

# Summary of Stakeholder and Property Market Engagement

Employment Land Review Technical Paper

South Gloucestershire

January 2022



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# 1. Introduction to the Paper

Atkins have prepared a series of technical papers which support the main the Employment Land Review (ELR) report. This in turn is set in the context of the West of England Employment Land Spatial Needs Assessment (ELSNA).

This paper summarises the findings of the stakeholder engagement process which has directly informed the findings of the ELR.

Qualitative assessment of employment demand and land and property supply plays a critical role in development of the Employment Land Review for South Gloucestershire. Atkins have conducted structured engagement throughout the study with a range of local stakeholders, business sector representatives and local and national property market agents. The intention of the stakeholder engagement process was to underpin the ELR with a deep understanding of the employment land situation in South Gloucestershire, informed by local knowledge. This technical paper summarises the key issues and evidence established through feedback from the engagement process.

## 1.1. Stakeholder Engagement Process

The stakeholder engagement process for the South Gloucestershire ELR was initiated with a market engagement workshop, held remotely via Microsoft Teams on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The purpose of the workshop was to establish a collaborative approach to capturing and testing market insights for South Gloucestershire's commercial property market, including the supply of and demand for employment land.

The workshop engaged with both property market sector representatives and key business umbrella groups active in South Gloucestershire, as well as the wider West of England region. A full list of attendees is presented in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1 - Stakeholder Engagement Workshop Attendees, 13th October 2020**

Name	Representing
Andrew Ridler	Alder King
Matthew Golisti	Avison Young
Chris Grazier	Hartnell Taylor Cook
Charlie Kershaw	Burston Cook
Seb Loyn	YTL
Paul Baker	JLL
Matt Griffith	Business West
Mark Thorne	St Modwen
Patrick Conroy	South Gloucestershire Council
Ian Steele	South Gloucestershire Council
Andy Cornelius	South Gloucestershire Council
Leanne Kelly	Atkins
Helen Dias	Atkins
Efua Dadze-Arthur	Atkins
Peter Alvey	Atkins
Rob Harris	Ramidus Consulting

The workshop focused on a Q&A session that was proceeded by a formal presentation; further data was subsequently provided by attendees and key issues identified during the workshop were followed up with attendees by the study team. The workshop was structured around the following key questions:

**Figure 1-1 - Key Workshop Discussion Questions**

- 1. Can you provide local insights into the challenges, issues and opportunities for your sector/the businesses you work with? Referring to trends pre-COVID*
- 2. How do you see the drivers of change impacting on your sector/the businesses you work with in the short, medium and longer term? [COVID-19, Brexit, net zero, inclusion, future of work, emerging sub-sectors, enterprise structures, digital and smart, AI and automation, circular economy] Which ones are most significant?*
- 3. What are the implications of these change factors on growth and employment levels? For the short, medium and longer term.*
- 4. What are the implications of these change factors for the spatial needs of your sector/the businesses you work with (scale, locational and premises)?*
- 5. Do you have any emerging evidence on these implications and their magnitude?*

The second stakeholder engagement workshop was again held remotely via Microsoft Teams, on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021, between Atkins and South Gloucestershire Council (SGC). The purpose of the second workshop was to obtain the insights of SGC on how the Council could approach the issue of meeting future employment space needs within the Unitary Authority, based on the outcomes of the ELSNA supply-demand assessment. This included a focus on maximising the use of existing employment sites and identifying locations/clusters with the potential to accommodate future need, as well as potential priorities for spatial planning policy. The workshop engaged with members of SGC's strategic planning and economic development teams. A full list of attendees is presented in Table 1-2.

