

The Sheffield Plan

**Assessment of Employment Land –
Opportunities for Intensification within the
Urban Area and Additional Sites**

April 2025

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1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 This paper comprises part of the evidence base that informs the submitted Sheffield Plan¹. It has been written in response to the Inspectors' Stage 2 post hearings letter (EXAM120), which has concluded that the plan has a shortfall in general employment land of 52.8 hectares over the plan period (between 2022 to 2039)^{2 3}.
- 1.2 The Inspectors have specifically requested that the Council look again at opportunities to provide additional employment land to meet this shortfall (see Paragraph 53 of EXAM120). They requested that the Council look at the scope for intensification or re-use of existing employment sites within employment policy zones, and to revisit any urban capacity work. The Inspectors also advised that the Council should explore whether there is scope to deliver employment sites outside the urban area, within the Green Belt (see Paragraph 54 of EXAM120).
- 1.3 This paper addresses this request through an analysis of land within the Sheffield Plan's designated employment, flexible use, and office zones; and a review of opportunities within identified employment sub-areas where land could be used more intensively or re-used. The paper also considers whether draft site allocations identified in the emerging Sheffield Plan could be amended where there may be an opportunity to increase employment land. In addition, a review of land within the Green Belt has been carried out to see if there are any opportunities for delivering employment sites outside the urban area.
- 1.4 Decisions regarding the release of Green Belt land will be informed by the conclusions in this paper, as exceptional circumstances (which includes existing urban capacity and the necessity for Green Belt release) must also be established to amend Green Belt boundaries and allocate sites.
- 1.5 This paper builds on the evidence contained within the Employment Land Reviews⁴ as well as the additional evidence provided throughout the Examination. These reviews have informed the Sheffield Plan's employment land requirements and have identified suitable sites that could be allocated for employment uses.

¹ [Sheffield Plan Examination Library](#)

² [Sheffield Plan examination – Stage 2 post hearings letter from the Inspectors](#)

³ General employment comprises industrial and manufacturing uses (within use classes B2 and class E g) (iii)), office and commercial uses (within use classes E c) and E g)). The need for and supply of logistics and retail developments are dealt with separately within the evidence base (see EM30 and EM07).

⁴ Sheffield & Rotherham Joint Employment Land Review (2015), Sheffield Employment Land Review (2020) and Employment Land Review Update for Sheffield (2021).

2. Background

- 2.1 Policy SP1 in the Sheffield Plan sets out a requirement for 12.8 hectares of employment land per annum. This annual requirement equates to total of 217.6 hectares over the plan period. It is comprised of 195.5 hectares (11.5 hectares per annum) for general employment and 22.1 hectares (1.3 hectares per annum) of large-scale logistics. These figures are based on a range of employment land projections within the Employment Land Review Update (2022).
- 2.2 The requirement figure for general employment (including office space) has been accepted within the Inspectors' Stage 2 post hearings letter (see Paragraph 48 of EXAM120). However, the Inspectors concluded that the requirement figure for large-scale logistics land should be increased to 41.7 hectares (2.45 hectares per annum). This combined with the 195.5 hectares of general employment results in an overall requirement of 237.2 hectares (13.95 hectares per year comprising 11.5 hectares per annum for general employment and 2.45 hectares per annum for large scale logistics).
- 2.3 The Inspectors have accepted the Council's updated employment land supply evidence (see EXAM 56A), which shows an overall supply of 184.4 hectares. This does not include any allowance for windfalls arising from 'churn' within existing employment areas. Based on the revised requirement figures, they have therefore identified and confirmed that there is a shortfall in supply of 52.8 hectares. Critically, they have confirmed that the increase in the large-scale logistics requirement is met by the Council's identified supply (permissions and allocations); and that the identified shortfall in supply relates to land for general employment only.
- 2.4 As such, the Council has been asked to "look again" at opportunities to provide additional employment land to meet the shortfall. The instructions are to consider opportunities for intensification or re-use of existing employment sites; and to consider whether there may be scope to explore options for delivering employment sites outside the urban area within the Green Belt.
- 2.5 The Council considers that the review of further opportunities for intensification or re-use starts from a strong position – both in terms of a positive policy framework, and the realities of how employment land and economic growth is delivered in the city.
- 2.6 The draft Sheffield Plan's policy framework continues the approach from the adopted Unitary Development Plan, by designating extensive areas of land within the Lower Don and Upper Don Valleys, the Sheaf Valley, Blackburn Valley and larger industrial estates within the south and east of the city as employment zones ('General Employment Zones' and 'Industrial Zones'). Within these employment zones, a permissive approach is proposed for employment generating uses as these are either 'preferred' or 'acceptable' (in accordance with draft Policies EC3 and EC4).
- 2.7 A similar approach has been taken within the defined City Centre, where Office Zones are identified as focal points for office development and draft Policy EC2 identifies them as the preferred use. Other Class E uses, including employment generating uses are also acceptable. Elsewhere, within the city, the Flexible Use Zones are, in

accordance with draft Policy VC3, acceptable locations for office based commercial, business and service uses (Class E).

- 2.8 As highlighted in the evidence provided to the examination (see EXAM54 and EXAM54A), within these employment generating zones (and others), over 52.5 hectares of employment land has already been permitted, and over 38 hectares has been completed (since April 2022).
- 2.9 Given the extent of these employment zones – whose scale and character is set out in further detail within this paper and accompanying appendices – the Council expects that these areas will continue to deliver windfall developments through the plan period. They will make an important contribution to meeting the identified shortfall of 52.8 hectares of general employment.
- 2.10 However, to provide a more refined position and directly answer the Inspectors' request, the Council has established a methodology for reviewing land and sites within the urban area, and sites within the Green Belt. Section 3 of this report describes the methodology in detail, with Section 4 setting out the analysis of sites within the urban area, and Section 5 documenting the analysis of potential sites within the Green Belt. At this stage, this paper does not formally confirm the selection of any of the identified Green Belt sites as this will be informed by other documents within the evidence base, notably the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)⁵ and the Proposed Additional Site Allocations: Selection of Sites for Green Belt Release Topic Paper.

Drawing on the Context from Previous Employment Land Reviews

- 2.11 The draft Sheffield Plan has been informed by three Employment Land Reviews⁴. These have examined employment land requirements and land supply, including the identification and recommendation of specific sites for allocation.
- 2.12 In addition, they provide assessments of existing employment space across Sheffield, including their type (office, light industrial or industrial), their broad locations, age and quality. This information provides useful information when identifying opportunities and the probability of intensification of employment floorspace taking place within the city.
- 2.13 They identify both the Upper and Lower Don Valleys and City Centre as the primary centres of employment in the city. The City Centre contains substantial office space (although this has reduced as a result of conversions of office space under Permitted Development Rights). These areas have been the focus of this paper.
- 2.14 Regarding the age of employment stock, the 2015 employment land review identified that 83% of Sheffield's factories were built before 1981. This is higher than for offices (77%) and warehousing (76%). The Employment Land Review Update (2021) (paragraph 5.11) confirmed that the quality of industrial stock remained low and unsuitable and that this is impacting on the ability of indigenous business to expand. The age and quality of stock would indicate that there remains a need for and opportunities to improve the quantity and quality of employment stock within the city.

⁵ Sheffield IAA Report Update and Addendum (2025)

