

Employment Land Review
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Report
July 2023

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Employment Land Review (ELR) has been prepared for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTBC) by BE Group and Per Consulting. The ELR will form part of the evidence base for the preparation of RCTBC's Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP).
- 1.2 The ELR provides an assessment of the supply and demand for employment land in the County, looking at the available employment allocations and existing employment areas to understand the supply side and reviewing the property market, consulting with local stakeholders and forecasting employment growth to understand the demand side.
- 1.3 The forecast period for the ELR is 2022-2037.

Methodology

- 1.4 Primary and secondary research techniques have been used in undertaking this update, including conversations with commercial agents, site inspections and reviewing national, sub-regional and local reports and strategies relevant to this study. The study also utilised RCTBC's survey and database of employment sites and premises.
- 1.5 An analysis of the local property market has been undertaken, including a critique of the transactions of commercial premises in RCT, a review of currently marketed properties and an assessment of the types of uses within employment areas. This data was complemented with information gathered from conversations with locally active commercial agents.
- 1.6 The ELR has reviewed the existing employment site allocations and existing employment areas through site inspections, reference to Council's annual employment land monitoring and review of planning applications/permissions. The existing employment site allocations and existing areas have been catalogued and critiqued.
- 1.7 The employment land demand over the planning period has been forecast using reference to past employment land take-up data where available and employment forecasts by sector. This is consistent with Welsh Government Practice Guidance. A

series of recommendations has been provided to guide employment land planning to 2037.

Welsh Employment Land Review Guidance

1.8 This study reflects Welsh Government guidance on how Local Authorities should approach employment land reviews, namely *'Practice Guidance – Building an Economic Development Evidence Base to Support a Local Development Plan'* (August 2015). The employment land review process takes the form of a four-stage methodology under the following headings:

- **Stage 1: Property Market Assessment** – An analysis of demand in terms of specific market sectors, property requirements and geographical areas, focusing on the current situation and prospects for the LDP over its 15-year life cycle. Where there is demand for development and where there is not.
- **Stage 2: Audit of Employment Sites** – The quantitative inventory and qualitative appraisal of local land supplies, including existing committed, allocated and potential employment sites and existing stock. This will feed directly into the review's conclusions on whether any further land should be identified for employment and whether any existing or committed employment sites should be transferred to other uses.
- **Stage 3: Future Land Requirements** – Establishing the LDP's employment land requirement, using recognised forecast methods, primarily:
 - *"Method 1 – Past Building Completions: Method 1 uses the average annual completions rate for B1, B2, and B8 employment land for a previous period in order to project future requirements over the life of the LDP.*
 - *"Method 2 – Labour Demand Forecasting: Method 2 involves acquiring employment growth forecast data for relevant Standard Industrial Classification (SIC, 2007) activity sectors, assigning sectors to B use classes and then converting jobs to floorspace."*
- **Stage 4: Policy Options, Recommendations and Monitoring** – Identifying policy options and recommendations, based on review findings.

1.9 Table 1 shows how the ELR aligns with this Guidance. The link between the report and the Planning Practice methodology is not always clear cut, with different sections overlapping, indeed certain steps overlap.

Table 1 – Employment Land Reviews – Practice Guidance

Stage 1: Property Market Assessment	
<p>Step 1: Identify where demand and opportunities exist for development.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify where existing employment land is no longer in demand.</p> <p>Step 3: Establish property market profiles for offices, industry and warehousing.</p>	<p>Covered in Sections:</p> <p>3.0 Socio-Economic Profile</p> <p>4.0 Property Market Assessment</p> <p>5.0 Cross Boundary Considerations</p> <p><i>Demand assessment and market profiling, including consultations with local commercial agents. Consideration of cross-boundary issues affecting employment land provision.</i></p>
Stage 2: Audit of Employment Sites	
<p>Step 1: Preparation of a quantitative site inventory</p> <p>Step 2: Preparation of qualitative site appraisals</p> <p>Step 3: Recommendations</p>	<p>6.0 Employment Land Assessment</p> <p><i>Quantitative and qualitative site assessments</i></p>
Stage 3: Calculating Future Land Requirements	
<p>Method 1 – Past Building</p> <p>Method 2 – Labour Demand Forecasting</p>	<p>7.0 Future Land Requirements Review</p> <p><i>Review of completed Economic Development Evidence Base, allowing for updated LDP position.</i></p>
Stage 4: Policy Options, Recommendations and Monitoring	
<p>Step 1: Policy Options</p> <p>Step 2: Policy Recommendations</p> <p>Step 3: Monitoring and Recording</p>	<p>8.0 Conclusions and Recommendations</p> <p><i>Final reporting, including conclusions and policy/practice recommendations.</i></p>

Source: BE Group reporting response to Planning Guidance – Building an Economic Development Evidence Base Support a Local Development Plan

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

Introduction

- 2.1 This section focuses on Welsh Government, sub regional and local reports and strategies that have a relevance to the allocation of employment land and premises. The strategies and reports reviewed below provides the context within which employment land planning and growth would be developed.

Welsh Government

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, Welsh Government (2021)

- 2.2 This document replaces the Wales Spatial Plan and acts as the national development framework, guiding development and where investment should be in Wales to 2040. This framework will be built on by Strategic Development Plans at a regional level and LDP's at a local authority level, to identify the location of new development and infrastructure. This document supports and helps deliver the aims of the Welsh Government Economic Action Plan.
- 2.3 The prosperity of the country has been altered by the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore working patterns in terms of location and hours may change. Future Wales supports the provision of infrastructure to support these changing work patterns. Additionally, there is no 'one size fits all' approach to strengthening, diversifying and increasing the resilience of the Welsh economy meaning support must be given to new and existing businesses of all sizes.
- 2.4 Eleven outcomes were created as overarching ambitions for Wales for the next 20 years which will link all policies together and describe 'A Wales where people live:
1. And work in connected, inclusive and healthy places
 2. In vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services
 3. In distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality
 4. In places with a thriving Welsh language
 5. And work in towns/ cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth
 6. In places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted
 7. In places where travel is sustainable
 8. In places with world-class digital infrastructure

9. In places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution
10. In places with biodiverse resilient and connected ecosystems
11. In places which are decarbonised and climate-resilient’.

2.5 Policy 1 states key areas for development with an aim to focus large-scale growth on the urban areas, allowing productive agricultural land to be protected as development pressures are channelled away from the countryside. In particular, national and regional growth areas are defined within Policy 1. For the South East region, Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys is a defined national growth area.

2.6 The Framework is then split geographically with a Strategic Development Plan for the South East, including issues of housing, employment, digital connectivity, rural economy and the environment. It is noted that Policy 33 sets out that Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys as a National Growth Area, with the Valleys as a priority area for investment. *“Strategic and Local Development Plans should recognise the National Growth Area as the focus for strategic economic and housing growth; essential services and facilities; advanced manufacturing; transport and digital infrastructure.”* The policy states that the Welsh Government will support coordinated regeneration and investment in the Valleys, including in the manufacturing sector. The Welsh Government will look to ensure a regional approach to addressing socio-economic issues in the Valleys and address social inequalities.

Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures (2020)

- 2.7 This document, published in July 2020, was created with the intention of setting out the Welsh Government's planning policy priorities for the COVID-19 pandemic recovery period.
- 2.8 The COVID-19 Pandemic has emphasised the importance of having quality living and working environments and how much they matter as more flexibility is required to support new working, living and learning needs. Consequently, the Welsh Government is moving to ensure that when policies are being devised by all sectors in the environmental, social, cultural and economic recovery, place-making is an important consideration.
- 2.9 This commitment to place-making will help:
- Create and sustain communities
 - Grow the economy in a sustainable manner
 - Make the best use of resources
 - Maximise environmental protection and limit environmental impact
 - Facilitate accessible and healthy environments
- 2.10 The document outlined eight key issues that bring individual policy areas together to ensure action is the most effective. One of these issues is the case of revitalising town centres. Since COVID-19 there has been a rise in online retailing providing increased competition to town centre retailers. Consequently, the role and function of established shopping areas in town centres must be reassessed. Part of this will involve creating larger open spaces for people to socialise whilst feeling safe. Another part of this will involve bringing employment, commercial, community, leisure and public sector land uses into town centres in addition to retail.
- 2.11 In anticipation of homeworking becoming more prevalent across the country, ensuring strong mobile and broadband connections is another issue faced by planners. The Welsh Government recommends that planning applications for new digital infrastructure will be recognised as being essential to the COVID-19 recovery period in order to ensure areas that currently have poor internet coverage can become better connected.

- 2.12 A final issue recognised is the change in the future need for employment land due to changing working practices. The Welsh Government state that recent developments such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit have the potential to impact requirements for future workspace. Consequently, economic forecasts will need to be re-examined frequently in order to ensure the supply of land for employment uses is adequate and fit for the future. Additionally, with the anticipated rise of homeworking flexible workplaces will need to be provided for remote workers to congregate together, share ideas and access office environments and facilities. The Welsh Governments see town centres as ideal environments for hosting these flexible workplaces.

Planning Policy Wales, 11th Edition – Welsh Government (2021)

- 2.13 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 11th Edition, sets out the land-use planning policies of the Welsh Government. It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs). Together with several circulars and policy clarification letters, PPW and the TANs comprise the national planning policy for Wales. National planning policy, alongside the Wales Spatial Plan should be considered in the preparation of LDPs.
- 2.14 Chapter 5 '*Productive and Enterprising Places*' of PPW 11 sets out national policies for economic development. For planning purposes, the Welsh Government defines economic development as "*the development of land and buildings for activities that generate sustainable long term prosperity, jobs and incomes... Economic land uses include the traditional employment land uses (offices, research and development, industry and warehousing), as well as uses such as retail, tourism, and public services.*"
- 2.15 The document states the importance of the planning system supporting economic growth and ensuring that there is sufficient land to meet the needs of the employment market at both a strategic and local level. "*Development plans should identify employment land requirements, allocate an appropriate mix of sites to meet need and provide a framework for the protection of existing employment sites of strategic and local importance.*"
- 2.16 "*Wherever possible, planning authorities should encourage and support developments which generate economic prosperity and regeneration. Sites identified*

for employment use in a development plan should be protected from inappropriate development.”

- 2.17 Plans and decisions need to be based on an up to date and locally/sub-regionally specific evidence base, which demonstrates the *“suitability of the existing employment land supply as well as future provision in relation to the locational and development requirements of business.”* That evidence base should include an ELR.
- 2.18 *“Planning authorities should work with each other and with relevant economic fora in order to prepare an ELR. The review should include an assessment of anticipated employment change and land use together with estimates of land provision for employment uses showing net change in land/ floorspace. This should be calculated for offices, industrial and warehouse uses separately. This evidence should help inform an economic vision for the area. Employment Land Reviews should be kept up to date and relevant to prevailing market conditions and the needs of the development plan.”*
- 2.19 In addition, local planning authorities should steer economic development to the most appropriate locations, including provision of strategic scale sites, by:
- Coordinating development with infrastructure provision
 - Supporting national, regional and local economic policies/strategies
 - Aligning jobs and services with housing (where possible) to reduce the need for travel, especially by car
 - Promote the re-use of previously developed vacant and underused land
 - Delivering physical regeneration and employment opportunities to disadvantaged communities
 - Control and manage the release of unwanted employment sites to other uses
 - Propose specific locations for locally and strategically important industries which are detrimental to amenity and may be a source of pollution
 - Identify protection zones around land and premises that hold hazardous substances and protect the ability of existing businesses to operate or expand by preventing the incremental development of vulnerable uses in the locality.
- 2.20 Innovative business and technology clusters may also be important to the economic growth of a local authority area. Development plan policies need to identify potential networks and cluster areas, and set policies for the creation of the transport,

environmental and telecommunications infrastructure needed to support such networks. Planning authorities should also look favourably on any renewable and low carbon energy generation proposals designed to serve clusters.

Technical Advice Notes – Welsh Government

2.21 These guidance notes and statements are intended to assist local authority policy makers in the preparation of LDPs. Of relevance to this study are TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk and TAN 23: Economic Development.

TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk (July 2004)

2.22 TAN 15 provides technical guidance on development and flood risk. It provides a framework within which risks from flooding can be assessed. The overall aim of the TAN 15 is to apply the precautionary framework to decision making for development, with a preference to direct development away from areas which are at high risk of flooding. Where development has to be considered in high risk areas, only those developments, which can be justified on series of tests will be considered.

2.23 The TAN 15 defines three development advice zones for flooding, which would require different planning actions.

- Zone A: little or no risk of flooding and the justification test is not applicable;
- Zone B: areas known to have been flooded in the past evidenced by sedimentary deposits. Applying the precautionary approach, the site should be assessed against the extreme (0.1%) flood level. If site levels are greater than the extreme flood level, no further assessment is required;
- Zone C: based on the extreme flood level, flooding issues should be considered as an integral part of decision making by the application of the justification test. C1 sites are used to indicate that development can take place subject to the justification test and C2 sites indicate that only less vulnerable development should be considered, subject to the justification test.

2.24 The TAN 15 recognises that substantial urban development in Wales has occurred alongside rivers and in the coastal plain, Therefore, some existing development will be vulnerable to flooding and occur within Zone C. Therefore, the TAN 15 states that “*some flexibility is necessary to enable the risks of flooding to be addressed whilst*

recognising the negative economic and social consequences if policy were to preclude investment in existing urban areas, and the benefits of reusing previously developed land. Further development in such areas, whilst possibly benefiting from some protection, will not be free from risk and could in some cases exacerbate the consequences of a flood event for existing development and therefore a balanced judgement is required.” New development should be directed away from Zone C sites to suitable land in Zone A or otherwise to Zone B. Development in Zone C will only be justified if it can be demonstrated that:

- “i Its location in zone C is necessary to assist, or be part of, a local authority regeneration initiative or a local authority strategy required to sustain an existing settlement; or,*
- ii Its location in zone C is necessary to contribute to key employment objectives supported by the local authority, and other key partners, to sustain an existing settlement or region; and,*
- iii It concurs with the aims of PPW and meets the definition of previously developed land; and,*
- iv The potential consequences of a flooding event for the particular type of development have been considered, and in terms of the criteria contained in sections 5 and 7 and appendix 1 [of the TAN 15] found to be acceptable.”*

TAN 15: Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion – December 2021

- 2.25 Following consultation in October 2019, Welsh Government released an updated version of TAN15 in September 2021 with the intention of it coming into effect on 1st December 2021. Welsh Government has advised local authorities that formal publication has been suspended until 2024. In the meantime, however, the updated TAN15 remains the policy basis for the preparation of the RLDP. The updated TAN 15 would take a risk-based approach in assessing new development in areas at risk of flooding and coastal erosion. The updated TAN 15 changes the zones for flood risk to the following:

Table 2 – New Flood Zones in Draft TAN 15 December 2021

Zone	Flooding from rivers	Flooding from sea	Flooding from surface water and small watercourses
1	<i>Less than 1 in 1000 (0.1%) (plus climate change) chance of flooding in a given year.</i>		
2	<i>Less than 1 in 100 (1%) but greater than 1 in 1000 (0.1%) chance of flooding in a given year, including climate change.</i>	<i>Less than 1 in 200 (0.5%) but greater than 1 in 1000 (0.1%) chance of flooding in a given year, including climate change</i>	<i>Less than 1 in 100 (1%) but greater than 1 in 1000 (0.1%) chance of flooding in a given year, including climate change.</i>
3	<i>A greater than 1 in 100 (1%) chance of flooding in a given year, including climate change</i>	<i>A greater than 1 in 200 (0.5%) chance of flooding in a given year, including climate change</i>	<i>A greater than 1 in 100 (1%) chance of flooding in a given year, including climate change.</i>
TAN 15 Defended Zones	<i>Areas where flood risk management infrastructure provides a minimum standard of protection against flooding from rivers of 1:100 (plus climate change and freeboard)</i>	<i>Areas where flood risk management infrastructure provides a minimum standard of protection against flooding from the sea of 1:200 (plus climate change and freeboard).</i>	<i>Not applicable.</i>

Source: TAN 15, December 2021

2.26 The updated TAN 15 outlines how sites are selected for development. Planning authorities should prioritise development in Zone 1. Within Defended Zones development will be justified if *“its location meets the definition of previously developed land; AND the potential consequences of a flooding event for the particular type of development have been considered and found to be acceptable”*. For Zone 2, development may be justified if *“it will assist, or be part of, a strategy supported by the Development Plan to regenerate an existing settlement or achieve key economic or environmental objectives; AND its location meets the definition of previously developed land; AND the potential consequences of a flooding event for the particular type of development have been considered, and found to be acceptable”*. Within Zone 3 new highly vulnerable development must not be permitted and less vulnerable development (including employment uses) will only be justified if *“there are exceptional circumstances that require its location in Zone 3, such as the interests of national security, energy security, public health or to mitigate the impacts of climate change; AND its location meets the definition of previously developed land; AND the potential consequences of a flooding event for the particular type of development have been considered, and found to be acceptable.”*

- 2.27 Therefore, there is a higher threshold in the updated TAN 15 text for development on sites with a material flood risk. This has potential implications for selection of employment sites for the RLDP.

TAN 23: Economic Development (2014)

- 2.28 This TAN provides guidance on planning for economic development at a strategic level, identifying and assessing the economic benefits of development proposals and establishing an evidence base to support the economic development policies of LDPs.
- 2.29 Echoing PPW, the TAN advises that local planning authorities should aim to provide the land that the market requires (unless there are good reasons to the contrary). *“Local planning authorities should recognise market signals and have regard to the need to guide economic development to the most appropriate locations, rather than prevent or discourage such development.”*
- 2.30 However, there may also be instances when planning authorities do not provide the land the market demands, in the places where the market demands it. Proposed developments or site allocations may be resisted because they would have unacceptable environmental impacts, divert demand from town centres or would go against agreed spatial strategies. In these circumstances planning authorities should look for alternative sites which offer the same, or very similar, advantages.
- 2.31 A sequential test should be applied to economic development proposals or possible employment land allocations. First preference should be given to sites within the boundaries of settlements (including planned new settlements and urban extensions), then edge-of-settlement sites and finally land in the open countryside. Land may be identified in less preferable locations if the resulting benefits (i.e. jobs accommodated, alternatives, special merit) *“outweigh any adverse impacts of the development.”*
- 2.32 Local authorities are encouraged to work jointly in sub-regional groups to prepare joint economy evidence bases, including an analysis of the sub-regional commercial and industrial property market. Such sub-regional strategies should also focus on identifying strategic sites of national and regional importance.

- 2.33 Where a planning authority is assessing a site allocation or planning application that could cause social or environmental harm, there are three issues which need to be considered:
- *“Alternatives: if the land is not made available (the site is not allocated, or the application is refused), is it likely that the equivalent demand could be met on a site where development would cause less harm, and if so where?”*
 - *...Jobs accommodated: how many direct jobs will be based at the site?*
 - *...Special merit: would the development make any special contribution to policy objectives?”*
- 2.34 An example of a development of ‘special merit’ could be a greenfield development that could attract high-value, high-skill businesses that would not be interested in a lower-quality urban environment.
- 2.35 In producing LDPs, local planning authorities should:
- Develop a broad vision for the Plan which *“must be consistent and coherent so that the economic, social and environmental considerations support each other”*
 - Set land provision targets which meet the market demand for land. Local authorities should work together to steer development to sustainable locations.
- 2.36 In terms of forecasting future growth, the TAN, echoing Planning Policy Wales, advocates *“a broad assessment of anticipated employment change by broad sector and land use”*. Specifically, this will require *“the preparation of possible future economic scenarios with plans developed in a way which ensures they are robust across the more likely scenarios and contain the flexibilities necessary to adjust to changing circumstances. The starting point for scenarios would normally be past trends at a regional level. Such scenarios could be adjusted to reflect different policy or demographic assumptions.”*
- 2.37 The TAN accepts that such forecast modelling can often be imprecise – *“Models of future economic scenarios are surrounded by a large margin of uncertainty, and often more so for individual authorities than for larger areas. Modelling may be most*

successful when based on functional economic areas such as travel to work areas and housing market areas.”

- 2.38 Where projected local authority growth differs markedly from that expected for the wider region, *“the authority should provide an evidence-based justification for these differences, much as they would have to in respect of population projections for their area.”* Predicted employment figures should usually be expressed as a range of scenarios to reflect different economic outcomes and policy options. Ultimately however, *“the level of growth envisaged must be realistic, able to withstand scrutiny and be consistent with the other aspirations of the plan including population and housing projections.”*
- 2.39 Finally, the TAN highlights that existing employment sites should only be released for other uses if:
- *“They have poor prospects of being re-occupied for their previous use;*
 - *And/or the particular market that the site is part of is oversupplied;*
 - *And/or the existing employment use has unacceptable adverse impacts on amenity or the environment;*
 - *And the proposed redevelopment does not compromise unduly neighbouring employment sites that are to be retained;*
 - *Or other priorities, such as housing need, override more narrowly focused economic considerations.”*

Development Plans Manual, Edition 3, Welsh Government (2020)

- 2.40 The Development Plans Manual is a reference document for the preparation and implementation of development plans. It contains practical guidance on how to prepare, monitor and revise a development plan, underpinned by robust evidence to ensure that plans are effective and deliverable and contribute to place-making.
- 2.41 The Manual highlights that *“while there is not always a direct correlation between jobs and homes, they need to be considered collectively when assessing growth levels and developing a sustainable strategy; the aim being to achieve a balance between homes and jobs thereby reducing the need for commuting. The scale of economic growth to be delivered in a plan will be strongly influenced by the available labour force, skills, net migration levels, commuting patterns, housing provision and*

infrastructure. Links to the regional and sub-regional context should also be considered, taking account of functional linkages and geographical synergies between places to achieve better planning outcomes.”

- 2.42 The scale of economic growth and housing expressed in the plan should be a judgement between the unconstrained need against supply factors which constrain the ability of the plan to deliver, resulting in adjusted growth levels and the requirement of the plan.
- 2.43 The level of unconstrained need is based on current levels of need/demand at a point in time, i.e., the current/baseline situation (homes and jobs), as demonstrated by evidence. *“Trend based forecasts quantify a variety of outcomes, based on a series of assumptions, extrapolating the level of need forward to cover the whole plan period. The forecasts used should relate directly to the range of issues and land uses the plan is seeking to address, for example changes in population and the need for additional homes to accommodate this change.”*
- 2.44 Once the total need, unhindered by any constraint has been determined, i.e., the unconstrained need, LPAs will then have to consider what constraints may apply that would influence the level of need, supply factors.
- 2.45 *“It is crucial how these two elements are considered, balanced and evidenced to identify the plan requirement. There should be a strong link between the scale of growth set out in the requirement, the overall vision of the plan and delivering on the key objectives. It would not be prudent for an LPA to consider maximising economic prosperity but reducing the supply of housing to a level which will not generate a sufficient labour force to fulfil the employment needs. Similarly, there should not be housing without jobs; a balance needs to be achieved within the development plan strategy.”* Table 3 summarises the need and supply factors which relate to employment land reviews.