**Table 1-2 – Meeting Future Need Workshop Attendees, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

Name	Representing
Lisa Price	South Gloucestershire Council
Jessica Bett	South Gloucestershire Council
Adeline Wilcox	South Gloucestershire Council
Carl McClure	South Gloucestershire Council
Patrick Conroy	South Gloucestershire Council
Ian Steele	South Gloucestershire Council
Andy Cornelius	South Gloucestershire Council
Leanne Kelly	Atkins
Richard Coburn	Atkins
Dominic Clark	Atkins
Peter Alvey	Atkins

In addition to these two workshops, focussed 1-2-1 discussions were held with key property agents as part of the ELSNA engagement process, including representatives from Avison Young, Knight Frank and Gerald Eve. This involved targeted discussions on major supply and demand issues for land, sites and premises within the West of England and its constituent markets and sub-markets. The major outcomes of these discussions, of specific relevance to the South Gloucestershire area, have been incorporated into the following summary of key issues and evidence established through the stakeholder engagement process.

The following summary of the key issues and evidence established through the stakeholder engagement process for South Gloucestershire is structured in the following two sections:

- Sector-Specific Challenges and Opportunities for Growth (including the Drivers of Change); and
- Future Spatial Needs and Premises Requirements (organised by Use Class and potential employment land locations).

## 2. Challenges and Opportunities for Growth

The opportunities and challenges presented during the stakeholder engagement process varied significantly by sector and even within sectors. As a result, some of the key challenges raised by business stakeholders and market agents are summarised by sector below. In particular, these focus on the drivers of change outlined in the previous chapters, including COVID-19, Brexit and automation of business activity. However, it is important to recognise here, and indeed throughout the Technical Paper, that these opportunities and challenges in South Gloucestershire are likely to have evolved since the first stakeholder workshop in October 2020 – particularly with regards to the COVID-19 pandemic and potentially site-specific issues.

### 2.1. Sector-Specific Challenges and Opportunities

#### Broader Manufacturing (including Aerospace and Advanced Engineering)

- Land use demands are expected to see a less dramatic shift than other sectors as a result of COVID-19 and other drivers of change, however the levels of staff required onsite are likely to lessen with increased automation.
- Many of the traditional industrial estates and locations in South Gloucestershire have suffered from lack of investment, with a high and increasing proportion of poor quality and poorly maintained premises. One reason for lack of investment may be anticipation of change to more valuable uses, e.g. residential.
- Lower cost industrial employment space in traditional locations is increasingly being converted/redeveloped for higher value alternative uses such as trade showrooms, retail warehouses, leisure uses and residential. This loss of low-cost space is anticipated to be more widespread and the effect much more pronounced following the changes to the Use Classes Order that came into force in mid-2020.
- The potential to co-locate employment and residential through redevelopment of employment sites is particularly limited to certain use types (particularly craft manufacturing). The end values of employment space created through such redevelopment are high and attractive to a small proportion of end users.

#### Housing, Construction and Development

- One of the major issues facing the construction sector is resources being pulled out of South Gloucestershire and the wider West of England into neighbouring locations like Hinkley and Berkley.
- Elements of the construction sector are becoming increasingly automated, with productivity improving significantly, meaning fewer people are needed to return the same outputs. This is likely to result in a GVA increase, but with a smaller increase in jobs. As a result, the types of facilities required to support the future workforce will change, including reduced demand for office accommodation on the consultancy side of the sector.

#### Professional Services

- This sector is likely to see a shift in demand following COVID-19, as organisations look to reduce their office footprint. This is an existing trend which has been underway since the start of the decade, however COVID-19 has accelerated the shift. For instance, Lloyds Banking Group have instructed staff that they are not expected in the office for the foreseeable future, which will likely have implications for floorspace if productivity levels have been maintained over the past year.

#### Creative and Digital

- Pressure on affordable city centre space and trend for repurposing second grade office space into housing substantially impacted creative industries. Whilst creative companies recognise they can work remotely, they require collaborative spaces, and are looking to reduce fixed costs of larger offices. Opportunity exists to develop neighbourhood hubs for co-working as people look for change of scene when working from home. Clustering and flexibility of workspace remain important, particularly for start-ups
- Although several microbusinesses and SMEs in the digital and creative sector are transitioning to permanent home working as a result of COVID-19, the role of offices is likely to remain key. Recent enquiries demonstrate increasing interest in more conventional leases with sole use/occupation as well

as collaborative workspace. This includes smaller traditional types of office spaces, such as smaller suites of offices and offices above shops, which are in limited supply due to pressure from housing.

