

SPENCERS WOOD EMPLOYMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Executive Summary

This Employment Needs Assessment has been conducted against the local, regional, and national economic and policy contexts, and assessment of market demand. It concludes that there is a strong case for the further provision of employment land, specifically industrial, in Wokingham.

National planning policy context emphasises the importance of supporting economic growth and development at different scales, including through the strategic provision of employment land according to both sector and geographic region.

The local policy review of employment needs in Wokingham suggests that there is a need for further industrial land provision within the Borough, based on:

- **Minimum Versus Aspirational Employment Land Targets:** Wokingham Borough is not currently on track to meet its aspirational demand for employment land, as the focus of the Council is currently on meeting its minimum demand;
- **Local Plan Development Provisions to Meet Identified Demand:** The forecast of the Council that the minimum demand for employment land will be met by 2040 is based on realisation of the strategic land allocations set out in its Local Plan, which include not only development of but also development beyond the Core Employment Areas in the Borough; and
- **Demand for Employment Space Across the Wider Region:** Demand for industrial land exists not only within Wokingham Borough but also within the neighbouring local authorities that form the Central Berkshire functional economic market area (FEMA), such that industrial land provision within Wokingham will strengthen the intrarelationships within, and economy of, the County as a whole.

The separate market demand assessment prepared by Hicks Baker concludes that the proposed employment space has the potential to become a successful and valuable addition to the local industrial market, based on:

- **Industrial Sector Growth:** The industrial sector continues to outperform other sectors and letting activity has improved during 2024.
- **Strong Demand:** There remains consistent demand for high-quality industrial space in the Reading market, sourced from both local, regional and national occupiers across a wider market territory.
- **Strategic Location:** Reading remains an attractive option for a broad variety of occupiers, given its strategic location and regional connectivity, also proving attractive to companies looking outside of London to locations with relatively lower rents.
- **Limited Supply:** Occupiers seeking prime space in established locations typically still have limited choice, and there remains limited new build supply in Reading's immediate pipeline, which should also help mitigate vacancy rates and sustain robust rental growth for new stock.
- **Site Potential for Industrial Development:** The proposed employment space offers a good opportunity to develop a high-quality industrial scheme, likely comprising units ranging from 2,000 sq ft to 25,000 sq ft. The scheme should incorporate modern design features, prioritise sustainability, and target a wide occupier audience seeking modern, energy-efficient space with strong ESG credentials.

Overall, this report concludes the proposed employment space has the potential to deliver a highly successful industrial development scheme, offering units of relevant size, specification and quality to suit the relevant occupier profile, within a local marketplace that is anticipated to have continued limited new build supply.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Employment Needs Assessment has been prepared by Bidwells LLP and Hicks Baker on behalf of Richborough (“the Applicant”) to support their forthcoming outline planning application for the Spencers Wood Development Framework Plan (the “Proposed Development”) in Wokingham Borough.

Site Location and Proposed Development

- 1.2 The description for the Proposed Development is as follows:

Outline planning permission is sought with all matters reserved for future determination, save for the means of access via Basingstoke Road, for: up to 420 dwellings (Use Class C3), an 80 bed care home (Use Class C2), 1ha of employment land (Use Class E(g), primary school (Use Class F1), local centre (Use Classes E(a), (b), (c), (f)), GP Surgery (Use Class E(e)), sports pitch and changing facility, public open space, SANG provision and associated infrastructure.

- 1.3 The Proposed Development is located on Basingstoke Road in Spencers Wood, Wokingham (“the Site”). Figure 2 illustrates the location of the Proposed Development (outlined in red).