Table 3 – Employment Need and Supply Factors

Demographic and Need Based Considerations	Trends Based Considerations	Delivery Considerations and Constraints	Policy Based Considerations
NEED AND DEMAND FACTORS		SUPPLY FACTORS	
<p>Latest Population and Household Projections (Welsh Government Latest)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working age profile Economically active Migration rates Age profile <p>Employment Land Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of existing employment sites Identification of existing employment land/jobs by use class, broken down into SIC code Job growth (if appropriate) Forecast growth or decline in Class B and other employment land uses Need for a buffer to act as a flexibility allowance <p>National and regional economic growth strategies Generate growth forecasts for non-Class B employment uses</p>	<p>LDP - AMRs</p> <p>Unemployment rates (comparison to local, national and UK averages)</p> <p>Commuting patterns and rates</p> <p>Level of self-employment and home based working, plus potential trends</p> <p>‘Churn’ and replacement of existing employment units</p> <p>Vacancy rates and surplus of sites/premises by type and sector</p> <p>Delivery of employment land / take up linked to past build rates - What is employment take up over different periods, e.g., 5, 10, 20 and 25 years?</p> <p>Current and future demand for employment sites by type / sectors including rural economic growth</p> <p>Development on Enterprise Zones</p>	<p>Role and function – capacity (physical, social and environmental) at places to accommodate growth</p> <p>Infrastructure capacity and costs</p> <p>Site availability and deliverability including phasing</p> <p>National environmental constraints – e.g., flooding, contamination and European designations</p> <p>Developer type/ capacity/potential to deliver growth levels – e.g., competition between sites with similar market offers in neighbouring LPAs</p> <p>Access to markets and end users</p> <p>Skill set of local workforce</p> <p>Land values</p> <p>Overage / claw back clauses (e.g., payment of a financial sum upon commencement of development)</p>	<p>Alternative demographic scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target increase in working age profile and economically active Changes to migration assumptions – e.g., rates of in/out migration linked to economically active <p>Settlement hierarchy and settlement boundaries</p> <p>Number and level of jobs proposed – e.g., specialist and local</p> <p>Scale and location of new employment sites (key / local) - B1, B2, B8 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of Enterprise Zones Safeguarding of key existing employment sites Loss of employment land to alternative uses <p>Relationship to housing growth</p>

Source: Welsh Government, 2020

Practice Guidance: Building an Economic Development Evidence Base to Support a Local Development Plan – Welsh Government (2015)

- 2.46 This Practice Guidance provides a methodology for local planning authorities (LPAs) to help meet these requirements, and to “*produce robust evidence bases to underpin sound plans and development management decisions.*” The guidance aims to “*address common technical problems and help achieve greater consistency in the approach to collecting data across Wales.*” LPAs may choose to depart from or add to the methods contained in this document “*but in either case make clear the reasons for their preferred methodology in their evidence base studies and LDP as the outputs should be robust enough to withstand scrutiny along with other supporting evidence for LDPs.*”
- 2.47 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) section 7.5.1 provides policy advice about LDPs and the economy, including the need for:
- I. “*An economic vision for the area, including a broad assessment of expected employment change by broad sector and land use*”
 - II. “*Quantitative targets on the provision of land for employment (B-Class) uses over the plan period, showing net change in land and/or floorspace for offices, industry and warehousing*”
 - III. “*Site-specific policies: – on new sites to be allocated for employment; – on established employment sites, to determine whether they should be safeguarded for their existing uses or released for alternative uses*”
 - IV. “*Criteria-based policies to guide development management decision on sites not specifically identified in the plan.*”
- 2.48 Chapter 4 establishes that the ELR is an integral part of establishing an evidence base to support the strategies and policies of an LDP. “*While ELRs have typically been conducted, and deal with data, at a local authority level, PPW and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23 strongly support joint studies with neighbouring authorities where this is practicable. The information collected in the ELR study will also help inform the more strategic assessment of economic development taking places at a larger than local level.*”
- 2.49 The ELR includes four stages. “*The Employment Land Review is essentially a two-part process, an appraisal of the present situation (stages 1 & 2) followed by an assessment of future needs (stages 3 & 4):*”

- *Stage 1: Property Market Assessment*
- *Stage 2: Audit of Employment Sites*
- *Stage 3: Future Land Requirements*
- *Stage 4: Policy options and recommendations.”*

Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan – Welsh Government (2017)

- 2.50 The purpose of the Economic Action Plan is to support delivery of Prosperity for All – the National Strategy for Wales. The Plan sets out a vision for inclusive growth, built on strong foundations, supercharges industries of the future and productive regions. The Plan drives the twin goals of growing the economy and reducing inequality.
- 2.51 The Economic Contract is the centrepiece of the new approach. *“This will frame the reciprocal relationship between Government and business and drive public investment with a social purpose.”* The Economic Contract will be applied to Welsh Government’s direct financial support to business. Government will explore extending the contract to include the wider offer to business and the adoption of these principles by the rest of the public sector in Wales. The Economic Contract will require businesses seeking investment from Welsh Government to demonstrate all of the following as a minimum requirement:
- Growth potential (measured for example, by contribution to employment, productivity, or multiplier effects through the supply chain)
 - Fair Work (as defined by the Fair Work Board)
 - Promotion of health, including a special emphasis on mental health, skill, and learning in the workplace
 - Progress in reducing carbon footprint.
- 2.52 Each region benefits from its own distinctive opportunities and challenges and the report advocates more effective regional collaboration in order to lead to better outcomes. *“We will introduce a new regionally focussed model of economic development. We will bring greater coherence through the work of our Chief Regional Officers who promote regional interests and issues in Welsh Government to tailor delivery on a broad range of issues. Our regional footprint is consistent with our local government reform agenda and those used by the Regional Skills Partnerships.”*

Economic Resilience & Reconstruction Mission, Welsh Government (2021)

- 2.53 This document has been developed in the context of dealing with the dual impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Brexit and is an evolution of the Welsh Government Economic Action Plan. This document builds upon '*Prosperity for All: The Economic Action Plan*' and takes forward the priorities from '*Coronavirus Reconstruction: Challenges and Priorities*'.
- 2.54 The vision is to create a '*well-being economy which drives prosperity, is environmentally sound, and helps everyone realise their potential*'. In order to achieve this vision, one of three outcomes is to create a Prosperous Economy. This can be achieved through the support of the Foundational Economy and a diverse range of businesses with good productivity levels and skilled workforces.
- 2.55 Five beacons have been created for delivery of medium-long term recovery from COVID-19, building upon policies that have been adapted to meet the challenges of the pandemic. They are:
- Strengthening the Foundational Economy
 - COVID Commitment to protecting and enabling skills and employment
 - Accelerating adaption for recovery and future prosperity
 - Magnetising investment in a green recovery
 - Fortifying the pursuit of social value.
- 2.56 Town Centres can no longer rely on just retail to thrive and therefore, as part of the 'Transforming Towns' agenda, new economic opportunities and employment must be brought back to Town Centres. This links to the 'Town Centre First' policy (Policy 6) in Future Wales, noted above. This should be as part of a wider offering of leisure, learning, local services, and cultural activities. It is a long-term ambition for Welsh Government for 30 percent of Welsh workers to be working flexibly and remotely. Additionally, there is the opportunity to re-purpose Town Centre buildings to create regional co-working hubs, deconcentrating and relocating the workforce back into Town Centre locations when required.
- 2.57 The COVID-19 Pandemic threatens to reverse progress made in Wales over the last decade of reducing unemployment economic inactivity. Welsh Government aims to support and prepare workforce for immediate and long-term challenges (as set out in

'*Coronavirus Reconstruction: Challenges and Priorities*' and reviewed below).

Support to be provided for employers/ businesses includes:

- New recruitment support and incentives for apprenticeships
- Training support to upskill workers
- Support the recruitment and retention of disabled people
- Support for workplace well-being/ safe working environments.

Smarter Working: a Remote Working Strategy for Wales - Welsh Government (2022)

2.58 This strategy document outlines the Welsh Government's approach to achieving 30 percent of the Welsh workforce working at or near to home in this Senedd term. The vision is to embed a culture that supports remote working in the workplace. The vision states that Welsh Government wants to:

- *“see 30% of the workforce working remotely on a regular basis*
- *work in partnership with employers, workers, trade unions and others to support a shift to more people working remotely, helping them to build on progress made during the pandemic and better understand the benefits of remote working*
- *take action against climate change by reducing the need to travel thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with transport*
- *improve air quality by reducing congestion and softening rush hour peaks*
- *create inclusive workplaces in our local communities that have equality at the heart of decision making*
- *promote a hybrid workplace model of office, home and local hubs to enable people to live and work in their local communities*
- *increase opportunities for more fair work and promote well-being and work-life balance in the Welsh workforce.”*

2.59 The strategy states that the Welsh Government will take a leading role in remote working with no more than 50 percent of its workforce working from a central office at any one time.

2.60 The strategy includes an outline of benefits and risks that could potentially arise from this policy. This includes recognition that such a policy may change how city and

urban centres are used. The document cites a study that suggests that there may be a shift in footfall from city centres to the suburbs as workers spend more time in their local area. It considers that city centres will survive through adaptation but that monitoring will be required.

- 2.61 Of relevance to the forecasting of employment land requirements in RCT, it is noted that this is likely to be most applicable for office based workers, either in B1 office spaces or hybrid spaces (mix of B2/B8 with B1 offices). Furthermore, historically Welsh Government is a significant landholder and occupier of employment spaces in RCT and their intent to take a leading role in remote working is likely to lead to a structural change in the Welsh Government's share of occupied spaces.

Regional

Baseline Economic Analysis for South East Wales – South East Wales Directors of Regeneration and Environment Business Group (SEWDER) (2015)

- 2.62 This study provides an economic baseline assessment for South East Wales (SEW) that will inform the regional business strategy. The main aim of the study is to provide a regional economic baseline assessment that informs the regional business strategy. It seeks to:
- *“Draw together the wide variety of information that currently exists including the business cluster assessment;*
 - *Focus on gaps and opportunities for business development linking to the two other key strategic priorities within the RSF, i.e. Place and People & Skills;*
 - *Provide useful analysis that will assist in future funding bids and provide part of the evidence base for the Strategic Development Plan; and*
 - *Demonstrate the significant variations that exist within the region.”*
- 2.63 SEW covers the ten unitary authorities of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Bridgend County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, The City of Cardiff Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Torfaen County Borough Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council.

2.64 SEW has a population of almost 1.5 million, which equates to 48 percent of the population of Wales. *“It is also economically significant for Wales, generating more than half of the total Gross Value Added (GVA) in Wales but still lags behind the UK average, generating only 80 percent of the UK average GVA per head... There is great disparity within SEW particularly between the more prosperous coastal areas and the more deprived Heads of the Valleys area.”*

Sub Regional Policy Context – Cardiff Capital Region

City Deal – Cardiff Capital Region (2017/18)

2.65 The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal includes the ten districts in South-East Wales – Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and Vale of Glamorgan – in a £1.28 billion programme of infrastructure investment. Hoping to *“build on the region’s sectoral strengths”* and *“tackle barriers to economic growth”*, the deal aims to deliver 25,000 new jobs, increase connectivity and improve infrastructure and regional business governance. Targeted economic gains include a 5 percent uplift in GVA and the attraction of an additional £4 billion private sector investment.

2.66 The Deal includes:

- £1.2 billion investment in the Cardiff City Region’s infrastructure. A key priority for investment will be the delivery of the South East Wales Metro, including the Valley Lines Electrification programme.
- Connecting the Region. The Cardiff Capital Region will establish a new non-statutory Regional Transport Authority to co-ordinate transport planning and investment, in partnership with the Welsh Government.
- Support for innovation and improving the digital network
- Developing a skilled workforce and tackling unemployment
- Supporting enterprise and business growth
- Housing development and regeneration.

2.67 The City Deal includes a £50 million Sites and Premises Fund to support the delivery of the Industrial and Economic Plan through new sites and modern floorspace, which the local authorities, including RCT could use to bring forward sites. The City Deal also includes provision for a new transport hub in Porth adjacent to the Porth Rail

Station to improve interchange facilities between bus and rail services and create a gateway to the town centre.

Cardiff Capital Region, Industrial & Economic Plan – Cardiff Capital Region

2.68 The purpose of the Industrial & Economic Plan is *“to guide the deployment of funding, policy decisions, and targeted effort to ensure the future productivity and prosperity of the region. It sets out the principles that will guide the region towards self-reliance, rather than a more detailed, prescriptive roadmap.”*

2.69 The CCR wishes to perform economically on a par with any region in the UK and internationally. It currently sits towards the bottom of most of the economic productivity and competitiveness tables in the UK. In order to improve the economic prosperity of the region, the report recommends the following:

- *“Identify areas of comparative strength in the CCR that can compete at a UK level and internationally, and invest in them*
- *Create rich ecosystems that stretch and support the development of key sectors within the economy – take a challenge led approach that drives up ambition and cohesiveness*
- *Encourage and support entrepreneurship so that our population not only seeks employment but creates employment within the region*
- *Improve productivity within the Foundational Economy*
- *Target our most deprived and isolated communities and support regenerative growth*
- *Turn the large public sector base within the region into an asset that adds prosperity to the region.”*

2.70 *“Building on our competitive advantage and opportunity within the economy we will strategically target sectors for support, enabling them to grow and flourish. These will include – but not be limited to – the following:*

- *Compound Semiconductors, its supply chain and applications*
- *Fin Tech*
- *Cyber Security Analytics*
- *Artificial Intelligence and Data Science*
- *Creative Economy*
- *Life sciences and more specifically the medical devices and diagnostics sub-sectors*

- *Transport Engineering – automotive, trains and aircraft.”*

Cardiff Capital Region Industrial and Economic Plan and COVID-19 Addendum

2.71 Cardiff Capital Region Industrial and Economic Plan and COVID-19 Addendum sets out 10 priorities to reflect the regional post COVID-19 reality:

1. *“Helping CCR businesses navigate the funding support packages available and surfacing gaps in provision*
2. *Building a strong evidence base to enable ongoing assessment of Regional Economic Health*
3. *Reviewing all current City Deal initiatives to ensure they align with CCR economic and social imperatives in a post COVID world*
4. *Ensuring entrepreneurs and start ups get the support they need*
5. *Establishing a new ‘Rebuilding Local Economies Challenge Programme’ to capitalise on the levels of business innovation and ingenuity seen throughout the crisis period*
6. *Developing new, targeted funding interventions and new investment application support mechanisms*
7. *Supporting key businesses in the CCR priority clusters to increase their resilience and capacity for growth through increased flexibility on lending/ investments*
8. *Increasing our overall competitiveness and wealth creation as a region through improving the financial performance of our medium sized businesses*
9. *Accelerating the development of our Med-tech Cluster through encouraging and supporting investment opportunities in Med-tech innovation*
10. *Expediting the creation of resilient industrial clusters with thriving regional eco systems.”*

CCR City Deal Strategic Business Plan Wider Investment Fund (2019)

2.72 In compliance with the Joint Working Agreement the five-year City Deal Strategic Business Plan:

- *“Sets out our current understanding of what is required to achieve the Cardiff Capital Regions long- term objectives*
- *Details required actions and outcomes, only some of which will benefit from Wider Investment funding*

- *Includes details of how the Wider Investment Fund will be used, over the next five years, to act as a catalyst to drive these actions forward*
- *Forms the basis of a more detailed regional strategic economic growth plan and strategy.”*

2.73 The City Deal Funding will act as a catalyst to drive economic momentum by leveraging of wider investments, accelerating the process of change, attracting interest and generating enthusiasm and taking advantage of the entrepreneurial talents that abound in the region.

2.74 The Business Plan identifies four strategic themes they feel can make a real improvement to the well-being of people in the region and, in doing so, support regional objectives, well-being goals and the twin goals, in the Welsh Government's 'Prosperity for All: economic action plan', of growing the economy and reducing inequality. The four themes are as follows:

- Skills and Employment – This will involve addressing skill gaps and shortages, developing higher level skills to futureproof the workforce, increasing the number and range of apprenticeships, developing a regional employability plan to get more people into work and many more interventions
- Innovation – *“Innovation underpins the development and application of ideas and technologies that yield better or new goods and services for the marketplace. Innovation is directly linked to raising productivity. Relative to other regional and international economies, productivity is unacceptably low in the Cardiff Capital Region.”* The Business Plan aims to create an environment that fosters entrepreneurial spirit and the creation of new commercial knowledge by bringing entrepreneurs, government, universities, colleges, funders and corporate entities together and adding in new capability
- Connecting the Region – To enable effective connectivity of all types in the Cardiff Capital Region, improvements to both the digital and transport infrastructure must be made. £734 million has been committed to the Metro as part of the City Deal. will make a significant contribution to improving transport connectivity, unlocking development sites, employment, and housing, providing access to training and employment opportunities, access to leisure and tourism and wider cultural development. The Business Plan also sets out several strategic goals to make the Cardiff Capital Region a 'Smart Region', allowing future generations to be fully integrated into a global network

- Regeneration and Infrastructure – With good quality development sites in short supply and a limited availability of ready to occupy premises of all sizes, the City Deal outlines a ‘Strategic Sites Plan’. This plan looks to improve the provision of employment sites, emphasise the refurbishment of existing stock and support specific infrastructure projects to encourage clusters of like-minded industries to emerge and develop, nurturing them as centres of excellence.

Local

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Development Plan (adopted 2011)

- 2.75 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP) provides a framework for sustainable development within the area up to 2021. It outlines the requirements for the delivery and implementation of the sites allocated for development and provides a monitoring framework for measuring the effectiveness of the Plan.
- 2.76 Objective 2 of the LDP is to “*develop a sustainable economy in Rhondda Cynon Taf that provides a diverse range of job opportunities in locations that reinforce the roles of Principal Towns and Key Settlements in the north and south of the County Borough.*”
- 2.77 Policy CS3 allocates large-scale sites with a mixture of residential, employment, retail and recreational purposes in order to promote sustainable growth. The below table includes the sites where employment uses have been allocated.

Table 4 – Rhondda Cynon Taf Strategic Sites

Site	Uses	Employment Allocation (ha)
1. Former Maerdy Colliery Site, Rhondda Fach	Employment, Informal Recreation Space	1
2. Former Fernhill Colliery Site, Blaenrhondda	350-400 Dwellings.	0
3. Phurnacite Plant Site, Abercwmboi	500 Dwellings, Employment, Informal Recreation Space	5.9
4. Land at Robertstown / Abernant, Aberdare	Employment / Leisure	3.7 (both employment and leisure)
5. Land South of Hirwaun	400 Dwellings and Employment	36
6. Former Cwm Colliery and Coking Works, Tyn-y-	800-950 Dwellings and Employment	1.9

Nant		
7. Mwyndy / Talbot Green Area	500 Dwellings, Employment, Retail, Leisure	15
Total		63.5

Source: RCT Local Development Plan, 2011

- 2.78 Policy CS6 states that 'In order to maximise the opportunities presented by the Capital Region and to ensure that Rhondda Cynon Taf achieves its economic potential, land will be allocated to meet strategic and local employment needs.' In order to meet strategic employment needs, land totalling 51 hectares has been allocated at the following sites (note that these two sites are also listed as Strategic Mixed-Use sites in Table 4 above):

Table 5 – Rhondda Cynon Taf Core Strategy Employment Requirement Sites

Site	Uses	Site Size Gross (ha)
Strategic Employment Sites		
1 Strategic Site 5: Land South of Hirwaun,	B1, B2, B8	36
2 Strategic Site 7: Land at Mwyndy / Talbot Green	B1, B2, B8	15
Total		51

Source: RCT Local Development Plan, 2011

- 2.79 In addition to the aforementioned Strategic Employment Sites, 34.82 hectares of non-Strategic Sites have been allocated including 19.03 hectares in the Northern Strategy Area (comprises the upland and valley areas of RCT) and 15.79 hectares in the Southern Strategy Area (comprises Pontypridd, Llantrisant, Tonyrefail, Llanharan and other small settlements).

Table 6 – Rhondda Cynon Taf Non-Strategic Employment Sites

Site	Uses	Site Size Gross (ha)
Northern Strategy Area		
Ferndale & Highfield Industrial Estate, Maerdy	B1, B2, B8	8.38
North of Fifth Avenue, Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Hirwaun	B2, B8	4.17
Land at Former Mayhew Chicken Factory, Trecynon	B1, B2, B8	2.88
Cae Mawr Industrial Estate, Treorchy	B1, B2	3.6
<i>Sub-Total</i>		<i>19.03</i>
Southern Strategy Area		
Coed Ely, Tonyrefail	B1, B2	14.32
Land at South of Gellihirion Industrial Estate, Pontypridd	B2, B8	1.47
<i>Sub-Total</i>		<i>15.79</i>
Total		34.82

Source: RCT Local Development Plan, 2011

Rhondda Cynon Taf Employment Land Review (2008)

- 2.80 This study assessed the supply and demand for employment land in Rhondda Cynon Taf to inform its then emerging Local Development Plan for the period 2006-2021.
- 2.81 The study used Experian forecasts to estimate the growth of job in the local authority area. It was estimated that office and distribution jobs would increase by 1,477 and 299 respectively to 2021 while manufacturing employment would fall by 3,668. The forecast figures were also set against other indicators and factors including:
- The regeneration and economic enhancement aspirations for Rhondda Cynon Taf
 - Past take-up rates
 - Levels of new business registrations
 - Levels of inward investment
 - Rental values
- 2.82 Taking the aforementioned factors into account, a gross land requirement to 2021 of 50 hectares was identified. This equates to 3.3 hectares per annum over the LDP period, half the 6.65 hectares of land developed between 2000 and 2005. The breakdown of the 50 hectares is shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7 – Forecast Employment Land Requirement, 2006 – 2021

B1	B2	B8	Total
32 ha	6 ha	12 ha	50 ha

Source: Rhondda Cynon Taf Employment Land Review 2008

- 2.83 The report noted that RCT’s supply of employment land was far in excess of its 50 hectares requirement. Table 8 details the sites that were recommended as potential employment development locations. A total of 157.56 hectares was identified (10.54 ha per annum) with the caveat that the site recommendations were preliminary and further detailed analysis was required before formal allocation. Consequently, the study stated that some of the following sites may be considered unsuitable or inappropriate for development.

Table 8 – Potential Employment Development Locations

Reference	Location	Size (ha)	Use Class
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TL36	Sony B P extension special employment allocation	34.1	B1
TP6	Co-Operative Store site, Church St / Mill St	0.21	B1
TP4	Millfield, Mill Street	0.66	B1
TL17	Mwyndy NW special employment allocation	6.17	B1
TL34	Llanilid Opencast special employment allocation	52.3	B1
TL28	Garth B P, Talbot Green	7.2	B2
TP9	Brown Lenox, Pontypridd	2.48	B2
TL26	Hepworth Industrial Park, Coedcae Lane, Talbot Green	9.2	B2
C15	Robertstown Industrial Estate	4.5	B8
TL13	Cowbridge Road (Purrolite Site)	3.9	B8
TT1	Coed Ely, Tonyrefail	20.04	B1/B2/B8
C7	Hirwaun I E – grassland	16.8	B1/B2/B8
Total		12	157.56

Source: Rhondda Cynon Taf Employment Land Review 2008

- 2.84 The study stated that the ‘strategy set out above provides the basis for the identification and allocation of sufficient land to meet the future requirements in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Although considerably less land is recommended for future allocation than has been allocated in the past, the sites set out above are of a high quality and that they have a reasonable prospect of delivery’
- 2.85 An important objective for RCT is to spread prosperity and investment throughout the area and not to concentrate it within the Taff Ely area. This is because Taff Ely is the most attractive location for business growth. Consequently, it was recommended that strategies should be put in place to encourage take-up of investment land to the north.
- 2.86 It was noted that RCT’s relationship with Cardiff is complex as the southern parts are in part viewed as forming part of the wider ‘north Cardiff’ area. Consequently, RCT has benefitted from its proximity to Cardiff but simultaneously suffered as the proximity also means some potential investment has been diverted away.

Economic Development Prospects and Employment Land Implications Study (2006)

- 2.87 This study analyses the demand for employment land within Rhondda Cynon Taf and reviews the current employment land offer as well as the streams of employment land that may be available in the future.
- 2.88 The report found that there was an adequate supply of employment land, with some

indication of an oversupply. It was also highlighted that the current supply does not meet future needs, in terms of:

- Type of employment sites and units available – specifically smaller flexible space
- Meeting the demand from micro-businesses
- The quality of office space, including town centre provision

2.89 It was also found that there were significant geographical differences in terms of both demand and supply of employment land in RCT. This was because the southern areas were identified as a popular location for business largely due to its strong transport links. Meanwhile the Rhondda Valleys, especially northern areas, possessed a poor supply and experienced low demand for employment land. The poor supply was a result of topographical and accessibility issues, as well as a lack of investment caused by low levels of demand and poor rates of return.

