

Wokingham Borough Council

Employment land position update at 31 March 2025

August 2025



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

1. This note provides an updated position on employment land need and supply in Wokingham Borough at 31 March 2025. This accounts for commitments and completions since 1 April 2023 (the monitoring years since the submitted Employment Topic Paper ED3).
2. Updated version of Tables 6, 7 and 8 in the Employment Topic Paper (ED3) submitted alongside the Local Plan Update are set out below.

Table 6: Future Employment Needs

		Industrial (m²)	Office (m²)
A	Identified needs (2022-2040)	73,756	30,761
B	Completions (2022-2025)	80,499	7,512
C	Remaining needs (2025-2040) (A-B)	-6,743	23,249
D	Commitments at 31 March 2025	31,082	-59,118
E	Net needs 2025-2040 (C-D)	37,825 oversupply	82,367

3. Table 6 shows that there is a change from the summary position in the submitted Topic Paper. There is now an over supply of new industrial floorspace and a net need for new office floorspace.

Table 7: Employment floorspace loss due to proposed allocation for alternative uses in the LPU

Ref	Site name	Industrial (m²)	Office (m²)
SS11	Arborfield Studios, Arborfield	34,492	0
SS14.7	Greenacres Farm, Nine Mile Ride, Finchampstead	Unknown	0
SS14.23	Winnersh Plant Hire, Reading Road, Winnersh	0	0
SS14.29	Station Industrial Estate, Oxford Road, Wokingham	2,300	0
SS14.30	Wokingham Borough Council offices, Shute End, Wokingham	0	8,500
	Total	36,792	8,500

4. Table 7 has been updated to reflect proposed allocation SS14.23 Winnersh Plant Hire is no longer considered developable for residential development (further detail below).

Table 8: Need and supply balance

		Industrial (m²)	Office (m²)
A	Identified needs (2022-2040)	73,756	30,761
B	Completions (2022-2025)	80,499	7,512
C	Remaining needs (2025-2040) (A-B)	-6,743	23,249
D	Commitments at 31 March 2025	31,082	-59,118
E	Net needs 2025-2040 (Table 6)	37,825 oversupply	82,367
F	Land allocated for employment uses - Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park - Hogwood Extension	70,000 6,000	0
G	Gross Supply (D+F)	107,082	-59,118
H	Floorspace losses due to proposed allocation for alternative uses (Table 7)	36,792	8,500
I	Net Supply (G-H)	70,290	-67,618
J	Need/Supply Balance (I-C)	+77,033	-90,867

5. Table 8 sets out the overall employment need and supply balance, when including the information from Tables 6 and 7. Key changes since the submitted Employment Topic Paper 2023 are outlined below.
6. Row B Completions (2022-2025) – Two years have been added to the completions figure: 2023-24 and 2024-25. Delivery of industrial floorspace in 2023/24 at Shinfield Studios has significantly increased recent industrial completions.
7. Row D Commitments at 31 March 2025 – Office commitments have been reduced by a significant prior approval granted in January 2025 for the demolition of Shinfield Park, a vacant office complex which was previously occupied by Woods and Berkshire County Council, totalling 77,642m². A full application for the redevelopment of the site to deliver around 20,000m² of industrial floorspace is currently under consideration.
8. Row F Land allocated for employment uses – Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park figures have been reduced from 95,000m² of industrial and 5,000m² of office. This is to account for recent permissions for the Natural History Museum and the Gateway office building, which are now included in the commitments figures in Row D.

9. Row H Floorspace losses due to proposed allocation for alternative uses – As set out in the council's Response to the Inspectors' Initial Questions (WBC6), proposed allocation SS14.23 Winnersh Plant Hire is no longer considered developable for residential redevelopment. The loss of industrial floorspace (of 4,500m²) has therefore been removed from Table 7 with this expected to remain available.

Industrial

10. The table shows that the position for industrial floorspace remains broadly similar to 2023, with a surplus against the needs identified in the Employment Land Needs Review (ELNR) (ED2). Recent delivery of industrial uses at Thames Valley Science and Innovation Park / Shinfield Studios has contributed to an increased surplus.
11. The identified need therefore remains capable of being met without allocating additional land for industrial uses.

Office

12. The table shows that the position for office floorspace has shifted since 2023 to a shortfall against the needs identified in the ELNR.
13. As previously outlined, this is largely due to a committed demolition of around 77,000m² of office space at the Shinfield Park site. Other offices have also been granted permission for alternative uses, including via prior approval. A small number of new office developments have been approved, as part of specialist schemes with occupiers already agreed (for example the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting), but the market is generally not pursuing speculative office schemes.
14. Evidence set out in the ELNR noted that neither the past trends nor the economic forecasts scenarios showed positive growth for office development. The ELNR also showed there is a surplus of office space across the borough, with occupiers seeking opportunities for higher quality office space which has resulted in downsizing and generally a weak demand for new office development.
15. The continuing trend of loss of office floorspace over recent years is therefore expected and does not raise cause for concern. Although the latest data marks a change from the 2023 position regarding office floorspace, it reflects the forecasts and recommendations set out in the ELNR. The identified need for office floorspace is capable of being met without allocating land, through opportunities for intensification and redevelopment. It is noted that very few sites were promoted by landowners or business for consideration as new office developments throughout the Local Plan Update process.

Other sources of supply

16. Not included in the future sources of supply figures in Table 8 are two outline permissions for a total of around 8,000m² of new industrial floorspace at Bridge Farm, Arborfield. These permissions entail the expansion of the existing employment site on to adjoining land. This floorspace is likely to be delivered within the plan period and will further provide industrial floorspace.