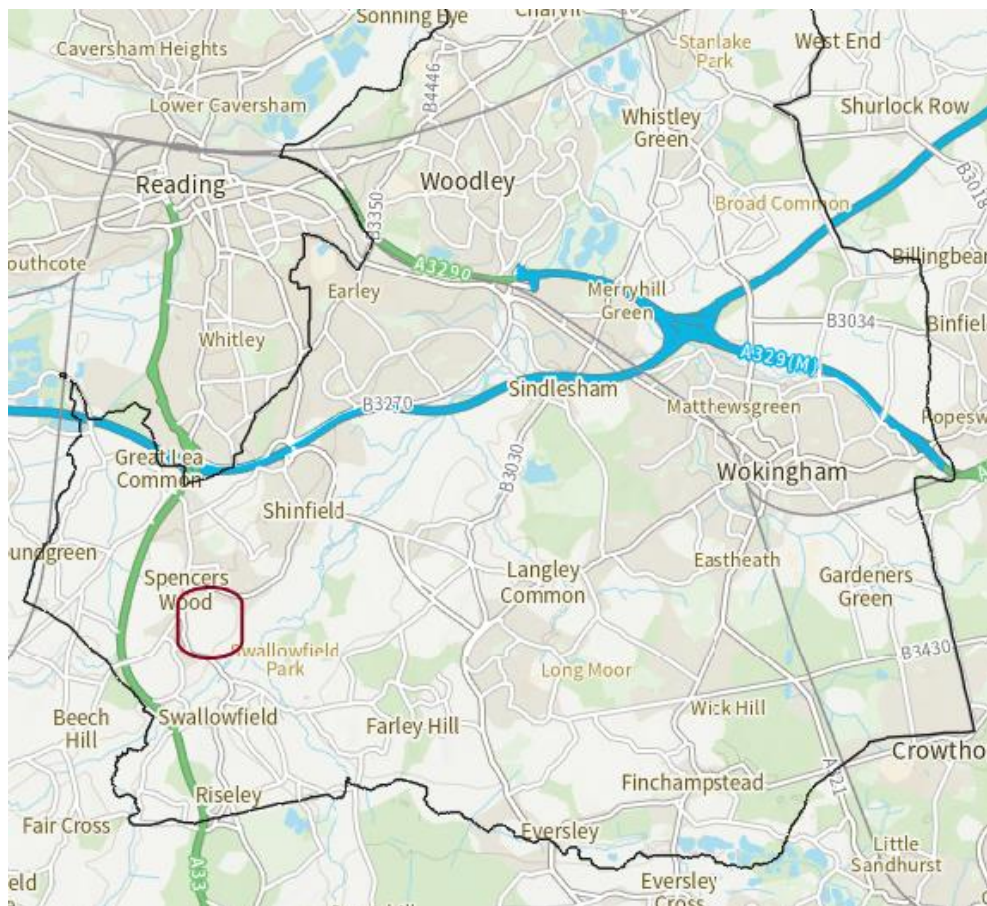


Figure 1: Site Location within Wokingham

- 1.4 The proposed employment space is shaded in red in the southern-most corner of the full Development Framework Plan (Figure 2) and has been approximately outlined for clarity (blue). This is located approximately 2.25 miles to the south of the M4 (J11) and 5.0 miles to the south of Reading town centre.



Figure 2: Proposed Development Framework Plan with Approximate Employment Space Outline

- 1.5 The proposed employment space can be accessed from Basingstoke Road, which provides one of the main north-south routes through Spencers Wood and in turn links with the A33 at White Horse Lane in Three Mile Cross, around 1.5 miles to the north of the subject site.
- 1.6 The wider subject site comprises existing farmland (approx. 38.4 ha/ 95 acres) found to the east of Basingstoke Road on the southern fringe of Spencers Wood.

Objectives

- 1.7 The Employment Needs Assessment aims to provide a robust evidence base to support the planning case for the proposed employment space. Specifically, the assessment will:

- Conduct a review of employment land policies and studies to identify strategic gaps or opportunities that support the proposed employment space at the Proposed Development; and
- Provide a high-level market assessment of the supply and demand for employment space for Wokingham and the surrounding areas.

1.8 By addressing these objectives, the assessment seeks to establish a compelling case that aligns the development with emerging economic trends and stakeholder needs.

Structure

1.9 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 – Employment Land Policy Review
- Section 3 – Market Demand
- Section 4 – Conclusion
- Appendix 1 – Market Demand Report by Hicks Baker

2.0 Employment Land Policy Review

Introduction

- 2.1 This section sets out the review of a range of policy documents and technical studies relating to employment land in Wokingham. The aim is to support the rationale for the proposed employment space at Spencers Wood.