2.90 In order to combat this geographic disparity, it was recommended that *'An effective geographic strategy can be developed by ensuring that the appropriate types of employment sites are developed with northern and southern areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. In the northern areas there will be a requirement for smaller employment units that will aid the development of new businesses and ensure that employment opportunities remain in these more deprived areas. This would include, for example, ensuring that social enterprises are able to acquire suitable premises. ...evidence shows that there is demand for office space in northerly parts of the county borough, particularly amongst start-up companies. There may be further scope for looking at developing mixed use residential and office space, targeting start-up companies with cheaper rents and housing costs.'*

2.91 Meanwhile it was recommended that *'The southern area of Rhondda Cynon Taf should focus upon larger businesses that would require the accessibility afforded by the M4 and A40 road links. The one exception to such a strategy would be the Hirwaun area, where improvements to the A465 would increase the accessibility and saleability of the area to larger businesses.'*

2.92 The southern end of the County Borough was seen as a good location for businesses with good transport links. While, to the north, in the Rhondda Valleys there was a poor supply and a low demand for employment land. There were clear topographical and access issues as well as a lack of investment caused by low levels of demand

and poor rates of return. The Cynon Valley was perceived as more desirable for business than the Rhondda. Several of these issues remain in play in 2023, as will be discussed later in this document.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Availability Schedule (2019)

- 2.93 This document sets out the most up-to-date situation with regard to the availability of employment sites included within Rhondda Cynon Taf. The table below shows the developable area remaining within Rhondda Cynon Taf, as at June-July 2019.

Table 9 – Total Availability

Total Area (ha) (All Sites)	Remaining Area (ha) (All Sites)	Remaining Developable Area (ha) Minus Allocations	Overall Vacancy Rate (116/1669 Units)
730.99	145	54.19	6.95%

Source: Rhondda Cynon Taf Availability Schedule

- 2.94 It can be interpreted from the above table that Rhondda Cynon Taf had 90.81 hectares of allocated and developable employment land as at June-July 2019. Additionally, it can be seen that Rhondda Cynon Taf's vacancy rate is low with only 6.95 percent of units being found to be vacant.

3.0 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Introduction

3.1 This section brings together several data sources including Census, Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) and other Office of National Statistics (ONS) data to create a profile of the employment market of RCT. It helps to illustrate the size of the economy, dominant business sectors and the types of business sectors that are present within the County Borough. Where appropriate, data has been compared to the nine other local authorities in the Cardiff Capital Region – Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, the Vale of Glamorgan and Torfaen.

Demographic Assessment

3.2 According to the 2021 Census, RCT had a total of 237,651 residents in 2021, with Table 10 providing a comparison to neighbouring authorities in the Cardiff Capital Region. The County Borough had the second largest population in the sub-region and accounted for 7.6 percent of the Welsh total. Since the last Census, RCT's population has grown in line with the national population seeing a growth of 1.4 percent over the period.

Table 10 – Total Population (2021)

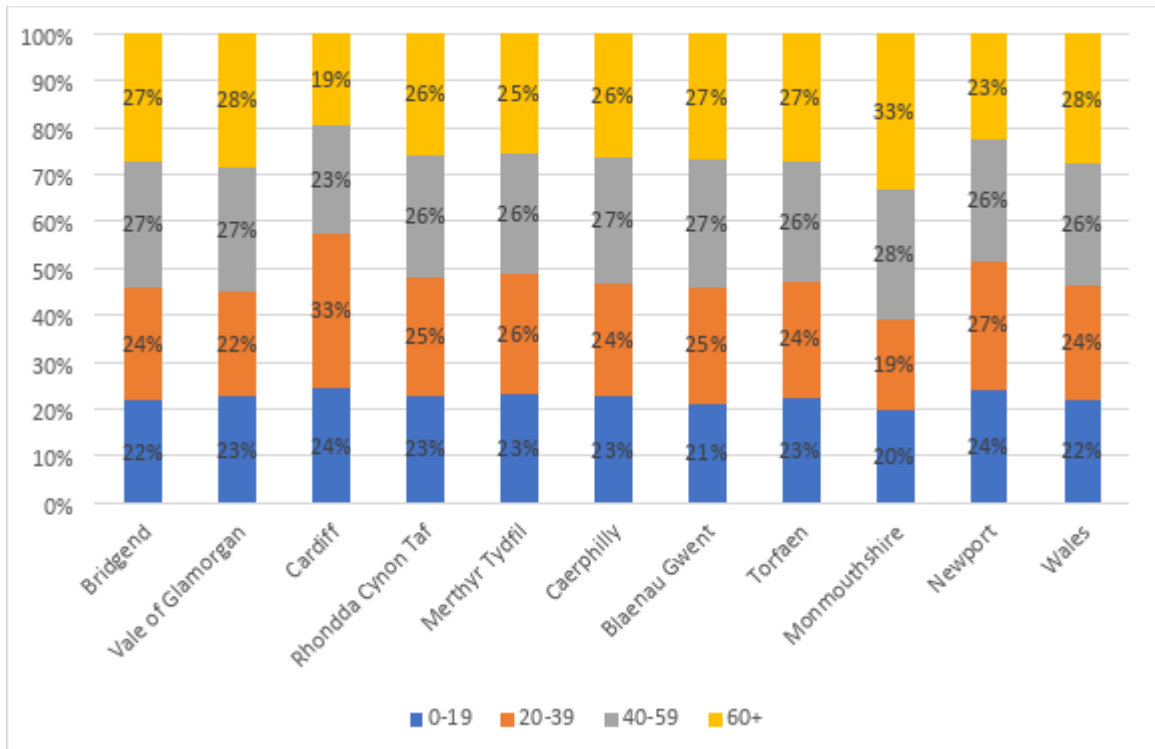
	2011	2021	Change 2011-2021	
			No.	Percent
Bridgend	139,178	145,486	6,308	4.5
Vale of Glamorgan	126,336	131,939	5,603	4.4
Cardiff	346,090	362,310	16,220	4.7
Rhondda Cynon Taf	234,410	237,651	3,241	1.4
Merthyr Tydfil	58,802	58,839	37	0.1
Caerphilly	178,806	175,952	-2,854	-1.6
Blaenau Gwent	69,814	66,904	-2,910	-4.2
Torfaen	91,075	92,276	1,201	1.3
Monmouthshire	91,323	92,957	1,634	1.8
Newport	145,736	159,587	13,851	9.5
Wales	3,063,456	3,107,494	44,038	1.4

Source: Census 2011, 2021

3.3 Published 2021 Census statistics allow for a more detailed analysis of the composition of the populations in each area. Consequently, Figure 1 provides an age profile, detailing the proportion of the population in each age category. This shows

RCT’s population is evenly spread across each age category with the most prevalent age categories being 40-59 and 60 plus, each accounting for 26 percent of the population. The smallest proportion of the population is found in the 0-19 age category (23 percent).

Figure 1 – Population Structure, 2021



Source: Census, 2021

Deprivation

- 3.5 The Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation were last updated in 2019, and of the 154 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within RCT, 26 were ranked in the top ten percent most deprived in Wales. This equates to 17 percent of RCT’s LSOAs being in the most deprived ten percent of the country, indicating there is a strong presence of high degrees of deprivation in the County Borough. Two LSOAs were found in the ten most deprived LSOAs in Wales including one in Tylorstown and the other in Penrhiwceiber.
- 3.6 110 of RCT’s 154 LSOAs were found in the most deprived 50 percent of Wales, equating to 71 percent of RCT’s LSOAs, meaning RCT’s level of deprivation is significantly above average. Meanwhile, eight percent of RCT’s LSOAs are found in

the least deprived ten percent including three in Pont-y-clun and two in Llantwit Fardre.

Key Market Indicators

- 3.7 In the period between October 2021 and September 2022, RCT had an estimated 115,500 economically active residents between the ages of 16 and 64; this represents 77.0 percent of those individuals who are of working age. This was above the economic activity seen in the region (75.1 percent) as well as in Wales as a whole (75.9 percent). The level of unemployment among those of working age was 2.8 percent which was similar to that in the Cardiff Capital Region (2.7 percent) and lower than that observed in Wales (3.7 percent).
- 3.8 It is noted that while overall unemployment is low in RCT, there remain areas of deprivation within the county borough. Therefore, while the overall unemployment figure is positive for RCT, in order to reduce deprivation, further measures to improve ease of access to employment opportunities would be necessary even in a low overall unemployment environment.

Table 11 – Economic Indicators

Aged 16-64	Rhondda Cynon Taf		Cardiff Capital Region	Wales
	No.	%		
Economically active	115,500	77.0	75.1	75.9
Employment	113,600	74.9	73.1	73.4
Self-employment	7,700	4.5	7.2	8.5
Unemployment	3,300	2.8	2.7	3.7
Inactive	35,300	23.8	24.9	24.1

Source: Annual Population Survey – October 2021 – September 2022

Employment Growth

- 3.9 Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) data provides details on the number of jobs within differing industry sectors in a local authority area (see Table 12). This information is based on a regular UK-wide survey of employment. The data at a local authority level is modelled from the national survey and is thus rounded to account for uncertainties in the data.

Table 12 – Employment by Sector, 2021

Sector	Employment Structure			
	Rhondda Cynon Taf		Cardiff Capital Region	Wales
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
1: Agriculture, forestry and fishing	900	1.1	0.9	3.2
2: Mining, quarrying and utilities	2,000	2.4	1.7	1.7
3: Manufacturing	10,000	12.2	9.4	10.3
4: Construction	5,000	6.1	4.0	4.5
5: Motor trades	1,750	2.1	1.8	1.9
6: Wholesale	1,500	1.8	2.0	2.2
7: Retail	13,000	15.9	9.7	10.4
8: Transport and storage (inc. postal)	3,000	3.7	3.2	3.4
9: Accommodation and food services	5,000	6.1	7.0	7.9
10: Information and communication	1,500	1.8	4.1	2.8
11: Financial and insurance	800	1.0	3.9	2.5
12: Property	900	1.1	1.8	1.5
13: Professional, scientific and technical	3,500	4.3	6.4	5.4
14: Business administration and support services	4,500	5.5	8.3	7.3
15: Public administration and defence	3,500	4.3	8.5	7.4
16: Education	9,000	11.0	8.5	8.5
17: Health	13,000	15.9	14.4	14.8
18: Arts, entertainment, recreation and other services	3,500	4.3	4.3	4.2
Total	82,350	100	100	100

Source: ONS BRES, 2021

- 3.10 The figures in Table 12 show that the retail and health sectors accounted for the largest number of employees within the County Borough each employing some 13,000 individuals and accounting for 15.9 percent of the total number in employment. The retail sector accounted for a significantly higher percentage than the average for Wales (10.4 percent) and the Cardiff Capital Region (9.4 percent). The health sector in RCT also accounted for a higher percentage than the average for Wales and the Cardiff Capital Region (14.8 and 14.4 percent respectively). It is noted that the majority of the jobs within these two sectors are likely based within hospitals, medical facilities or retail premises and not in B-class premises, which is the focus of this employment land study.
- 3.11 Manufacturing and education completed the top four sectors in terms of people employed. The manufacturing sector employed some 10,000 people, accounting for 12.2 percent of the total while education employed approximately 9,000 people,

accounting for 11.0 percent of the total. Both sectors were comparatively strong when compared to regional and national averages.

3.12 Construction was also a strong sector in RCT, employing 5,000 people and accounting for 6.1 percent of those employed. This compared favourably to the 4.5 percent and 4.0 percent observed nationally and regionally respectively.

3.13 Additionally, the transportation sector employed 3,000 individuals with the share of the working population being 3.7 percent, which again was in excess of the shares observed nationally (3.4 percent) and regionally (3.2 percent).

3.14 Private sectors which are typically found within offices comprise:

- Information and communication
- Financial and insurance
- Professional, scientific and technical
- Business administration and support services.

3.15 These sectors accounted for a combined total of 12.6 percent of RCT's workforce compared with 18.0 percent for Wales and 22.7 percent across the Cardiff Capital Region. Welsh and Capital Region averages will be skewed by Cardiff however, a long-established national centre for the office economy.

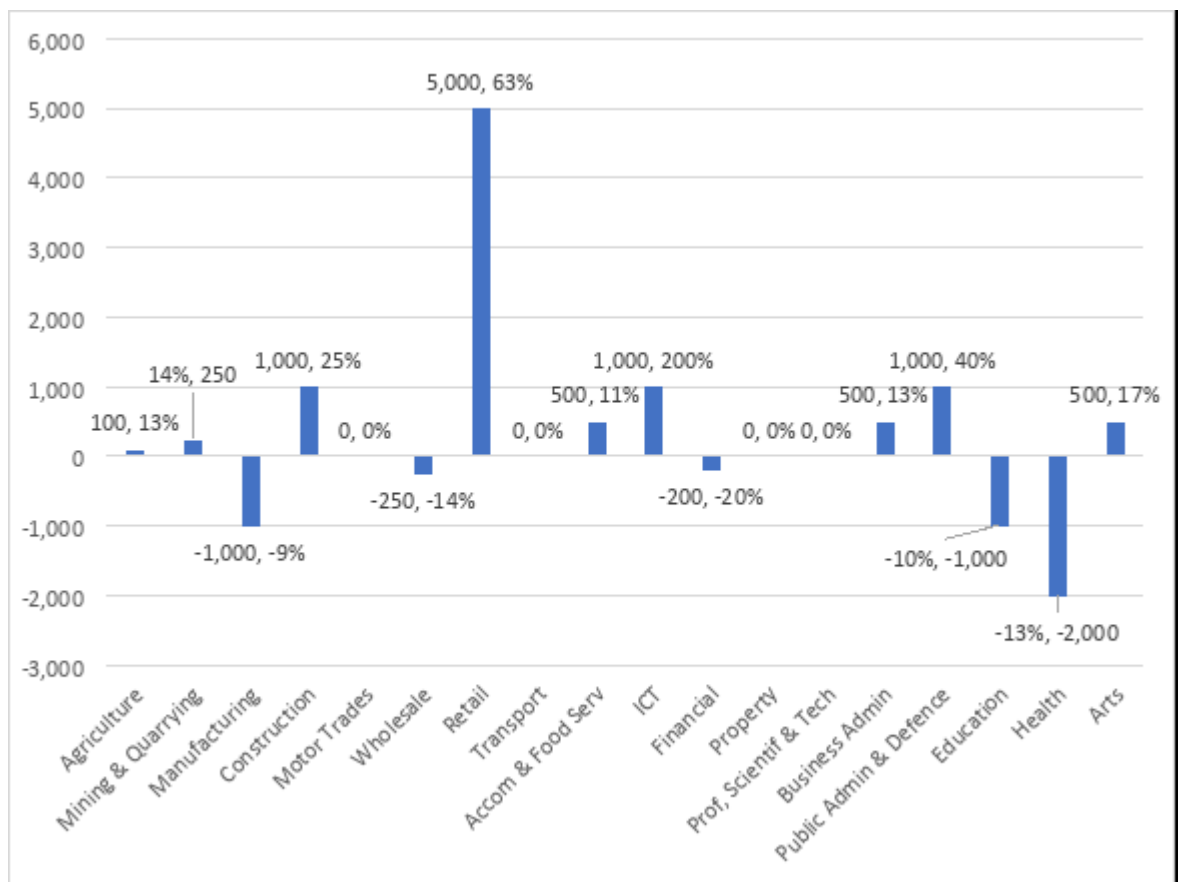
3.16 When comparing each individual office-based sector, RCT's share of employment can be seen to be lower than that observed in the region and the nation across the board. The most prevalent office-based sector in RCT was business administration, accounting for 5.5 percent of the working population while the least prevalent sector was financial and insurance, accounting for only 1.0 percent of the total.

Growth and Decline of Sectors, Employees, 2015-2021

3.17 As at 2021 within RCT, there were a total of 82,350 jobs split between 18 different sectors, a total that has risen by 7.0 percent on the 76,950 employed in 2015. This is higher than the growth in employment across Wales over the same time period of 0.9 percent. Figure 2 breaks down the change in the number of jobs by sector in RCT.

3.18 The retail sector saw the greatest absolute increase in jobs over the period observed, by a large margin, as some 5,000 jobs were added (a 63 percent increase). The next largest increase in jobs was seen in the ICT, public administration and construction sectors each adding approximately 1,000 jobs. The ICT sector saw the largest percentage growth of any sector, seeing a 200 percent growth in employment on 2015 levels.

Figure 2 – Change in Employment by Sector in RCT, 2015-2021



Source: BRES, 2021

*Right-hand number represents the absolute gain/loss in employment

3.19 Aside from ICT, the only office-based sector that experienced growth in RCT was the business administration sector where 500 jobs were added (13 percent increase). The remaining two sectors did not experience growth as the professional, scientific and technical sector's workforce stayed the same while employment in financial and insurance fell by 20 percent.

3.20 Five of the 18 sectors saw a decline in employment between 2015-2021. The largest decrease in absolute jobs was seen in the health sector where about 2,000 jobs were

lost, 13 percent of the workforce. The next largest losses were seen in the education and manufacturing sectors where some 1,000 jobs were lost. The loss in manufacturing employment is consistent with trends observed regionally and nationally.

3.21 Comparison with the other local authority areas of the Cardiff Capital Region suggests that all bar two lost manufacturing jobs over 2015-2021, with the exceptions being Bridgend and Torfaen which report no change in manufacturing employment. None gained industrial jobs over the recorded years:

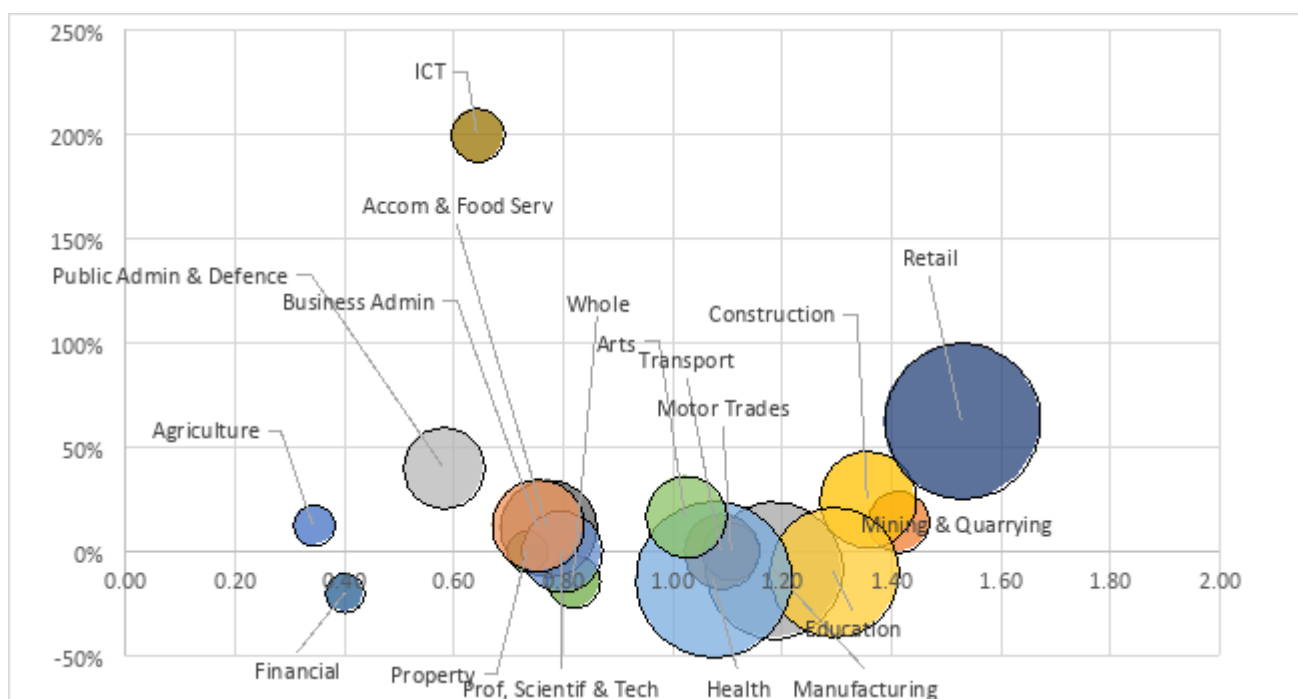
- Blaenau Gwent = 500 less manufacturing jobs over 2015-2021
- Bridgend = No change
- Caerphilly = 1,000 less manufacturing jobs over 2015-2021
- Cardiff = 1,000 less manufacturing jobs over 2015-2021
- Merthyr Tydfil = 500 less manufacturing jobs over 2015-2021
- Monmouthshire = 1,000 less manufacturing jobs over 2015-2021
- Newport = 1,000 less manufacturing jobs over 2015-2021
- Torfaen = No change.
- Vale of Glamorgan = 1,500 less manufacturing jobs over 2015-2020

3.22 Thus, changes in manufacturing employment in the County Borough are consistent with wider trends.

Location Quotients

3.23 Location Quotients (LQ) are a measure of an area's specialisms within the local economy. Figure 3 illustrates the LQ (x-axis) along with the size of the sector in 2021 (size of the bubble) and its growth through employment numbers over the time period of 2015-2021 (y-axis).

Figure 3 – Location Quotients vs Employment vs Growth, 2015-2021



Source: BE Group analysis of BRES

- 3.24 LQs describe the proportion of employment within a sector in RCT relative to Wales in 2021. It is a measure of an area's specialisms i.e., if a certain sector is more prevalent in the area than in the country as a whole. A score of 1.00 shows a sector with the same proportion of employment at the local level than seen in Wales. Each sector is also represented by different sized bubbles, which indicates the size of the sector's employment in 2021.
- 3.25 The sectors situated furthest along the x-axis show the sectors which have a high degree of localised specialisation, compared to Wales. The retail sector represented a larger proportion of employment than seen in Wales, which was demonstrated by a location quotient of 1.53. The next most specialised sector was the mining and quarrying sector which had a location quotient of 1.41.
- 3.26 Conversely, the agriculture sector in RCT represented a share of employment close to a third of the size observed in Wales, with a location quotient of 0.34. Three office sectors had the next lowest degrees of specialisation, being financial (0.40), business administration (0.58) and ICT (0.64).
- 3.27 BRES data also provides information at a more granular level, showing employment for more specific sectors. The following table provides the LQs of two-digit SIC code

sectors that have LQs greater than 2.0 (i.e. the proportion of employment in these sectors in RCT is over twice that of Wales). Interestingly, of the eight subsectors that meet this requirement, seven are within the manufacturing sector, with the remaining being within the construction sector. Therefore, while manufacturing as a whole is only slightly more prevalent as a proportion in RCT than in Wales, with an LQ of 1.2, there are specific manufacturing subsectors within which RCT has a higher degree of specialisation.

Table 13 – RCT Areas of Employment Specialism (LQ>2.0)

Employment Sector	Number	LQ
Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products	800	2.2
Manufacture of rubber and plastic products	2,000	2.9
Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products	500	2.0
Manufacture of furniture	800	3.2
Other manufacturing	1,250	3.4
Repair and installation of machinery and equipment	1,500	3.5
Waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery	1,250	2.5
Civil engineering	1,250	2.0

Source: BE Group analysis of BRES

Skills and Qualifications

3.28 In 2021, 33.5 percent of RCT's economically active population aged 16-64 was educated to NVQ level 4 or above (equivalent to degree level). This is lower than the national and regional averages of 38.6 percent and 39.0 percent respectively. The proportion of the population with no qualifications in RCT was 10.1 percent, higher than that observed nationally (8.3 percent) and regionally (8.9 percent).