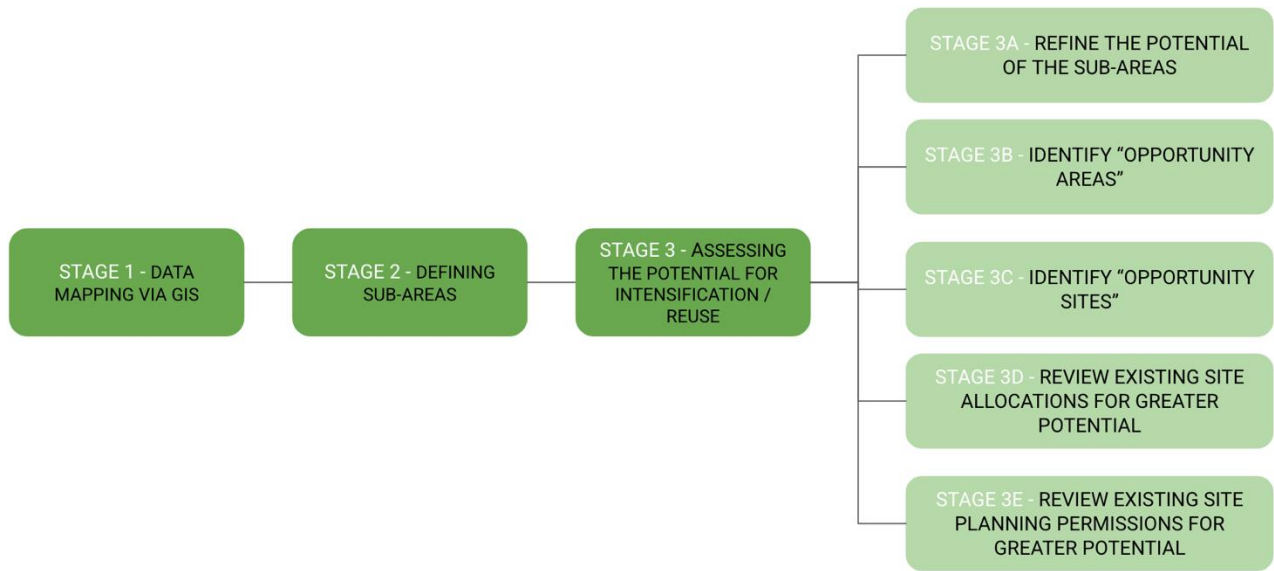
- 2.15 Vacancy rates are lower within the city (8.4% in 2021) than the 'ideal' rate of around 10%, this reflects the view that, notwithstanding the delivery of new employment developments within the Innovation District, Sheffield has a shortage of modern industrial space.
- 2.16 Sheffield's office market has recovered following the pandemic, particularly the sub-3,000sqft office space. The larger spaces have been slower to respond. The 2021 review identifies a need for 'better space', including access to public transport, flexibility in how space can be used, proximity to amenities and hospitality. These are City Centre locations. In addition, there is a need for knowledge hubs and clusters of high-quality space within the city. This includes shared office and co-working spaces, which are playing an increased role in the market.
- 2.17 Vacancy rates in office space are identified as 5.1% across the city with rates falling to 3.8% for office space in the City Centre.
- 2.18 Informed by the Employment Land Reviews, this paper focusses on the Lower Don Valley, Upper Don Valley, City Centre (office space) and other outlying areas designated as employment, office, or flexible use zones. The reviews indicate that there remain considerable opportunities to intensify employment floorspace in these areas.

3. Methodology

Overview

- 3.1 A summary of the methodology followed to complete the assessment work is shown in Figure 3.1 below. It highlights the progression and refinement that has occurred throughout the work to generate the overall conclusions.

Figure 3.1: Methodology Flow Diagram



Stage 1: Data Consolidation and Mapping

- 3.2 The first stage comprised the creation of an up-to-date GIS map to show relevant data on employment sites, industrial and office areas as defined within the draft Sheffield Plan. The mapping comprises:

- Emerging site allocations – with reference to those employment allocations set out in the Sheffield Plan. This should include general employment, industrial, office, and retail-related allocations;
- Spatial extent of the of the employment-led policy zones as defined in Part 2 of the Sheffield Local Plans, namely: Policy EC1 – EC4, and EC8;
- Current employment planning permissions – by site area / red line boundary;
- Recent employment land completions – by site (depending on data availability and the ability for this information to be mapped); and
- The eight identified Green Belt “Strategic Locations” as set out through the examination process and as documented in the Council’s latest Integrated Impact Assessment (2025).

- 3.3 The data mapping process draws down on existing evidence that supports the plan and included within the Examination evidence, including:

Document Reference	Document Name
CD56	Site Selection Methodology Background Paper
HS01	Sheffield Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (2022) - Main Report
HS02	Sheffield Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (2022) - Site schedule
EXAM3A and EXAM3B	Sheffield Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (2023) and Housing and Economic Land Site Schedule
CC01	Central Area and City Centre City Centre Strategic Vision City Centre Strategic Vision
CC02	Sheffield Central Area Strategy Capacity Report
CC03	City Centre Priority Neighbourhood Frameworks
EM05	Employment Land Review (2020)
EM06	Employment Land Review Update (2021)
EM22	Sheffield Retail & Leisure Study (November 2022)
WS5/1	Matter 5 Employment Hearing Statement (Sheffield City Council) (2024)
EXAM54 and EXAM54A	Explanatory Note: Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) (SEA) Addendum and consideration of strategic employment issues
EXAM56 and EXAM56A	SCC note on Employment Land and Supply and Employment Land Supply Update
EXAM103	Lichfield's Office Market Commentary
EXAM105	Sheffield City Council – Update to Answer to Inspectors' Query on Employment Land and Supply

Stage 2: Defining Sub-Areas

- 3.4 Once the employment-related data was collated and mapped, it was possible to aggregate and demarcate parts of the city due to their locational, land-use, and employment-related characteristics.
- 3.5 A series of sub-areas were defined, many of which represent well understood and well established 'clusters' within the city, such as the areas at Meadowhall, or the central components of the Lower and Upper Don Valley.
- 3.6 Identifying sub-areas made the task of analysing their make-up and their potential to offer opportunities for intensification / re-use more manageable and ensured that a greater level of specificity and detail could be documented.

- 3.7 For land within the defined City Centre, a slightly different approach has been taken, with a more immediate focus on reviewing the designated Office Zones. Given that the majority of underutilised or vacant sites have already been allocated within the Sheffield Plan, there was no need for a further re-appraisal. Instead, the assessment work reviewed the draft site allocations and existing permissions for office (E(g)(i)) uses to understand whether these could be uplifted through variations to permissions or alterations to the size/height of planned development.
- 3.8 Within the Office Zones, the analysis of draft allocations includes a comparison of allocated areas (which contribute to the general employment land supply) and indicative floorspaces. Floorspace figures are informed by Employment Land Review assumptions of floorspace to plot ratios, emerging master plans and discussions with the urban design team on building heights.
- 3.9 There is also a broader review of employment permissions across the defined City Centre, with a critique as to their alignment with the regeneration objectives during the plan period. This provides evidence on the contribution of office developments and shared workspaces to meeting general employment land requirements.

Stage 3: Assessing the Potential for Intensification / Re-use

Stage 3a: Refining the Sub-Areas

- 3.10 The objective of Stage 3a was to gain a clearer understanding of each of the sub-areas and establish a more detailed urban capacity study-type assessment of the land and buildings within them to understand whether redevelopment, or more intensive uses, could be achieved.
- 3.11 The analysis includes a sub-area wide calculation of the quantum of land which is free from buildings, extant planning permissions, recent completions, and Sheffield Plan site allocations. The remaining area (akin to the 'negative space' left over) comprises the land that is potentially underutilised and could, in theory be intensified / re-used.
- 3.12 This initial calculation provides a headline figure for the quantum of land that could be intensified / re-used within each sub-area. That headline figure is further refined to account for other land use constraints; the presence of land occupied by public roads, pavements, and areas used for parking; and land required for commercial operations, including storage of materials and products. To present a more realistic quantum of land that could be intensified / re-used, a low-level percentage range has been set out, showing a 1%, 2.5%, and 5% figure for each sub-area. These are a conservative, yet realistic, range for the level of urban capacity that could be expected as windfall return within the plan period.

Stage 3b: Identification of Opportunity Areas

- 3.13 Building on the overall sub-area analysis, this stage takes a more focused look at 'hotspot' locations where there is a clear absence of known activity, or where built density is low, or land is underutilised. The objective is to highlight more specific areas of land / industrial estates / clusters of sites where there is limited planned activity, and therefore greater potential to generate more intensive development. These have been identified as **"Opportunity Areas"**.

- 3.14 This approach helps narrow down the analysis from the larger sub-areas and has allowed for the identification of more specific locations where windfalls could deliver additional employment floorspace.
- 3.15 It does not always follow that “Opportunity Areas” are located in those areas that have a higher percentage of underutilised land (as generated through Stage 3a) as this underutilised land may comprise significant areas of car parking required to serve large retail units or large operational depot facilities. Also, some sub-areas include land that is highly unlikely to come forward during the plan period. For example, the Queens Road sub-area has the second highest percentage of underutilised land, but this comprises a large Council-owned highway depot, bus depot and numerous large retail car parks. Similarly, within the Outokumpu sub-area, the requirements of the operational steel works and the historic legacy of steel production (processing of waste material) restrict opportunities to provide additional employment development within the vacant land that surround the steel works.
- 3.16 The triaging of locations within sub-areas also draws on existing data / information provided in the Employment Land Reviews (2020, 2021, and 2022) and the Lichfield’s update note on market conditions (EXAM103) to identify locations where there is a concentration of older and lower quality building stock (see Pages 28 – 38 of the Employment Land Review Update, 2021). This provides a further mechanism to target locations that have a greater likelihood of being intensified or re-used.

Stage 3c: Identification of Opportunity Sites

- 3.17 In parallel with the identification of Opportunity Areas, specific vacant sites, which do not have extant planning permissions or allocations have been assessed, and where their suitability and deliverability is not clearly constrained, are identified as “**Opportunity Sites**”. This includes sites identified within the previous Employment Land Reviews that had been recommended as potential employment allocations, but which are not currently allocated within the draft Sheffield Plan.
- 3.18 These are sites that could be developed during the plan period subject to availability. Their status is similar to opportunity sites for housing, which following discussions during the hearing sessions are proposed as a modification to the Sheffield Plan.