Wokingham Borough Council Policy

- 2.2 A range of policy documents, technical studies, and topic papers comprise the policy approach of Wokingham Borough Council to employment land. These are most recently summarised in the Employment Topic Paper¹ produced by the Council in September 2024, which evaluates a range of technical assessments and reviews to assess the demand and supply of employment land in the Borough between 2023 and 2040.
- 2.3 The Topic Paper focuses specifically on office space and industrial space, of which the former is found to be over-provided for Wokingham under current development and policy plans.
- 2.4 For industrial space, the Topic Paper refers back to the Employment Land Needs Study (ELNS)² undertaken in 2020 as well as the subsequent Employment Land Needs Review (ELNR) (2023)³. The ELNS and ELNR identify a minimum demand of 18 hectares of industrial space and an aspirational demand of 53 hectares.

Minimum Versus Aspirational Employment Land Targets

- 2.5 It is concluded in the Topic Paper that the aspirational target of 53 hectares is not appropriate for two key reasons:
- Firstly, that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for a single local authority to meet this level of demand for industrial space but no other authorities have been willing or able to work with the Council on this; and
 - Secondly, that there are very limited opportunities to deliver additional employment land in the Borough, such that the aspirational target perhaps seems unrealistic.
- 2.6 However, the aspirational target of 53 hectares was adopted by both the original ELNS and the subsequent ELNR for key reasons including a sense that the past industrial delivery considered in the forecasting method had been constrained and the need for Plans to be made positively. That it will not be met under current provisions therefore seems to indicate a demand for

¹ [Topic Paper: Employment](#)

² [Wokingham Employment Land Needs - Stantec Jan20](#)

³ [Wokingham Employment Land Needs Review 2023](#)

developments that can contribute towards this target and therefore the long-term economic growth of the Borough.

Local Plan Development Provisions to Meet Identified Demand

- 2.7 The Topic Paper also sets out how the minimum demand of 18 hectares will be met, including through intensification and expansion of the Core Employment Areas in the Borough and also through additional “appropriate employment uses outside Core Employment Areas within settlements”.
- 2.8 The Paper thus concludes that the demand for employment space within Wokingham Borough will be met under the provisions of the Local Plan and its emerging Update (as detailed in the Proposed Submission Plan⁴).
- 2.9 It is important to note the inclusion of additional development beyond the Core Employment Areas within the Council’s forecast that demand for employment space in the Borough will be met over the course of the new Plan (i.e., by 2040). This provision means that the Proposed Development at Spencers Wood is an opportunity to meet employment space demand through one of the avenues outlined by the Council – namely, development beyond the Core Employment Areas.

Demand for Employment Space Across the Wider Region

- 2.10 Increasing the supply of employment land in Wokingham Borough will not only contribute towards its own aspirational target but also towards meeting the demand in connected local authorities, many of which have expressed a current or forecasted shortfall⁵.
- 2.11 Wokingham Borough has been found to have consistently strong interrelationships with several local authorities within Berkshire, especially those within the defined Central Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)⁶. This spans Reading Borough, Wokingham Borough, Bracknell Forest Borough, and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 2.12 The Central Berkshire FEMA was based in large part on the strong economic relationships between the towns of Reading, Maidenhead, Bracknell, and Wokingham, particularly in terms of value, accessibility, and labour force⁷.
- 2.13 Employment land provided in Wokingham Borough will have the capacity to contribute towards meeting employment land demand in surrounding areas as well, strengthening the existing strategic regional partnerships between local authorities and boosting the economy of Berkshire as a whole.

⁴ [Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040 Proposed Submission Plan](#)

⁵ [Topic Paper: Employment](#)

⁶ [Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area Study | Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership](#)

⁷ [Topic Paper: Employment](#)

- 2.14 The following two sections examine the opportunities for interregional development in Reading and West Berkshire, two of the local authorities within the Central Berkshire FEMA for which development in Wokingham could be particularly beneficial.