Table 14 – Qualifications ('000s)

	Rhondda Cynon Taf		Cardiff Capital Region	Wales
	No.	%	%	%
NVQ4+ - aged 16-64	49,600	33.5	39.0	38.6
NVQ3+ - aged 16-64	78,800	53.1	57.3	58
NVQ2+ - aged 16-64	104,500	70.4	73.7	75.3
NVQ1+ - aged 16-64	124,600	84	84.9	85.8
Other qualifications (NVQ) - aged 16-64	8,700	5.8	6.2	5.9
No qualifications (NVQ) - aged 16-64	15,000	10.1	8.9	8.3

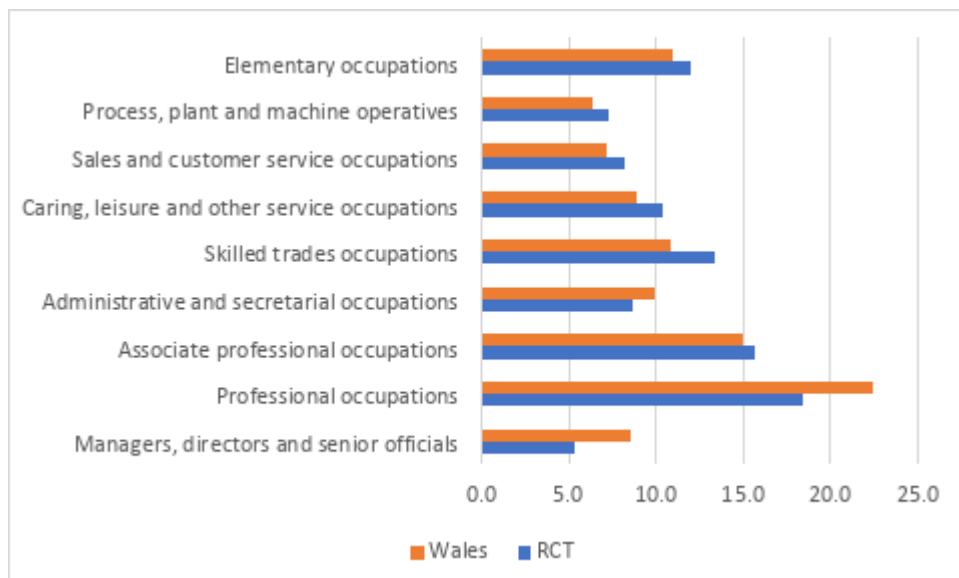
Source: Annual Population Survey – results for January 2021 – December 2021

3.29 Lower average qualification levels are an indicator of a barrier to accessing employment and may represent difficulties for employers in attracting adequately skilled staff.

Employment by Occupation

3.30 Figure 4 below shows the split of employment by occupation of residents in RCT over July 2021 – June 2022. The spread of employment was evenly split across occupations with six out of nine occupations accounting for over ten percent of the employment share. Those in professional occupations made up 18 percent of the workforce, the highest amount in RCT. Meanwhile, residents in skilled trades and associate professional and technical occupations both accounted for 13 percent of the workforce, the joint-second highest in RCT.

Figure 4 – Employment by Occupation (percentage), Oct 2021 – Sept 2022



Source: Annual Population Survey, 2022

3.31 Consistent with the qualifications level data, the occupations requiring lower to mid-level qualifications have higher proportions of representations in RCT than in Wales, with professional and senior management occupations underrepresented in the county borough.

Number and Size of Businesses

3.32 ONS data identifies that as of 2022 there were 6,205 VAT registered businesses operating in RCT.

3.33 89.5 percent of businesses in Wales employed less than ten people (micro businesses), and 98.4 percent of businesses were classified as small (up to 49 employees). RCT broadly followed the Welsh national pattern but with a slightly lower proportion of both micro and small firms. RCT had a slightly higher proportion of medium and large sized firms compared to that seen nationally.

Table 15 – UK Business Counts, 2022

Enterprises	Rhondda Cynon Taf		Cardiff Capital Region		Wales	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Micro (0-9)	5,540	89.3	40,080	88.7	96,690	89.5
Small (10-49)	540	8.7	4,205	9.3	9,590	8.9
Medium (50-249)	95	1.5	745	1.6	1,455	1.3
Large (250+)	25	0.4	180	0.4	320	0.3
Total	6,205	100.0	45,210	100.0	108,055	100.0

Source: ONS, 2022

Business Change by Sector

3.34 In this section, business counts data has been assessed up to 2021 in order to align with the available BRES data which is currently available up until 2021. Aligning with BRES data is necessary as it allows a more in-depth view of what is happening in each sectors as viewing the number of businesses and the number in employment separately, additional insight is gained by viewing them together.

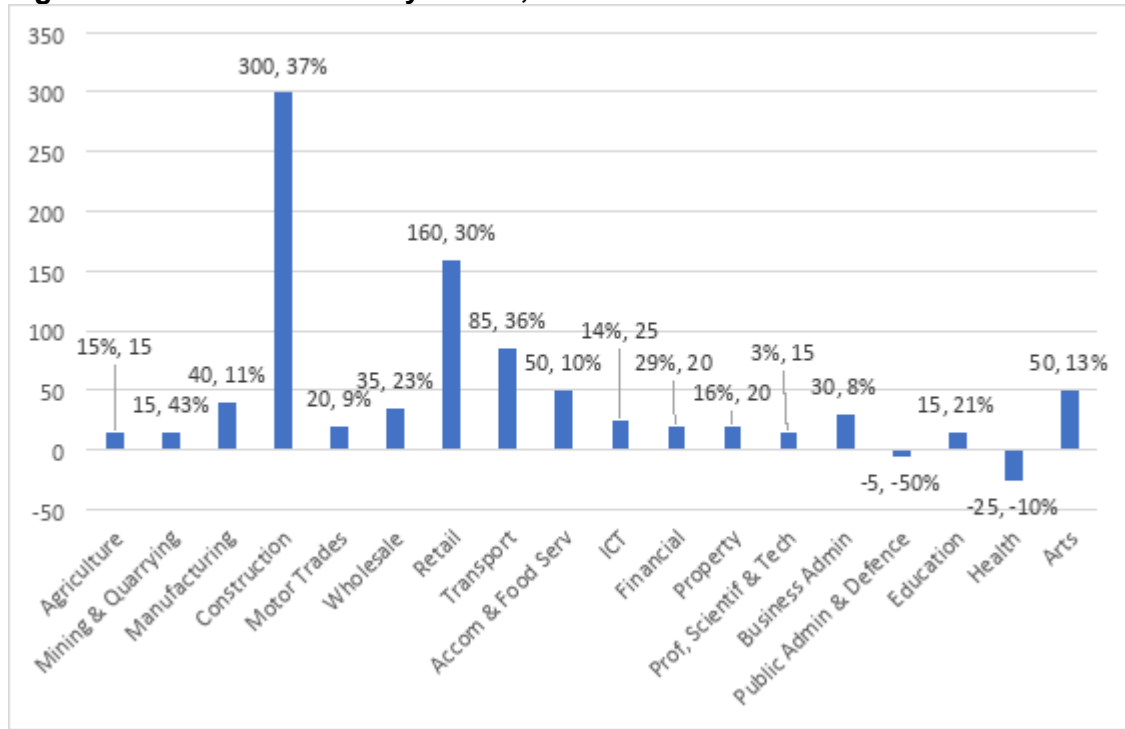
3.35 RCT was home to 5,485 businesses in 2021. Within these, the construction sector was the largest sector by business count with 1,120 businesses, accounting for almost a fifth of all businesses in RCT. The next most prevalent sector was retail with 685 businesses, accounting for 12 percent of businesses.

3.36 Office-based sectors accounted for 22 percent of all businesses in RCT. Within these, the professional, scientific and technical was most prevalent with 585 businesses, accounting for 10 percent of the total. The next most prevalent was business administration with 405 businesses, accounting for 7 percent of the total, followed by ICT (4 percent) and then finally financial (2 percent).

3.37 There were 395 manufacturing businesses (7 percent) and 320 transport businesses (5 percent) in the county borough.

3.38 In RCT, the total number of registered businesses increased from 4,980 to 5,845 over 2015-2021 (see Figure 5). Most notably, 300 new businesses were registered in the construction sector, the largest absolute growth in any sector and a proportionate increase of 37 percent on 2015. With a related gain of 1,000 jobs, this sector has clearly performed well in recent years.

Figure 5 – Business Count by Sector, 2015-2021



Source: Business Counts, 2021

*Right-hand number represents the absolute gain/loss in employment

3.39 The transport sector saw 85 new businesses recorded, expansion of 36 percent over the period observed. It is noted that employment in transportation however stayed constant over this period, suggesting a dispersion of employment to smaller businesses over this period.

3.40 Only two of the 18 sectors saw a decline in the number of businesses/entities over 2015-2021 – these included the public administration and health sectors. The public administration sector lost half its entities while the health sector lost a quarter of its businesses. It is also noted that over this period, the health sector employment declined by some 2,000 jobs, demonstrating the reduced importance of this sector within RCT over time, though it remains the equal largest employer as of 2021.

- 3.41 In the manufacturing sector, 40 businesses were added, representing an 11 percent increase. This is during a period where this sector was estimated to have lost some 1,000 jobs in RCT. Therefore, while businesses may be consolidating their operations in terms of employment, this does not mean a uniform decline in the sector and may be due to efficiencies or automation, rather than lower output. The increase in numbers of manufacturing businesses in RCT suggest a more positive market than simply looking at the employment metric in isolation
- 3.42 The office-based sectors saw a combined net increase of businesses by 90, with the largest growth occurring in the business administration sector, increasing by 30 businesses. This combined with a growth in jobs of 1,300 over the same period indicates that the office-based sectors have performed strongly in RCT.
- 3.43 The financial sector saw the highest proportionate gain in business numbers, 29 percent or 20 firms. However, both the total number employed in the sector and the total number of businesses remain modest. This sector has seen an increase in business numbers during a period of declining overall employment, suggesting a dispersion of employment to smaller entities, potentially including sole trading businesses.

Commuting Patterns

- 3.44 The latest data available for statistics on commuting in Wales are from 2021 (see Table 16). The 2021 data shows that 60.3 percent of the RCT's resident population were also employed in the area. This is a moderate rate of retention and reflects RCT's position within the Cardiff catchment for higher order jobs but also its relatively large population and consequently solid range of employment opportunities in businesses/facilities that service this residential population. This rate of retention compares favourably to rates observed in other local authority areas in the Cardiff Capital Region, such as Caerphilly, Vale of Glamorgan, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen.

Table 16 – Commuting, 2021

Area	Out-Commuters (No.)	In-Commuters (No.)	Live and Work in Area (No.)	Percentage who Live and Work in area as a Percentage of the Total Employed * (Percent)
Bridgend	16,300	16,000	48,900	75.1
Vale of Glamorgan	26,800	8,100	34,000	55.9
Cardiff	34,300	75,500	157,400	82.1
Rhondda Cynon Taf	43,100	14,000	65,500	60.3
Caerphilly	36,100	17,800	44,200	55.0
Blaenau Gwent	14,100	6,000	16,500	54.1
Torfaen	18,000	17,600	21,300	54.2
Monmouthshire	17,100	14,300	27,100	61.2
Newport	27,400	34,100	42,000	60.4
Merthyr Tydfil	9,900	8,700	16,500	62.3

Source: Welsh Government, 2021

*Total employed based on the total number of working residents in the area

- 3.45 The main worker destinations of the RCT's residents were Cardiff (17,300 workers), Caerphilly (4,600 workers), Bridgend (4,600 workers) and Merthyr Tydfil (3,000 workers) while a further 10,300 workers commuted to places elsewhere in South East Wales. A further 3,700 workers commuted to destinations in Mid and South West Wales.
- 3.46 In terms of in-commuting, workers mainly came from the same destinations in Cardiff (3,700 workers), Merthyr Tydfil (2,700 workers) Caerphilly (2,400 workers) and Bridgend (1,900 workers). A further 2,000 workers commuted from elsewhere in South East Wales to work in RCT while approximately 1,400 workers commuted from outside South East Wales to work in RCT.
- 3.47 Overall, RCT is a net out-commuting area, with an average net outflow of some 29,100 workers, reflecting the relative choices of employment in nearby areas, particularly Cardiff, compared to RCT.

Earnings

- 3.48 Table 17 shows that the median weekly earnings of the residents in RCT, when measured by place of work, was the third lowest in the Cardiff Capital Region

(£520.2), behind the Vale of Glamorgan (£516.9) and Merthyr Tydfil (£518). Weekly pay by place of work in RCT were significantly less than the Welsh median (£562.8).

Table 17 – Median Weekly Earnings, 2021

Area	Gross Median Weekly Pay, £ (Analysis by place of work)	Gross Median Weekly Pay, £ (Analysis by place of residence)
Blaenau Gwent	577.9	523.3
Bridgend	608.0	577.7
Caerphilly	542.5	562.7
Cardiff	586.7	574.9
Merthyr Tydfil	518.0	525.1
Monmouthshire	556.6	688.8
Newport	540.6	573.2
Rhondda Cynon Taf	520.2	560.3
Torfaen	563.3	547.7
Vale of Glamorgan	516.9	593.3
Wales	562.8	570.6

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2021

- 3.49 When measuring the gross median weekly pay by place of residence, RCT's median of £560.30 was the fourth lowest in the Cardiff Capital Region. Comparison of the resident wage and workplace wage in RCT indicates that some workers are out-commuting to access high earning positions.

Summary

- 3.50 As of 2021, RCT had a population of 237,651, the second largest population in the Cardiff Capital Region. Growth since 2011 has been in line with the Welsh growth rate.
- 3.51 The socio-economic statistics suggest that there are likely to be significant obstacles in growing employment in RCT without specific interventions. The low unemployment level and the high economic activity level indicate that there is only limited spare labour capacity in the market. This, combined with lower-than-average qualifications of the local workforce, suggest that businesses in RCT may have difficulties in finding staff, particularly adequately skilled staff.
- 3.52 There are significant areas of deprivation within RCT, with 26 of RCT's 154 LSOAs in the top ten percent most deprived in Wales (17 percent). Therefore, it is important that a range of further employment opportunities are available within the community

to help address deprivation. This should include entry level positions and support to enter the labour market.

- 3.53 BRES data from 2021 shows that employment sectors that support the local residential population, such as retail and health. These sectors will continue to be important components of the local economy. However, broadening opportunities for businesses within RCT will help to improve employment choices for local residents as well as providing a more rounded economy within the county borough. This would also help to reduce the net out-commuting of workers from RCT, though the area will always have a function of providing housing for some of the Cardiff worker population.
- 3.54 The business count and employment by sector information highlighted that the growth in the economy is not uniform throughout all sectors. Some sectors, such as manufacturing and financial services saw recent declines in the employment in these sectors, though an increase in the number of businesses. Therefore, while employment may be declining, there could be increasing need for business locations to support business number growth.

4.0 PROPERTY MARKET ASSESSMENT

4.1 This document provides an overview of the commercial property market for RCT to inform the ELR and future demand for employment space. The report draws on information gathered from a variety of market reports produced by commercial agents, specific dialogue with local property agents and other stakeholders as well as our own reflection on emerging trends and prospects.

Economic Context

4.2 The national economy has been through a series of tumultuous changes in recent years. First there were signs of recovery from the global financial crisis of 2008 before commercial confidence was unsettled again following the decision to leave the EU in 2016. Whilst a trade deal was finalised between the EU and UK by December 2020, the global economy was again in crisis due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.3 With three economic lockdowns during 2020 and everyone encouraged to work from home, where possible, the UK economy shrunk nearly 10 percent in terms of GDP output overall for the year – the largest decline of the G7 global economies. This was at least an improvement on the 35 percent contraction in GDP in the second quarter of 2020 after the first lock-down.

4.4 Whilst there were signs of recovery in 2021, fears of another economic recession have again arisen following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and resulting global energy and cost of living crisis. Inflation in the UK reached a 40-year high of 11.1 percent in November 2022 and although the Retail Price Index is expected to rise further, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) anticipate inflation to fall to around 7 percent in 2023 and potentially below zero from 2024 which effectively continues the recessionary pressures and constrains economic growth potential.

4.5 Investor confidence in the UK was devastated by the interim fiscal review put forward by the short-lived Truss/Kwartang Premiership and Chancellor hiatus but has recently stabilised following the more recent budget announcement under the Sunak/Hunt partnership in November. The forecasts remain stark, however, with the UK predicted to enter recession following further contraction in economic output –

0.6% down in September 2022 and is now 0.2% lower than pre-pandemic levels in February 2020.

- 4.6 The Bank of England meanwhile believe the UK economy is already in recession and expect this to continue until the end of 2024. In an attempt to manage inflation, interest rates have increased by 175 basis points to 4.0 percent (February 2023), the biggest increase in 33 years, this was followed by a further rise to 5.0 percent in June 2023. Whilst this is an attempt to manage inflation, the pressure on prices is not so much from consumer demand but the consequence of rising energy costs. As a result, this has put further pressure on the economy with rising household mortgage costs, increased cost of public debt and curtailing private investment due to higher interest rates.

Property Market Context – UK & Regional Trends

- 4.7 Across the UK the industrial and logistics property market was experiencing record levels of demand with the surge in on-line retailing coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic whilst there were more negative impacts on other market sectors such as offices, retail and leisure.
- 4.8 According to research by specialist agents Lambert Smith Hampton, **industrial and logistics property** take up was over 30 percent higher year on year in 2021, topping out at 78 million sqft. Even more impressive, is Amazon, for a second year, accounted for 20 percent of this national take-up activity.
- 4.9 Take-up in Wales also showed a strong recovery in the year, 75 percent up on a poorer 2020 with 3.1 million sqft transacted including the 1 million sqft data centre for Microsoft at Imperial One, Newport. This continues to put pressure on available supply of quality floorspace with rents, having been static in previous years surged, upward during 2021 with levels around £7.50 psf in Cardiff, £6.50 psf in Newport and £5.25 psf in Swansea. With Cardiff market in particular experiencing supply side pressures on industrial land, market interest will push out more widely especially if the M4 is less significant to occupier requirements, which are more likely to be drawn to the Newport corridor generally.
- 4.10 Demand generally continued to accelerate at least through Q1 2022 although market expectations were that supply issues would constrain take-up activity through the

year. Whilst there had been movement in the speculative development of floorspace across the UK, developers are now fearful of rising build costs.

- 4.11 Indeed, market comments from Knight Frank indicate 1.3 million sqft of transactions have taken place across Wales through to Q3 2022 with the majority of occupiers taking second hand units due to shortage of available supply. Over 217,000 sqft is under construction at the end of September 2022 with the 50,000 sqft Pencoed Technology Park under offer and further development at St Modwen Park, Newport recently completing. Overall, some 4.2 million sqft of industrial space is estimated to be available across Wales, 28 percent less than same time last year and representing a total stock vacancy rate of around 10 percent. Nearly two-fifths of the available supply is associated with Ford at Bridgend (1.6m sqft) although this is seeing good progress with occupier demand already.
- 4.12 The capital investment market has slowed in recent months following the catastrophic financial statement during the short-lived Truss premiership – especially where investment is debt financed. Occupier demand, however, remains strong across South Wales especially for small workshop space under the business rate threshold.
- 4.13 In terms of the **UK Office Market**, this clearly stalled during the early stages of the COVID pandemic with the switch to home-working but general signs are that the sector was slowly bouncing back during 2021 and 2022. Occupiers continue to be highly selective, however, in terms of locations and quality of space. Flexibility of office space both in terms of operating fit-out to support hybrid working and ability to flex space as needs change over time is vital with large numbers of unwanted space being returned to the open market. Generally, office transactions remain below the pre-pandemic levels and have taken a further hit more recently with concerns over the global economy and moves to contain operating costs among many of the big technology firms and redundancy proposals emerging across the property sector as well among fears of agency contraction.
- 4.14 Cardiff, of course, dominates the Wales office market with H1 2022 totalling 215,000 sqft the strongest since 2016 and reflecting the recent surge in quality floorspace supply at Capital Quarter and Fusion Point. Prime office rents in Cardiff remain around £25 psf with average Grade A office space at £23.15 psf according to research by Savills. Looking forward it is difficult to envisage demand continuing at

this level for the into 2023 as the effects of economic conditions slow market activity globally and not just in central Cardiff.

- 4.15 Outside of Cardiff, RCT has also been successful attracting the purpose build development of 133,000 sqft of offices for Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) at Nantgarw near Treforest. Completed in April 2021, the scheme accommodates some 1,700 staff relocating from across South Wales. The County Borough Council also led the successful redevelopment of the Taff Vale Shopping Centre in Pontypridd incorporating 100,000 sqft of speculative Grade A office space. Transport for Wales (TfW) now occupies part of this as their national Headquarters with 20,300 sqft remaining over 3 floors in 2 Llys Cadwyn.

Local RCT Property Market

- 4.16 The RCT area may be characterised by three distinctive market propositions:
- Treforest/Nantgarw with strong links to A470 and M4 corridor
 - Coed Ely/Llantrisant – A4119 corridor
 - Northern RCT/Heads of the Valleys / A465 corridor
- 4.17 **Treforest Industrial Estate** has been a mainstay for local business growth since it was first established in 1936 and remains a popular, affordable destination to this day. Now in private ownership, Mileway is a pro-active property manager prepared to invest in property and improve quality and financial returns. A major concern for the area, however, is continued flood risk and need for strategic investment in the wider area.
- 4.18 Nearby **Parc Nantgarw** provides a modern industrial setting, equally popular with important access to the A470 and M4. A mixed site with large leisure offering and major presence of Coleg y Cymoedd. The recent investment by L&G /Rightacres in the 133,000 sq ft office development for the DWP is testimony to the quality location.
- 4.19 The regeneration of **Coed Ely** colliery and coking works between Llantrisant and Tonyrefail is another important market destination. Developed through joint venture between RCT County Borough Council and Welsh Government it is virtually all currently “under offer” and forms another important development corridor along the A4119 from the M4 and through Llantrisant.

- 4.20 The **northern half of RCT and the Heads of the Valley** corridor is the third defined market area for the county borough although traditionally much weaker than the southern half of the county. Rental values remain low and there has been a lack of investment in new property. Demand is very localised and focused on smaller industrial units rather than larger logistics operations.

Local Property Sectors

- 4.21 RCT's strongest market sector is industrial. Much of the market take-up is locally driven demand especially across the core valley areas with national operators responding to more strategic locations as identified above. There is good demand across all size ranges and a risk of supply shortages within the county borough following recent development success and take-up.
- 4.22 Logistics in RCT is mostly focused on localised/last-mile distribution activity with the major logistics operators attracted to the M4 corridor around Newport/Magor area.
- 4.23 The office sector in RCT will always be low-key compared to the draw of Cardiff and to lesser extent Newport. Recent office investments in the county have been opportunistic and led by special tenant demand such as the DWP scheme at Nantgarw and Transport for Wales (TfW) taking RCT's regeneration scheme in Pontypridd.

Market Rents

- 4.24 The market rental tone across RCT is highlighted in the tables below. For simplicity, the figures are only presented in terms of £/sqft. This is based on current quoting rental values for available property in each area. Rental differences reflect both the quality of different floorspace and general location/accessibility to the main road network.
- 4.25 Generally, office rents are around £10 - £14 psf although the high spec new build in Pontypridd is quoting at around £18 psf and achieving £16.50 psf. The one serviced office accommodation on the market at the former RCT offices in Navigation Park, Abercynon are seeking £17.50 psf inclusive.