Stage 3d: Reviewing Existing Allocations

- 3.19 Alongside the analysis of the sub-areas, there has been a review of the existing proposed employment site allocations (including mixed use sites) (as set out in Policy AS1, plus any updates submitted during the Examination). This has determined whether any of these sites could be amended and an increase in employment land / floorspace achieved.
- 3.20 This analysis draws upon the information provided through the Council’s HELAAs, extant planning permissions, the Call for Sites process, the Site Selection Methodology, the Sheffield Central Area Strategy Capacity Report, and the City Centre Priority Neighbourhood Frameworks.

Stage 3e: Reviewing Planning Permissions

- 3.21 Again, in addition to the sub-area analysis, there has been a review of planning permissions that have been approved since the draft Sheffield Plan was submitted, and those that are in addition to any identified supply in the Examinations documents (e.g. shown in EXAM56 and EXAM105). Again, similarly to the review of existing allocations, the aim was to reassess these permissions to understand whether any further development or greater potential (including future phases), could be identified and added to the overall portfolio of employment land supply.

Stage 4: Considering the Potential of Green Belt Sites

- 3.22 Stage 4 reviews potential 'new' Green Belt land and sites. The need to allocate these sites will depend on the findings of the urban capacity analysis within Stage 3 and the already identified supply within allocations and permissions, as amendments to the Green Belt boundary to accommodate these sites can only be made in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances include the absence of suitable, deliverable and available sites in the urban area, and/or clear evidence that windfalls could not meet unmet needs.
- 3.23 These Green Belt sites have been submitted by landowners for employment development (including mixed use sites) and have already been identified through the Green Belt Review and accompanying analysis in the IIA. They comprise the following eight 'Strategic Locations' for employment:
- (A) Hesley Wood;
 - (B) East of Smithywood;
 - (C) Norton;
 - (D) Handsworth;
 - (E) Warren Lane;
 - (F) Beighton;
 - (G) Owlthorpe; and
 - (H) South of Chapelton / Ecclesfield.

Stage 5: Conclusions

- 3.24 Based on the assessment work undertaken in Stage 2 to Stage 4, conclusions on whether or not the Council can meet the identified shortfall in land supply are set out.
- 3.25 The conclusions clarify those locations and sites that could be intensified / re-used and explains whether there is the need to consider the release of land from within the Green Belt to meet the identified shortfall. Where appropriate, the conclusions will also signpost to other documents and reports, including, for example, the Green Belt Review and the updates to the IIA.

4.2 Refining the Potential of the Sub-Areas

- 4.2.1 Each of the 20 sub-areas was subject to further detailed assessment to draw out a better understanding of:
- opportunities to increase the size of existing allocations;
 - calculations of land that is potentially vacant or underutilised;
 - broad areas where there are clusters of underutilised land; and
 - individual opportunity sites that, subject to availability, are suitable for development.
- 4.2.2 Table 4.1 below identifies the total area within each sub-area that is covered by either a General Employment, Industrial, or Flexible Use Zone (i.e. where employment uses are either 'preferred' or 'acceptable' in the context of the draft Sheffield Plan).
- 4.2.3 The next step was to exclude land that was already occupied by buildings, subject to planning permissions, recent completions, or existing allocations. The remaining area comprises land that in theory could be intensified. However, as this includes roads, pavements, infrastructure, and other land required and used by operational businesses, the majority of this land is unlikely to be either available, suitable, or deliverable. In addition, the viability of regenerating brownfield employment sites and uncertainties regarding landowner intentions greatly reduces the amount of land that in reality, will be redeveloped for employment.
- 4.2.4 Consequently, to present a more realistic quantum of land that could be intensified or re-used, a low-level percentage range has been set out, showing a 1%, 2.5%, and 5% figure of intensification for each sub-area. These are a conservative, yet realistic, ranges for the level of urban capacity that could be expected as windfall return within the plan period.
- 4.2.5 Table 4.1 identifies the 'Outokumpu and Marcegaglia' sub-area (which is situated within the Lower Don Valley) as having the highest proportion of land that could be suitable for intensification (at 87%). This is followed by two sub-areas within the Sheaf Valley – 'Queens Road' (77%) and 'Broadfield' (75%); and two within the Upper Don Valley – 'Parkway' (75%) and 'Upper Don Central' (75%).
- 4.2.6 All five of these sub-areas exceed the average figure, which across the 20 sub-areas is 63%. This reflects the specific type and character of these sub-areas, and the predominant land uses within them, which includes large retail units, car showrooms, builders' merchants, and depots. They do, however, contain a greater proportion of recent employment developments, which are less likely to be redeveloped again in the plan period. Also, within the 'Outokumpu and Marcegaglia' sub-area, the operational requirements and land used to store and move steel-making material results in substantial areas appearing underutilised.
- 4.2.7 At the other end of the range, three sub-areas found within the Lower Don Valley – 'Europa Link' (31%), 'Meadowhall and Carbrook' (41%), and 'Forgemasters' (51%); and one sub-area within the Upper Don Valley – 'Wardsend' (52%), have the lowest amount of land that appears underutilised and suitable for intensification. This reflects the extent of land that is either allocated for development, has an approved planning permission, or has development that has recently been completed (and already accounted for in the supply of employment land). The 'Forgemasters' sub-

area contains extensive buildings that occupy a large part of the sub-area, and which remain in active use by the steel works.

- 4.2.8 Between these ranges, a significant number of sub-areas comprise a mosaic of employment stock, including many older (pre-1981) industrial buildings. These are occupied by a range of businesses, including metal manufacturers, storage (including open storage and distribution), retail, waste recycling and vehicle garages. This includes four sub-areas within the Lower Don Valley – ‘Attercliffe’ (67%), ‘Darnall’ (64%), ‘Burngreave and Brightside’ (71%), and ‘Blackburn Brook’ (68%); as well as two sub-areas within the Upper Don Valley – ‘Neepsend and Parkwood’ (66%), and ‘Claywheels Lane’ (61%). Except for the sub-area at ‘Claywheels Lane’, these sub-areas all exceed the average level of underutilisation, indicating that there are likely to be opportunities for intensification/re-use and the replacement of older employment units with more modern attractive employment spaces.
- 4.2.9 The calculations for the sub-areas close to Junction 34 of the M1, specifically ‘Sheepcote Lane’ and ‘Europa Link’, show that theoretically 58% of land is underutilised. However, the presence of recently developed employment units associated with the Innovation District, along with prominent storage and distribution operations, reduces the likelihood of opportunities for further intensification in these areas.
- 4.2.10 Beyond the Upper and Lower Don Valleys, within outlying industrial estates, a similar mix of employment uses, and range of stock exist north around Chapeltown and Ecclesfield. For example, within the ‘Blackburn and Butterthwaite Ind Est’ sub-area (58%), where in addition to older stock, modern employment units have been developed within the Smithy Wood industrial estate. Within the ‘Holbrook’ sub-area (59%) in south-east Sheffield, the building stock comprises post war employment stock, reflecting the sub-area’s location, beyond the historic (pre-war) centres of employment. Consequently, the percentage of underutilised land is slightly below the average figure.
- 4.2.11 As noted, to present a realistic figure for the quantum of land that could be intensified or re-used, a cautious percentage calculation has been set out. The scenarios show the scale of development that would be achieved if 1%, 2.5%, or 5% of the identified underutilised land came forward during the plan period.
- 4.2.12 Based on the 1% scenario, this generates approximately 9.7 hectares of land, for the 2.5% scenario it is approximately 24.4 hectares, and for the 5% scenario it is approximately 46.0 hectares of land that would come forward for intensification or re-use.
- 4.2.13 If a built footprint of 40% (as recognised in the Employment Land Reviews) is achieved this would equate to between 38,800 sq.m. and 184,000 sq.m. of floorspace. This calculation is based on a single-storey development footprint only and given the type and nature of more modern premises, many of which include mezzanines and second storeys, this figure is likely to be greater.