Reading Borough Council Policy

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

- 2.15 The Local Plan for Reading Borough⁸ guides development in Reading up to 2036 and is “the main point of reference for anyone wishing to undertake new buildings, changes or developments within Reading over that period”.
- 2.16 The Plan identifies an urgent need for employment space and supporting infrastructure:
- “...critical issues to be considered include how to provide the employment space and supporting infrastructure to make sure that Reading continues to be an attractive place in which to work, to live and to study.”*
- “A high level of need has been identified for new floorspace for employment development, to help ensure the future prosperity of Reading.”*
- 2.17 At the same time, the Plan identifies potential negative wider impacts of employment development within the local area:
- “The tight labour market of Reading and the wider Thames Valley area means that additional employment development could result in still greater pressures on housing in the Borough, more congestion and longer commuting distances. Pressure on housing can particularly affect those who cannot afford open market housing. One possible way to mitigate these impacts is through maximising the potential of the existing population to fill jobs, through improving skills, changing working practices or providing childcare facilities. Therefore, such development should include mitigation commensurate with its impact on the demand for labour and skills.”*
- 2.18 It can be understood that employment space provision in the wider region would contribute towards an identified demand whilst avoiding overcrowding and increased housing pressures in the central areas within Reading.
- 2.19 The Plan also makes reference to other documents that have informed it and provide justification for its policies. These include the Economic Development Needs Assessment (2016) which assesses the need for new economic development.

⁸ [Local Plan Adopted November 2019.pdf](#)

West Berkshire Council Policy

Employment Land Review Addendum (2022)

2.20 An Employment Land Review (ELR) Addendum was commissioned by the Council following a number of significant events including the Covid-19 pandemic and the exit of the UK from the EU. The ELR Addendum updates the property market assessment of the original Employment Land Review (2020) and reassesses the supply and demand for office and industrial floorspace using up-to-date data.

2.21 With regard to industrial floorspace, the Addendum finds that:

“Industrial demand has increased since the previous assessment, while supply has continued to fall, placing further pressure on existing stock. Demand across the Thames Valley is strong for largescale distribution and remains robust because occupiers have not been able to satisfy their requirements for a sustained period. West Berkshire is now considered a credible location for largescale storage and distribution, helped by comparatively lower rents making it an attractive location for those occupiers that are being ‘priced out’ of the more expensive Reading and London markets. Take-up has been low but this is due to a lack of available space, and whilst there has been new development at Beenham and Greenham Business Park, there remains an acute shortage of good quality space.”

West Berkshire Employment Background Paper (2023)⁹, Paragraph 31.

2.22 The Addendum subsequently recommends a minimum requirement of 91,109 sqm of floorspace, or 23 ha of land, over the Plan period to meet identified needs in the industrial sector. After accounting for new employment site allocations in the Proposed Submission Local Plan Review (LPR) for West Berkshire, the Addendum concludes that:

“...there is a shortfall of 32,709 sqm of industrial land.”

West Berkshire Employment Background Paper (2023)⁹, Paragraph 56.

2.23 It can be concluded that employment land created in Wokingham will not only contribute towards its own targets but towards addressing the shortfall in neighbouring local authorities, thereby strengthening the wider economy of Berkshire.

Employment Land Review (2020)

2.24 The original Employment Land Review (ELR)¹⁰ was conducted for West Berkshire in 2020 and evaluated various markets within the area, including the industrial market:

“The industrial market is performing well with low vacancy and tight supply especially for smaller units, which are the most challenging to develop. Demand is evident for larger B8 distribution in close proximity to the M4 motorway junctions particularly close to Reading... The existing industrial stock is generally in good condition and current rents mean it is viable to maintain for its

⁹ [Employment Background Paper](#)

¹⁰ [Employment Land Review](#)

existing use. The current balance of the market means that existing industrial sites should be protected.”

2.25 The ELR further concludes that:

“For industrial, demand for land is higher than for offices, with gross demand at 62,000 sq m... Demand is also more pressing given the current market shortage, and there is a need to frontload the plan with 16 ha of easily deliverable sites. Four or possibly five potentially suitable sites are identified through the HELAA that are capable of meeting the need for industrial floorspace. All of these sites are extensions to existing employment areas, and these are in the main area of market demand in the east of the District. Other sites are also identified that could meet market demand in the rural and eastern parts of the District should any of the top five sites fail to progress.”

“In terms of the 20 existing PEAs we have found that all have high occupancy rates for industrial uses, and...All require safeguarding... The only one that has real prospect for significant intensification of floorspace through redevelopment is the London Road Industrial Estate...”

“Although there is substantial supply [of industrial space] in the pipeline, this is only just over half the gross demand, and 16 ha of new land is needed to meet future demand for industrial uses over the Plan period... Given the need to address a current market shortage for industrial space there is, unlike for offices, a more pressing need to frontload the plan with a readily available pipeline of space... No single site has been identified through the HELAA that is capable of meeting the whole shortfall for industrial floorspace, but five sites are promoted that cumulatively could bridge the quantitative gap... As with offices, consideration should also be given to providing new industrial floorspace, as part of any potential large housing allocations.”

