



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



TAG Farnborough Airport © Anthony Weller

Farnborough Airport Economic Study

NLP investigated the impact of growth of business aviation at Farnborough Airport, the UK's only dedicated Business Aviation airport as part of an economic study for Rushmoor Borough Council. This study will inform the Council's LDF and consideration of future development proposals. It involved extensive consultation with economic, business and property bodies and review of other business airports. This study is the latest in a long line of economic studies of airports by NLP, ranging from Liverpool John Lennon to London City Airport.



Creativity on the Kent Coast

Linked to its study of employment land for Shepway Council in Kent, NLP examined the economic potential of Folkestone's Creative Quarter. Parts of this historic sea-side town centre had become dilapidated with high deprivation and worklessness. The charitable Creative Foundation bought around 80 properties in the town centre to stimulate regeneration by developing a creative quarter, supported by graduates from the new University Centre Folkestone's creative and business courses. This involved renovating and letting subsidised properties to over 60 creative activities such as artists, sculptors, designers and small retailers. NLP's study identified this regeneration initiative as one of a range of factors that could change the town's image and help attract investment and generate economic growth.

Manchester City Region

NLP is producing a Position Statement for the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) to identify employment land provision across the 10 Greater Manchester districts. This will support future employment policies and allocations in the 10 districts' LDFs and the Greater Manchester Strategic Plan. It will examine how each district is addressing its employment space requirements, help translate regional figures into district requirements, support a future City Region-wide approach, and provide recommendations on future Employment Land Reviews and monitoring. This work will build on NLP's Economy and Employment Space Study for Manchester City Council which focuses on the potential for landless growth in the city centre.



Employment Land Reviews

Many local authorities are now seeking to undertake studies of employment land needs within a sub-regional context, rather than individually. This is a growing area of NLP's work with a current joint study underway covering three districts in North Hampshire/Surrey, with other studies covering groups of districts in Gloucestershire and County Durham.

NLP is also increasingly being commissioned to undertake peer reviews of previous Employment Land Reviews carried out for local authorities, sometimes after issues of Core Strategy soundness have been raised at Examination, or to reflect recent major changes in the economy and property market. Such reviews are currently being carried for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and the London Borough of Harrow.



Regional Development Agencies

NLP has been appointed to provide a national consultancy support role for England's Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), working through One NorthEast which leads on planning and housing issues. NLP will provide strategic advice on delivery of the new integrated Regional Strategies, the impact of the recession and how regions could respond positively, housing affordability and co-ordinated responses to national policy consultations. Early advice was given on how the RDAs could respond to regeneration schemes undermined by the recession and potential innovative funding methods.



Recession Advice to House Building Sector

NLP were appointed to advise the PLC Board of a 'top five' volume house builder on the impacts of the recession on the future of its business, including analysis of scenarios for recovery of the housing market and advice on the implications for the Board's strategic decision-making.



Image courtesy of +3 architecture

Peterlee Industrial Masterplans

A multi-disciplinary team led by NLP recently produced a Masterplan and Delivery Framework for three industrial estates in County Durham. This provided a clear strategy for each estate with a range of interventions to help them compete effectively for new investment. NLP identified the role and function of each estate, as well as future opportunities, informed by economic analysis and consultation with the business community. Delivery Frameworks were prepared for each estate, to provide a delivery timetable, guide prioritisation of projects, and assess different delivery vehicles.

Cardiff Urban Extension

NLP is providing economic advice to support a proposed mixed-use urban extension to the city with a significant element of B1 uses that will more closely reflect current market demand and allow synergies with the International Business Park being promoted nearby through the Local Development Plan. This has examined the adequacy of employment land supply within Cardiff and the alignment between employment growth and new housing distribution in the sub region.

Comment on PPS4

The recent consultation draft PPS4 *Planning for Prosperous Economies* re-emphasises the importance of planning properly and flexibly for economic development, and providing sufficient quantity and quality of employment land. While the emphasis on flexibility is retained, the guidance steps back from the very wide definition of economic development in the 2007 draft. Combining economic and retail planning guidance, alongside greater emphasis on rural issues,

indicates a more joined up approach to planning for economic development.

This is evident in advice that employment land reviews should be undertaken at the same time as, or combined with strategic housing land availability assessments. This joined-up approach has already been adopted by local authorities, with NLP recently commissioned by Gateshead Council to undertake such a joint assessment.

Further project examples available at www.nlplanning.com