Table 4.1: Assessment of Sub-Areas – Calculation of land that could come forward for intensification or re-use

No.	Sub-area Name	Land within Employment and Flexible Use Zones				% that could be suitable and deliverable		
		Total employment land	All land potentially underutilised		Rank	1%	2.5%	5%
1	Attercliffe	92.4	62.4	67%	9	0.62	1.56	2.9
2	Blackbrook and Butterthwaite Ind Est	90.4	52.5	58%	15	0.52	1.31	2.4
3	Blackburn Brook	99.8	67.8	68%	8	0.67	1.70	3.1
4	Broadfield	27.1	20.2	75%	3	0.20	0.51	1.0
5	Burngreave and Brightside	119.3	85.0	71%	6	0.85	2.13	4.3
6	Claywheels Lane	54.9	33.7	61%	13	0.33	0.84	1.7
7	Darnall	30.3	19.4	64%	12	0.19	0.49	1.0
8	Europe Link	57.2	17.8	31%	20	0.18	0.45	0.8
9	Forgemasters	89.4	45.2	51%	18	0.45	1.13	2.1
10	Greenland & Sheepcote Lane	46.2	31.1	67%	9	0.31	0.78	1.6
11	Holbrook	90.3	53.2	59%	14	0.53	1.33	2.6
12	Lower Don Central	145.6	100.9	69%	7	1.00	2.52	4.9
13	Meadowhall and Carbrook	100.9	41.5	41%	19	0.41	1.04	1.0
14	Neepsend and Parkwood	60.0	39.4	66%	11	0.39	0.99	1.9
15	Outokumpu and Marcegaglia	61.2	53.5	87%	1	0.53	1.34	2.7
16	Parkway	109.7	82.2	75%	3	0.82	2.06	4.1
17	Queens Road	32.5	25.1	77%	2	0.25	0.63	1.2
18	Sheepcote Lane and Europa Link	136.0	78.3	58%	15	0.78	1.96	3.4
19	Upper Don Central	66.7	50.3	75%	3	0.50	1.26	2.5
20	Wardsend and Herries Road	32.4	16.8	52%	17	0.17	0.42	0.8
-	All Sub-areas (Sheffield)	1,542	976.3	63%	-	9.7	24.45	46.00

4.3 Identifying Opportunity Areas in Employment Zones

- 4.3.1 In parallel with the overall, more strategic-level analysis (Stage 3a), there has been more detailed appraisal of specific ‘hotspot’ locations within the sub-areas, where there are clusters of sites or areas of land where significant redevelopment could take place during the plan period. Where these have been identified they have been categorised as **“Opportunity Areas”**.
- 4.3.2 A summary of the identified Opportunity Areas is set out in Table 4.2 below. Each Opportunity Area is identified and described in more detail in their respective sub-area appraisals in Appendix 3.

Table 4.2: Opportunity Areas

No.	Employment Sub-Area	Opportunity Area	Indicative Size (ha)
1	Burngreave and Brightside	Land between Carlisle Street and Petre Street	9
2	Lower Don Central	Land off Stevenson Road	11
3	Neepsend and Parkwood	Neepsend Lane North	10
4	Sheepcote Lane and Europa Link	Outokumpu, Loverose Way	3
5	Upper Don	IFA Site, Livesey Street	1
Total			34

- 4.3.3 The analysis has identified five different Opportunity Areas and combined these could deliver up to 34 hectares through intensification or re-use.

4.4 Identifying Opportunity Sites in Employment Zones

- 4.4.1 Again, in parallel with the overall analysis of the sub-areas, there has been more specific appraisal of individual sites. These sites are locations where there is clearly a vacant land parcel (that may have been cleared of development) or it is underutilised, where there is no known activity (planning permissions, applications, site allocations etc). They also include sites that have been identified within previous Employment Land Reviews and been recommended as a potential employment allocation, but which was not carried forward into the draft Sheffield Plan. Where these have been identified they have been categorised as **“Opportunity Sites”**.
- 4.4.2 A summary of the identified Opportunity Sites is set out in Table 4.3 below. Each Opportunity Site is also identified and described in more detail in their respective sub-area appraisals in Appendix 3.

Table 4.3: Opportunity Sites

No.	Employment Sub-Area	Opportunity Site	Indicative Size (ha)	Suitable Employment Uses
1	Blackbrook and Butterthwaite	Loicher Lane, Yarra Industrial Estate	0.6	B2, B8, E(g)(iii)
2	Blackburn Brook	Bifrangi Ltd, Grange Mill Lane	2.9	B2, B8, E(g)(iii)
3	Burngreave and Brightside	Land between East Earsham Street and Alliance Street	0.4	B2, B8, E(g)(iii)
4	Claywheels Lane	Former Union Carbide, Claywheels Lane	5*	B2, B8, E(g)(iii)
5	Lower Don Central	Land off Stevenson Way (opposite Stevenson Way)	0.3	B2, B8, E(g)(iii)
6	Wardsend	Wardsend Road North	0.8	B2, B8, E(c) & E(g)
Total			10	

*Based on the land remaining, following removal of land previously approved (and already included in the supply) and in use for the recycling of 'bottom ash'.

- 4.4.3 Both the Loicher Lane and Former Union Carbide sites were recommended as allocations within the Employment Land Review (2020) (EM05), however they were not allocated as it was determined that they were not needed to meet the employment land requirement within the submitted version of the Sheffield Plan.
- 4.4.4 The Former Union Carbide site is large industrial site that was once occupied by factories (only a limited number of buildings remain on site and four large chimneys were recently demolished). The whole site covers approximately 18 hectares. As land within the site is occupied by waste processing companies, and areas already accounted for within the employment land supply (see Paragraph 4.6 and Sheffield City Council's Written Statement WS5/1), approximately 5 hectares remains unused, providing further opportunities for employment development within this strategically significant site.
- 4.4.5 The Bifrangi Ltd site on Grange Mill Lane, comprises the remains of a factory (Bifrangi Ltd) which was partially demolished following the granting of demolition consent in 2020. The remaining half of the factory building remains. Whilst there are no extant planning permissions or undetermined applications, the land is suitable for employment use and there are no fundamental constraints.
- 4.4.6 The site at East Earsham Street has been cleared of vegetation, has no extant planning permission for development or applications awaiting determination. It is not allocated for development; however, the land is suitable for employment use and there are no fundamental constraints.
- 4.4.7 The site off Stevenson Way is vacant plot of land of Stevenson Rd, opposite Stevenson Way within the Stevenson Rd Opportunity Area (see above). This land was used for open storage by the occupier of the adjacent industrial buildings but has not been used since around 2015. The land does not have any extant, expired or undetermined planning applications and it would appear, subject to availability, be suitable for allocating for employment.

- 4.4.8 In total, the analysis has identified six different Opportunity Sites and combined these could deliver up to 10 hectares through intensification or re-use during the plan period.

4.5 Reviewing Existing Site Allocations

- 4.5.1 In addition to the analysis of the sub-areas, the Council has reviewed the draft site allocations as proposed within the draft Sheffield Plan. From this review, one allocation has been identified as being suitable for an extension. This is site allocation, reference: **NES03 – Land to the west of Blackburn Road, S61 2DW**.
- 4.5.2 NES03 is within the 'Blackburn Brook' sub-area (see sub-area 3 in Appendix 3 for further details) and is covered by an extant planning permission that permits enabling works (see application details: 20/02550/FUL), and it is also subject to a recent planning application (not yet determined) which proposes the phasing of the planned works (see application details: 25/00735/FUL).
- 4.5.3 Both applications include land on the opposite side of the Blackburn Trail and culverted Blackburn Brook. This additional land covers approximately 3 hectares and the current application identifies this area as a location for a separate employment unit. Given the extant permission, and the further evidence of deliverability through the current application, the Council considers that this area should be included as part of site allocation for NES03. For completeness, this would take the area of NES03 from the current figure of 11.12 to 13.70 and create a further 2.58 hectares of land supply.
- 4.5.4 No further site allocations were identified as suitable for extension, or offer greater development potential than is currently set out in the draft Sheffield Plan. This is because they are either constrained by neighbouring land uses and/or there are no pertinent permissions or subsequent local plan submissions indicating that the allocation's boundary should be changed.

4.6 Reviewing Planning Permissions

- 4.6.1 In addition to site allocations within the draft Sheffield Plan (totalling 96.22 hectares), the Employment Land Supply Update (October 2025) (EXAM 56A) identifies 52.52 hectares of additional employment land as having planning permission*.
- 4.6.2 41.27 hectares will be delivered within seven sites which were approved prior to submission (and not commenced). 11.25 hectares will be delivered within 20 sites that have been approved after submission.