2.26 Many of the outlined ways in which demand for industrial space could be met are dependent on certain new developments in or forecasted to be in the pipeline taking place. Thus, the Review includes provisions for the event that these new developments are not forthcoming and finally suggests that:

“In the absence of any new sites, the final option maybe to examine potential housing sites with a view to securing an element of new office or industrial space depending on location.”

2.27 In conclusion, there has been considerable demand for industrial floorspace in West Berkshire over the past five years, with the levels of demand initially outlined in the ELR significantly increased by the time of the Addendum and likely still growing. This coupled with falling supply means that there is a pressing need for industrial floorspace in West Berkshire and, therefore, that industrial floorspace provision within the wider region of Berkshire is likely to benefit West Berkshire as well. This is not only by fulfilling the floorspace needs of the region but also by strengthening the interregional economic relationships between the Berkshire local authorities.

National Planning Policy

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”)¹¹ sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied, providing a framework within which locally

¹¹ [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

prepared plans can provide for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner.

- 2.2 Chapter 6 'Building a strong, competitive economy' sets out policies relating to sustainable economic growth and development. Paragraph 85 explains that:

"Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential."

- 2.3 Paragraph 87 further identifies the need to recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors in planning policies and decisions, including making provisions for:

"a) clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and infrastructure that are needed to support the growth of these industries (including data centres and grid connections);
b) storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations that allow for the efficient and reliable handling of goods, especially where this is needed to support the supply chain, transport innovation and decarbonisation; and
c) the expansion or modernisation of other industries of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth and resilience."

National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 'Healthy and safe communities' (March 2014, as amended August 2022).

- 2.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹² was initially prepared in 2014 to support the NPPF. It is available as an online resource and is regularly updated.
- 2.5 PPG Section 'Housing and economic needs assessment'¹³ includes information on how local authorities can determine the type of employment land that is needed and how market signals can be used to forecast future need:

"Strategic policy-making authorities will need to prepare a robust evidence base to understand existing business needs, which will need to be kept under review to reflect local circumstances and market conditions. National economic trends may not automatically translate to particular areas with a distinct employment base."

"Functional economic market areas can overlap several administrative areas so strategic policy-making authorities may have to carry out assessments of need on a cross-boundary basis with

¹² [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/303641/Planning_practice_guidance.pdf)

¹³ [Housing and economic needs assessment - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/303641/Planning_practice_guidance.pdf)

neighbouring authorities within their functional economic market area. Local Enterprise Partnerships (and county councils) can play a key role in this process.”

Paragraph: 025 Reference ID: 2a-025-20190220

- 2.6 This guidance confirms the importance of considering interregional economic relationships across administrative boundaries, particularly within wider economic market areas such as the Central Berkshire FEMA.

- 2.7 The PPG section on ‘Housing and economic land availability assessment’¹⁴ sets out the method for assessing housing and economic land availability. This includes specific guidance relating to assessing potential sites for development:

“A site or broad location can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated.

When considering constraints, plan-makers may wish to consider the information collected as part of the initial site survey, as well as other relevant information, such as:

- national policy;*
- appropriateness and likely market attractiveness for the type of development proposed;*
- contribution to regeneration priority areas;*
- potential impacts including the effect upon landscapes including landscape features, nature and heritage conservation.*

Plan-makers need to assess the suitability of identified sites or broad locations for different forms of development where appropriate, taking into account the range of needs for housing, economic and other uses.”

Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 3-018-20190722

- 2.8 Paragraph 018 also provides clarification regarding utilisation of local development plans:

“When assessing sites against the adopted development plan, plan-makers will need to take account of how up to date the plan policies are and consider the relevance of identified constraints on sites / broad locations and whether such constraints may be overcome. When using the emerging plan to assess suitability, plan-makers will need to account for potential policy changes or other factors which could impact the suitability of the site / broad location. For example, an emerging site allocation may enable development to come forward. This will have to be reflected in the assessment of achievability.

