of business it hopes to attract. This could range from merely allocating appropriate land, through to buying and servicing land for resale or providing further managed workspace or industrial units suited to the target sectors.

Part of the solution to meeting needs for business growth and inward investment will be ensuring appropriate allocations are made in the local plan, understanding what private landlords and landowners may be able to do to assist with growth as well as to be aware of the offer in other districts.

It will be necessary to promote what land and premises are already available in the district. A review of the land and property register, how it is used and marketed would be advisable.

Actions:

- Feed results of survey into Planning Policy Employment Land Review
- Establish likely indigenous business demand over plan period
- Determine Councils position on inward investment and feed this into planning policy
- Review use, content and marketing of Land and Property Register
- Ensure appropriate prominence given to land and premises on the Place to Grow website

Timeline - Local Plan,

Resources required - tbc