Table 4.4: Summary of Review of Planning Permissions

HELAA/ Planning Permission Reference	Address	Net Employment Site Area (Ha)
Approved Prior to Submission		
S03494	Former Hartwells Site, Savile Street/Spital Hill	0.46
S03765	Sustainable Aviation Fuel Centre (SAF), Land Adjacent ICAIR, Europa Avenue	8.31
S03464	2 Rotherham Road, Handsworth	0.79
S03764	Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park	3.84
S03180	Sheffield Business Park Phase 2 *	22.60
S03189	Beeleywood, Claywheels Lane*	4.90
S03160	Land at Rear of No 2 Hunsley Street *	0.37
Total Approved Prior to Submission		41.27
Approved After Submission		
21/04771/FUL	350 Petre Street	0.19
22/01107/FUL	Formerly MHH Contracting Ltd, Upwell Street	0.59
22/01617/FUL	39-43 Charles Street And 186-194 Norfolk Street	0.02
22/02250/FUL	Sheffield Forgemasters Ltd, River Don Works, Brightside Lane	0.10
22/02112/FUL	Olympic Legacy Park - Land at south side of Fell Road	0.42
22/03642/FUL	Land At Rear Of 7-14, Fieldhouse Way	0.56
22/02929/FUL	Land At Junction with Europa Link, Europa Close	0.81
22/04598/FUL	Land Rover, 100 Savile Street	0.53
23/01823/FUL	University Of Sheffield, Factory 2050, Europa Avenue (Formerly part of Sustainable Aviation Fuel Centre (SAF) Land Adjacent ICAIR, Europa Avenue site)	0.43
20/03766/OUT	Meadowhall Centre, Meadowhall Way	3.10
23/02975/FUL	Car Park, Greenland Road	0.50
23/03144/FUL	Land Between O2 Academy And Odeon Cinema And, Arundel Gate	0.10

23/03730/FUL	Former RBS Bank, 3 - 5 Church Street	0.29
23/04037/FUL	Stocksbridge Library, 519 Manchester Road, Stocksbridge	0.06
24/00312/FUL	The Hope Centre Car Park Bernard Road Sheffield S2 5BQ	0.16
22/01609/FUL	Excel Martial Arts Shield House Long Acre Way Sheffield S20 3FS	0.61
24/00670/FUL	605 Ecclesall Road Sheffield S11 8PT	0.08
23/02738/FUL	387 Attercliffe Road Sheffield S9 3QU	0.31
23/00946/FUL	Former Lorry Park Adjacent F E Mottram Ltd Oakes Green Sheffield S9 3WR	0.37
22/04321/FUL	Land Between Rear Of 91 To 99 Green Lane and Blackburn Brook	1.84
Total Approved After Submission		11.25
Total Approved (up to October 2024)		52.52

* These planning permissions have lapsed. The Council, as set out in response to MIQ 5 (WS5.1), has included these sites throughout all of its HELAA work, and considers these sites to be viable and developable, and as such continues to include them as part of the long-term supply of employment sites.

- 4.6.3 Reviewing the seven applications that were approved prior to submission, there is no evidence that the sites will deliver additional employment floorspace, beyond the quantum already permitted.
- 4.6.4 Regarding Claywheels Lane, the remaining land not covered by the now expired permission for a waste management facility (17/03725/FUL) and bottom ash recovery operation, is identified as an Opportunity Site (see Section 4.5 and Table 4.3 above).
- 4.6.5 Analysis of the twenty applications approved post submission has not identified any sites where a subsequent application has been submitted that would increase the net employment area.
- 4.6.6 In summary, a review of the extant planning permissions which are listed within the employment land supply, has not identified any further land that would count towards the City's employment land requirements. The supply position relative to planning permissions therefore remains as has been submitted to the Examination and Hearing Sessions under document EXAM 56A.

4.7 Identifying the Potential for Intensification within the City Centre

- 4.7.1 As with the employment zones, the zoning approach across the City Centre is essentially a continuation of the 'Policy Area' approach that was used in the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998) – see Policy H10 (in Document AP10) and the Proposals Map sheet for the Central Area (AP32). This has proved effective in providing a framework for considering development proposals on non-allocated sites. It provides developers with greater certainty regarding the types of uses that are likely to be acceptable in different areas of the City Centre.

Context and approach to assessing the opportunities for intensification or re-use

- 4.7.2 Appendix 1 shows that since the beginning of the plan period (April 2022) there has been a significant loss of office provision within the Central Area (approximately 40,000 sq.m.), which has all occurred in the Central Area Flexible Use Zones. There are many factors that could influence this; however, office to residential conversion and general office market viability are significant factors. In addition, multiple large-scale office schemes gained permission a couple years prior to the monitoring period, notably West Bar and the Sheffield Digital Campus (both later mentioned in the relevant appendices). These are not captured in the figures but have provided the city with a significant step-change in the quantum of modern workspaces.
- 4.7.3 Appendix 1 identifies permissions which result in either an increase or decrease in office space. It contains a significant number of conversions of old office facilities into dwellings. In recent years however, there has been an increase in co-working / shared office space (classed as *Sui Generis*). This has provided a relatively small amount of new office space (1,045.3 sq.m). As these were granted between 2022 and 2025, these developments have been included within the appraisal of potential intensification and re-use opportunities in the City Centre (see below). It is apparent from this data, and as suggested by paragraph 5.30 of the Employment Land Review Update (2021), that shared office and co-working spaces are likely to play an increasing role in the market. This Council considers that this is especially likely within areas that are within or adjacent to the Sheffield Innovation Spine (see further details below).
- 4.7.4 Overall, there has been an average loss of 1.3 ha per annum of office space over the three-monitoring periods (2022/23-2024/25), this is a reduction in average loss of office land to that of 2.83ha per annum reported in the 2020/21 monitoring period (paragraph 5.40, ELRU 2021).
- 4.7.5 This reduction in losses supports the updated office market position set out in EXAM103, which provides contemporary analysis of the office market and explains how net absorption levels are positive, leasing activity remains stable, general office rent levels remain constant, and prime office rents are increasing. The latest market position led the Lichfield's Office Market Analysis (EXAM103) to conclude (paragraph 1.8) that "*Sheffield City's office market is holding up well and has not softened noticeably since the pandemic*".

- 4.7.6 Reflecting the shift to more mixed-use schemes across the City Centre, it is anticipated that the majority of new office developments will be delivered in the allocated City Centre Office Zones, which are considered the primary location for office development. The assessment therefore focuses on Office Zones as locations for further intensification. Some smaller scale office provision will likely come forward from schemes delivered in the Central Area Flexible Use Zone, but this will be a secondary source of office provision.

Assessment of Opportunities for Intensification or Re-use in Office Zones

- 4.7.7 The assessment focuses on the six defined Office Zones set out within the draft Sheffield Plan. All Office Zones are in the defined City Centre, and they are:
1. Castlegate;
 2. Sheaf Street/Pond Street;
 3. Heart of the City;
 4. Sheaf Street/Suffolk Road;
 5. Victoria Quays; and
 6. West Bar/Riverside Exchange.
- 4.7.8 Within the Office Zones, Policy EC2 identifies offices (Class E(g)(i)) as the 'preferred' use, with other Class E uses and residential uses as 'acceptable'. As set out in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.9 above, there are limited opportunities to increase the built footprints within the City Centre, due to the concentration of existing buildings.
- 4.7.9 This serves to highlight the points made by the Council during the Examination Hearing Sessions, which is that for the City Centre (and to some extent across the whole of the urban area) there is a disconnect between the discussion over delivering land (in hectares) versus the delivery of floorspace. The Council has advocated that the type and nature of sites within the City Centre means that small sites will generate significant new floorspace based on their building height and plot ratio. The City Centre is seeing increasingly tall buildings being developed, and that, alongside more mixed-use buildings being built, will mean that floorspace figures will arguably be more important than the final quantum of land delivered.
- 4.7.10 As such, the assessment has not analysed the percentage of underutilised land across individual Office Zones. Instead, it has focused on intensification through the potential for increases in floorspace on extant permissions and proposed site allocations. The detailed appraisal of each Office Zone can be found in Appendix 2.

- 4.7.11 A review of the extant planning permissions across the Office Zones indicates that the designs and development proposals have maximised the appropriate building heights for those sites, and that there is no further scope for intensification.
- 4.7.12 A review of the proposed site allocations within the Office Zones (see Appendix A of the draft Sheffield Local Plan) highlights that they only set out the site's developable area – and do not give an indicative floorspace figure.
- 4.7.13 To provide an indicative range of potential floorspace for each site allocation, and to help consider the likelihood of any ability to intensify the use on the site, the assessment work has set out a comparison of different scenarios:
- (a) A simple 1:1 ratio of allocated area to floorspace, translating hectares to square metres; and
 - (b) An indicative minimum and maximum floorspace figure – which either takes the default figure from the Employment Land Review Update (2022) (which set a floorspace/plot ratio of 2.0 (200%)); or, where appropriate is informed by a desk-based review carried out by the Council's design team and utilising best practice from adopted and draft regeneration masterplans.
- 4.7.14 The detailed appraisal of the proposed site allocations and their potential floorspace yields is set out within the Office Zone Appraisals in Appendix 2 to this report. A summary of the floorspace calculations is set out in Table 4.5 below.
- 4.7.15 It should be noted that the indicative figures are subject to satisfactory planning and design matters.**

