

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal PPB

DATE: 20th September 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director – Environment & Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Environment and Urban Renewal

SUBJECT: Housing and Employment Land Update 2022/23.

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides a summary of the annual housing and employment land monitoring surveys undertaken by the Planning & Transport Department.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

3.1 Halton's Local Plan sets out policy targets for the delivery of additional housing and also the provision of land for employment development.

3.2 The Local Plan seeks the delivery of an average of 350 dwellings (net gain) per annum (p.a.) and also provide approximately 180ha of land for employment purposes over the period 2014 to 2037.

3.3 Local Plan policy CS(R)3 during the period 2014 to 2037 states provision will be made for the development of at least 8,050 (net) additional dwellings at an average of 350 dwellings (net) each year. National Guidance, contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires a rolling 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites, and this position is captured within Halton's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which is a document that forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.

3.4 Local Plan (Policy CS(R)4) looks for approximately 180 hectares of land from a variety of sources to be made available to facilitate the sustainable growth of Halton's economy during the period 2014 to 2037. The employment land policy CS(R)4 figure of 9 ha per annum is based on a continuation of the long term take-up rate of employment land by to businesses between 2014 to the end of the Local Plan period (to 2037). Unlike housing, where the policy has an annualised construction target, the employment figure is a target for the quantum of land available (supply) rather than 'take-up / development' of that land.

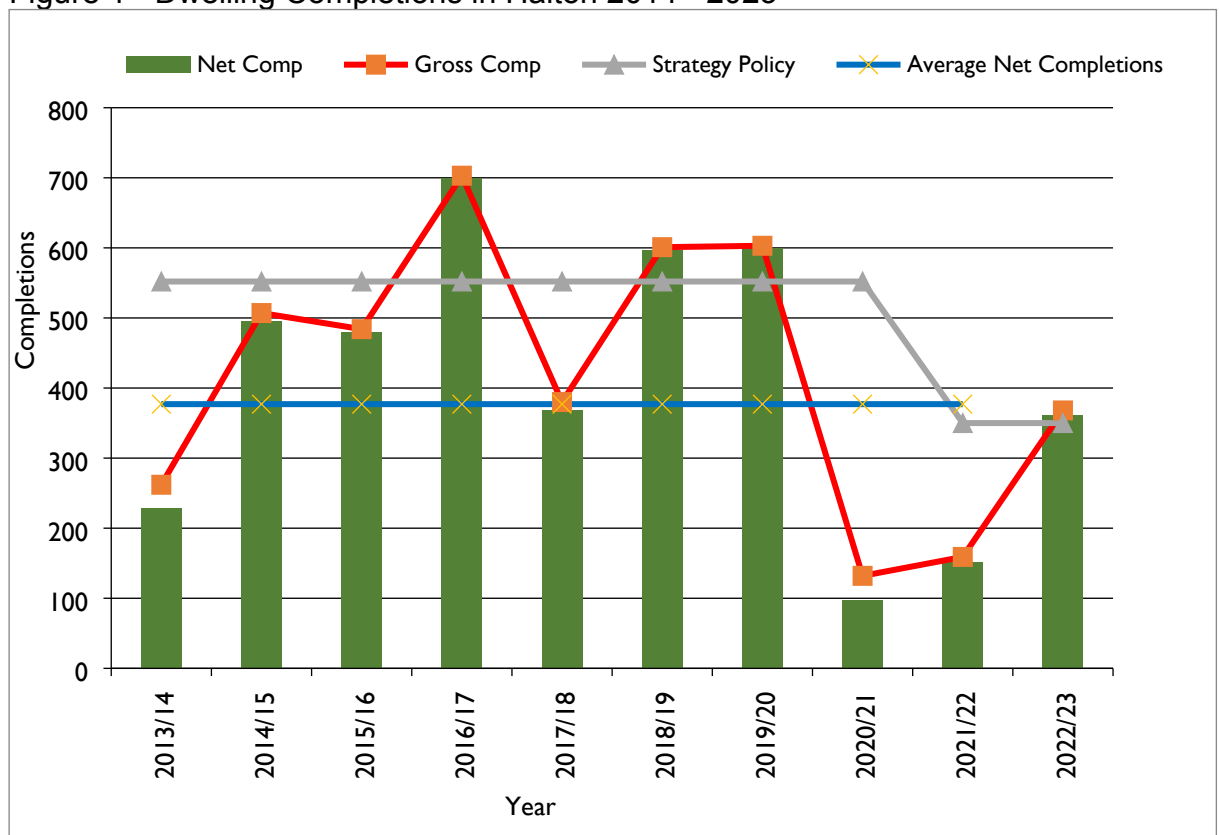
Housing

3.5 In the year to April 2023, there were 368 housing completions in Halton with 6 losses/demolitions giving a net dwelling gain for the year of 362 units. Of these, 108 units were completed on land to the East of Village Street, Sandymoor Daresbury. Two

