



Economics Update

Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) has advised on the economics of development for nearly 50 years. In this update, we review some of the firm's recent commissions and latest company news.



Employment Land in Growth Areas

Employment land requirements are an increasingly thorny issue in the preparation of LDFs and development strategies. Such studies can be more difficult in growth areas, where traditional approaches to estimating needs work less well. NLP's economics team has recently undertaken employment land reviews in three of the South East's major growth areas – Ashford and the Thames Gateway Boroughs of Gravesham and Swale. These studies considered how future economic growth needs and job targets could be achieved and the types of sites needed to deliver them.

Thrills, Spills and Economic Impact

As the UK's largest theme park, Alton Towers provides thrills for more than two million visitors. The resort's economic importance within the local area has been explored in an NLP economic impact study. This looked at the additional employment, spending and multiplier effects that the resort brings to the local area and the likely effects of further investment at the resort. A similar NLP study will assess the potential economic impacts of a new hotel at LEGOLAND near Windsor.



Notes from Rotterdam

Expanding our knowledge of international best practice in economic development, NLP recently visited Rotterdam, one of the world's largest container ports. The Port employs 60,000 people and has spawned a 5,000 ha industrial complex for sectors requiring access to deep water wharves, including container terminals, distribution and chemical industries. It is a major economic driver for the Randstad region. Major expansion is underway to increase capacity and accommodate larger vessels, to remain competitive ahead of European rivals. With container port proposals now approved at Shellhaven in the Thames Gateway and NLP's recent success in obtaining planning permission for the Northern Gateway at Teesport, the Rotterdam experience highlights how a major economic boost can be generated by major infrastructure projects.

New Settlement Economic Role

NLP advised the promoters of a major new settlement near Waterbeach in Cambridgeshire on the economic and demographic need for the new development. This considered its potential contribution to business development and meeting housing needs in the Cambridge Sub-Region. It also examined the types of economic sectors most likely to be attracted to the new settlement and its potential economic role within the Sub-region.

North Eastern Technology

NETPark in Sedgefield is a regionally significant science and technology park, focusing on high value electronics. Its research and incubation unit accommodates world class R&D groups from nearby Durham University with a National Centre of Excellence in plastic electronic technologies on site. This Centre's future spin-off benefits were among the key issues examined in an NLP review of future employment land needs in three County Durham districts. The Centre will be one of only four worldwide, helping to keep the UK at the forefront of an industry expected to be worth \$250 billion by 2025.



Economic Drivers of Housing Growth

NLP has been advising the Government Office for the West Midlands on options to accommodate additional housing provision in the region, following publication of the NHPAU supply range. This work considered economic variations within the region to help identify areas more likely to benefit from housing growth, and where new housing would support economic growth and regeneration objectives. The economic benefits and drawbacks of different housing options were also considered.

Innovation Centres

Many local authorities seek to attract innovative, high-technology businesses to their area to provide good quality local jobs and boost the local economy. NLP advised a major pharmaceutical company on the potential scale, type and form of innovation centre needed to attract small bioscience firms and help develop new products. This involved a review of approaches to funding, developing and managing innovation/incubation centres in Europe, the USA and elsewhere.



Developing Eco-town Economies

The economic aspects of eco-towns are less well understood than their housing and sustainability benefits. To support the Co-operative Group's proposals for an eco-town in Leicestershire, NLP assessed its potential economic role and the level of employment space needed to support a self-contained settlement with high sustainability credentials. This included reviewing the scope to develop a green industries cluster, the type of activities to be targeted and how the settlement could support sub-regional economic objectives.



Rhondda Cynon Taf Employment Land

NLP is undertaking one of the first employment land reviews in Wales. This study is considering the implications of a legacy of industrial decline and change, the impact of economic growth within neighbouring Cardiff and how to deal with a substantial existing over-supply of employment land.

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