Table 18 – Current Local Office Market Rents – (November 2022)

Location	Size (sqft)	Rent psf	Serviced Office psf
2 Llys Cadwyn Pontypridd	20,300	£16.50-£18	
Ty Pennant Pontypridd	16,500	£10.50	
5-7 Cefn Coed Bus Park, Parc Nantgarw	20,895	£13.50	
4 Cefn Coed Bus Park, Parc Nantgarw	8,866	N/A	
3 Cefn Coed Bus Park, Parc Nantgarw	4,370	£14.50	
17 Centre Court Treforest Ind Est	1,510	£11.00	
18-19 Centre Court Treforest Ind Est	3,044	£10.00	
G5 Treforest Ind Est	4,625	N/A	
Suite 8 3 Melin Corrwg Bus Park Treforest	909	£13.75	
Navigation Park Aberycynon	From 240		£17.50

Source: PER Consulting Research November 2022

- 4.26 Standard industrial rents are around £4 - £5 psf pushing to £6 - £8 psf for better quality and located accommodation. Higher values are being quoted where there are prospects for trade-counter operations or retail/café uses in Treforest Centre Court.

Table 19 – Current Local Industrial Market Rents – (November 2022)

Location	Size (sqft)	Rent psf
G4.1 & G4.2 Treforest Ind Est	20,760	£4.00
G4.3 & G4.4 Treforest Ind Est	26,198	£4.50
G4.5 Treforest Ind Est	33,425	£3.00
D10.2 Treforest Ind Est	798	
Unit 10 Riverside Treforest Ind Est	2,887	£9.70
Unit B31 Riverside Treforest Ind Est	1,063	£11.29
Unit F6 Main Avenue Treforest Ind Est	17,086	£3.50
Unit J7 Gellihirion Ind Est Rhydyfellin	2,366	£6.50
Unit H1 Gellihirion Ind Est Rhydyfellin	12,065	£5.50
Unit 3 Albion Ind Est Cilfynydd	956	£9.94
Unit 38 Albion Ind Est Cilfynydd	5,731	£6.50
Unit C1 Coedcase Lane Ind Est Pontyclun	1,871	£7.50
Unit 13 Pontcynon Ind Est Abercynon	573	£10.00
Unit 4 Pontcynon Ind Est Abercynon	1,200	£8.00

Source: PER Consulting Research November 2022

Transactions

- 4.27 A list of recorded occupational deals (i.e. sales and leases of the premises by the occupier and not including investment deals) completed between 2012 and 2022 has been obtained from Radius Data Exchange. This data has been compiled below for industrial/warehousing and for offices. Whilst this database is not necessarily comprehensive of all deals conducted within RCT (some agents may not choose to disclose details), it does nonetheless provide a guide to the level and nature of activity within the County.
- 4.28 A total of 626,187 sqm of **industrial/warehousing** floorspace was recorded as transacted within RCT from 597 deals over the previous decade. 2013 saw a peak in the number of properties transacted with 75 and a total floorspace of 65,042 sqm.
- 4.29 2017 saw the most occupational industrial floorspace transacted with 105,832 sqm changing hands across 60 deals. In this year there were three transactions of units in excess of 10,000 sqm, which were all sales:
- Unit E6, Treforest Industrial Estate, Pontypridd – 23,289 sqm unit sold to JR Ferris
 - Phileas House, Llantrisant Business Park – 23,224 sqm unit sold to FEI Foods
 - Former L’oreal unit, Pontyclun – 18,577 sqm unit.

4.30 Of the 597 transactions, 88 percent were recorded as leasehold deals, with 12 percent being occupational sales (freehold). The average rent achieved was £55/sqm (£5.1/sqft).

4.31 70 percent of RCT's industrial transactions over the past decade have been for premises less than 500 sqm (5,380 sqft). Transactions of larger premises were less common with units over 5,000 sqm (53,800 sqft) accounting for only five percent of the decade's transactions. This suggests RCT'S industrial market sees little demand from regional and national enterprises with local SMEs making up the bulk of the demand observed. However, this five percent represents a critical component of employment within RCT and as they are land-consumptive operations, consideration for future larger requirements should form part of the employment land study, even if as a percentage of transactions this section of the market is small.

Table 20 – RCT Industrial/Warehousing Letting/Occupational Sale Transactions, 2012-2022

Industrial		Size (sqm)							Unknown	Total
		0-100	101-200	201-500	501-1,000	1,001-5,000	5,001-10,000	10,000+		
2022	Floorspace (sqm)	702	837	2,375	865	17,612	~	~	0	22,391
	Total Properties	10	5	8	1	7	~	~	0	31
2021	Floorspace (sqm)	1,272	3,957	2,662	3,759	7,554	~	12,453	0	31,657
	Total Properties	19	26	9	6	4	~	1	0	65
2020	Floorspace (sqm)	483	1,010	2,802	1,128	19,138	~	~	0	24,561
	Total Properties	8	8	9	2	8	~	~	0	35
2019	Floorspace (sqm)	436	1,788	5,946	5,150	7,993	11,576	~	0	32,889
	Total Properties	6	14	17	6	5	2	~	3	53
2018	Floorspace (sqm)	487	2,647	4,549	2,056	18,625	13,063	~	0	41,427
	Total Properties	8	19	17	3	10	2	~	1	60
2017	Floorspace (sqm)	641	1,740	3,327	3,351	26,526	5,068	65,179	0	105,832
	Total Properties	9	14	12	5	12	1	3	4	60
2016	Floorspace (sqm)	300	1,337	1,481	2,697	16,348	5,393	59,647	0	87,203
	Total Properties	4	11	5	3	6	1	2	4	36
2015	Floorspace (sqm)	357	822	7,088	2,578	30,180	5,515	18,563	0	65,103
	Total	6	7	21	4	11	1	1	3	54

	Properties									
2014	Floorspace (sqm)	1,234	1,569	2,760	7,530	8,572	34,877	42,663	0	99,205
	Total Properties	18	13	10	10	3	6	2	1	63
2013	Floorspace (sqm)	1,259	2,642	6,060	2,760	10,676	11,767	29,878	0	65,042
	Total Properties	20	19	22	3	6	2	2	1	75
2012	Floorspace (sqm)	867	2,283	3,582	6,178	18,828	19,139	~	0	50,877
	Total Properties	14	16	11	10	10	3	~	1	65
Total	Floorspace (sqm)	8,039	20,631	42,632	38,052	182,051	106,399	228,383	0	626,187
	Total Properties	122	152	141	53	82	18	11	18	597

Source: Radius Data Exchange, 2022

4.32 Twenty-four investment sales have been recorded for industrial/warehousing premises in RCT over the last decade, which are tallied below. These transactions do not add to the occupational (business) demand for premises and thus not included in the totals above, though are indicative of the investor interest and confidence in the local market.

Table 21 – RCT Industrial/Warehousing Investment Transactions, 2012-2022

Industrial		Size (sqm)							Unknown	Total
		0-100	101-200	201-500	501-1,000	1,001-5,000	5,001-10,000	10,000+		
2022	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	0
	Total Properties	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	0
2021	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	733	~	1,744	~	~	0	2,477
	Total Properties	~	~	2	~	1	~	~	0	3
2020	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	445	~	2,497	~	~	0	2,942
	Total Properties	~	~	1	~	1	~	~	2	4
2019	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	~	2,007	5,778	~	0	7,785
	Total Properties	~	~	~	~	1	1	~	1	3
2018	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	~	4,396	13,218	~	0	17,613
	Total Properties	~	~	~	~	2	2	~	2	6
2017	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	~	~	5,068	~	0	5,068
	Total Properties	~	~	~	~	~	1	~	1	2
2016	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	~	1,619	~	~	0	1,619
	Total Properties	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	0	1
2015	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	~	1,160	~	~	0	1,160
	Total Properties	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	0	1

2014	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	0
	Total Properties	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	0
2013	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	~	~	~	14,111	0	14,111
	Total Properties	~	~	~	~	~	~	1	0	1
2012	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	~	8,082	~	~	0	8,082
	Total Properties	~	~	~	~	3	~	~	0	3
Total	Floorspace (sqm)	0	0	1,178	0	21,505	24,064	14,111	0	60,858
	Total Properties	0	0	3	0	10	4	1	6	24

Source: Radius Data Exchange, 2022

4.33 The largest investment deal of the decade involved a 14,111 sqm industrial premises on Gellihirion Industrial Estate being purchased by a private individual. The achieved price was £3,637,000, the highest of the decade. Not included in the above was a purchase in 2014 of several buildings at Llantrisant Business Park by the Welsh Government in 2014, comprising a total of 137,600 sqm (former Sogefi Filtration site). This was purchased upon the closure of the Sogefi operations at Llantrisant, with the Welsh Government intervening to secure the site, rather than for investment or occupation purposes. Units have since been sold to private occupiers.

4.34 The table below provides the occupational transactions for **office** space in RCT since 2012. The overall volume of occupational transactions for office space and the average floorspace size are significantly smaller than for industrial and warehousing.

Table 22 – RCT Office Letting/Occupational Sale Transactions, 2012-2022

Office		Size (sqm)							Unknown	Total
		0-100	101-200	201-500	501-1,000	1,001-5,000	5,001-10,000	10,000+		
2022	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	1,021	~	2,483	~	~	0	3,504
	Total Properties	~	~	3	~	2	~	~	0	5
2021	Floorspace (sqm)	231	569	~	541	~	~	~	0	1,341
	Total Properties	5	4	~	1	~	~	~	0	10
2020	Floorspace (sqm)	110	503	307	3,713	~	~	~	0	4,633
	Total Properties	4	4	1	5	~	~	~	0	14
2019	Floorspace (sqm)	316	153	1,025	2,189	1,415	~	~	0	5,098
	Total Properties	5	1	3	3	1	~	~	2	15
2018	Floorspace (sqm)	125	1,250	1,925	2,201	~	~	~	0	5,501
	Total Properties	3	9	6	3	~	~	~	3	24
2017	Floorspace (sqm)	657	643	1,450	2,227	~	~	~	0	4,977

	Total Properties	15	5	4	4	~	~	~	0	28
2016	Floorspace (sqm)	442	542	1,068	2,551	1,198	~	~	0	5,802
	Total Properties	9	4	3	3	1	~	~	3	23
2015	Floorspace (sqm)	707	1,016	1,172	1,389	1,359	~	~	0	5,644
	Total Properties	19	7	4	2	1	~	~	1	34
2014	Floorspace (sqm)	339	1,108	955	3,147	~	~	~	0	5,549
	Total Properties	5	7	3	5	~	~	~	0	20
2013	Floorspace (sqm)	738	1,356	2,693	1,717	2,390	5,110	~	0	14,005
	Total Properties	11	10	9	3	1	1	~	0	35
2012	Floorspace (sqm)	61	1,006	1,068	825	3,852	6,664	~	0	13,475
	Total Properties	2	7	3	1	3	1	~	1	18
Total	Floorspace (sqm)	3,727	8,145	12,684	20,500	12,698	11,774	0	0	69,529
	Total Properties	78	58	39	30	9	2	0	10	226

Source: Radius Data Exchange, 2022

- 4.35 2013 was the year in which the highest number of office transactions occurred (35) in RCT accounting for 15 percent of the decade total, along with the highest amount of floorspace transacted during a single year, 14,005 sqm. The total floorspace transacted during the 10 years was 69,529 sqm across 226 deals.
- 4.36 The sale of Aberdare Magistrates Court was completed in 2012. This 6,664 sqm building was the largest recorded office transaction in RCT in this period.
- 4.37 It is noted that in terms of transacted floorspace, the largest years were 2013 and 2012 (average 13,740 sqm) and since then levels have been consistently at a significantly lower level (average 4,672 sqm). The pandemic appears to have had an impact on transaction volumes, particularly in 2021, as businesses re-evaluate their property requirements.
- 4.38 85 percent of office transactions over the last decade were by leasehold, with 15 percent by freehold sale.
- 4.39 35 percent of transactions were for premises less than 100 sqm (1,076 sqft), while 26 percent were for premises in the 101-200 sqm (1,076-2,153 sqft) size band demonstrating that office occupiers are generally SMEs. Only five percent of transactions over the last decade were for office premises over 1,000 sqm. Despite

the fact that transactions of larger premises are rarer, demand here would still need to be catered for in the market to ensure that businesses have flexibility.

4.40 The following table provides a list of the investment sales of offices over the last decade.

Table 23 – RCT Office Investment Transactions, 2012-2022

Office		Size (sqm)								Total
		0-100	101-200	201-500	501-1,000	1,001-5,000	5,001-10,000	10,000+	Unknown	
2022	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	825	~	~	~	0	825
	Total Properties	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	0	1
2021	Floorspace (sqm)	~	284	~	~	~	~	~	0	284
	Total Properties	~	2	~	~	~	~	~	0	2
2020	Floorspace (sqm)	~	106	~	~	~	~	~	0	106
	Total Properties	~	1	~	~	~	~	~	0	1
2019	Floorspace (sqm)	48	~	~	~	1,593	~	10,329	0	11,971
	Total Properties	1	~	~	~	1	~	1	2	5
2018	Floorspace (sqm)	~	509	~	589	1,346	~	12,315	0	14,758
	Total Properties	~	3	~	1	1	~	1	1	7
2017	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	446	~	~	~	~	0	446
	Total Properties	~	~	1	~	~	~	~	0	1
2016	Floorspace (sqm)	85	173	~	~	3,783	~	~	0	4,041
	Total Properties	1	1	~	~	1	~	~	0	3
2015	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	556	~	~	~	0	556
	Total Properties	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	0	1
2014	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	919	3,266	6,510	~	0	10,695
	Total Properties	~	~	~	1	1	1	~	0	3
2013	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	631	~	~	~	0	631
	Total Properties	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	0	1
2012	Floorspace (sqm)	~	~	~	522	~	~	~	0	522
	Total Properties	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	0	1
Total	Floorspace (sqm)	133	1,072	446	4,040	9,988	6,510	22,644	0	44,833
	Total Properties	2	7	1	6	4	1	2	3	26

Source: Radius Data Exchange, 2022

4.41 As can be seen from the table, 26 investment deals have been recorded over the last decade for offices with a floorspace totalling 44,833 sqm. The largest office investment deals were:

- Site G13, Willowford, Pontypridd, 12,302 sqm, September 2018, unknown price
- British Airways Avionics Engineering, Gwaun Elai Industrial Estate, March 2019, £7,100,000
- G Units, Parc Nantgarw, October 2014, £7,920,000

Property Supply

- 4.42 A schedule of the vacant floorspace being marketed in RCT has been compiled from a review of online property portals and commercial property agents' websites, as well as consultations with agents. The marketed spaces can be taken to be a reasonably close approximation to that which is vacant – although there may be occupiers waiting for interest in their property before moving, and empty units not being marketed.
- 4.43 Across the study area, a total supply of 61,662 sqm vacant space is reported (industrial and offices spaces), comprised of 90 individual premises. Industrial space makes up over two thirds (68 percent) of RCT's available premises and 78 percent of floorspace.
- 4.44 Table 24 provides a breakdown of vacancy by property type and location. The most vacant premises can be found in Pontypridd, where 23 individual premises are available, followed by Nantgarw which has 17 available premises. Other prominent towns include Aberdare and Pontyclun which both have nine options on the market while Ferndale has eight. The remaining eight towns have no more than five options on the market.

Table 24 – Marketed Property by Type and Location

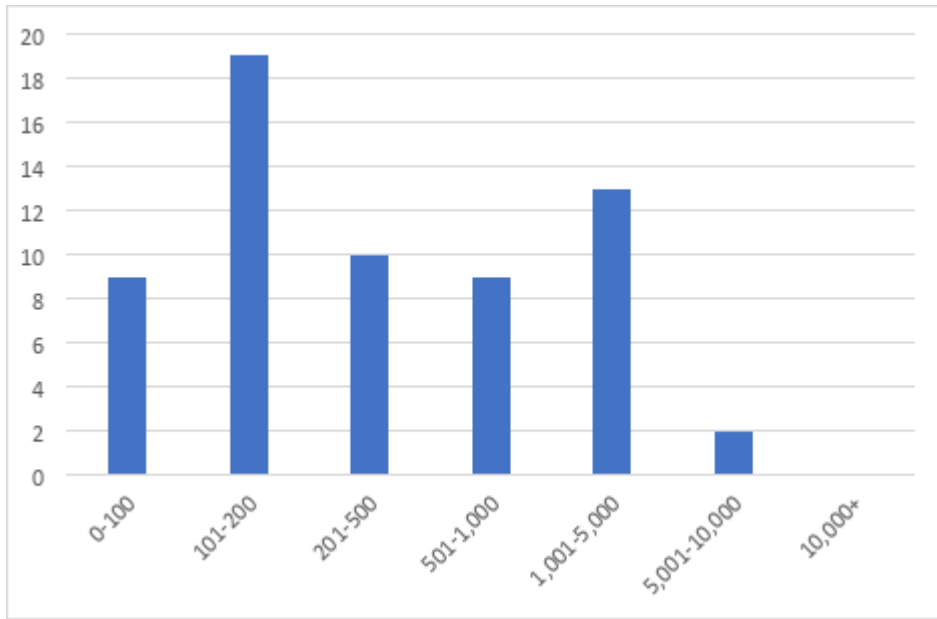
	Industrial		Office		Total	
	No.	Sqm	No.	Sqm	No.	Sqm
Abercynon	4	382	1	22	5	405
Aberdare	8	7,711	1	12	9	7,723
Ferndale	8	1,644	0	0	8	1,644
Llantrisant	1	5,899	1	151	2	6,050
Mountain Ash	2	173	1	73	3	246
Nantgarw	5	4,573	12	7,689	17	12,262
Pentre	5	2,884	0	0	5	2,884
Pontyclun	8	6,487	1	41	9	6,528
Pontypridd	18	16,671	5	3,557	23	20,228
Taffs Well	0	0	4	1,321	4	1,321
Talbot Green	0	0	1	188	1	188
Tonypany	2	1,808	2	269	4	2,077
Treorchy	1	106	0	0	1	106
Total	62	48,339	29	13,323	91	61,662

Source: BE Group, 2022

Industrial

4.45 Industrial availability comprises 48,339 sqm in 62 individual premises. Pontypridd has more than double the industrial premises and floorspace available compared to any other town in RCT with 18 premises and 16,652 sqm of floorspace, reflecting its overall large quantum of industrial units. This largest unit being marketed is a 5,899 sqm unit at Llantrisant Business Park in Llantrisant which contains a factory premises as well as associated offices. There are currently 52 leasehold industrial options available (84 percent) on the market in RCT as well as nine freehold options and one available on both a freehold and leasehold basis. 88 percent of past transactions were by leasehold. Therefore, the dominance of leasehold properties currently available would suit this market.

Figure 6 – Number of Industrial Marketed Property



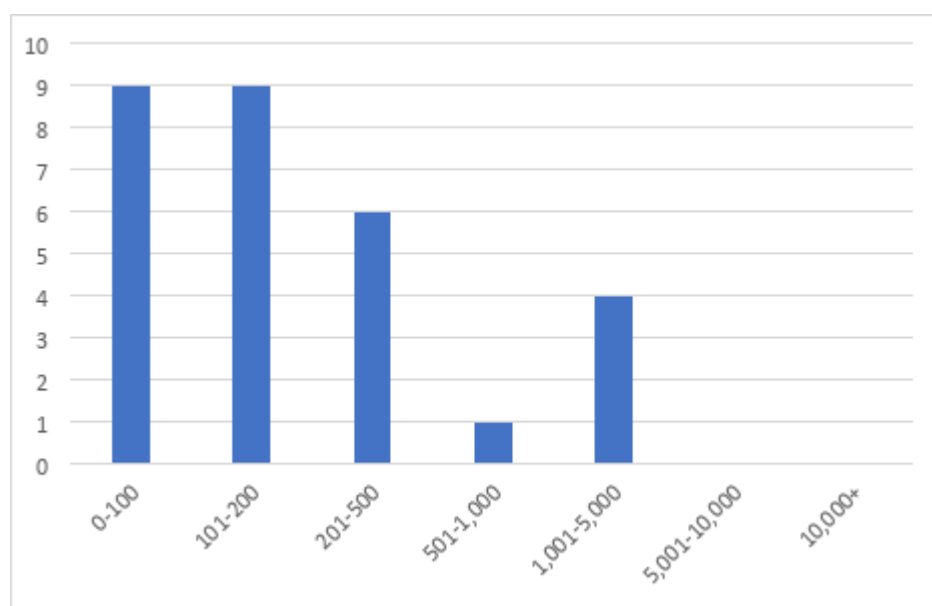
Source: Radius Data Exchange, Various Agents Websites, 2022

- 4.46 As Figure 6 shows, the supply of industrial units in RCT includes premises over a broad range of sizes and is similar to the distribution of transacted units over the last decade, including that vacant units less than 200 sqm account for 45 percent of vacant premises, compared to 46 percent of past transactions and units over 1,000 sqm account for 24 percent of vacant units and 19 percent of transacted units. Only two units are available in excess of 5,000 sqm, which limits opportunities in this market, though would have a significantly lower churn of stock in RCT.

Office

- 4.47 Office unit availability comprises 13,323 sqm in 29 individual premises. Nantgarw has the most office premises and floorspace available with 12 premises and 7,689 sqm respectively. The largest of these options is the QED Centre, found on Treforest Industrial Estate in Nantgarw. This unit is a good quality large detached quadrant office building that is 3,771 sqm in size and is available on a long-leasehold basis.
- 4.48 As seen in Figure 7, the most common unit sizes available for less than 200 sqm, which correspond to the most common unit sizes transacted over the last decade. There is only more limited options of larger units, including only five units above 500 sqm.

Figure 7 – Amount of Marketed Office Property



Source: Radius Data Exchange, Various Agents Websites, 2022

Annual Monitoring Report Vacancies

4.49 Unit vacant information is available within RCT's Annual Monitoring Reports for the period between 2012 and 2019. Each year, RCT County Borough Council monitored the occupancy of a number of operational employment sites. A summary of the results of this monitoring is found in the table below.

Table 25 – RCT Operational Employment Site Vacancy Rate

	Average Vacancy Level (%)	Number of units	No of Sites Monitored
2012/13	N/A	1,532	122
2013/14	16.0	1,532	103
2014/15	14.0	1,550	103
2015/16	14.7	1,667	102
2016/17	9.0	1,687	102
2017/18	7.95	1,709	101
2018/19	6.95	1,669	100
2019/20*	N/A	N/A	N/A
2020/21	7.29	1,705	101
2021/22	10.33	1,752	101

Source: RCT Annual Monitoring Reports 2012-2022

* Data not collected due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions

4.50 Over 100 sites were monitored year on year between 2012 and 2022 with over 1,750 units. The results of these inspections show that the vacancy rate fell nine percentage points between 2013 and 2019 (pre-COVID), indicating significant improvement in the market over this period. The impact of the pandemic and the resulting economic downturn is evident in the data for 2020/21 and 2021/22, though vacancy levels remain below levels seen in 2013-2016.

4.51 Further data provided by RCTCBC on its employment premises survey for 2022 includes floorspace and vacancy levels for each employment area. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the premises survey data, listing the floorspace and number of units by planning use type for each employment area within RCT. There was a significant range of employment areas, including single use sites, office parks, industrial estates and mixed-use employment areas. Activity levels also varied, with some areas completely occupied and others having significant numbers of vacant units. The following table provides a list of the vacancy percentage of employment areas from the 2022 survey.