- The pandemic posed a threat to the tech sector as collaboration remains crucial e.g. through incubators. The majority of start-up hubs and incubators have suffered due to the smaller premises, for instance staircases are typically only one person wide. Some larger retail premises are likely to have become vacant due to COVID-19, therefore they should be considered for development to accommodate incubator or accelerator space – inspired by success of Unit DX.
- Brexit does not pose a major impact upon high-tech companies, as technologies are unique and not competing against one another. Tariffs on imports and exports may harm larger companies, but not smaller tech businesses.
- The loss of the lower quality employment space and land in central areas and well -located estates is placing pressure on supply, leading to increased rents for premises suitable for new start-ups (particularly in the creative sector which is extremely price sensitive) and for SMEs wanting to establish and expand close to their key, central, markets. The likely trend for such businesses to move to more peripheral locations does not support the Net Zero Carbon agenda.
- Particularly in microbusinesses and the creative digital sector, the workforce is getting younger and is increasingly dominated by Generation Z (19 to 24 years old), which marry lifestyle with flexibility in working patterns. The young people who move to work in the West of England and Bristol are typically drawn by softer factors – such as a sense of place that is tolerant, diverse and sustainable.

### Transport and Logistics

- The high level of growth in demand for space in well-connected locations is set to continue in the medium term. The range of skills required on site is expanding with much greater needs for IT and computing skills, as the processing of goods is increasingly automated with 24/7 working patterns.
- Low cost industrial and employment floorspace for businesses vital to serving the local economy – “servicing the services”, “white man and a van” and business meeting the need of residents – are being pushed out of Bristol City Centre. These businesses are vital to the successful functioning of the economy and there is a need to protect land and property in appropriate locations for these lower value uses.
- The potential move of the focus of future trading links toward the United States, Canada and the rest of the world rather than Europe may benefit parts of the UK with good access to ports on the western coast.
- The potential for the Port of Bristol to become a Freeport under government policy holds significant opportunities for the growth of the transport and logistics sector; depending on the trading agreements reached and the amount of time that goods may need to be held at ports, there may be a need for more bonded and climate controlled warehousing at Bristol Freeport.

### Retail, Culture and Leisure

- Place strategies are crucial to town centres if a path to vibrancy is to be re-established. This includes repurposing retail units to stimulate footfall in centres, e.g. the Galleries in Bristol as an example of positive change.
- Data can also be key in streaming investment decisions within retail, e.g. providing useful insights on demographics and spending patterns, which can therefore be utilised when defining spending priorities.

### Tourism

- The tourism sector found itself in a peculiar position in October, with high vacancies and redundancies. The sector also experiences considerable levels of vacancies in highly skilled roles.
- A significant challenge facing the tourism and leisure sector is how to address issues surrounding the seasonal nature of the businesses and employment. This has been particularly pronounced during COVID-19 related lockdowns and there is widespread concern that businesses will be lost if continued and sector-specific support is not provided by the government.
- The impact of Brexit on the tourism sector in long term will be considerable for the West of England, with Bristol in particular being more reliant on the European market. For example, the region benefits from international school groups, which can currently travel on EU identity cards. The removal of this will have a huge impact on market. The reputational damage of Brexit will also have a significant impact in reducing international travel. This is detrimental for the region as international visitors tend to stay for longer and spend more money within the local economy.

- Despite the impacts of COVID, significant development is underway in the visitor economy, including 6 major hotels in Bristol and South Gloucestershire, as well as the Bristol Arena development.