“Sites in existing development plans or with planning permission can generally be considered suitable for development although it may be necessary to assess whether circumstances have changed which would alter their suitability. This can be informed by a range of factors including the suitability of the land for different uses and by market signals, which will be useful in identifying the most appropriate use.”

¹⁴ [Housing and economic land availability assessment - GOV.UK](#)

Conclusion

- 2.9 An assessment of employment needs in Wokingham suggests that there is a need for further industrial land provision within the Borough. This is based on three key points:
- Wokingham Borough is not currently on track to meet its aspirational demand for employment land, as the focus of the Council is currently on meeting its minimum demand;
 - The forecast of the Council that the minimum demand for employment land will be met by 2040 is based on realisation of the strategic land allocations set out in its Local Plan, which include not only development of but also development beyond the Core Employment Areas in the Borough; and
 - Demand for industrial land exists not only within Wokingham Borough but also within the neighbouring local authorities that form the Central Berkshire FEMA, such that industrial land provision within Wokingham will strengthen the intrarelationshi ps within, and economy of, the County as a whole.
- 2.10 National planning policy context also emphasises the importance of supporting economic growth and development at different scales, including through the strategic provision of employment land according to both sector and geographic region.
- 2.11 This assessment of employment needs has been conducted thus against the local, regional, and national economic and policy contexts and concludes that there is a strong case for the further provision of employment land, specifically industrial, in Wokingham.

3.0 Market Demand

Introduction

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the high-level market assessment of the potential demand for employment space within the Proposed Development.
- 3.2 The full high-level market assessment prepared by Hicks Baker is provided in Appendix 1.

Industrial Sector

- 3.3 UK industrial market performance was more subdued in 2023 and early 2024, but the industrial sector continues to outperform other sectors. The industrial lettings and investment markets also improved during the course of the year, reaching a more 'normalised' balance in recent months.

Strategic Location

- 3.4 The Thames Valley's strong location, with its close proximity to Greater London, Heathrow Airport and wider UK motorway connectivity beyond, still attracts consistent demand from many companies looking outside of London to locations with relatively lower rents.
- 3.5 Key towns, such as Reading, long regarded as the capital of the Thames Valley, have benefited from this wider occupier demand, although relocating occupiers still expect good quality buildings with strong ESG credentials.
- 3.6 Reading's strategic location, on the M4 corridor linking London to the west of England, makes it a prominent warehouse and distribution hub, with excellent transport connectivity. Heathrow Airport (handling around 75% of all the UK's air cargo) is also located only 26 miles (45 minutes drivetime) to the east. Reading railway station, offering regular GWR rail services to London Paddington with a fastest journey time of 24 minutes, is also a terminus for Crossrail, offering greater rail diversity and regular Elizabeth Line services across central London, which has effectively widened the town's workforce catchment.

Existing Supply of Industrial Space

South East

- 3.7 The total existing supply (immediately available industrial units) across the South East increased during 2024, broadly aligned with total supply in 2022 but below 2023 levels. This increased supply reflected a combination of increased 'second-hand' supply together with some new stock that was effectively 'lagged' from 2023 (due to some schemes becoming delayed through increased construction costs, planning delay and uncertainties).
- 3.8 However, the pipeline of new industrial supply (comprising new developments being delivered now and coming forward in 2024), is understood to have fallen dramatically. New industrial

space under construction in the South East reportedly fell by 64% in the twelve months to September 2024 (JLL research).

- 3.9 Occupiers seeking prime space in more established logistics locations across the region are still often faced with a limited choice.

Wokingham and Reading

- 3.10 The supply of new industrial development in the local market (Reading and surrounding towns) remains limited. This has helped to sustain rising rents, with record-level prime headline rents being achieved in recent months.
- 3.11 The main clusters of existing industrial supply in the local Reading market include; the western cluster (including the Oxford Road area and Tilehurst areas), the eastern cluster (incorporating the Suttons Business Park, Woodley and Winnersh areas), and the southern cluster, close to the A33/ M4 (J11) intersection (closest to the subject site).
- 3.12 The most active industrial occupier sectors (manufacturing, Logistics operators, Internet retail and e-commerce sectors) remain well represented in the local market. Major food retailers and delivery specialists remain amongst the largest industrial tenants in Reading.
- 3.13 Two notable existing industrial supply sites are Trade City in Reading and Shinfield Studio in Shinfield. Appendix 1 provides more detail about these sites and other sites near the area.