Table 26 – Vacancy Rates by Employment Site (by unit and floorspace)

Site Ref.	Site	Vacancy Rate (by units)	Vacancy Rate (by floorspace)*	Site Ref.	Site	Vacancy Rate (by units)	Vacancy Rate (by floorspace)*
C1	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, East of 5th Ave	0.0%	0.0%	R27	Oaklands Business Park	13.8%	10.8%
C2	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Main and 4th Ave	0.0%	0.0%	R29	Paulette's Yard & Workshop	0.0%	0.0%
C3	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, 14th, 16th, 17th Ave	5.4%	7.5%	R30	Former Peacock Site	0.0%	0.0%
C4	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, North of A465, South of 5th Ave	15.4%	21.4%	R31	Ynyshir Industrial Estate	0.0%	0.0%
C5	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, North of 5th Ave Land	100.0%	100.0%	R32	Ynyshir Lady Lewis Industrial Estate	0.0%	0.0%
C6	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, North of 5th Ave	0.0%	0.0%	TL3	Newtown Industrial Estate	4.0%	7.1%
C8	East of the A4061, Hirwaun	0.0%	0.0%	TL6	Llantrisant Business Park, East of Royal Mint	3.0%	0.5%
C9	Bryngelli Industrial Estate, Hirwaun	26.7%	45.8%	TL7	Llantrisant Business Park, Royal Mint	0.0%	0.0%
C12	Former Mayhew Chicken Factory, Gelli Isaf, Trecynon	N/A	N/A	TL8	Llantrisant Business Park, West of Royal Mint	12.5%	3.8%
C13	Prysmian Factory, Llwydcoed	0.0%	0.0%	TL9	Llantrisant Business Park, South East of Royal Mint	0.0%	0.0%
C14	Aberdare Business Park, Robertstown	7.7%	6.7%	TL10	Llantrisant Business Park, South West of Royal Mint (Edwards Business Park)	23.5%	24.1%
C15	Robertstown Industrial Estate, Aberdare	0.0%	0.0%	TL11	Ely Meadow/Gwaun Elai including Magden Park	0.0%	0.0%
C19	Aberdare Town Centre Office Area	0.0%	0.0%	TL16	Mwyndy Cross Industries, Pontyclun	0.0%	0.0%

Site Ref.	Site	Vacancy Rate (by units)	Vacancy Rate (by floorspace)*	Site Ref.	Site	Vacancy Rate (by units)	Vacancy Rate (by floorspace)*
C20	Cwmbach Industrial Estate, Canal Road, Cwmbach	8.3%	3.2%	TL19	Fillcare Plant and Warehouse (Formerly L'Oreal)	0.0%	0.0%
C21	Canal Road, South of the Roundabout, Cwmbach	0.0%	0.0%	TL20	Lanelay Road Industrial Estate (Spar)	9.1%	10.8%
C24	Gasworks Road Industrial Estate	0.0%	0.0%	TL21	The Beeches Industrial Estate	10.5%	8.5%
C25	Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, Units 1-14	0.0%	0.0%	TL22	East Side of Coedcae Lane, including Forest Park I E	8.3%	10.1%
C26	Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, Units 15-39	15.8%	5.7%	TL23	Woodlands Workshop Centre	13.0%	11.9%
C27	Aberaman Enterprise Centre, Units 1-29	0.0%	0.0%	TL24	Cambrian Industrial Estate, East Side	4.0%	1.2%
C28	Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, Units 40-42	0.0%	0.0%	TL25	Coedcae Lane Industrial Estate including Green Park	0.0%	0.0%
C30	Cardiff Road, including Navigation Yard	0.0%	0.0%	TL26	Hepworth Business Park, Talbot Green	5.3%	2.6%
C32	Cwm Cynon Business Park, North	0.0%	0.0%	TL27	Cambrian Industrial Estate, West Side	0.0%	0.0%
C33	Cwm Cynon Business Park, South	5.6%	6.2%	TL29	Talbot Green Business Park	0.0%	0.0%
C34	AB Electronics Factory, Ynysboeth	0.0%	0.0%	TL30	Ely Valley Business Park	0.0%	0.0%
C35	Pontcynon Industrial Estate	0.0%	0.0%	TL31	Junction Industrial Centre & Ely Valley Business Park (East), Pontyclun	19.2%	7.4%
C36	Navigation Park, Abercynon	0.0%	0.0%	TL36	Pencoed Technology Park, Pencoed	0.0%	0.0%
C37	Ty Trevithick and Adjoining Land, Abercynon	0.0%	0.0%	TL37	Mwyndy, Pontyclun. Strategic Site Allocation SSA 8	N/A	N/A
C39	SPS Gooden Sanken, Abercynon	0.0%	0.0%	TL39	Control Centre, Station Road, Church Village	0.0%	0.0%
C40	The Old Parish Road, Ynysybwll	25.0%	7.5%	TP1	Hetty, Hopkinstown	25.0%	10.8%
C41	Land South of Hirwaun	N/A	N/A	TP2	Barry Sidings	0.0%	0.0%
C42	Land South of Hirwaun	0.0%	N/A	TP3	Maritime Industrial Estate including Maritime Workshops, Pontypridd	11.8%	12.5%
R2	Stelco Hardy, Treherbert	100.0%	N/A	TP8	Town Centre Office Area, Gelliwastad Road, Pontypridd	7.3%	2.9%
R3	Treherbert Industrial Estate	0.0%	0.0%	TP10	Glyntaff Sidings, Pentrebach Road	0.0%	0.0%
R4	Ynyswen Industrial Estate	11.8%	6.2%	TP11	Albion Industrial Estate	39.2%	29.5%
R5	Abergorki Industrial Estate & Parc Busnes Treorci	9.4%	0.7%	TP13	Dr William Price Business Park	0.0%	0.0%
R6	Caemawr Industrial Estate - Allocation (NSA 14.4)	0.0%	58.3%	TP14	Gellihirion Industrial Estate	21.1%	4.6%
R7	Treorchy Industrial Estate	0.0%	0.0%	TP16	Melin Corrwg, Hawthorn	0.0%	0.0%
R8	Old Griffin Mill Field	0.0%	0.0%	TP17	Upper Boat Trading Estate & Upper Boat Business Centre (A-G)	11.1%	7.6%
R9	Gelli Industrial Estate	13.8%	15.1%	TP18	Treforest Industrial Estate, West Bank	10.7%	9.4%
R11	Factories at Salem Terrace Llwynypia	0.0%	0.0%	TP19	Treforest Industrial Estate, Main Avenue	29.7%	28.4%
R12	Tonypandy Enterprise Centre	0.0%	0.0%	TP20	Parc Nantgarw	10.8%	2.0%
R14	Cambrian Business Park Clydach Vale	0.0%	0.0%	TP21	GEASE Works, Nantgarw	0.0%	0.0%

Site Ref.	Site	Vacancy Rate (by units)	Vacancy Rate (by floorspace)*	Site Ref.	Site	Vacancy Rate (by units)	Vacancy Rate (by floorspace)*
R15	The Pavilions Clydach Vale	0.0%	0.0%	TP22	Cardiff Road, Nantgarw	14.3%	3.4%
R16	Penygraig Industrial Estate	0.0%	0.0%	TP23	Glan y Llyn Industrial Estate, Taffs Well	0.0%	0.0%
R17	Ely Industrial Estate	0.0%	0.0%	TP24	Moy Road Industrial Estate / Rombourne Industrial Centre	0.0%	0.0%
R18	Council Depot Porth	0.0%	0.0%	TP26	Robert Price Timber Yard	0.0%	0.0%
R19	Dinas Enterprise Centre	0.0%	0.0%	TP27	Ty Rhiw Industrial Estate (Rockwood)	0.0%	0.0%
R20	Bus Depot Porth	0.0%	0.0%	TT1	Coed Ely, Tonyrefail	N/A	N/A
R21	Rheola Industrial Estate	28.6%	26.8%	TT2	Parc Eirin North East of A4093	0.0%	0.0%
R22	Llwynceilyn Industrial Estate	0.0%	0.0%	TT4	Parc Eirin, Ensinger	0.0%	0.0%
R23	Former Fennar Factory	0.0%	0.0%	TT8	Gelligron Industrial Estate, Tonyrefail	12.5%	11.1%
R24	Maerdy Road Industrial Estate	0.0%	0.0%	TT9	Dinas Isaf East including Ty Elai	0.0%	0.0%
R25	Ferndale Industrial Estate, Allocation NSA 14.1	N/A	N/A	TT10	Dinas Isaf West	0.0%	0.0%
R26	Highfields Industrial Estate	40.0%	41.8%				

Source: RCT Employment floorspace survey, May 2022

* floorspace vacancy levels include floorspace classified as derelict or non-classifiable

4.52 Summary points from reviewing these occupancy levels include:

- 14 of the 107 areas were occupied, single-user employment locations
- 66 of the sites were fully occupied
- Floorspace vacancy levels in excess of 20 percent were observed at:
 - Bryngelli Industrial Estate
 - Caemawr Industrial Estate
 - Rheola Industrial Estate
 - Highlands Industrial Estate
 - Albion Industrial Estate
- Parts of Hirwaun Industrial Estate (north of A465), Treforest Industrial Estate (Main Avenue) and Llantrisant Business Park (south-west of Royal Mint) also had areas with floorspace vacancy rates in excess of 20 percent.

Summary

4.53 The UK economy has experienced several significant shocks in recent years that have impacted on the property market, including Brexit, the pandemic, inflation, labour shortages and political uncertainty. This has impacted on overall business and investment confidence in the market across the UK, although impacts have not been

uniform, with some property sectors seeing increased levels of demand due to changing consumer behaviours and others being negatively impacted.

- 4.54 The industrial/logistics sector has performed strongly across the UK and more specifically across South Wales in response to increasing demand for online retailing during the pandemic period. Furthermore, smaller workshop space has continued to see strong demand, particularly for good quality spaces, with occupier interest remaining strong despite uncertain economic conditions.
- 4.55 The office market has been significantly negatively impacted by the pandemic, with changing workplace practices resulting in businesses re-evaluating their floorspace needs. Furthermore, the Welsh Government has outlined a policy of no more than 50 percent of its workforce working from a central office at any one time as part of achieving a wider strategy of 30 percent of the Welsh workforce working from or near home. Therefore, there is likely to be on-going muted interest in office space in the post-pandemic environment.
- 4.56 RCT's market has experienced similar trends to the national picture, with the industrial/logistics market performing more strongly in recent years than the office sector. For industrial, the market over the last decade has seen a broad range of unit sizes being transacted, though the highest volume has been in smaller units (70 percent of units transacted less than 500 sqm). Five percent of units transacted have been for very large units (in excess of 5,000 sqm or 53,800 sqft), which while small as a percentage of the overall churn of stock, is significant due to the difficulties in locating such premises. Therefore, consideration of further land needs in RCT over the RLDP period would also need to account for this market sector.
- 4.57 The RCT office market is a softer market, with transaction levels significantly down from the high levels of 2012 and 2013, with consistently lower levels of floorspace transacted since, which has been further muted since 2020 due to the pandemic. The office market is unlikely to return to the higher levels of 2012 and 2013 in the foreseeable future in terms of overall volume of stock transacted.
- 4.58 Vacancy levels, as recorded by RCT in its Annual Monitoring reports, have declined steadily between 2013 and 2019, though have increased somewhat to 2022, which appears to be a function of softer economic conditions since the beginning of the pandemic. However, at 10.3 percent, this level remains below that experienced

between 2013-2016. As noted in Table 26, there is significant variation in the vacancy levels across the county borough, with some employment areas fully occupied and others with considerable vacancy levels, in excess of 20 percent.

5.0 CONSULTATION SUMMARIES

5.1 The following summarise the consultations undertaken with property sector stakeholders as inputs to this study. The objectives of the consultations were to gain insights into the local market dynamics, understand any local issues/obstacles in the property market and discuss recent developments in the market. The consultations did not follow a rigid question and answer format; rather they were discussions around the above topics.

5.2 The following section summarises the views of representatives of the following organisations.

Welsh Government, Property

- WG remain committed to delivering 300,000 sqft (27,900 sqm) per annum rolling programme although recognised budgets becoming constrained following inflation pressures and future public funding constraints.
- Still seeing strong occupier market demand and anything new will find occupiers relatively easily.
- WG keen to engage in Joint Ventures with Developers/Local Authorities.
- Coed Ely is a successful Joint Venture project with RCT – virtually all under offer. Latest 30,000 ft development interest from food company.
- Pencoed Technology Park (borders RCT/Bridgend) progressing well with 46,000 ft spec development coming forward and lot of interest.
- Brocastle (Bridgend) is 50% under offer and understand Ford has a buyer lined up for their space – which is encouraging and demonstrates strong occupier demand across all sizes.
- There is a struggle to secure strategic site for Heads of the Valleys – query proposals for Tower Colliery at Hirwaun.

Knight Frank

- Industrial & Logistics sector continues to thrive across South Wales with continued strong take-up and occupier demand.

- Capital / Investment market slowed down following the early budget from Truss Government with some deals being negotiated down during the uncertainty and a cautious approach continuing.
- Occupier demand remains good although not yet seeing the full impact of rising energy costs on industrial processes – might slow things down in short-term. There is also uncertainty around re-valuation for rating purposes in 2023.
- Still seeing strong demand for small units typically under the Rating thresholds and able to be purchased as part of business owner pension scheme.
- Number of units about to be released and brought to market at Nantgarw providing 40,000 – 50,000 sqft (3,700 – 4,600 sqm) and expected to see strong demand as there is a general shortage of supply.
- Coed Ely has been popular although one developer struggling on viability with increased build costs.
- Flood risks around Treforest Industrial Estate remain concerning and some occupiers unable to obtain insurance cover.
- Land in the Llantrisant corridor would prove popular with proximity to motorway although RCT is predominantly an industrial/manufacturing location, rather than logistics.

Jenkins & Best Chartered Surveyors

- Principal agents on Treforest Industrial Estate for investors Mileway.
- Always good interest in Treforest – location/specification and owners investing/upgrading.
- There are occupier concerns over flood risk issues on site – often final stumbling block to agreeing to take units.
- There is land remaining at Treforest but build costs proving prohibitive for speculative development.
- Demand in RCT is patchy – strong where sites are well connected to the M4 corridor but more localised in the valley areas.
- Occupiers expect lower values further in the valley areas with demand for budget space.
- Emerging concerns from occupiers over Business Rate changes and rising energy costs.

- Landlords also pushing rent levels – driven by expectations from demand in logistics sector but impacting traditional manufacturing occupiers.
- Some operators are pessimistic about the current financial uncertainty and fear that they may have to close operations.
- Demand remained strong through COVID pandemic but beginning to see things slow down now.
- However, there is also lack of available property stock across all size ranges.

Sutton Consulting

- Sutton Consulting has advised Cardiff Capital Region on strategic market opportunities and prepared a specific report for RCT on Hirwaun Industrial Estate (Jan 2021).
- There is a shortage across Wales of large development sites 30-50 acre (12-20 ha) range.
- Brocastle (Bridgend) and Ford is understood to be largely under offer.
- Rassau Industrial Estate (Blaenau Gwent) being developed for Glass Factory with WG investment.
- St Athan EZ in Vale of Glamorgan planning to bring forward a strategic site – 2-3 years away as it requires power supply enhancement.
- Hirwaun could provide a strategic site at the western part of the A465 Heads of the Valley route following completion of final stage dual carriageway (due Mid 2025), which will enhance the strategic connectivity of the site and attraction to wider/regional business demand.
- Hirwaun benefits from National Grid Substation having been developed to serve wind-farm capacity in the wider area.
- There has been a proposal for DRAX power station but as gas-fired may not now come to fruition – could be potential for alternative green energy.
- TfW have been examining potential for Aberdare to Hirwaun Metro Extension which would be of significant value in opening the area up in terms of sustainable access and widening the regional labour market attraction to the site.
- Although perhaps currently on the edge of the main settlements in the Cynon Valley, it could soon be a strong strategic site for the regional economy.

Summary

- 5.3 The consultations illustrate a picture of the commercial property market in RCT that is not uniform, which is consistent with the findings of the property assessment of the previous chapter. There has been investment and significant occupier interest, particularly in good quality units and sites with strong links to the M4. However, in the smaller settlements and in the north the interest is more localised and subdued. However, it was noted by one consultee that the finalisation of the dual carriageway of the Heads of the Valley road would help to open up Hirwaun, potentially widening opportunities for this area.
- 5.4 There was a level of caution due to uncertain economic conditions, which could lead to more subdued occupier interest in the market, although it was also remarked that interest proved resilient during the pandemic period.

6.0 EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLY

- 6.1 This chapter provides a review of the existing employment allocations as identified in the Adopted Local Development Plan Core Strategy, including employment sites identified under Strategic Sites (Policy CS3), Core Strategy Employment Requirements (Policy CS6), Northern Strategy Areas Employment Allocations (NSA14) and Southern Strategy Area Employment Allocations (SSA14). The chapter also reviews the existing employment areas, with particular focus on their ability to provide further employment floorspace through in-fill sites and their appropriateness to continue to be functioning employment areas.
- 6.2 The analysis focusses on the B-class employment uses of the sites (office, manufacturing, warehousing), though it is recognised that non-B-class uses have a role in several employment areas throughout RCT and this would be expected to continue over the coming planning period.
- 6.3 This assessment is undertaken in Table 27 overleaf. A recommendation is provided in the table as to whether each site should be safeguarded or allocated for employment in the RLDP. The Welsh Government guidance is that employment allocations should not be rolled forward from previous LDP without evidence of their deliverability within the coming plan period. Thus simply rolling over employment allocations is insufficient, without an assessment that reviews the sites' ongoing appropriateness for employment uses in the coming planning period (2022-2037). The sites that have been recommended for allocating for employment are those that have limited constraints, are of sufficient scale for development and have sufficient market potential for development.

Table 27 – Employment Sites with Available Employment Land

Site Ref.	Site Name	Site Description	Constraints	Intended Development in Planning Policy / Planning Permissions	Site Size, ha - Baseline	Site Size, ha – Realistically Available for B1/B2/B8 Use (Anticipated Land Use – B1/B2/B8)	Should the vacant land be safeguarded/ identified for employment uses?
Core Strategy Strategic Sites							
CS3.1/ R33	Former Maerdy Colliery Site	Undeveloped site in RCT ownership. Site is at the northern edge of Maerdy and is a former colliery site. Alongside another employment site (to the south), remaining adjacent land is undeveloped, including other former colliery land, and open space. Site is moderately sloped in parts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sloping • Partly tree covered • Potential contamination 	Employment	1.0	0.0	No, lack of demand in area and viability constraints.
CS3.3/ C42	Phurnacite Plant Site (Extension of Aberaman Industrial Estate)	Remaining sites of the key industrial area of Aberaman Industrial Estate. Large, predominantly flat site suitable for mid to large B2/B8 units. Some contamination potential due to previous uses. Site access and estate roads are suitable for HGVs and neighbouring uses are a mix of industrial uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential contamination 	Employment	4.0	4.0 B2, B8	Yes.
CS3.4/ C15	Land at Robertstown/ Abernant, Aberdare	Brownfield site that has been partially redeveloped. New-build uses are small workshop spaces and Coleg Y Cymoedd building. Site also includes park and ride facility for Aberdare Station. Remaining land off Wellington St (former Universal factory) has been partially cleared and may be suitable for employment uses, although it is acknowledged that it is within a flood risk zone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood zone 	Employment and leisure	8.8 (1.61 vacant)	0.0	No, due to flood risk constraint.
CS3.5/ C41	Land South of Hirwaun	Large brownfield site, formerly Tower Colliery. In ownership of a development firm, Tower Regeneration Ltd, the site forms a wider redevelopment site. Site would require rehabilitation from its previous works. Site is to the south of the proposed upgraded Heads of the Valleys Road corridor. Some sloping on site and retention ponds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential contamination • Rehabilitation costs 	B1, B2 & B8	65 (gross)	15 B1, B2 & B8	Yes but it is unclear whether the full site is required for employment.
CS3.6/ TP29	Former Cwm Colliery and Coking Works	Large brownfield site, formerly the Cwm Colliery and Coking Works site. Proposed employment land is part of a wider proposal for regeneration of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential contamination • Rehabilitation 	Employment	1.68	0.0	Potentially, as part of wider regeneration of

Site Ref.	Site Name	Site Description	Constraints	Intended Development in Planning Policy / Planning Permissions	Site Size, ha - Baseline	Site Size, ha – Realistically Available for B1/B2/B8 Use (Anticipated Land Use – B1/B2/B8)	Should the vacant land be safeguarded/ identified for employment uses?
		the wider site to include dwellings. Employment area is in north of wider site and would require the wider development of the area to enable it to come forward. Some rehabilitation of the site is likely. Access is difficult at the moment, with the colliery site behind residential areas and accessed via narrow roads. Site is partly within a flood zone.	costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flood zone (partial) 				site, though doubtful due to rehabilitation and development costs.
CS3.7/ TL37	Mwyndy/ Talbot Green Area	Site to the east of the A4119 and approximately 2km to the north of J34 of the M4. Greenfield site, partially covered with trees. Access to the site and internal roads would require upgrades to support employment uses. Neighbouring uses to the south include employment uses. Conservation issues for this greenfield site would need to be addressed if the site is to be developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) (majority) Access 	B1	15	0.0	No, due to SINC designation and environmental constraints.
Northern Strategy Area Existing Employment Allocations							
NSA14.1/ R25	Ferndale & Highfield Industrial Estate, Maerdy	Brownfield site that has been cleared. Adjacent to Ferndale and Highfields Industrial Estates. Flat site, with no obvious constraints to development. Planning permission for a primary school, which would take bulk of the land, though potentially about 1.4 ha remaining. Advised from RCTCBC to absorb the remaining land into R24.		Primary school	8.38 (1.4 vacant, to be reassigned to R24)	0.0	No
NSA14.2/ C5	North of Fifth Avenue, Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Hirwaun	Flat site in north of Hirwaun Industrial Estate that has been developed for waste processing and energy production. Buildings have been constructed though site is not yet operational.		B2, B8	4.17	0.0	No, unlikely that further uses would be developed on site
NSA14.3/ C12	Land at Former Mayhew Chicken Factory, Trecynon	Brownfield site, partly covered in trees and some hardstand area. In RCT ownership. Access would be via existing highways, including roundabout. High profile site at northern part of Aberdare. Site could support a single use or a multi-unit facility, though flooding constraint across majority of site limits development opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flood zone 	B1, B2, & B8	2.88	0.0	No, due to flood risk constraints
NSA14.4/	Cae Mawr Industrial Estate, Treorchy	Brownfield site, partly cleared, though still has	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access 	B1, B2	3.6	0.0	No, due to

Site Ref.	Site Name	Site Description	Constraints	Intended Development in Planning Policy / Planning Permissions	Site Size, ha - Baseline	Site Size, ha – Realistically Available for B1/B2/B8 Use (Anticipated Land Use – B1/B2/B8)	Should the vacant land be safeguarded/ identified for employment uses?
R6		substantial derelict warehouse structures. Site is flat and is adjacent to existing industrial uses that have units of a basic to moderate quality. To the west is a playing field. Access is via a narrow lane and bridge, past residential dwellings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration costs Flood zone 		(2.04 vacant)		flood constraints and regeneration costs.
Southern Strategy Area Existing Employment Allocations							
SSA14.1/ TT1	Coed Ely, Tonyrefail	High profile, flat site on the A4119 north of Llantrisant. Site has been developed as a joint venture between WG and RCT. While only one building has been completed and occupied, it is understood that almost all plots are committed or under offer. The occupied unit was built speculatively as a joint venture between RCT and WG. Some construction has been delayed due to rising development costs; however it is expected that this site will be rolled out in the near term.		B1, B2	15.78	15.78 B1, B2	Yes
SSA14.2/ TP28	Land south of Gelli-Hirion Industrial Estate, Pontypridd	Tree covered site close to an access point to the A470, a key district arterial. Partially sloped. Close to retail services. Could be developed for industrial uses as extension to Gelli-Hirion Industrial Estate. Detailed assessment would need to be undertaken to determine developability of site given sloping and trees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sloped Tree covered 	B2, B8	1.47	0.0	No, due to tree coverage
Employment Sites							
C1	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, East of 5th Ave	Reasonable quality units, though a quiet estate. Good quality landscaping. Some on street parking, though not causing interruptions. Would benefit from improvements to the A465. One vacant plot, which is triangular, thin and covered in scrubby trees, thus unlikely to be developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree covered (vacant plot) 	B1, B2, B8	7.55 (0.42 vacant)	0.0	No
C2	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Main and 4th Ave	Flat site in centre of Hirwaun Industrial Estate, comprising mid-sized industrial units and brownfield, cleared land. Units are of a good quality with sufficient off-street parking and good quality landscaping.		B1, B2, B8	22.77 (10.04 vacant)	10.04 B1, B2, B8	Yes