### Food and Rural Enterprise

- In the food sector, spatial needs are not anticipated to significantly change in volume/size, however small units on business parks are likely to continue gaining traction and provide opportunities for food services. Increased automation is anticipated to shift how businesses operate, but employment levels are likely to stay at similar levels.
- Both the food and agricultural sectors could be significantly affected by a poor Brexit deal and subsequent legislation/future international Trade Deals. Until the government provides significant information on likely import and export tariffs, it is difficult for businesses in this sector to plan and adjust plans accordingly.
- A significant challenge facing rural enterprises is a lack of connectivity and broadband access, particularly in more remote areas. Addressing this issue is crucial if demand for space in rural areas is anticipated to increase. Access to funding is also a significant issue for the rural enterprise sector.
- Where fibre optic broadband has been installed in rural areas, these areas have seen an increase in home working has been observed, including increasing desire for set down hub spaces in rural communities, as well as hot desking spaces. Availability of fibre broadband should act as a key guide for the future location of SMEs and home working. The workshops also highlighted the wide variety of industries encompassed within rural enterprise, with the range increasing as fibre optic broadband becomes more available.

## 2.2. Workforce Implications in South Gloucestershire

Market engagement highlighted significant concerns around the impact of COVID-19 and possible future effects on the workforce in South Gloucestershire. Lack of business confidence in the short term may have a negative impact on employment levels and growth prospects, whilst repayment of existing government and bank loans means future plans will be cautious. The pandemic means people increasingly want to travel less, with a changing outlook emerging around work-life balance. Interest has heightened in the notion of '15 minute' communities, with people expressing a desire to engage more cohesively with their communities and live/work in an integrated way.

Crucially, it is again important to emphasise here that the workforce implications of the COVID-19 pandemic are continuously evolving and shifting, particularly since the first stakeholder workshop in October 2020. The government response to the pandemic, and the policies of employers with regards to flexible working, remain very dynamic and the situation will require monitoring to observe any implications for employment space. There is a need for long term policy to be in keeping with the expected structural trends, with employees beginning to return to the office, but expecting to continue remote working for at least part of the week. This highlights the need for dynamic working patterns, and employers being flexible with their expectations for the workforce, ensuring behavioural factors are taken into account. However, the majority of points raised still remain relevant and demonstrate the shifting lifestyle patterns of today.

Lockdown accelerated existing trends of flexible working and working from home. This is anticipated to have implications on the internal design of new homes and neighbourhoods. Demand is expected to increase for attractive local quarters which provide good quality public realm and open places, with a range of local services, including workspace available to rent by the day or week. These "softer" design issues are likely to have a greater and increasing influence on where people choose to live, and businesses chose to locate.

The workshop highlighted that the environment of the locality – from the business estate itself to the urban centre – is becoming increasingly important for firms deciding where to locate, with affordability of places for the workforce to live being key. Many of the key centres and locations in South Gloucestershire and Bristol are attractive to mobile businesses as the area provides a diverse range of sustainable high-quality lifestyle choices.

Market engagement has also highlighted that the desire to work in rural areas is increasing as a lifestyle choice, and rural locations are now seen as desirable home working locations with increased provision of fibre optics.

Alongside automation, market engagement indicates that agile working patterns will have impacts in terms of facilities required to support future workforce as business real estate choices are likely to evolve. In addition to an increasing focus on business parks, which are seen crucial in their support of supply chain business, and edge of town locations with firms more inclined to bring teams together on the urban periphery of towns, engagement suggests an anticipated reduction in demand for office accommodation.

Whilst some stakeholders have indicated that reduced density in office space does not necessarily require a shift to smaller spaces, as these will be used more flexibly, others have indicated that demand for space is likely to reduce as more people work productively in a flexible way, particularly in sectors such as Professional Services. Although many businesses have found that working from home has not reduced their productivity, businesses seem to be taking cautious approach to returning to the office for several reasons, including health concerns, childcare responsibilities and staggered approaches to social distancing. Informal studies suggest increased productivity among remote workers, but not equally distributed between genders, which is likely to be caused by childcare responsibilities and may be addressed by schools and childcare providers reopening from September.