Anticipated uses, occupier requirements and leasehold disposal assumptions

- 3.14 The most viable commercial uses for the proposed employment space will be industrial, which (amongst wider potential uses under Class E) may include the following broader commercial industrial user categories:
- Storage and distribution, to include self-storage, uses;
 - Potentially some light or general industrial (subject to hours of use/noise/user tolerances given the proposed employment space's location and surrounding uses);
 - Research, technology and engineering uses;
 - Trade Counter-related uses;
 - Health, Medical and scientific- including lab/clinic related uses; and
 - Other 'alternative' user sectors, to include Pet-related industry, Hobbies& crafts etc.
- 3.15 The relative proximity of the proposed employment space to nearby designated 'core employment areas,' both at Green Park and Thames Valley Science park/ Shinfield Studios, together with ease of access to major arterial roads (A33 and M4) and wider connectivity, will undoubtedly be positive location factors for occupiers/investors considering a prospective industrial development here.

3.16 Given the closer proximity of other existing supply, or more imminently forthcoming pipeline supply (Observer Park), we do not believe that a scheme on the proposed employment space could immediately leverage proximity to Shinfield Studios at this early stage. However, given that the Studios only recently opened, it could potentially feed further local demand in the wider area as it becomes more established over time, which may in turn therefore drive some demand for the proposed employment space.

3.17 The proposed employment space offers a good opportunity to develop a high-quality industrial scheme, likely comprising units ranging from 2,000 sq ft to 25,000 sq ft, with the following initial disposal assumptions:

ASSUMED SCHEME:	ESTIMATED RENTAL VALUE (£PSF)	BLENDED PRE-LET VOIDS	ANTICIPATED LEASE TERM	RENT FREE PERIOD (L/H)
Units from around 2,000-25,000 sq ft	Approx. £17.00- £18.00	Approx. 12-18 months	5-10 years	Approx. 3-6 months

3.18 The scheme should incorporate modern design features, prioritise sustainability, and target a wide occupier audience seeking modern energy-efficient space with strong ESG credentials.

Conclusion

3.19 The proposed employment space at Spencers Wood has the potential to deliver a highly successful industrial development scheme, offering units of relevant size, specification and quality to suit the relevant occupier profile, within a local marketplace that is anticipated to have continued limited new build supply.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 This Employment Needs Assessment has been conducted against the local, regional, and national economic and policy contexts, and assessment of market demand. It concludes that there is a strong case for the further provision of employment land, specifically industrial, in Wokingham.
- 4.2 National planning policy context emphasises the importance of supporting economic growth and development at different scales, including through the strategic provision of employment land according to both sector and geographic region.
- 4.3 The local policy review of employment needs in Wokingham suggests that there is a need for further industrial land provision within the Borough. This is based on three key points:
- **Minimum Versus Aspirational Employment Land Targets:** Wokingham Borough is not currently on track to meet its aspirational demand for employment land, as the focus of the Council is currently on meeting its minimum demand;
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- 4.4 The market demand assessment concludes that the proposed employment space has the potential to become a successful and valuable addition to the local industrial market, based on:
- **Industrial Sector Growth:** Industrial sector continues to outperform other sectors and letting activity has improved during 2024;
 - **Strong Demand:** There remains consistent demand for high-quality industrial space in the Reading market, sourced from both local, regional and national occupiers across a wider market territory;
 - **Strategic Location:** Reading remains an attractive option for a broad variety of occupiers, given its strategic location and regional connectivity, also proving attractive to companies looking outside of London to locations with relatively lower rents;
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 - **Site Potential for Industrial Development:** The proposed employment space offers a good opportunity to develop a high-quality industrial scheme, likely comprising units ranging from 2,000 sq ft to 25,000 sq ft. The scheme should incorporate modern design features, prioritise sustainability, and target a wide occupier audience seeking modern energy-efficient space with strong ESG credentials.

- 4.5 Overall, the report concludes that the proposed employment space has the potential to deliver a highly successful industrial development scheme, offering units of relevant size, specification and quality to suit the relevant occupier profile, within a local marketplace that is anticipated to have continued limited new build supply.

APPENDIX 1

MARKET DEMAND REPORT
