

LOCAL PLAN FOR LANCASTER DISTRICT 2011 – 2031

EMPLOYMENT LAND MONITORING POSITION STATEMENT 2022 – 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On an annual basis the Council undertakes monitoring surveys where they assess the changes in employment land in the district. This position statement provides some of the key information on the changes to employment uses and the land take-up within the district, this includes:
- Proposals granted for planning permission between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023;
 - The number of new employment developments completed between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023; and
 - Future development pressures and trends for employment within the district.
- 1.2 This position statement can be read in conjunction with previous position statements which have been prepared to inform the Councils understanding of changes to employment floorspace within the district. Historical statements can be provided from the Planning and Housing Policy Team on request.
- 1.3 The Council completed an Employment Land Review in 2015 which assessed the suitability of all allocated employment sites for their ongoing suitability through the forthcoming plan period up to 2031 and sets out future economic growth forecasts. The Council have published an 'Achieving Economic Potential' Report and 'Inclusive Economic Growth' Report which sets out how economic growth can be sustainability achieved. In preparing the Local Plan the Council have considered the content and direction of all evidence available to it to ensure the Plan is robust, accurate and justified.
- 1.4 In September 2023 the City Council ceased work on the preparation of the Lancaster South Area Action Plan, including Bailrigg Garden Village. Whilst work has stopped on this workstream, evidence which had been intended to support the Action Plan remains and continues to provide useful context in terms of the local economy and the opportunities for economic growth. Evidence on this issue can still be found on the Council's website relating to [Economic Prosperity Strategy](#) which provides a check on employment land requirements in the district and the role that the Area Action Plan (and development in South Lancaster) can play in delivering such needs.
- 1.5 The evidence is available to download from the Council's [website](#). For further information on employment matters, please contact the Planning and Housing Policy Team on 01524 582383 or planningpolicy@lancaster.gov.uk.

2. PLANNING APPLICATIONS PERMITTED

- 2.1 The period 2022 to 2023 has seen the number of planning applications related to employment floorspace (whether that be the creation or loss of) has marginally increased with 18 applications being registered (relatively similar to last year which registered 15).
- 2.2 Some of the ongoing challenges around the economy remain relevant and are likely to be fuelling the continuing low level of applications for employment growth. This includes the potential residual implications of COVID-19 but also further wider macro-economic implications such as the cost of living, increased energy costs and high inflation which is putting off expansion and new business creation. The number of schemes which have been granted permission over the 12-month period is set out in Table 1 of this statement.

App. Reference	Site	Description	Floorspace Growth / Loss
22/00332/FUL	Land North of Bulk Road and East of Parliament Street, Lancaster	Demolition of existing carpet store and car wash (Class E) and erection of 9 storey building and one 6 storey building for purpose built student accommodation comprising 441 Studios (C3) with ancillary communal facilities.	3,120sqm
22/00868/FUL	Fuel Proof Ltd, Middleton Business Park, Middleton Road, Middleton	Erection of a single storey extension to existing industrial unit.	935sqm
22/00869/FUL	Fuel Proof Ltd, Middleton Business Park, Middleton Road, Middleton	Demolition of existing storage unit and erection of a new industrial unit.	475sqm
22/01024/FUL	Heysham Business Park, Middleton Road, Middleton	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of employment units (Class Eg, B1 and B8) and a new gate house with associated service yards, parking areas and spine road with landscaping.	2,555sqm
22/01104/FUL	MRL Services, Middleton Road, Heysham, Morecambe	Erection of 5 small industrial / commercial / storage units (B2, B8 & Eg) with associated parking and turning areas.	1,740sqm
22/01268/FUL	18-20 Carnforth Road, Lancaster	Change of use from office (E) into two dwellings (C3), erection of single storey rear extensions	166sqm
22/00063/FUL	Sofidel, Caton Road, Lancaster	Demolition of part of the existing warehouse building (B2) and detached outbuilding, refurbishment and recladding of the remaining warehouse, erection of 2 storey office extension, associated access and parking.	2,798sqm
23/00059/FUL	Porsche Centre, 1 Electric Drive, Carnforth	Erection of a workshop, relocation of car park and associated drainage.	448sqm

23/00173/FUL	Lunedale House, Market Street, Lancaster	Change of use of the ground floor retail units and first floor offices to 3 apartments.	272sqm
22/00309/FUL	Metamark UK Ltd, Thetis Road, Lune Industrial Estate	Erection of a single storey extension to the front elevation.	738sqm

Table 1: Permission granted for potential employment growth within Lancaster District 2022 – 2023 (proposals over 100sqm floorspace created or lost) (Source: Lancaster City Council 2023).