A deeper understanding is required concerning the functionality of why workers want to spend time together, such as with regards to collaboration, and how this impacts organisations' land use. For instance, a significant amount of collaboration in R&D can now be carried out in a remote way, however activities like product testing might require interaction within a physical facility.

The two biggest expenses for businesses are staff and rent, and any potential savings will be taken in difficult economic situation. Increased levels of productivity may mean some small businesses consider moving away from town centre offices and using largely home-based workforce, with more flexible approaches to office working. Manufacturing and warehousing should ultimately be less affected by such implications.

## 3. Future Spatial Needs – Locational and Premises Requirements

Qualitative assessment of employment demand and supply is crucial in assessing future spatial needs for South Gloucestershire. Engagement with property market agents and local stakeholders has provided Atkins with a detailed understanding of the employment land situation and future locational/premises requirements for the Unitary Authority. The anticipated future locational and premise requirements discussed during the market engagement process are organised by Use Class below. In addition, site-specific points from the second workshop on meeting future employment space need are presented by location.

### 3.1. Office Market

Empirical evidence shows that office buildings in core locations are empty as a result of COVID-19. The general market perception that business park locations would be easier to re-let during COVID because they are more compatible with social distancing (e.g. lower densities, accessed by car) has not been realised and is a surprise. BPAA/HTC believes that this is because businesses are reluctant to make accommodation decisions amid changing Government workplace guidelines.

BPAA/HTC expect a short-term decline in demand for office space that will rebalance in the next 3 years. Pre-COVID employment densities in offices had been drawing in from 1/100 sq.f.t to 1/60-80 sq.f.t. Floorspace requirements after COVID will vary on a case-by-case basis; some occupiers will require less space due to greater home working whereas other occupiers will look to retain the office for training, collaboration and innovation.

It is important to understand the relative size and interaction of office markets and not assume that all markets have a preference for the city centre, e.g. Bristol North Fringe is larger by volume than Central Bath and operates independently from city centres. The main problem in Bristol North Fringe, however, has been a lack of speculative development over the past decade because there has been a lack of viable employment land supply and because city centres are more lucrative development prospects, whereas Bristol North Fringe occupiers are cost-orientated business facing functions.

Net zero/low carbon design is apparent in the city centre investor market where re-use and recycling of buildings and materials is important. However, this trend has not yet filtered out of town because demand is cost and functionality-led over perceived CSR benefit. A push towards net zero is anticipated in the out-of-town market over the next decade, though future employment space specification is likely to be cost orientated post-COVID.

The co-working office market has matured into a major sector in Bristol in recent years, driven by a lack of supply and increased employee densities in the city centre and out of town markets. However, there has not been much activity in South Gloucestershire. For instance, schemes in Almondsbury have struggled from lack of an established market and healthier supply-demand balance in general. BPAA/HTC anticipate some SME take up of high street retail units for flexible office space due to recent changes to the Use Class order. Burston Cook anticipates that there will be greater demand post-COVID for 'plug and play'/Cat B workspace options, where tenants want some degree of control over their own space without having to undertake the fit out.

Sevenside is unlikely to experience demand for office space and smaller units, due to its distance from residential units and poor provision of amenities. There is a negative view of Sevenside, as well as Avonmouth and Portbury, due to the industrial character of the area and its association with dirty industries. The area has significant potential for distribution depots and large-scale manufacturing activity, but cannot be considered as an all-purpose supply of employment land.

### 3.2. Industrial/Logistics Market

Greater Bristol must be seen in its entirety rather than four constituent economic areas, which leads to an imbalance, i.e. supply is greatest in Sevenside, but demand is greatest in North Fringe and Bristol Ring Road area. The imbalance presents a challenge for external businesses looking to move into Greater Bristol and existing businesses which cannot relocate locally, resulting in a loss of local employment. There is insufficient supply or safeguarded suitable industrial sites in these locations.

There is a need to disaggregate floorspace supply between Sevenside and the rest of South Gloucestershire. Indeed, building features and location criteria in Sevenside (regional distribution hubs) are not a like for like

alternative for demand employment space in the East Fringe and Yate (smaller, lighter industrial or manufacturing firms with denser employment footprint).