large sites at Wharford Lane, Daresbury and Sandymoor were completed and there were six sites continuing under construction yielding 248 units this year, with 455 remaining to be completed in future years.

- 3.6 Of the 368 completions (gross), 74%, some 273 units (270 net) were in Runcorn with 26%, totalling 95 completions (92 net) being in Widnes.
- 3.7 34% of completions were on brownfield sites, with 70% of sites achieving the Local Plan policy target of at least 30 dwellings per hectare.
- 3.8 Figure 1 shows that the 368 gross completions in Halton (2022/23) represents a significant increase from the previous two years which saw only 291 gross completions in total.

Figure 1 - Dwelling Completions in Halton 2014 - 2023



- 3.9 As at April 2023 there were a total of 264 units under construction, 222 in Runcorn (17 sites) and 42 in Widnes (6 sites). Once all these sites are completed it will return an additional 1086 units.
- 3.10 Permissions were granted for a total of 610 units (603 net) in 2022/23, with 431 (70.5%) in Runcorn and 179 (29.5%) in Widnes of which 447 units (73%) were given permission on brownfield land and 163 units (27%) on greenfield land.

Employment

- 3.12 Employment land monitoring for 2023 recorded the take up of 6.67 ha of employment land all of which was taken up in Widnes. Development includes 4,507 sqm of B8 and 3,618 sqm of E(g)(iii) (Industrial Processes).

3.13 This represents a decrease on the previous year (from 12.57 ha to 6.67 Ha.) and is slightly behind the remaining prevailing long term average of around 9 Ha. Figure 2 shows comparative figures for each year since April 2014, whilst Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the category of employment use developed.

3.14 Over the local plan period so far (2014-2023) we have seen a total of 51.96 hectares of employment development in Halton. This equates to a future requirement of 128.04 hectares of land for the remainder of the Local Plan period. The current Employment Land Availability Register shows over 133 hectares of land available for employment development.