Site Ref.	Site Name	Site Description	Constraints	Intended Development in Planning Policy / Planning Permissions	Site Size, ha - Baseline	Site Size, ha – Realistically Available for B1/B2/B8 Use (Anticipated Land Use – B1/B2/B8)	Should the vacant land be safeguarded/ identified for employment uses?
C3	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, 14th, 16th, 17th Ave	Poor quality part of the industrial estate, with a disjointed layout and some poor quality buildings. On-street parking is prevalent in several parts of this area. Some clearance of older stock has occurred.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential contamination 	B1, B2, B8	22.29 (0.63 vacant)	0.0 B1, B2, B8	No, unlikely to be required in planning period.
C4	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, North of A465, South of 5th Ave	Flat area north of the A465 (though no direct access) with some significant tree coverage and landscaping. Low intensity of development throughout site, resulting in perception of low activity levels. Buildings are generally of a moderate to good quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential contamination 	B1, B2, B8	11.80 (0.7 vacant)	0.0	No, unlikely remainder of the site would be developed
C13	Prysmian Factory	Land to the rear of Prysmian Cables site, within the same land ownership. Potential flooding constraints for much of the site. Access to this part of the site would be difficult, though could be opened up for Prysmian Cables expansion, if required. Unlikely to be available for the wider market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access Flood zone 		14.91 (6.13 vacant)	0.0 (vacant land not available to wider market)	No, not available to wider market.
C26	Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, Units 15-39	Site to the west of B4275, which separates the area from the remainder of the industrial estate. Generally comprised of smaller industrial workshop units of a moderate quality. Off street parking is available and trees along edge of this area shield it from the roads. Some units are being used for retail uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High risk coal mining area Potential contamination 	B1, B2, B8	4.47 (0.18 vacant)	0.0	No, due to size and constraints
C28	Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, Units 40-42	Important part of broader Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, this section comprises the larger units within the estate, including warehouse and logistics uses. Good quality industrial units throughout, including buildings with higher eaves suitable for modern for logistics. Broad internal streets, suitable for HGVs.		B1, B2, B8	16.03 (1.44 vacant)	1.44	Yes
C32	Cwm Cynon Business Park North	Two good quality units have been developed on site, which are hybrid industrial/office uses. Potential for further development on remainder of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flood zone Tree cover 	B1, B2, B8	7.57 (1.41 vacant)	0.0	No

Site Ref.	Site Name	Site Description	Constraints	Intended Development in Planning Policy / Planning Permissions	Site Size, ha - Baseline	Site Size, ha – Realistically Available for B1/B2/B8 Use (Anticipated Land Use – B1/B2/B8)	Should the vacant land be safeguarded/ identified for employment uses?
		site, with a further unit developed to the north of existing footprints. However, profile/access of a further site would be limited and with tree cover it is unlikely that this site would come forward. Ownership is RCT.					
C33	Cwm Cynon Business Park South	Reasonable quality units, including small and medium sized workshops/industrial units. Remaining development parcels appear to be serviced and available for development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential contamination 	B1, B2, B8	7.96 (2.97 vacant)	2.97 B1, B2, B8	Yes
C36	Navigation Park, Abercynon	Good quality office park with well-maintained units and spaces. Alongside River Taff and within walking distance of Abercynon rail station and Abercynon centre. Two small development plots remain, within same ownership as nearby units (Business in Focus, a co-working space organisation). Potentially suitable for further office development, but unlikely due to scale.		B1	8.71 (0.33 vacant)	0.0 B1	No, too small for viable development
R2	Stelco Hardy	Demolished building leaving only hardstand areas on site. Within a residential area. Redevelopment costs and poor location likely to mean that site would only be a long term prospect (if at all) and the site's position suggests only a limited employment market. Alternative uses should be considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access Regeneration costs Flood zone 		2.14	0.0	No
R14	Cambrian Industrial Park	Industrial estate is comprised of small to mid sized units of a reasonable quality. High occupancy rate. Remaining parcel is small and at the rear of the site. It is serviced and flat and covered with low density scrub.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhondda Special Historic Landscape Area Potential contamination 		4.06 (0.24 vacant)	0.0	No
R22	Llwyncelyn Industrial Estate	Crowded industrial estate with awkward access from Llwwyncelyn Rd. Mix of storage and light industrial uses, with on-street parking increasing sense of crowdedness. Vacant parcel is flat but has further access constraints within the site and is small. Potentially could be developed for small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access 		3.77 (0.38 vacant)	0.0	No, small site in low profile location within estate.

Site Ref.	Site Name	Site Description	Constraints	Intended Development in Planning Policy / Planning Permissions	Site Size, ha - Baseline	Site Size, ha – Realistically Available for B1/B2/B8 Use (Anticipated Land Use – B1/B2/B8)	Should the vacant land be safeguarded/ identified for employment uses?
		scale storage or production uses.					
R24	Maerdy Road Industrial Estate	Quiet industrial estate north of the A4233 comprising very small to mid sized industrial units. Buildings do not have significant prominence from A4233 due to topography and tree cover. Vacant land reassigned from R25 (remaining land from primary school approval on R25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential contamination 		3.85	1.4	Yes.
TL2	Llantrisant Road	Site currently being developed for residential uses			3.13	0.0	No.
TL6	Llantrisant Business Park, East of Royal Mint	TL6 is part of broader Llantrisant Business Park, a significant business and industrial park, with access to the A4119. Within TL6 units are of a moderate to good quality. Two sites to the rear (north) of the site have been approved and are being developed for employment units. Another site, a small tree-covered site is also available, though less likely to be developed due to its vegetation constraints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree covered (1 small site) 		33.32 (vacant 0.40)	0.0	No, due to tree coverage and size of plot.
TL11	Ely Meadow/Gwaun Elai	Modern office and mixed commercial park in a high profile location. Office uses appear well occupied. On-street parking limits perceptions of access and amenity. Northern section, separated from other areas, is a medical hub, which has one small development parcel remaining (0.39ha), though this has a planning application for a car park. Western area is a former British Airways Avionic Engineering site, which is now closed (3.4ha). Eastern area is the highest profile, fronting the A4119 and includes offices space, Premier Inn, Costa Coffee and development parcels, one of which is currently used as an overflow car park (0.40 ha and 0.09ha).			16.05	0.40	Yes.
TL22	East Side of Coedcae Lane, including Forest Park Industrial Estate	Part of a broader industrial estate south of the A473 to the rail corridor. This section of the estate comprises small and mid size industrial/warehouse units of a moderate quality. Parking available off-street for most units, though some on-street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flood zone (part) 		3.74 (0.12 vacant)	0.0	No, if used would be for Wester Power uses, not unlikely to be

Site Ref.	Site Name	Site Description	Constraints	Intended Development in Planning Policy / Planning Permissions	Site Size, ha - Baseline	Site Size, ha – Realistically Available for B1/B2/B8 Use (Anticipated Land Use – B1/B2/B8)	Should the vacant land be safeguarded/ identified for employment uses?
		parking along Coedcae Lane. Small vacant site (0.12 ha) is tree covered and under ownership of Western Power Distribution.					available for wider market.
TL25	Coedcae Lane Industrial Estate, including Green Park	Part of a broader industrial estate south of the A473 to the rail corridor. This section of the estate comprises small to mid size industrial/warehouse units of a moderate to good quality. Parking available off-street for most units, though some on-street parking. Variation in landscaping quality, with some sites having significant grassed areas and some having negligible greenery. Vacant site (0.15 ha) is triangular and unlikely to be developed, rather remaining as a grassed area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irregular shape of vacant plot 		10.88 (0.15 vacant)	0.0	No, unlikely to be developed
TL36	Pencoed Technology Park	Very large, part developed site near Junction 35 of the M4. Site is in multiple ownerships. Plots have been established to support new build, large manufacturing/warehousing or office headquarter units and the site is being actively marketed. Suitable for leading businesses requiring a high profile location.			33.11	6.6	Yes
TP19	Treforest Industrial Estate, Main Avenue	Core element of the Treforest Industrial Estate, this is a very large, elongated area comprising a broad mix of manufacturing, warehousing and office uses, supported by other commercial uses, including retail, roadside services, auto retailing, etc. This section straddles Main Avenue, the main spine for the broader estate. Main Avenue is a broad, divided road, providing good turning room for large vehicles. Some significant vacancies in this area. Only a small amount of vacant land remains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flood zone 		38.87	0.39	Yes
TT4	Parc Eirin including Ensinger	Flat site, partially developed for B2 and B1 employment uses, in good quality, modern buildings. Remainder of the site appropriate for B2/B8 uses serving a local market. Access is past a new-build residential scheme, which may limit market appeal for employment uses.			5.25	0.82	Yes

Sources: Adopted Local Development Plan, planning applications, BE Group assessment, 2023

6.4 Table 28 below summarises the employment sites that contain land with potential for development, summarised from the assessment in Table 27 above. **The total realistic supply of developable employment land in RCT is 58.8 ha, comprised of 19.00 ha of Core Strategy Strategic Sites, 15.78 ha of Southern Strategic Area sites and 24.06 ha of other employment allocations.**

Table 28 – Employment Sites with Available Employment Land

Site Ref.	Site Name	Realistically Developable Site Area (ha)	Appropriate B-class Uses of Sites	Site Scoring (Max 20)	Should the vacant land be safeguarded/ identified for employment uses?
CS3.3/ C42	Pharmacite Plant Site (Extension to Aberaman Industrial Estate)	4.0	B2 & B8	11	Yes
CS3.5/ C41	Land South of Hirwaun	15.0	B1, B2 & B8	10	Yes but it is unclear whether the full site is required for employment
SSA14.1/ TT1	Coed Ely, Tonyrefail	15.78	B1 & B2	16	Yes
C2	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Main and 4th Ave	10.04	B1, B2 & B8	11	Yes
C28	Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, Units 40-42	1.44	B1, B2 & B8	15	Yes
C33	Cwm Cynon Business Park South	2.97	B1, B2 & B8	16	Yes
R24	Maerdy Road Industrial Estate	1.4	B1, B2 & B8	11	Yes
TL11	Ely Meadow/Gwaun Elai	0.40	B1 & B2	16	Yes
TL36	Pencoed Technology Park	6.6	B1, B2 & B8	19	Yes
TP19	Treforest Industrial Estate, Main Avenue	0.39	B1, B2 & B8	16	Yes
TT4	Parc Eirin including Ensinger	0.82	B2 & B8	12	Yes

Sources: Adopted Local Development Plan, planning applications, BE Group and RCT assessment, 2023

6.5 Of these, the following sites have more than 10 ha of available land. Such large quantities of available land provide opportunities for broad, integrated employment sites providing a critical mass of employment types and businesses.

- **Land South of Hirwaun (15.0 ha):** Very large brownfield site that has the potential to be a major employment node for the Valleys. The site is a current Strategic Site allocation, which is of a large scale. The whole site may not be required with regards to the identified need for employment land within RCT, however it is on the edge of the main settlements of the Cynon Valley. The site that was also safeguarded for its coal reserves has been subject to pre-extraction through opencast coal mining. The land has since been restored to allow for the development of the Strategic Site allocation. This may also be considered a strategic sub-regional development opportunity, in association with the considerable investment in the dualling of the A465 in the Heads of the Valleys area.

- **Coed Ely (15.78):** Site with construction ready plots, this will be a near term development for B1 and B2 uses.
- **Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Main and 4th Avenue (10.04 ha):** Hirwaun Industrial Estate has recorded slow development in recent years, with limited demand/interest from the market.
- **Pencoed Technology Park (6.6 ha):** Whilst below 10 hectares, this is a high profile site, appropriate for large businesses and headquarter sites. With access to the M4 and being actively marketed, this area will be a near term prospect.

6.6 Therefore, there is some choice of large sites, including current/near term schemes and longer-term prospects. The two large sites in Hirwaun require further consideration whether the sites have sufficient potential to come forward within this planning period.

6.7 The table above also includes site gradings for each employment allocation, using a standard scoring system (see Appendix 3) which reflects guidance in 'Employment Paper for SEWSPG: A Common Methodology for Undertaking Audits of Employment Sites as Part of an Employment Land Review in South East Wales' (Report of the Pathfinder Group, 2017). Each site is scored out of 20, made up of four individual measures, each scored out of five – Accessibility, Internal Environmental Factors, External Environmental Factors and Market Attractiveness. Those sites with no realistically available land are not included. The scoring is for the vacant and available land only and those broader sites that also include some existing buildings have been further assessed and graded below when assessing the existing employment areas. Proformas for existing areas, which includes the scoring is provided in Appendix 4.

6.8 Those sites that scored highest were those with excellent accessibility and prominence, with good market prospects and include:

- Pencoed Technology Park
- Coed Ely, Tonyrefail
- Cwm Cynon Business Park South
- Ely Meadow/Gwaun Elai
- Treforest Industrial Estate, Main Avenue

- 6.9 Lower scoring sites may require some significant level of change in circumstances to come forward in a timely manner, such as being part of a wider regeneration development scheme (such as land South of Hirwaun), a potential broader mix of uses or the identification of further areas of demand, which are not yet evident in the market.

Existing Employment Areas

- 6.10 This section reviews the existing employment areas in RCT for their on-going appropriateness for employment uses. These sites have considered factors such as condition of premises, vacant premises, market attractiveness and location.
- 6.11 The table overleaf provides a summary of each existing employment area in the County Borough. The table includes site scoring for each area, based on similar scoring as was undertaken for the employment sites, but also incorporating an assessment of the existing premises and external areas. Each site is scored out of 30, made up of six individual measures, each scored out of five – Accessibility, Building and Site Quality and Characteristics (Overall Building Quality and Overall Site Quality), Environmental Factors (internal and external) and Market Attractiveness. This is a means of assessing and comparing the sites, through a grading of several qualitative factors.
- 6.12 Proformas for existing areas are provided in Appendix 4.

Table 29 – Existing Employment Areas – Assessment Summaries

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
Hirwaun Industrial Estate	<p>Hirwaun Industrial Estate is a large, sprawling industrial estate in the north of RCT. The estate is disjointed and has significant variations in quality of buildings, from poor to new build. Low intensity of development in several parts of the estate and appears to be underperforming and quiet. Overall this industrial estate is too big for requirements.</p> <p>Upgrades to the Heads of the Valleys Rd has the potential to make this area more attractive to the market, though still likely to be too large for overall demand in the area.</p>	C1	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, East of 5th Ave	Reasonable quality units, though a quiet estate. Good quality landscaping. Some on street parking, though not causing interruptions. Would benefit from improvements to the A465. One vacant plot, which is triangular, thin and covered in scrubby trees, thus unlikely to be developed.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use
		C2	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Main and 4th Ave	Flat site in centre of Hirwaun Industrial Estate, comprising mid-sized industrial units and brownfield, cleared land. Units are of a good quality with sufficient off-street parking and good quality landscaping.	10.04	19	Retain for employment use
		C3	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, 14th, 16th, 17th Ave	Poor quality part of the industrial estate, with a disjointed layout and some poor quality buildings. On-street parking is prevalent in several parts of this area. Some clearance of older stock has occurred.	0.0	11	Retain for employment use
		C4	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, North of A465, South of 5th Ave	Flat area north of the A465 (though no direct access) with some significant tree coverage and landscaping. Low intensity of development throughout site, resulting in perception of low activity levels. Buildings are generally of a moderate to good quality.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use
		C5	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, North of 5th Ave Land	Flat site in north of Hirwaun Industrial Estate that has been developed for waste processing and energy production. Buildings have been constructed though site is not yet operational.	0.0	22	Retain, though not for B-class employment uses
		C6	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, North of 5th Ave	Site in the northern part of the Hirwaun Industrial Estate, built out with good quality industrial/ warehousing buildings, including larger units. Appears to be occupied, but low intensity of activity.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use
				C8	East of the A4061, Hirwaun	Site is south of the Hirwaun Industrial Estate, though separated from it and not part of this node. Site is on the A4061, with direct access to it and is occupied by a single manufacturer.	0.0
		C9	Bryngelli Industrial Estate, Hirwaun	Small agglomeration of industrial units, north of the A465, though no direct access from the	0.0	13	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
				A-road. Instead, access is from the north, via a residential street, which is narrow. Buildings are of a mix of quality, from poor to good, though some poor quality units are at the entrance, which reduces overall amenity. Disjointed internal layout of the estate			
		C13	Prysmian Factory, Llwydcoed	Existing use is a single occupier manufacturing operation. Buildings are of a good quality. Land to the rear of Prysmian Cables site, within the same land ownership. Potential flooding constraints for much of the site. Access to this part of the site would be difficult, though could be opened up for Prysmian Cables expansion, if required. Unlikely to be available for the wider market.	0.0	19	Unoccupied land not available to the wider market. Retain occupied site for employment use
		C14	Aberdare Business Park, Robertstown	Industrial estate straddling Wellington Street, comprising manufacturing and warehousing units of a range of quality. Wellington Street is very narrow in parts and small residential nodes are located at either end of the industrial estate. Afon Cynon is to the north of the estate and poses a flood risk throughout the site.	0.0	14	Retain for employment use
		C15	Robertstown Industrial Estate, Aberdare	Brownfield site that has been partially redeveloped. New-build uses are small workshop spaces and Coleg Y Cymoedd building. Site also includes park and ride facility for Aberdare Station. Remaining land off Wellington St (former Universal factory) has been partially cleared and may be suitable for employment uses, although it is acknowledged that it's within a flood risk zone.	0.0	26	Retain for employment use
		C19	Aberdare Town Centre Office Area	Central site east of the high street of Aberdare. Mix of quality of office buildings, some with own parking, but some would rely on town centre public parking. Includes a multi-storey building with public sector occupation, repurposed heritage buildings and single storey office units. RCTBC is largest owner within the site, though there are also private sector ownerships. Some good quality	0.0	25	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
				landscaping within and surrounding the site.			
		C20	Cwmbach Industrial Estate, Canal Road, Cwmbach	Linear industrial estate comprising a mix of manufacturing, trade counter/suppliers and car servicing. Good levels of activity/occupancy within the site. Some on-street parking creating perception of crowdedness. Close to public transport options and A4059.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		C21	Canal Road, South of the Roundabout, Cwmbach	Linear industrial estate to the south of C20. Uses are a mix of auto servicing, auto sales, trade counter and general industry. Units are of a basic to moderate quality and generally smaller than C20 to the north. Good levels of activity/occupancy within the site. Some on-street parking creating perception of crowdedness. Close to public transport options and A4059.	0.0	17	Retain for employment use
		C24	Gasworks Road Industrial Estate	Flat site comprised a mix of small industrial units, outdoor storage and bus depot. While close to the A4059 roundabout at Aberaman, the site does not have access or visibility from the A4059. Rather the site is accessed via Gasworks Road, a narrow and poorly maintained road. Vehicles are required to pass residential areas to reach the site. Buildings are of a basic standard.	0.0	11	Retain for employment use
Aberaman Park Industrial Estate	Large industrial estate in prominent location south of the A4059. Contains a broad range of unit sizes up to large warehousing units. Wide internal roads are appropriate for HGV movements. Most areas have off street parking. Key node for Aberdare/Aberaman. Full site is within the flood zone. Some expansion land is available in the south (C42).	C25	Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, Units 1-14	High profile part of broader Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, this section is located south of the A4059. Large off-street car parking for sites. Mix of small and medium industrial, light industrial and trade counter units. Moderate to good quality units with good occupancy levels. Some retail warehouse type uses have located in this area.	0.0	24	Retain for employment use
		C26	Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, Units 15-39	Site to the west of B4275, which separates the area from the remainder of the industrial estate. Generally comprised of smaller industrial workshop units of a moderate quality. Off street parking is available and trees along edge of this area shield it from the	0.0	23	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
				roads. Some units are being used for retail uses.			
		C27	Aberaman Enterprise Centre, Units 1-29	Small mixed industrial units within Aberaman Park Industrial Estate. This section is accessed through C25 and from a market perspective would not be considered to be a different estate. Its position within the broader estate means it has a low profile, despite being physically close to the A4059. Units are being occupied by a mix of light industrial, workshop, trade counter and quasi retail uses.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use
		C28	Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, Units 40-42	Important part of broader Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, this section comprises the larger units within the estate, including warehouse and logistics uses. Good quality industrial units throughout, including buildings with higher eaves suitable for modern for logistics. Broad internal streets, suitable for HGVs.	1.44	23	Retain for employment use
		C42	Phurnacite Plant Site (Extension to Aberaman Industrial Estate)	Remaining sites of the key industrial area of Aberaman Industrial Estate. Large, predominantly flat site suitable for mid to large B2/B8 units. Some contamination potential due to previous uses. Site access and estate roads are suitable for HGVs and neighbouring uses are a mix of industrial uses.	4.0	11 (max 20)	Retain for employment use
		C30	Cardiff Road, including Navigation Yard	Narrow, linear collection of industrial uses along Cardiff Rd, though not within an integrated estate. Single occupier sites with mid sized units are located in the northern section of the site, with the southern land parcel comprising a collection of smaller units. Parking is generally off-street, though some on-street parking was evident at time of inspection, with potential for congestion with Cardiff Road relatively narrow.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
		C32	Cwm Cynon Business Park, North	Two good quality units have been developed on site, which are hybrid industrial/office uses. Potential for further development on remainder of site, with a further unit developed to the north of existing footprints. However, profile/access of a further site would be limited and with tree cover it is unlikely that this site would come forward. Ownership is RCT.	0.0	26	Retain for employment use
		C33	Cwm Cynon Business Park, South	Reasonable quality units, including small and medium sized workshops/industrial units. Remaining development parcels appear to be serviced and available for development.	2.97	24	Retain for employment use
		C34	AB Electronics Factory, Ynysboeth	Site to the west of New Road (A4059) that is fully developed. Dedicated access road from New Road is solely for this estate. Buildings are of a moderate quality. Parking is along the road (in dedicated bays) as well as off-street.	0.0	17	Retain for employment use
		C35	Pontcynon Industrial Estate	Moderate quality industrial estate west of New Road (A4059). Comprises a mix of manufacturing, warehousing and outdoor storage uses. Buildings are of a basic to good quality. Good occupancy levels.	0.0	19	Retain for employment use
		C36	Navigation Park, Abercynon	Good quality office park with well-maintained units and spaces. Alongside River Taff and within walking distance of Abercynon rail station and Abercynon centre. Two small development plots remain, within same ownership as nearby units (Business in Focus, a co-working space organisation). Potentially suitable for further office development, but unlikely due to scale.	0.0	26	Retain for employment use
		C37	Ty Trevithick and Adjoining Land, Abercynon	2-storey office building owned by RCTBC and utilised for Council offices. Long, single structure office building, not likely to be easily reoccupied if made available to the market. Significant car parking on site. Adjacent to A470, though access to and from the A-road is approximately 1.3 km to the north.	0.0	17	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
		C39	SPS Gooden Sanken, Abercynon	Single occupancy site to the north of C37 used for a car trading centre. Significant car parking is available within the site. Building is of a good quality. Adjacent to A470, though access to and from the A-road is approximately 1.3 km to the north.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		C40	The Old Parish Road, Ynysybwll	Linear collection of small employment uses along The Old Parish Road, which is a minor and very narrow road. Supports small workshops in older buildings. Very low profile site.	0.0	11	Do not retain for employment use
		R2	Stelco Hardy, Treherbert	Demolished building leaving only hardstand areas on site. Within a residential area. Redevelopment costs and poor location likely to mean that site would only be a long term prospect (if at all) and the site's position suggests only a limited employment market. Alternative uses should be considered	0.0	10	Do not retain for employment use
		R3	Treherbert Industrial Estate	Two thirds of this site is occupied by Everest as a manufacturing site, with the remaining third being a RCTBC recycling centre. Site is flat and in a low-profile position, with a rail corridor to the south and residential areas to the north and north-west, though mostly separated by the Rhondda River. Close to Treherbert rail station.	0.0	15	Retain for employment use, though should be re-evaluated if current occupier vacates site.
		R4	Ynyswen Industrial Estate	Triangular site bounded by Rhondda River, rail corridor and minor street. Not operating an integrated industrial estate, rather it is a loose agglomeration of uses, including small workshops, mid-sized manufacturing and warehousing. Reasonably low intensity of development, though unlikely to accommodate further units.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use
		R5	Abergorki Industrial Estate & Parc Busnes Treorci	Large industrial estate bounded by Rhondda River, rail corridor and a primary school. Estate has several larger units including manufacturing and warehousing. Units appear to be larger than expected for a low-profile site. main access street from the A4061 is	0.0	17	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
				narrow.			
		R6	Caemawr Industrial Estate - Allocation (NSA 14.4)	Brownfield site, partly cleared, though still has substantial derelict warehouse structures. Site is flat and is adjacent to existing industrial uses that have units of a basic to moderate quality. To the west is a playing field. Access is via a narrow lane and bridge, past residential dwellings.	0.0	12	Retain for employment uses.
		R7	Treorchy Industrial Estate	Triangular site bounded by Rhondda River, rail corridor and R6. Units are of a basic to moderate state and intensity of uses appear to be low. Access is via a narrow lane and bridge, past residential dwellings. Circulation is not possible through the site, with access to the units via a series of cul-de-sacs of a main internal street.	0.0	16	Retain for employment use
		R8	Old Griffin Mill Field	Single occupancy site within a residential area. Use is office and warehouse space. Fully surrounded by residential uses and an allotment. Access is via narrow residential streets.	0.0	12	Do not retain for employment uses.
		R9	Gelli Industrial Estate	Long, linear employment node on two distinct ground levels, separated by internal roads and an embankment. Low intensity of development throughout the site, though further industrial units are being developed. Uses include small and mid sized industrial and warehousing units and outdoor storage. Significant levels of vacant space.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		R11	Factories at Salem Terrace Llwynypia	Untidy industrial estate along Ridgewell Way, which is a narrow laneway off the A4058 (Rhondda Terrace). The estate comprises a manufacturing unit (occupied by a windows manufacturer), auto servicing unit and a salvage yard. Ridgewell Way is used for parking, adding to perceptions of crowding and untidiness. Vulnerable to congestion at intersection with A4058.	0.0	13	Retain for employment uses, however continue to monitor potential for regeneration of the site, including a broader mix of uses.