- 2.3 The number of applications which have been granted permission of the current year has remained similar to last year with a number of applications approved for the creation or loss of employment space. However, the scale of potential opportunities for new floorspace creation has significantly increased since the last monitoring period with a number of large applications approved for new floorspace which, if implemented, would generate **6,891sqm** of new floorspace.
- 2.3 The level of planning permissions that involve the loss of employment space has increased from previous years with four planning applications approved which involve the loss of employment floorspace. If implemented this could result in the loss of **6,356sqm** of employment floorspace, none of this recorded loss would be located in allocated employment areas.

3. EMPLOYMENT LAND COMPLETIONS

- 3.1 The number of employment completions this years has remained similar to last years monitoring period and, unlike last year, the scale of those completions has also dropped with only one completion which has resulted in over 1,000sqm of floorspace created / lost being implemented.
- 3.2 There are a number of factors which could be relevant to this, the longer-term implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the current challenges in terms of cost of living and inflation could all be factors in reducing the levels of growth seen within the district. The wider economic implications describe (and the scale of applications which have been received by the Council) suggest that investment is currently challenged and therefore growth in the employment sector may remain low in the short term.
- 3.3 In terms of new floorspace completions in this years monitoring report, there are a number of modest scale completions in Heysham, Carnforth and Lancaster which have seen the creation of **1,466sqm** of new floorspace, this is marginally down on last years figure of 1,700sqm. The largest completions include the erection of an new building(s) on the Port of Heysham Industrial Estate, on land off Junction 35 of the M6 and at Lune Industrial Estate.
- 3.4 There has only been one completion which has resulted in the loss of employment space which involve the conversion of office space on Dalton Square which resulted in the loss of **1,033sqm** of employment space.

3.5 The table of completions are set out in Table 2 below.

App. Reference	Site	Description	Floorspace Change
21/00449/FUL	GED Environmental Services, Field Road, Heysham	Part retrospective application for the erection of a industrial building for repair and maintenance to HGVs (B2) ancillary to existing business on site.	136.5sqm
23/00059/FUL	Porsche Centre, 1 Electric Drive, Carnforth	Erection of a workshop, relocation of car park and associated drainage.	448sqm
23/00309/FUL	Metamark UK Ltd, Thetis Road, Lune Industrial Estate	Erection of a single storey extension to the front elevation.	738sqm
21/00545/FUL	Unit 10, Boundary Lane, Kellet Road Industrial Estate	Erection of a single storey side-extension and front extension to existing workshop (B2) to create storage area B8)	144sqm
21/00556/FUL	7 Dalton Square, Lancaster	Change of Use of Office (E) into aparthotel (C1) comprising 20 units on part first, second floor and into the attic. Erection of a single storey glazed extension to create entrance.	1,033sqm

Table 2: The completion of employment floorspace that has taken place in the district 2022 – 2023 in excess of 100sqm (Source: Lancaster City Council 2023).

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

- 4.1 The Council will continue to protect employment sites that contribute towards a sustainable and strong local economy. Through the preparation of the new Local Plan, the Council will ensure that a varied and diverse employment land portfolio is maintained to provide a strong range of employment sites, in sustainable locations, which provide a sufficient range of choice for potential investors in regard of size and location.
- 4.2 The Council have now adopted their new Local Plan, which includes the Strategic Policies & Land Allocations DPD and reviewed Development Management DPD. The Plan has sought to identify land which will meet the future economic needs of the district through to 2031. The plan also sets out a series of generic planning policies which will be used to determine planning application involving the loss or creation of employment spaces.
- 4.3 Following the adoption of the Local Plan, the Council have initiated an immediate partial review of the Plan in the context of Climate Change, with the Council declaring a Climate Emergency in January 2019. This has not included any amendments to the Plan in the context of employment and economic growth.