Nevertheless, there is a significant quantity of unused land at Severnside, which should be considered as a 'reservoir' of employment land for large-scale industrial and warehousing uses. For example, if a start-up company at Emersons Green develops a next generation product which could be used internationally and creates a massive commercial opportunity, Severnside would be able to accommodate construction of a new manufacturing and distribution facility. The remaining available land should not be filled immediately, with a bank of land reserved for new facilities in future. However, this discussion was primarily held in the first workshop in October 2020, with the Severnside situation appearing to have changed by June 2021 – as explored in Section 3.4.

Market engagement identified that some of the proposed FEMAs e.g. East Fringe (Kingswood, Staple Hill, Hanham) are outdated/legacy locations not suited for modern industrial/logistics, due to congestion and residential settings which restrict working hours and business operation.

Burston Cook estimates that there is a shortage of 750 – 2500 sq ft for light industrial units. However, these buildings have to work functionally, for instance with appropriate access and parking. It is not regarded as beneficial for light industrial businesses to be hindered in a mixed-use setting.

### 3.3. Retail Market

Market engagement highlighted the unclear retail occupier landscape as a result of COVID. An identified key factor will be how retailers adapt to the future retailing environment and how economic centres become more mixed-use, for instance through greater residential provision.

The retail market is typically more unpredictable and tiered by rent levels. The sub £25k/pa rent market (e.g. local high streets) offer stability pre- and post-COVID, with people spending more time and money on local high streets such as Thornbury. Market engagement indicates the importance of maintaining city and town centres with a high-quality cultural offer and the need for town centres to be more flexible in how they can be repurposed for cultural offers, education and flexible employment, creating both destinations and employment opportunities of high-quality design and place-making, including public realm, green infrastructure as well as flexible working and digital connectivity.

The recent significant changes on the Use Classes Order will have wide ranging impacts on both town centres and well-located retail warehouse and business parks and employment estates. The future introduction of appropriate leisure, employment uses within town centres will depend on positive urban design and place making/planning to integrate such uses into the urban fabric. Site specific policy interventions including Article 4 Directions will be needed on key employment sites to protect them from fragmentation and loss of space for which there is market demand. Retail landlords may have to choose between holding out and expecting a period of vacancy or receiving lower rents.

### 3.4. Severnside

Both stakeholder workshops, as well as the individual discussions with market agents, highlighted issues relating to the level of supply currently at Severnside. While the quantity of supply for Severnside may appear significant on paper, it was argued that these figures disguise a number of key constraints. Firstly, there is intensifying pressure on Severnside to accommodate growth, with increasing numbers of applications for plots within the CS12 allocation in recent years. As a result, the level of supply is declining rapidly, with availability shrinking. This is exacerbated by the fact that occupiers at Severnside are predominantly seeking large-scale sites for storage and distribution purposes, which thus adds pressure on the remaining capacity of the allocation.

Secondly, it is anticipated that a significant proportion of existing available land for development at Severnside is unlikely to come forward in the timescales required to meet market requirements. Indeed, it was suggested that once Central Park reaches capacity, there will be a significant lack of readily available supply. This is due to a number of complex factors, including an overage agreement which currently restricts development within the Westgate site. As a result, there is currently a considerable lack of small to medium logistics space in particular. Once the remaining land comes forward, it is expected to be taken up rapidly.

Another issue raised relates to the gas storage units located at Severnside at present. A workshop delegate suggested that a number of the plots on the Central Park site were purchased and developed on the basis that these storage units were to be decommissioned. However, the storage units have recently been purchased and are proposed for recommission. This will sterilise a lot of the land at Severnside and limit potential land use changes. There are also ongoing issues of flood risk, as discussed in the ELSNA supply analysis.