Table 4.5: Allocated Office Zone Floorspace and Indicative Footprint

Site Ref	Site Name	Floorspace using 1:1 ratio of allocated area (sq.m.)	Indicative floorspace using either ELR or Design team ratios (sq.m.)	
Castlegate Office Zone				
			Min	Max
CW01	Castlegate (Exchange Place)	800	1,600	4,000
CW02	Castlegate (Shude Hill)	2,600	5,200	10,400
CW04	Buildings at Dixon Lane and Haymarket, S2 5TS	5,300	10,600	21,200
CW06	29-57 King Street, S3 8LF	700	1,400	2,800
Castlegate Office Zone Totals		9,400	18,800	38,400
Sheaf Street/Pond Street Office Zone				
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heart of the City Office Zone				
			Min	Max
HC06	113-125, Pinstone Street, S1 2HL	500	1,000	3,000
HC12	Midcity House 17, 23 Furnival Gate, 127-155 Pinstone Street And 44 Union Street, Sheffield, S1 4QR	0	3,000	10,500 *
Heart of the City Office Zone Totals		500	4,000	13,500
Sheaf Street / Suffolk Road Office Zone				
			Min	Max
SV02	Land at Midland Station, Cross Turner Street, S1 2BP	3,800	10,000	N/A
SV05	K.T Precision Engineering and land adjacent, Turner Street, S2 4AB	2,100	0	N/A
Sheaf Street / Suffolk Road Office Zone Totals		5,900	10,000	N/A
Victoria Quays Office Zone				
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
West Bar/Riverside Exchange Office Zone				
			Min:	Max
CW03	West Bar Square	10,000	75,000	N/A
West Bar / Riverside Exchange Office Zone Totals		10,000	75,000	N/A
Grand Total		25,800	107,800	136,900 **

*Ratio of 54.0 reflects the potential opportunity to deliver office development on H12, should the permitted housing scheme not be implemented.

** where no maximum figure has been identified, the minimum figure has been carried forward to generate a grand total.

4.7.16 Table 4.5 indicates that the designated City Centre Office Use Zones, and the proposed site allocations within them have the potential to deliver significant

floorspace, subject to the final details of each development site, in terms of buildings heights, plot ratios, and the make-up of uses within the development.

- 4.7.17 The City Centre Office Zones remain fundamental to the Council's aim to regenerate the city and unlock significant economic growth. West Bar/Riverside Exchange, Heart of the City, Castlegate and Sheaf Street/Suffolk Road Office Zones are all involved in larger regeneration projects of their surrounding areas, promoting mixed-use developments and to creating 'destinations' that act as a catalyst of activity across a range of sectors, including offices.
- 4.7.18 Those Office Zones that are not involved in regeneration or master planning exercises (e.g. Victoria Quays and Sheaf Street/Pond Street) is because of their current operational profile and their availability. For example, the Sheaf Street/Pond Street Office Zone is a well-established cluster of modern office buildings in the form of the Sheffield Digital Campus. However, it should be noted that, even here, the Council is looking ahead and has earmarked the Sheaf Street/Pond Street Office Zone as potentially contributing towards the Sheffield Innovation Spine (see paragraphs 4.20-4.24 below).
- 4.7.19 Given the review of the Office Zones, it is the Council's view that the current perspective on how much floorspace they could deliver represents the most appropriate outcome for the sites. It is an appropriate scale of development that will provide office accommodation to a high specification in the right location and in an appropriate setting where businesses are able to cluster together. It also has the potential to capture footloose national enquiries (including government/public sector relocations) as well as local demand. The final floorspace figures delivered will be determined at the planning application stage.

Wider City Centre

- 4.7.20 Outside the Office Zones, the Central Area Flexible Use Zones effectively cover what is 'left over' after all the other policy zones (including Office Zones) have been designated with the Central Sub Area. They are parts of the city that allow for a mix of residential and commercial uses but are of a secondary order when compared to other 'Zones', which are more suited to specific types of uses (e.g. Residential, Office Zones, Cultural Zones, University/College Zones and the City Centre Primary Shopping Area). These areas already have a mix of commercial and residential uses, and the policy provides flexibility for the market to respond to changing demand by allowing a wide range of uses, provided that they do not harm living conditions for people residing in the area. It is anticipated that smaller scale office windfall provision will also come forward from schemes delivered in the Central Area Flexible Use Zone as existing trends show (see Section 4.7.6).
- 4.7.21 Additionally, there is an emerging project in the Central Area in the form of the Sheffield Innovation Spine. The project aims to create the case for investment in the city's innovation infrastructure, including the laboratory and office space needed by existing knowledge-intensive companies. It also provides an attractive inward investment opportunity for other companies that can drive economic growth in the city centre.

- 4.7.22 The Sheffield Innovation Spine has been developed with city institutional partners; Sheffield City Council, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, and Sheffield Technology Parks. It is recognition of the strategic importance and impact the Sheffield Innovation Spine can have in shaping the city's future. Creating the Sheffield Innovation Spine will leverage the city's burgeoning technology-led start-up enterprises, the University of Sheffield's spinout pipeline, key existing incubation space at Sheffield Technology Parks and the laboratory facilities at Sheffield Hallam University. It will also complement and create a feeder pipeline for the Innovation District.
- 4.7.23 The Sheffield Innovation Spine concept is still at quite early stages and work is yet to be carried out an economic and spatial analysis, as well as production of an innovation infrastructure plan. The spine loosely runs from Sheffield Station and Sheffield Hallam University's City Campus through Sheffield Digital Campus to, Castlegate, Riverside, West Bar, Tenter Street and up to the University of Sheffield's main campus (See Figure 4.1 below). It is anticipated a series of innovation hotspots within the city centre and the Sheffield Innovation Spine becomes the wayfinding and connective narrative that binds them.

Figure 4.1: Sheffield Innovation Spine indicative map (Blue sites are existing assets that already perform function of the Innovation Spine. Green sites are potential opportunity sites that can contribute towards the Innovation Spine)



- 4.7.24 The objectives of the Sheffield Innovation Spine include the delivery of dedicated spaces and places for start-up and high-growth knowledge-led businesses; the attraction of investors and innovators into the Central Area; increase the number of knowledge-intensive businesses in tradeable sectors, the density of knowledge-intensive businesses and the number of high-quality job opportunities. Potential strategic sites include the Bus Station, and the Royal Mail Delivery City Office and car park (which are within the Sheaf Street / Pond Street Office Zone); along with the Castlegate, West Bar, and Midland Station sites

(which are also within Office Zones). Further analysis of these opportunities is set out in Appendix 2.

- 4.7.25 It is anticipated that the Sheffield Innovation Spine project will enable the delivery of innovation hotspots, where you have research organisations, anchor and growth companies, start-ups and scale-ups, real estate developers and owners, investors and social networking organisations co-located and allowing for connectivity through their proximity. We can already see these hotspots emerging at the station/Sheffield Hallam campus, Pennine 5, University of Sheffield Innovation Centre and Castle House, although they are at different stages of maturity and with different needs/offers. The Spine becomes the wayfinding and narrative that links these together, which currently also works well with the tram network and grey-to-green active travel network.

Summary

- 4.7.26 The assessment of opportunities for intensification or re-use in the City Centre is different, due to the type and nature of the sites and the context of the surrounding built environment. The Council's position remains the same, that the City Centre is fundamental to the sustainable economic growth of Sheffield as a whole. The City Centre represents a dynamic location, with large-scale regeneration proposals and sites of major development activity. The Council is also clear that development sites and site allocations will evolve and change as they are brought to fruition, which will alter the final development potential of the sites and will bring additional windfall development to the City Centre.
- 4.7.27 The assessment has set out a range of potential employment floorspace figures that could be achieved in the City Centre Office Use Zones – from a baseline of approximately 26,000 sq.m. through to a theoretical maximum of approximately 140,000 sq.m. Given the status of the development proposals and how they are tied to major regeneration opportunities, the Council expects that promoters and developers will seek to maximise the potential from these sites. However, at present, there is little to justify a material change to the sites that would result in significant new opportunities for intensification or re-use.
- 4.7.28 Elsewhere within the City Centre, there are emerging plans for the Sheffield Innovation Spine, which will complement the City Centre Office use Zones, and will provide a further evolution of the city. However, at this stage with plans at such an early stage, the Council considers that it would be inappropriate to include the possible sites/buildings as any further opportunities for intensification or re-use. Should the plans for the Sheffield Innovation Spine accelerate during the plan period, they would represent further windfall development.