- 4.4 The Council continue to work on a number of significant projects which could influence future economic growth in the district. This includes the regeneration of the Canal Quarter area in Central Lancaster for a range of residential, retail, leisure and commercial uses and the Eden Project in Central Morecambe. In September 2023 the Council ceased work on the preparation of the Lancaster South Area Action Plan which included the delivery of Bailrigg Garden Village.
- 4.5 In light of fundamental changes to the ambitions of the currently adopted 2020 Local Plan, for instance ceasing work on growth proposals in South Lancaster, this has triggered the need for a full review of the Local Plan which, in particular, looks to revisit issues around the spatial distribution of development and the needs for both housing and employment land. The Council in September 2023 endorsed the need for the full review and it is anticipated this will commence later in the year.
- 4.6 At the point of writing this 2023 Position Statement the Country has begun the recovery from the economic implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic, however is face with further challenges relating to high inflation and cost of living, including high energy costs. These are having significant implications on business through to the costs of energy, materials and labour through to a tightening of disposable income. This will continue to pose significant challenges to the economy – locally and nationally – which have not been seen since at least the 2008 Financial Crash.
- 4.7 As highlighted in Table 3 of this Statement, there remain a number of significant planning applications which are either under construction or within the planning application pipeline which may have significant effects on the levels of employment floorspace in the district over the coming years, either through the provision of new floorspace or the reduction of floorspace. A number of these (particularly any granted permission in 2018) are likely to lapse during the course of the next monitoring period unless renewals to permission are sought.

App Reference	Site	Description	Floorspace Change
19/00545/HYB	Land North of Kellet Road, Over Kellet	Hybrid application comprising a full application for the proposed alterations to land levels and associated access and the outline application for up to 8,400sqm of employment floorspace.	8,400sqm
18/00234/FUL	Mellishaw North Development Site, Mellishaw Lane, White Lund	Erection of four buildings comprising of a total of 20 units (B1a and B1c use class) with associated access and parking.	3,062sqm
19/01531/FUL	Co-op Centenary House, Regent Road, Morecambe	Change of use of retail store to a mixed use comprising a retail store (A1), A3) and Workshop (B2).	982sqm
18/00234/FUL	Bay Scaffolding, Northgate, White Lund	Demolition of a factory building and erection of 4 industrial units, installation of a raised replacement roof.	644sqm
20/01082/FUL	5-7 Skipton Street, Morecambe	Change of use of an office (Class E) to 7 self serviced apartments for short term visitor accommodation (Sui Generis)	465sqm
21/00768/FUL	Brooklands Building, Addington Road, Halton	Installation of Bunds, replacement office accommodation (Class E), erection of a storage building (B8) and creation of additional car parking	527sqm
21/00464/FUL	Keer Bridge Depot, Scotland Road, Carnforth	Erection of a Storage Building (B8) and alterations to ground levels.	410sqm

23/00173/FUL	Lunedale House, Market Street, Morecambe	Change of use of the ground floor retail units and first floor offices to 3 apartments.	272sqm
22/0063/FUL	Sofidel UK, Caton Road, Lancaster	Demolition of part of the existing warehouse building (B2) and detached outbuilding, refurbishment and recladding of the remaining warehouse, erection of 2 storey office extension, associated access and parking.	2,798sqm
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20/1145/FUL	Lune Industrial Estate, New Quay Road, Lancaster	Partial demolition of industrial estate including the erection of new buildings and the conversion of existing buildings to create 15 industrial blocks (B2/B8), erection of amenity block containing nursery, café and retail unit (Class E) with associated access and car parking.	14,374sqm
19/01251/FUL	Northwood Tissue (Lancaster) Ltd, Lansil Way, Lancaster	Creation of an area of hardstanding and erection of a temporary storage building (B8).	2,745sqm

Table 3: Employment development which is currently underway (as of October 2023) and is anticipated could be reported in the 2023-2024 monitoring statement (applications involving the loss / creation of more than 200sqm only) (Source: Lancaster City Council 2023).

5. DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

5.1 The levels of recorded development which involve the creation of new employment floorspace have remained relatively stable over recent years, with between 1,000sqm and 2,500sqm of new employment floorspace being created on an annual basis. This year has remained low with the level

of employment completions which created new floorspace standing at 1,466sqm (down from 1,700 last year).

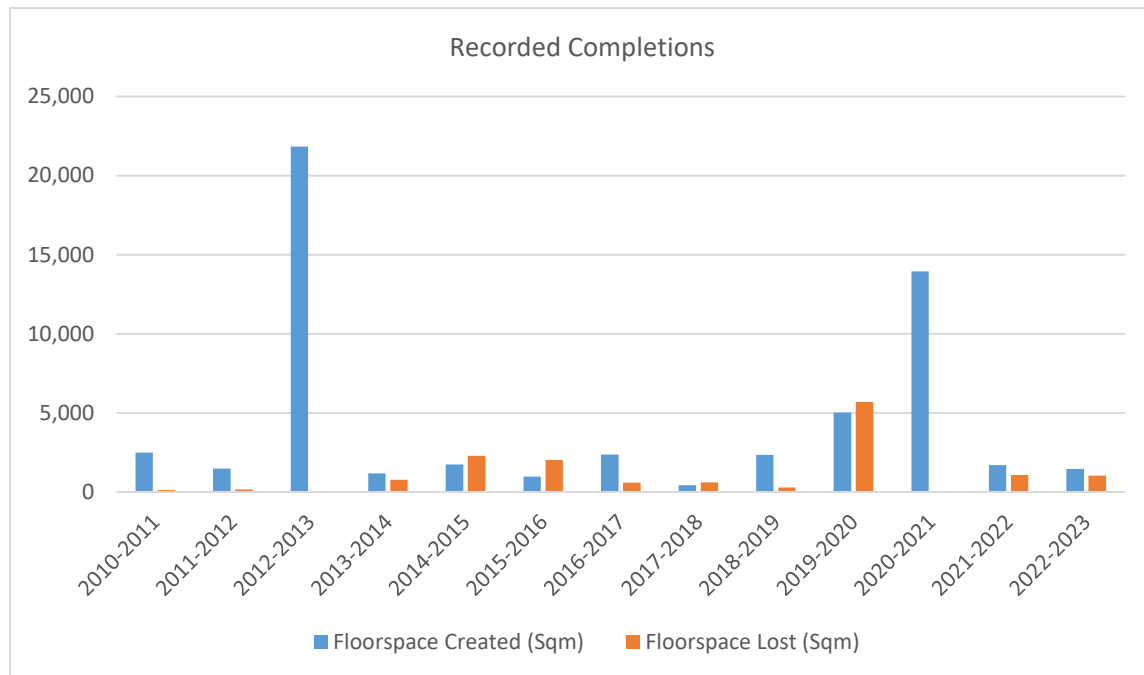


Figure 1: Levels of recorded completions in Lancaster District 2010 – 2023 (Source: Lancaster City Council October 2023)
 NB. Figures for 2012-2013 include development at Carnforth Business Park (13,707sqm, 2020-2021 figures include Phase 1 of the Lancaster University Health Innovation Campus)

- 5.2 The significant exceptions to this is the completion rate for 2012 – 2013 which saw a completion rate of over 20,000sqm. This exceptionally high figure should be caveated against the completion of a significant part of the Carnforth Business Park (generating 13,707sqm of new floorspace and the expansion of the Metamark premises on the Lune Industrial Estate which generated 3,400sqm. In terms of losses of employment land and premises, levels have been relatively low, rarely exceeding a loss of over 1,000sqm annually. The rates in 2020-2021 reflect the completion of phase 1 of the Lancaster University Health Innovation Campus (creating 9,313sqm of new employment floorspace) along with other modestly-sized proposals at Luneside East and Lancaster Business Park.
- 5.3 In terms of planning permissions granted, the period 2021-2022 has significantly increased since last year which reflect that perhaps the economic challenges which have been apparent in creating economic growth are perhaps beginning to improve. It should be noted that the growth in permissions to create new employment space has significantly increase on last years figure, so too has the figure for employment land / space loss.



Figure 2: Levels of recorded permissions in Lancaster District 2010 – 2023 (Source: Lancaster City Council October 2023)