



Planning Note

Colchester Employment Land Needs and Tiptree

1. This note has been prepared for Marden Homes and considers Colchester Borough Council's employment land supply / need evidence insofar as it concerns Tiptree and land at Tower House in particular.

Colchester Employment Land Needs Assessment : Final Report (2015)

2. The Council published the Colchester Employment Land Needs Assessment : Final Report (2015) ('the 2015 Report') as part of its emerging Local Plan evidence base.
3. The 2015 Report recorded the total available employment land for Rural District Centres (Tiptree, West Mersea, Wivenhoe) as 0 ha. An extract showing the relevant table from the 2015 Report is shown below:

Table 3.2 Available Employment Space in Colchester

Location		Available Employment Land (ha)		
		Office (B1a/b)	Industrial (B1c/B2/B8)	Total
Strategic Employment Zones	North Colchester	7.9	14.6	22.5
	Stanway	13.3	13.5	26.8
	Knowledge Gateway	11.4	0	11.4
Colchester Town Centre	Town Centre Core	0.1	0.1	0.2
	Edge of Centre	3.5	7.1	10.6
Rural District Centres (Tiptree, West Mersea, Wivenhoe)		0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Rural Areas		1.4	4.0	5.4
Total		37.6	39.3	76.9

Source: Colchester Borough Council / NLP analysis

Note: Split between office (B1a/b) and industrial (B1c/B2/B8) uses has been estimated based upon Core Strategy policy CE1 and existing uses present at the time of site assessments

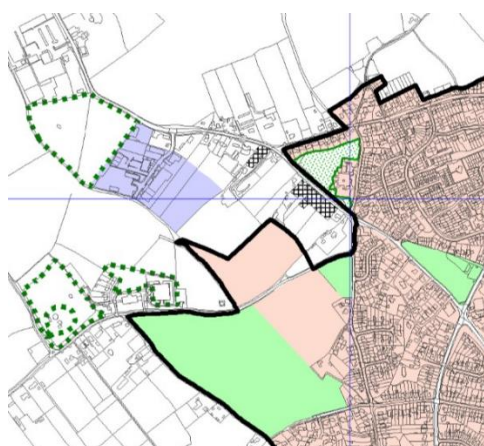
4. The 2015 Report went on to suggest low market demand for employment land in Rural District Centres; and an adequate supply in such areas. The below table is Table 7.4 from the 2015 Report:

Table 7.4 Comparison of Employment Land Supply and Demand to 2032 by Sub Area

Sub Area	Available Employment Land Supply (ha)	Reported Level of Market Demand		Demand / Supply Balance to 2032
		Office	Industrial	
North Colchester	22.5	Moderate	High	↔
Stanway	26.8	Low/Moderate	Low/Moderate	↑
Knowledge Gateway	11.4	Low/Moderate	n/a	↑
Colchester - Town Centre Core	0.2	Moderate	n/a	↓
Colchester - Edge of Centre	10.6	Low/Moderate	Moderate	↔
Rural District Centres (Tiptree, West Mersea, Wivenhoe)	0.0	Low	Low/Moderate	↔
Other Rural Areas	5.4	Low/Moderate	Low/Moderate	↔
Borough Total	76.9	Low/Moderate	Moderate	↑

KEY ↔ = adequate supply ↑ = over-supply ↓ = under-supply

- In considering employment needs / supply, the 2015 report did not appear to consider the whole employment allocation – only the element that has already been developed.
- In considering Tower House, Tiptree (site reference 36 in the 2015 report) it refers to the site as being 2.59 ha, as opposed to the total allocation which the Council’s adopted Site Allocations Plan which reports the allocation measures 4.12 ha.
- Nevertheless, the area shown within the 2015 report as representing the Tower House employment site matches that of the allocation:



Extract from Site Allocations Plan (2010)



Extract from Employment Land Needs Assessment Final Report (2015)

8. Notwithstanding the extent of area shown on the 2015 report's map, the assessment refers to Tower House as "totally 2.59 hectares" and states "this is a fully developed employment site and there is **no apparent scope for further development**" (Emphasis added).
9. Furthermore, a footnote provided in respect of the site assessment (footnote 42 of the 2015 report) states:

*"The size of this site has been amended as the allocated employment area included adjacent fields and there is **no scope for development to occur on these fields**"*
10. As such, it would appear that the 2015 assessment conclusions that there was an adequate supply of employment land in the Rural District Centres (including Tiptree) did not account for any contribution to supply from the undeveloped part of the Tower House allocation, i.e. it could not be said that the undeveloped element of this allocation would need to be developed for employment use in order to ensure supply would meet the needs that had been identified.
11. Furthermore, and separately to the issue of need / supply, the commentary and footnote in the 2015 study very much indicated that the undeveloped element of the allocation has no prospects for development for employment.
12. The 2015 assessment also included the following commentary, suggesting viability concerns and expressly stating that additional employment allocations in Rural District Centres for B class development did not appear necessary:

*"The Borough's Rural District Centres (as defined by the 2008 Core Strategy Centre Hierarchy) include Tiptree, West Mersea and Wivenhoe and provide a wider range of shops and services for the needs of residents within the immediate neighbourhood and the vicinity of the District settlement. They provide an important source of employment and include a number of established employment sites such as Tower House in Tiptree and Waldegraves Farm in West Mersea. Nevertheless, demand is very localised, accessibility (particularly to strategic routes) can be poor and new development of employment space is largely unviable due to the peripheral location of these centres away from the critical mass of established employment areas in and around Colchester town. **The District Centres do not accommodate any available supply of employment land**, although the above factors mean that **it does not appear necessary to specifically identify any new land for B class development over the plan period**". (Emphasis added).*

Economic Growth Evidence Base Update (2019)

13. A note providing an update to the Colchester Employment Land Needs Assessment : Final Report (2015) was published in 2019 by the Council ('the 2019 Update').
14. This included revised employment space requirement projections, identifying overall increased need for space for Use Class B:

	Floorspace (sq.m)
Offices (B1a/B1b)	94,480
Manufacturing (B1c/B2)	-18,090
Distribution (B8)	8,430
Total B Class Jobs	84,820

Extract from Employment Land Needs Assessment Final Report (2015)

	Floorspace (sq m)
Offices (B1a/B1b)	18,150
Manufacturing (B1c/B2)	38,691
Distribution (B8)	82,485
Total B Class Jobs	139,326

Extract from 2019 Update



15. Notably, the 2019 Update identified a vastly greater need for B8; a need for manufacturing (whereas the 2015 Needs Assessment suggested an oversupply); but a significantly reduced requirement for office space.
16. The 2019 Update did not include any analysis or commentary regarding spatial distribution of this need, such as whether the Rural District Centres still had an adequate supply of employment land as identified in the 2015 assessment.

January 2022