One proposal to address the shortfall of supply at Severnside was to begin looking to sites beyond the original CS12 allocation, in order to expand the development area and benefit from its strategic location. These areas have already seen increasing demand and could be considered as a reservoir of supply in the long term, however there is likely to be competing demand from housing to be considered. This includes potential sites at Easter Compton, as well as SGC-owned land neighbouring the CS12 allocation (i.e. around Whitehouse Farm).

There have also been aspirations discussed to diversify the range of employment provision currently available at Severnside. Growth in the residential population around Severnside is likely to see increased demand for an array of complementary employment purposes to improve the function of the broader area.

### 3.5. North Fringe

The Bristol North Fringe was identified as an area with potential for accommodation of future growth, however the type of employment space to be accommodated proves a challenge at present. The Filton Airfield development is expected to significantly increase the residential population of the area, with the associated demand for retail and leisure facilities. The inclusion of a new train station within the Bristol Arena permission will significantly boost the connectivity of the North Fringe with Bristol, and provide key opportunities for growth.

The key issue for the North Fringe is how the aerospace and aviation industry will respond post-COVID. If the sector begins to flourish again, there will be a likely need to reserve employment land in the area for grow-on space and development of the existing cluster of businesses. This is likely to add more strength and vibrancy to the South Gloucestershire economy than the retail and leisure spaces that developers are likely to target. The North Fringe has also seen a number of temporary applications for bars and residential uses, highlighting the shifting focus of the area.

### 3.6. Yate and Surrounding Areas

The workshops highlighted a definite impression that Yate is yet to benefit from its status as the fourth largest centre in the West of England, with a desire to strengthen the employment land base of the town and its surrounding areas. There has been a strong demand historically for industrial uses, which is expected to be maintained for the foreseeable future, alongside potential diversification of the employment provision. This could involve the expansion of existing employment allocations to serve general industrial uses, depending on market demand, as well as intensification of current sites to maximise capacity.

However, the residents of Yate are increasingly expressing distaste towards the number of large storage and distribution units within the town. This includes the increasing levels of congestion on roads, particularly large articulated vehicles using small country lanes to access the M5. This must be considered within future employment provision in Yate and its surrounding areas.

### 3.7. East Fringe

The predominant issue identified in the East Fringe is that currently there are fewer jobs than people, leading to low levels of employment opportunities and high levels of out commuting. As a result, there is a need to enhance the employment offer of the area and identify potential new employment spaces.

Employment sites were reported to have gradually declined in the East Fringe over the last 10 to 20 years, predominantly the legacy Victorian sites. The intention was for the Bristol and Bath Science Park to replace these losses, however current employment on the site does not align with the historic uses of those sites lost. In addition, there has been significant pressures from residential development, often growing out of Bristol. Notably, this resulted in the loss of a significant plot on the Emersons Green allocation to residential uses. There is a strong desire not to remove any further allocations in the East Fringe, without re-provision or inclusion of significant employment provision within a mixed-use scheme.

The main query with regards to the East Fringe is what forms of employment development the market would support in the area. Despite losses of employment land, the area remains attractive – with good connectivity to the Avon Ring Road and various active regeneration schemes. This may require new, innovative forms of employment space which are not currently delivered elsewhere in South Gloucestershire.

### 3.8. Rural Fringe

There is a keen desire to grow the Rural Fringe, particularly Charfield and Wickwar, as an employment area for South Gloucestershire, although market demand is currently limited. However, with increasing residential numbers, there may be demand in future for flexible working hubs and community spaces. As with the East

Fringe, the query also remains as to what forms of employment development could the market support in the Rural Fringe.

The introduction of a new station at Charfield will also bolster the strength of the area from an employment demand perspective and there will be a pressing need to limit out commuting. Another option could be small-scale industrial estates, as exemplified in other smaller residential areas of South Gloucestershire. These will likely need to focus on service-based industrial uses, which will not impact the residential population. The location near the Cotswolds, with picturesque landscapes, may add an extra incentive for particular businesses.

### 3.9. Conclusions

The findings and implications of the stakeholder engagement process summarised in this technical appendix have been considered and reflected in the recommendations of the ELR report.

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