4.8 Summary of Opportunities for Intensification and Re-use

- 4.8.1 The Council has looked again at the urban areas of Sheffield to understand if there are locations, parcels of land, or sites that could be identified as having potential to be developed more intensively or redeveloped.
- 4.8.2 The assessment work has defined 20 sub-areas across the city and has subjected them to detailed appraisal and review (see Appendix 3). From these 20 sub-areas, a conservative calculation has indicated that, based on three different scenarios where either 1%, 2.5%, or 5% of the identified underutilised land came forward for development over the plan period, then it would generate windfall development of between 9.7 hectares and 48.8 hectares. The Council considers that this represents a realistic and high-level assessment of the quantum of land that could be delivered over the plan period.
- 4.8.3 As has been advocated through the Examination hearing sessions and the Written Statements, the Council considers that there is significant potential within the employment zones of the Upper and Lower Don Valley, the Sheaf Valley, Blackburn Valley, and Holbrook Industrial Estate. This is due to the potential to intensify employment floorspace, either through the extension of or redevelopment of existing buildings, or the redevelopment of vacant sites.
- 4.8.4 In parallel, more detailed appraisals have been carried out of clusters of sites / land, which the Council has put forward as “Opportunity Areas”. For the avoidance of doubt, the Opportunity Areas are not expressed as additional land to that which has been set out as part of the higher-level strategic assessment of all 20 sub-areas. Instead, the six Opportunity Areas represent more immediate “quick wins” where there is a clearer rationale as to the likelihood of more intensive development, re-use, or redevelopment. The six Opportunity Sites represent 34 hectares of land that could be delivered over the plan period.
- 4.8.5 Refining the position further, the Council has also identified the most immediately obvious vacant land parcels, where there is no known activity. These are sites that might have been identified within previous Employment Land Reviews and recommended as a potential employment allocation, but which, for various reasons, including use at the time and availability, were not carried forward into the draft Sheffield Plan. These have been put forward as “Opportunity Sites”. Again, these are not expressed as additional land/sites, but are more ready-made development sites where there is a strong likelihood that they can be developed/re-used. The five Opportunity Sites represent 10 hectares of land that could be delivered over the plan period.
- 4.8.6 Separately, a review of the existing site allocations and planning permissions has been carried out to see if there is greater potential to deliver more land, or more intensive development. The Council has identified one existing site allocation (NES03 - Land to the west of Blackburn Road, S61 2DW) where a recent planning permission has amended the site area and has increased it by 2.58 hectares, which can be added to the employment land supply.

- 4.8.7 In overall summary, when taken together, the Council considers that it has identified 12.58 hectares of land within the existing urban area that could provide additional flexibility to the employment land supply.
- 4.8.8 Within the City Centre, the assessment has shown that there is scope for existing site allocations within the City Centre Office Zones to potentially deliver uplifts in floorspace; however, this will be subject to the final designs within submitted planning applications, plot ratios, and building heights. On this basis, the Council considers there is no scope for further intensification or re-use of existing employment sites, nor are there any new sites within the City Centre Office Zones.
- 4.8.9 Elsewhere in the City Centre there are emerging plans for the next wave of regeneration and redevelopment as part of plans for the Sheffield Innovation Spine. However, these ideas are at an early stage and will require further master planning before they can be considered as opportunities for intensification or re-use.
- 4.8.10 Overall, the further work has identified some potential for the intensification or re-use of existing employment areas, but it is insufficient to meet the identified shortfall in full. Therefore, in the Council's view, it is appropriate to consider the release of some Green Belt land for employment use. The targeted release of Green Belt sites for employment purposes could also create a more balanced portfolio of sites, provide greater choice for the market, help meet demand, and boost jobs growth in the city.
- 4.8.11 The review of the potential Green Belt sites is set out in Section 5 below.

5. Considering the Potential of Green Belt Sites

- 5.1. As set out in Section 4, the analysis of opportunities for intensification or re-use within the urban area indicates that approximately 13 hectares of land could provide additional employment land supply (10 hectares from windfalls and 2.58 hectares from an extension to an existing site allocation).
- 5.2. This means that there is a residual shortfall in employment land supply against the 52.8 hectares identified within the Inspectors' letter (EXAM120). Paragraphs 54 and 55 of the Inspectors' letter describe how the Council's Green Belt evidence indicates that some sites in the Green Belt do not score well against Green Belt purposes. In this context, the Inspectors suggest there may be scope to explore options for delivering employment sites outside the urban area; and in so doing, the Council should carry out further work and explore all options to deliver the shortfall of 52.8 hectares of land identified for general employment over the plan period.
- 5.3. In accordance with Paragraphs 140 and 141 of the NPPF (2023), the release of Green Belt land can only occur in exceptional circumstances. In respect to employment land these circumstances will not exist without clear evidence that an objectively assessed need for additional land cannot be met without Green Belt release. The conclusions following the additional urban capacity work within this paper indicate that the release of Green Belt land is required to ensure the benefits of meeting economic development needs.
- 5.4. This section therefore examines the potential Green Belt sites that could contribute to meeting Sheffield's general employment land requirement. This assessment focusses on and summarises the appraisal of potential Green Belt sites within the:
 - Proposed Additional Site Allocations: Selection of sites for Green Belt Release Topic Paper (May 2025); and
 - Sheffield Local Plan: Integrated Impact Assessment (Aecom, December 2022) (CD17⁶) and Sheffield Local Plan: Integrated Impact Assessment (Update and Addendum) (Aecom, May 2025).
- 5.5. Together with the evidence on requirements and supply within the Employment Land Review Update (2022) (EM6) and Employment Land Supply Updates (EXAM 56 and 56A), the Green Belt Review (GB02, GB03 and EXAM 95A), and this paper will determine whether exceptional circumstances exist to amend the Green Belt boundary.

Integrated Impact Assessment Addendum (2025)

- 5.6. In addition to the four employment locations (Hesley Wood, East of Smithywood, Norton and Handsworth) that were assessed within the IIA that supported the pre-submission Sheffield Plan (CD17), the IIA Update and Addendum 2025 has examined a further four sites (Warren Lane, Beighton, Owlthorpe, Ecclesfield). These were previously considered as strategic housing locations within the pre-submission IIA but are also suitable employment sites.

⁶ Examination Document Library reference

5.7. Together the eight sites appraised comprise the following 'Strategic Locations' for employment:

- (A) Hesley Wood;
- (B) East of Smithywood;
- (C) Norton;
- (D) Handsworth;
- (E) Warren Lane;
- (F) Beighton;
- (G) Owlthorpe; and
- (H) South of Chapelton / Ecclesfield.

5.8. All eight sites have been promoted to the Council by their landowners as development sites either during Call for Sites in 2019 or subsequent consultations on the draft Sheffield Plan. The sites at Hesley Wood, Smithywood, Handsworth and Warren Lane have been promoted as employment or mixed-use sites. They are all considered available.

5.9. Figure 5.1 shows an extract from the IIA, summarising the appraisal of site and their performance against the IIA's sustainability objectives.

5.10. A detailed appraisal of each site can also be found within Appendix H of the IIA Update and Addendum (2025).

5.11. The IIA has concluded that the four sites identified as reasonable alternatives within the pre-submission IIA (A, B, C and D) are potentially suitable employment allocations given their location in relation to the motorway (in the east) and characteristics that would support strategic growth.

5.12. Regarding the four additional sites identified within the update, these are also in the east of Sheffield in locations with strong access to the strategic road network and suitable topography. This indicates they are also potentially suitable employment allocations. Some of the sites are, however, also suitable for residential use.

Figure 5.1: Summary of appraisal findings for the strategic locations for employment growth (Sheffield Local Plan Integrated Impact Assessment Report (Update and Addendum) April 2025)

<i>Strategic Location</i>	<i>Economy</i>	<i>Housing</i>	<i>Health and wellbeing</i>	<i>Transport</i>	<i>Soil and Land</i>	<i>Historic Environment</i>	<i>Landscape and Townscape</i>	<i>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</i>	<i>Climate Resilience</i>	<i>Natural Resources</i>	<i>Resource efficiency</i>
A: Hesley Wood	✓✓✓?	-	-	✓	✓✓	-	x	xx?	x?	-	x?
B: East of Smithywood	✓✓✓	-	✓	-	x	-	xx	x	x	x	x?
C: Norton	✓	x?	✓✓	✓	✓	-	✓	x?	-	-	x?
D. Handsworth	✓✓✓	x?	✓	✓	x	-	x	-	x	-	?
E. Warren Lane	✓✓✓?	-	✓	✓	x	-	xx	x	x?	x	x?
F. Beighton	✓✓	x?	✓✓	✓	x	-	x	-	x	x	?
G. Owlthorpe	✓	x?	✓✓	✓	x	-	x	x	x?	-	?
H. Ecclesfield	✓✓	x?	-	✓	x	-	xx	x	x	x	?

Proposed Additional Site Allocations: Selection of Sites for Green Belt Release Topic Paper (May 2025)

5.13. Of the eight sites appraised within the IIA, five have been assessed within the site selection topic paper. These are:

- (A) Hesley Wood (S04639);
- (B) East of Smithywood (Land South of M1 Junction 35) (S04101);
- (D) Handsworth (Handsworth Hall Farm) (S03061);
- (E) Warren Lane (S03112); and
- (F) Beighton (S03005).

5.14. The three sites that were not assessed as potential employment sites are:

- (C) Norton – this has been allocated for housing development within the submitted Sheffield Plan.
- (G) Owlthorpe – housing is considered a more suitable use in this location and has been assessed solely on this basis.
- (H) Ecclesfield – housing is considered more suitable, and the site is proposed as a housing allocation.