Figure 2 – Employment Completions in Halton 2014 - 2023

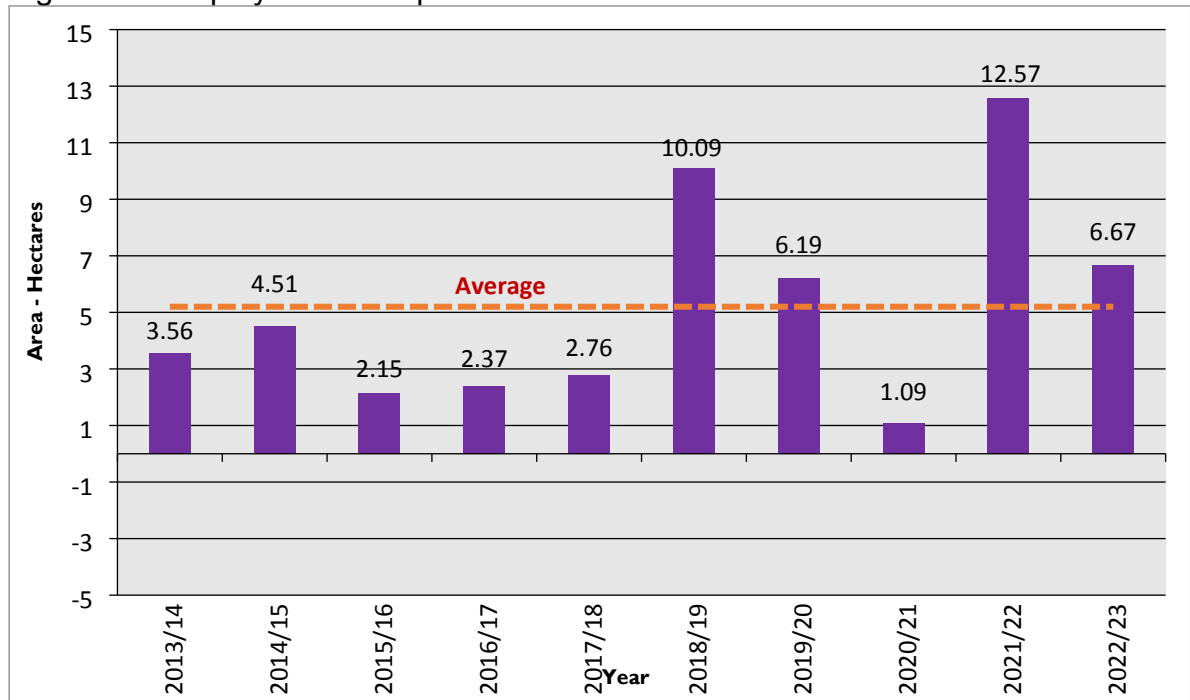


Figure 3 - Hectares of Completed Employment Development in Halton 2014 – 2023 (By Use Class)

YEAR	Use Class									Total
	E(g)(i)	E(g)(ii)	E(g)(iii)	B2	B8 Small	B8 Large	E(g), B2, B8	SG	Mixed Use	
2013/14	0.81	0.01	0.00	1.54	1.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.56
2014/15	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.40	0.98	0.00	0.00	3.09	0.00	4.51
2015/16	0.02	1.39	0.00	0.00	0.69	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.00	2.15
2016/17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.81	0.00	0.00	1.56	0.00	2.37
2017/18	0.57	0.00	0.00	1.37	0.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.76
2018/19	0.65	0.00	0.04	5.66	0.00	3.74	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.09
2019/20	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.05	1.45	2.43	2.25	0.00	0.00	6.19
2020/21	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.09
2021/22	1.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.75	2.54	0.00	0.00	12.57
2022/23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.23	0.00	0.00	5.44	0.00	6.67
Total 2014-2023	3.41	1.40	0.07	9.02	8.20	14.92	4.79	10.14	0.00	51.95

Annual Average	0.34	0.14	0.01	0.90	0.82	1.49	0.48	1.01	0.00	5.19
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4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 National guidance requires that Halton set and monitor performance against housing delivery and employment development land policy targets. The National Planning Policy Framework has a requirement to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing, of which the Housing Land Availability monitoring is a part, with the presumption in favour of sustainable development overriding local policy (excluding Green Belt) where this 5 year supply cannot be demonstrated.
- 4.2 There is no specific government sanction for failing to meet employment targets. Indeed, the figures above, do not represent a lack of available land but rather the lack of specific development by the private sector. However the strength of Halton's local economy depends upon a good range of sites to attract inward investment.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None identified.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

New residential development approved through the development management system will be expected to conform to current policy including making adequate provision for children's play space. Access to modern 'healthy' housing and enhanced local job opportunities for family members (boosting household incomes and aspirations) or young people as they enter the labour market can have positive effects.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Housing development is seen as a major economic driver, creating jobs within the construction sector, and boosting demand for goods and services. Halton has experienced periods of population decline and increasing the supply and range of housing is seen as key to helping stabilise/grow the population and maintain the demand for services.

Additions to Halton's commercial property stock, boosts employment opportunities within the Borough on the sites concerned but can also have significant wider 'multiplier' effects as businesses invest, boosting turnover and demand for supporting services.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

New development approved through the development management system will be expected to conform to current policy, including in the Design for Community Safety SPD. Access to modern 'healthy' housing and to enhanced job opportunities can have both direct and indirect health benefits.

6.4 A Safer Halton

New development approved through the development management system will be expected to conform to current policy, including in the Design for Community Safety SPD.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

New development, be it on previously developed (brownfield) land or on peripheral greenfield sites represents significant investment within the borough. It provides new or expanded commercial floorspace, boosting or safeguarding employment levels, lifting the quality of the commercial stock boosting economic activity and potentially levering in further investment.

New residential development increases and widens the housing stock helping address specific housing needs and/or retaining/attracting new families into the borough.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None identified. Annual monitoring of development completions has been systematically undertaken for a number of years in accordance with government requirements or guidance. This provides a valuable time series of robust information that is used to inform planning policy and development management decisions.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 No direct implications identified.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.