5.15. In addition to the five sites also appraised in the IIA, the topic paper has assessed two non-strategic employment sites. These are:

- S02833 – South of Loicher Lane (Ecclesfield); and
- S03124 – Land West of Nether Lane (Chapelton).

5.16. However, both were ruled out as they were fundamentally constrained due to poor access (S02833) and flood risks, which reduce the developable area significantly (S03124).

5.17. The assessments comprise a comprehensive review of all the shortlisted employment sites' suitability (alongside housing sites). Informed by evidence within the IIA, Green Belt Review and other documents, the Green Belt release topic paper selects the following four Green Belt sites as strategic employment or mixed-use allocations:

Table 5.1: Conclusions from Green Belt Topic Paper (May 2025) on employment sites to be released from the Green Belt

Site (HELAA) Reference	Allocation Reference	Allocation Name	Uses	Net Developable Area (ha)
S03061	SES29	Handsworth Hall Farm	Mixed Use	20.00
S03112	CH03	Land bordered by M1, Thorncliffe Road, Warren Lane and White Lane	Employment	18.06
S04639	CH04	Hesley Wood, North Cowley Hill	Employment	13.35
S04101	NES36	Land to the south of the M1 Motorway Junction 35	Employment	15.94
			Total	67.35

- 5.18. In total, the release of these Green Belt sites will deliver 67.35 hectares of employment land. The amount of land proposed to be released from the Green Belt is greater than the shortfall figure identified by the Inspectors; and is also greater than the residual shortfall figure having had regard to the opportunities for intensification or re-use.
- 5.19. The Council advocates that the allocation of these sites alongside those within the urban area and the windfall opportunities (within the extensive employment zones) provides a more balanced portfolio of sites. It can meet a range of market demands; provides flexibility, choice and competition; and will help overcome any uncertainties in delivery. Importantly, providing additional greenfield sites, close to the motorway, will increase and diversify the type of employment site that is available in Sheffield.
- 5.20. The Inspectors' letter also states that the need for large scale logistics land should be revisited through an early review of the Local Plan to allow the Council to explore opportunities for carrying out further assessment of the supply and requirements for large scale logistics over a wider area in the sub-region. A margin of additional supply over and above that requested by the Inspectors therefore also provides flexibility, if a future sub-regional logistics study were to identify an additional need for large scale logistics uses.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The Council has carried out additional work to address the findings as set out in the Inspectors' Stage 2 post hearings letter (EXAM150). Specifically, the Council has sought to meet the requests in paragraphs 52 to 55, where the Inspectors conclude that there is an identified shortfall in the supply of land for general employment and that the Council should carry out further work and explore all options to deliver the shortfall.
- 6.2. The Council has looked at opportunities for intensification and re-use within the urban areas, and at options for land release from the Green Belt.
- 6.3. To help categorise opportunities for intensification and re-use, the Council has appraised 20 sub-areas across the city. Each sub-area has been comprehensively appraised with a proforma provided that documents the overall size of the area, the scale of the built-up area, the context and character of the area (e.g. age and character of buildings) and then overlays policy zones, existing buildings, policy constraints, site allocations, sites with planning permission, and sites with recent completions.
- 6.4. For each sub-area, an indicative area of land that is potentially suitable for intensification or re-use has been identified. As expected, there are sub-areas across the city where there appears to be a greater potential for intensification or re-use of existing areas. These correspond to the Lower Don Valley, the Upper Don Valley, and those sub-areas that house significant existing industrial estates (e.g. Smithy Wood).
- 6.5. To present a realistic figure for the quantum of land that could be intensified or re-used, the Council has applied a cautious percentage calculation showing three different scenarios depending on whether 1%, 2.5%, or 5% of the land identified as underutilised came forward during the plan period.
- 6.6. Based on the 1% scenario, this would generate approximately 9.7 hectares, for the 2.5% scenario it is approximately 24.4 hectares, and for the 5% scenario it is approximately 48.8 hectares. For clarity, the Council advocates that this land would represent windfall land supply.
- 6.7. If a built footprint of 40% was achieved this would equate to between 38,800 sq.m. and 184,000 sq.m. of floorspace. This calculation is based on a single-storey development footprint only and, given the type and nature of more modern premises, many of which include mezzanines and second storeys, this figure is likely to be greater.
- 6.8. Further to this broad windfall assessment, the Council has refined its position and carried out more detailed appraisals of specific 'hotspot' locations within the sub-areas where there are clusters of sites / areas of land where significant redevelopment could take place during the plan period. Where these have been identified they have been categorised as **"Opportunity Areas"**.
- 6.9. The Council has identified five Opportunity Areas, which together amount to 34 hectares of employment land supply.

- 6.10. Furthermore, the Council has undertaken specific appraisals of individual sites. These sites are locations where there is clearly a vacant land parcel (that may have been cleared of development), or it is underutilised, where there is no known activity (planning permissions, applications, site allocations etc), and also where the site might have been identified within previous Employment Land Reviews and been recommended as a potential employment allocation, but which was not carried forward into the draft Sheffield Plan. Where these have been identified, it is proposed that they should be categorised in the Sheffield Plan as “**Opportunity Sites**” (rather than allocated sites).
- 6.11. The Council has pinpointed six Opportunity Sites, which taken together amount to 10 hectares of land. Of the six Opportunity Sites, two of them were previously recommended as site allocations from the Employment Land Review (2020). The Council considers that these 10 hectares represent the strongest opportunities for the intensification or re-use of urban areas and has a high expectation that this land will be forthcoming in the plan period.
- 6.12. In addition, the Council has reviewed the list of proposed site allocations in the draft Sheffield Plan, and any extant planning permissions which now feature as part of the Council’s expected employment land supply. One existing site allocation (NES03 - Land to the west of Blackburn Road) has a recent planning permission, which has amended the site area, increasing it by 2.58 hectares.
- 6.13. As such, when taken together, the Council considers that it has identified 12.58 hectares of land within the existing urban area that could provide additional land supply for general employment. This is the 10 hectares from the six Opportunity Sites and the 2.58 hectares from the amendment to proposed site allocation NES03.
- 6.14. The Council has also carried out a review of the City Centre – with a specific focus on the City Centre Office Zones. The assessment has shown a range of potential employment floorspace figures that could be achieved from a baseline of approximately 26,000 sq.m. through to a theoretical maximum of approximately 140,000 sq.m. Given the status of the development proposals and how they are tied to major regeneration opportunities, the Council expects that promoters and developers will seek to maximise the potential from these sites. However, at present, there is little additional scope for further intensification or re-use of existing employment sites.
- 6.15. Elsewhere within the City Centre, there are emerging plans for the Sheffield Innovation Spine, which will complement the City Centre Office Zones, and will provide a further evolution of the city. However, at this stage with plans at such an early stage, the Council considers that it would not be appropriate to include the Sheffield Innovation Spine as a location for intensification or re-use.
- 6.16. The analysis of opportunities within the urban area reveals that the Council could generate 12.58 hectares through intensification or re-use and therefore would still fall short of the figure identified by the Inspectors. As such, and as promoted by paragraphs 54 and 55 of the Inspectors’ letter, the Council has explored options for delivering employment sites outside the urban area within the Green Belt.

- 6.17. Eight sites previously identified as 'Strategic Locations' within the Green Belt have been considered for employment use. These eight sites stem from evidence and analysis within the Council's wider evidence base, including the Green Belt Review and the IIA. Further assessment work has narrowed down the eight sites to four sites and has set out that they are appropriate for identification as strategic employment or mixed-use allocations.
- 6.18. The four sites are: **Handsworth Hall Farm; Land bordered by M1, Thorncliffe Road, Warren Lane and White Lane; Hesley Wood, North Cowley Hill; and Land to the south of the M1 Motorway Junction 35.**
- 6.19. In total, the release of these four Green Belt sites will deliver 67.35 hectares of employment land.
- 6.20. In overall conclusion, the Council's additional assessment work to help answer the Inspectors' requests has set out that 12.58 hectares of land within the urban area has the scope for intensification or re-use; and that 67.35 hectares of the Green Belt could be released for employment. This provides a grand total of 79.93 hectares, which exceeds the identified shortfall of 52.8 hectares identified by the Inspectors. The total employment land supply for the period 2022-2039 would therefore be 264.33 hectares set against an overall requirement of 237.2 hectares. This represents a 11% margin of supply over the requirement.
- 6.21. Whilst the additional land supply is greater than the identified shortfall, the Council believes that in doing so it is providing a more balanced portfolio of sites. This can meet a range of market demands; provides flexibility, choice and competition; and will help overcome any uncertainties in delivery. Importantly, providing additional greenfield sites, close to the Motorway, will increase a type of employment site that is otherwise unavailable in Sheffield.