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
		R12	Tonypandy Enterprise Centre	Industrial estate between Llwynypia Road (which leads to Tonypandy town centre) and the Rhondda River. While close to both the A4119 and A4058, the site itself is not in a prominent location and access is limited to connecting to the A4058 via Llwynypia Road. The units are a mix of small workshops and mid sized manufacturing/warehousing units.	0.0	16	Retain for employment use
		R14	Cambrian Business Park Clydach Vale	Industrial estate is comprised of small to mid sized units of a reasonable quality. High occupancy rate. Remaining parcel is small and at the rear of the site. It is serviced and flat and covered with low density scrub.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use
		R15	The Pavilions Clydach Vale	Site to the west of R14 at the end of a cul-de-sac. Owned and occupied by RCTBC, the site comprises good quality office space.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		R16	Penygraig Industrial Estate	Poor quality, small industrial estate surrounded by residential and community uses. Access is via a car park and a narrow road. Some older units have been removed, with only the metal shell remaining. There is a planning application for the regeneration of part of the site for industrial units, including the partly removed units, though this appears to have stalled.	0.0	10	Retain for employment use
		R17	Ely Industrial Estate	Good quality industrial estate, although appears to be quiet. Access from the A4119 is via two roundabouts and a relatively steep incline, which may limit attractiveness for businesses requiring significant HGV movements. Units are generally small workshops, though there are some mid sized industrial units. Some non-B-class uses are also located within the estate.	0.0	22	Retain for employment use
		R18	Council Depot Porth	Single occupier site for RCTBC depot, outdoor storage and recycling centre uses. Small building only, with most of the site for outdoor storage/hardstand.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
		R19	Dinas Enterprise Centre	Site in prominent position at intersection of A4058 and A4233. Majority of site is not being used for B-class employment uses, rather retail uses dominate, including Aldi and convenience retailing. Likely to be continued pressures for remaining B2 use to be converted to retailing.	0.0	18	While a prominent site, do not retain for employment use, reflecting current retail uses. More appropriate to consider as an out of town retail centre.
		R20	Bus Depot Porth	Single use site in a central location within Porth. Occupier is a bus operation. Site is well positioned for a bus depot, given its proximity to the A4058 and A4233, though some access streets are narrow. Site is elongated, with a confusing layout, not conducive to an efficient operation.	0.0	15	Retain for employment use
		R21	Rheola Industrial Estate	Small industrial estate in a narrow site between the A4233 and the Rhondda River. Units are of a moderate quality. While centrally located, there is no direct access to the A4233 and the site is hidden due to topography differences and shielding.	0.0	17	Retain for employment use
		R22	Llwyncelyn Industrial Estate	Crowded industrial estate with awkward access from Llwyncelyn Rd. Mix of storage and light industrial uses, with on-street parking increasing sense of crowdedness. Vacant parcel is flat but has further access constraints within the site and is small. Potentially could be developed for small scale storage or production uses.	0.38	16	Retain for employment use
		R23	Former Fennar Factory	Large, good quality manufacturing building in Maerdy. Building is used for plastics/rubber manufacturing. Site is in a quiet, Valleys area, south of the former Maerdy Colliery Site (CS3.1/R33) though no other nearby employment uses.	0.0	21	Retain for employment use
		R24	Maerdy Road Industrial Estate	Quiet industrial estate north of the A4233 comprising very small to mid sized industrial units. Buildings do not have significant	1.4	16	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
				prominence from A4233 due to topography and tree cover. Vacant land reassigned from R25 (remaining land from primary school approval on R25)			
		R26	Highfields Industrial Estate	Industrial estate to the east of R25 and R24, north of the A4233. Appears to be a quiet industrial estate comprising multi-let industrial buildings in a linear layout. Buildings do not have significant prominence from A4233 due to topography and tree cover. Significant level of vacancies.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use
		R27	Oaklands Business Park	Reasonable quality industrial estate, comprising two multi-unit buildings surrounding a central car-parking and circulation area. Industrial estate has a dedicated service road from the A4233.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		R29	Paulette's Yard & Workshop	Narrow site on the junction of the A4233 and Aberllechau Road comprising building suppliers fronting the site and a workshop to the rear. Desirable, prominent position at the junction, though not benefiting workshop site at the rear.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		R30	Former Peacock Site	Site comprising two large industrial buildings, accessed from Aberllechau Road. Buildings are shielded from roadways by significant tree cover and topography changes. Surprisingly large units for this site, given surrounding uses are generally residential and is a function of historic uses of the site.	0.0	16	Retain for employment use
		R31	Ynyshir Industrial Estate	Narrow site between A4233 and Ynyshir Road. Site comprises good quality industrial units, with driveways fronting Ynyshir Road. This road is relatively narrow and with on-street parking there is local congestion.	0.0	17	Retain for employment use
		R32	Ynyshir Lady Lewis Industrial Estate	Linear site to the east of the A4233. Comprising small to medium industrial units, including some new build development. Access is direct from A4233. Northern half of the site comprises moderate quality industrial units with limited yard space. These units are	0.0	18	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
				adjacent to a school to the north. Southern half comprises a mix of new build and older, smaller units.			
		TL3	Newtown Industrial Estate	Disjointed industrial estate to the south of Llantrisant Road. Units have been developed in a haphazard manner. The rear of the site contains significant outdoor storage areas.	0.0	16	Retain for employment use
Llantrisant Business Park	Llantrisant Business Park is a very large industrial estate with access to the A4119. One of the key estates within the County Borough and hosts small to large manufacturing and warehousing uses, including key employers for the County Borough. Well positioned to serve both RCT and wider market.	TL6	Llantrisant Business Park, East of Royal Mint	TL6 is part of broader Llantrisant Business Park, a significant business and industrial park, with access to the A4119. Within TL6 units are of a moderate to good quality. Two sites to the rear (north) of the site have been approved and are being developed for employment units. Another site, a small tree-covered site is also available, though less likely to be developed due to its vegetation constraints.	0.0	23	Retain for employment use
		TL7	Llantrisant Business Park, Royal Mint	This site is a single occupier site, housing the Royal Mint. The site contains several buildings, including manufacturing, storage, office and visitor/reception areas. The site allows for tours of the Mint and has significant visitor parking at the front of the site.	0.0	24	Retain for employment use
		TL8	Llantrisant Business Park, West of Royal Mint	Highly prominent site at the gateway of the estate. Site includes good quality office and manufacturing premises, including leading businesses within the County Borough.	0.0	28	Retain for employment use
		TL9	Llantrisant Business Park, South East of Royal Mint	This site contains good quality manufacturing buildings, including some recent builds, though there is some older stock in the north of the site.	0.0	24	Retain for employment use
		TL10	Llantrisant Business Park, South West of Royal Mint (Edwards Business Park)	Highly prominent site at the gateway of the estate. Site formerly a very large, single occupier manufacturing use, that has since vacated. Buildings have been repurposed for multiple occupiers, though still contains some significant level of vacancies. Some older buildings within this area.	0.0	21	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
		TL11	Ely Meadow/Gwaun Elai including Magden Park	Modern office and mixed commercial park in a high profile location. Office uses appear well occupied. On-street parking limits perceptions of access and amenity. Northern section, separated from other areas, is a medical hub, which has one small development parcel remaining (0.39ha), though this has a planning application for a car park. Western area is a former British Airways Avionic Engineering site, which is now closed (3.4ha). Eastern area is the highest profile, fronting the A4119 and includes offices space, Premier Inn, Costa Coffee and development parcels, one of which is currently used as an overflow car park (0.40 ha and 0.09ha).	0.40	25	Retain for employment use
		TL16	Mwyndy Cross Industries, Pontyclun	Industrial estate with access to the A4119 and close to the M4. However, buildings are not visible from the A4119 and thus has low prominence. Estate is a loose collection of units, dominated by a large Leekes (furniture retailer) warehouse/head office, with additional small manufacturing and office units. Access from the A4119 is via a narrow, tree-lined laneway, not suitable for servicing an industrial estate. Adjacent to CS3.7/TL37, which has significant vacant land.	0.0	19	Retain for employment use
Talbot Green	Talbot Green is an agglomeration of adjacent business and industrial parks that have been developed over several years in a piecemeal manner. Straddling both sides of the A473 and with good connectivity to the M4 via A-roads, this node is an important employment area for RCT. This area is build out (other than remnant very small sites) though remains an important site for businesses acquiring built stock. There is a very broad range of unit sizes.	TL19	Fillcare Plant and Warehouse (Formerly L'Oreal)	Site at the northern part of the Talbot Green industrial area. Comprised of two very large units providing manufacturing and storage uses. Site has good prominence in the area on the A473, with full divided road access to the M4. Some underutilised space in western parcel, though not likely to be available to wider market.	0.0	26	Retain for employment use
		TL20	Lanelay Road Industrial Estate (Spar)	Prominent industrial estate within Talbot Green on the A473, with full divided road access to the M4. Older buildings, with low eaves and with dated appearance. Access from the A473 is somewhat confusing and unattractive.	0.0	15	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
		TL21	The Beeches Industrial Estate	Small part of the Talbot Green area on Coedcae Lane, just south of the A473. Comprises small light industrial, industrial and office units. Units are of a reasonable quality.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use
		TL22	East Side of Coedcae Lane, including Forest Park I E	Part of a broader industrial estate south of the A473 to the rail corridor. This section of the estate comprises small and mid size industrial/warehouse units of a moderate quality. Parking available off-street for most units, though some on-street parking along Coedcae Lane. Small vacant site (0.12 ha) is tree covered and under ownership of Western Power Distribution.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use
		TL23	Woodlands Workshop Centre	Small part of the Talbot Green area along the Coedcae Lane corridor, although this area does not have frontage to Coedcae Lane, being behind the Western Power Distribution site. Units are of a reasonable quality, though very small. Crowded site, with relatively narrow circulation area.	0.0	14	Retain for employment use
		TL24	Cambrian Industrial Estate, East Side	Industrial units at the southern end of the Talbot Green area, with rail corridor to the south. Crowded and haphazard layout of units in this area, with parked vehicles impeding internal movements and servicing. River Ely corridor to the east.	0.0	15	Retain for employment use
		TL25	Coedcae Lane Industrial Estate including Green Park	Part of a broader industrial estate south of the A473 to the rail corridor. This section of the estate comprises small to mid size industrial/warehouse units of a moderate to good quality. Parking available off-street for most units, though some on-street parking. Variation in landscaping quality, with some sites having significant grassed areas and some having negligible greenery. Vacant site (0.15 ha) is triangular and unlikely to be developed, rather remaining as a grassed area.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		TL26	Hepworth Business Park, Talbot Green	Part of a broader industrial estate south of the A473 to the rail corridor. This section is	0.0	24	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
				centrally located within the estate and comprises mid and larger units, predominantly for storage/warehousing. While having a relatively narrow road frontage along Coedcae Lane, the site is large and comprises good quality units.			
		TL27	Cambrian Industrial Estate, West Side	Long, narrow site at the southern end of the Talbot Green area, with rail corridor to the south. Crowded and haphazard layout of units in this area, with parked vehicles impeding internal movements and servicing. River Ely corridor to the east. Predominantly a manufacturing and warehousing site, though some non-B-class uses have encroached on the site.	0.0	15	Retain for employment use
		TL29	Talbot Green Business Park	Site at the north-western part of the Talbot Green industrial area. Dog-leg shaped site wrapping around TL19 with access to the A473 via a roundabout. Site comprises a range of good quality units, including non-B-class uses, in an attractive setting. Topography of the site would limit walkability.	0.0	26	Retain for employment use
Ely Valley Business Park	Agglomeration of industrial units and outdoor storage in Pontyclun. Comprised of good quality units, this area has a confusing layout. Its location is close to Pontyclun rail station and the town centre of Pontyclun, though is in a very low profile area and difficult to get to.	TL30	Ely Valley Business Park	Along with T31, this site provides a mix of good quality industrial units, close to services, though difficult to access. The triangular shape of this area dictates the layout of buildings.	0.0	16	Retain for employment use
		TL31	Junction Industrial Centre & Ely Valley Business Park (East), Pontyclun	Along with T30, this site provides a mix of good quality industrial units, close to services, though difficult to access. Cul-de-sac nature of streets within the site means it is difficult to navigate. Some encroachment of non-B-class uses within the units.	0.0	16	Retain for employment use
		TL36	Pencoed Technology Park, Pencoed	Very large, part developed site near Junction 35 of the M4. Site is in multiple ownerships. Plots have been established to support new build, large manufacturing/warehousing or office headquarter units and the site is being actively marketed. Suitable for leading businesses requiring a high profile location.	10.53	29	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
		TL39	Control Centre, Station Road, Church Village	Small, single-occupier site in Church Village. Near to the locally important junction of Station Road and Main Road, though the site is tucked in behind buildings and not prominent from the roadways. Good quality office building.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		TP1	Hetty, Hopkinstown	Narrow site along A4058, between Pontypridd and Porth. Western portion of the site contains a building supplier and a shed. Eastern portion of the site contains the heritage listed Hetty Winding House and would not be available for employment uses.	0.0	22	Retain for employment use
		TP2	Barry Sidings	Narrow site south of the River Rhondda containing a scrap yard. Within a heavily treed area, the site is hidden away. Connectivity to the nearby A4058 is via a very narrow laneway and a narrow bridge across the river.	0.0	11	Do not retain for employment use
		TP3	Maritime Industrial Estate including Maritime Workshops, Pontypridd	Busy industrial estate within Pontypridd. Near to residential areas, though sufficient separation between them. Mix of auto servicing and engineering works, with some encroachment of non-B-class uses. Range of building qualities throughout the site from very poor to good.	0.0	18	Retain for employment use
		TP8	Town Centre Office Area, Gelliwastad Road, Pontypridd	Pontypridd town centre location. Mix of uses along Gelliwastad Road, not limited to office or other B-class uses, including student accommodation, community and civic uses. Key occupiers include Town Council and Police. Gelliwastad Road is also used as a bypass of the core of the town centre.	0.0	25	Retain for employment use
		TP10	Glyntaff Sidings, Pentrebach Road	Small, narrow site on Pentrebach Road and with close access to the A470. Site consists of a small aggregation of modest quality buildings, including builders' merchants, scrap yard and workshops.	0.0	15	Retain for employment use
		TP11	Albion Industrial Estate	Industrial estate comprising a large number of small workshops. Buildings have low eaves and are looking dated. While close to the A470 corridor, access to this road is not convenient	0.0	14	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
				and would require significant doubling back. Significant level of vacancies.			
		TP13	Dr William Price Business Park	Line of good quality office buildings opposite Treforest rail station, used by the University of South Wales for innovation and specialist spaces.	0.0	24	Retain for employment use
		TP14	Gellihirion Industrial Estate	Mixed use employment estate with good access to the A470. Comprising mid sized, low leaves units, the scheme is close to residential and retail uses, though has sufficient separation from these uses. Some buildings are in need of refurbishment, though overall the estate is performing its function well.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		TP16	Melin Corrwg, Hawthorn	Linear site comprising a small number of two-storey office buildings along Cardiff Road. Buildings are of a good quality and have off-street parking. Site is close to an access point to the A470.	0.0	26	Retain for employment use
		TP17	Upper Boat Trading Estate & Upper Boat Business Centre (A-G)	A mixed retail and industrial estate in a key position at a junction with the A470. Approximately half the site is taken up by a Dunelm outlet, with the remainder of the site a mix of buildings comprising trade counters, offices and manufacturing. While is a key location, the site has significant trees shielding from the strategic roads, which reduces the visibility for occupiers.	0.0	22	Retain for employment use
Treforest Industrial Estate	Very large industrial estate straddling the River Taff. This sprawling area provides a very large array of unit sizes and types. The River Taff separates different elements of the estate, with the West Bank area a more haphazard development area, with the areas along Main Avenue developed in a more orderly manner. Access to the A470, with strategic connectivity to the wider region, is the key attractive element of this estate. The area also includes retail and education elements.	TP18	Treforest Industrial Estate, West Bank	Very large agglomeration of industrial uses to the south of the River Taff. Very good access to the A470. Development throughout this area has been piecemeal, resulting in a difficult to navigate estate. However, it clearly is providing an important and broad economic function for RCT.	0.0	21	Retain for employment use
		TP19	Treforest Industrial Estate, Main Avenue	Core element of the Treforest Industrial Estate, this is a very large, elongated area comprising a broad mix of manufacturing, warehousing and office uses, supported by other commercial uses, including retail, roadside services, auto retailing, etc. This section	0.39	23	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
				straddles Main Avenue, the main spine for the broader estate. Main Avenue is a broad, divided road, providing good turning room for large vehicles. Some significant vacancies in this area. Only a small amount of vacant land remains.			
		TP20	Parc Nantgarw	Large industrial, leisure and commercial area immediately to the east of T19. Main spine road of this area is Heol Y Gamlas, the northern half of the site is a traditional industrial and business park location, with the southern half a broader mix, including leisure, education, office and food outlets. Some medium to large B-class units, including headquarters and significant manufacturing premises. Lower level of vacancies than T19. Coleg Y Cymoedd developing a site in the south, which was the last development parcel in this area.	0.0	25	Retain for employment use, though should consider reduction in area designated for B-class uses, given current occupiers.
		TP21	GEAES Works, Nantgarw	Large, single-occupier manufacturing site. GE Aircraft Engine Services is a key employer in the County Borough and wider region. Buildings on site are purpose-built for specialist manufacturing.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		TP22	Cardiff Road, Nantgarw	Small, narrow collection of employment and commercial uses between the A470 and Cardiff Road.	0.0	20	Retain for employment use
		TP23	Glan y Llyn Industrial Estate, Taffs Well	Small industrial estate on Cardiff Road and Moy Road. Physically close to the A470, access is significantly further away, reducing accessibility. Units are a mix of low-eave industrial and commercial buildings for small occupiers. Layout of the estate is not integrated and appears crowded.	0.0	16	Retain for employment use, though monitor as potential for conflict with residential uses and long-term pressure for redevelopment
		TP24	Moy Road Industrial Estate / Rombourne Industrial Centre	Industrial estate comprised predominantly of warehousing uses. Eastern boundary is the A470, though access is not convenient. Mid to large units, some with high eaves. Some units	0.0	21	Retain for employment use

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
				appear to have been refurbished.			
		TP26	Robert Price Timber Yard	Single occupier site to the west of the A470. Use is a timber mill and merchant and comprises milling buildings and indoor and outdoor storage.	0.0	16	Retain for employment use
		TP27	Ty Rhiw Industrial Estate (Rockwood)	Small, isolated employment area at the end of Cemetery Road, which is a very narrow laneway in this section. Buildings are dated and in need of refurbishment. Site is surrounded by greenery.	0.0	13	Do not retain for employment use
		TT1	Coed Ely, Tonyrefail	High profile, flat site on the A4119 north of Llantrisant. Site has been developed as a joint venture between WG and RCT. While only one building has been completed and occupied, it is understood that almost all plots are committed or under offer. The occupied unit was built speculatively as a joint venture between RCT and WG. Some construction has been delayed due to rising development costs; however it is expected that this site will be rolled out in the near term.	15.78	25	Retain for employment use
		TT2	Parc Eirin North East of A4093	Quiet industrial estate off the A4093. Close to residential areas and very limited other employment uses, Site comprises of mid sized industrial units of a moderate to good quality. Units are occupied by manufacturing uses.	0.0	19	Retain for employment use
		TT4	Parc Eirin, Ensinger	Flat site, partially developed for B2 and B1 employment uses, in good quality, modern buildings. Remainder of the site appropriate for B2/B8 uses serving a local market. Access is past a new-build residential scheme, which may limit market appeal for employment uses.	0.82	21	Retain for employment use
		TT8	Gelligron Industrial Estate, Tonyrefail	Small, crowded employment area in a central location within Tonyrefail. The haphazard layout of the site, narrow access and dated buildings mean that the site would have limited market appeal, though is providing low cost accommodation for local businesses.	0.0	12	Retain for employment uses at this stage, but monitor for potential regeneration for non-employment

Estate Name	Overall Description	Site Ref	Site Name	Site Descriptions	Vacant and Available Parcels of Land on Existing Site	Site Scoring, Max 30	Recommendation
							uses in the longer term if required to meet Tonyrefail's needs.
		TT9	Dinas Isaf East including Ty Elai	Employment node to the east of the A4119 in two distinct halves. The northern half is a single occupier site comprising RCT council offices and associated car parking. The southern half is an industrial node comprising mid to large manufacturing units. The site has significant greenery at the edges providing strong shielding.	0.0	22	Retain for employment use
		TT10	Dinas Isaf West	Single occupier site to the west of the A4119. Access is via a roundabout off the A4119 and past a semi-rural area. Occupier is the Heart of the Valleys Information Hub (NHS), housed in a large industrial/office building.	0.0	21	Retain for employment use

Sources: RCT, BE Group 2023

6.13 Employment areas that scored highly, due to good, modern premises in prominent locations, with good accessibility include:

- Pencoed Technology Park
- Llantrisant Business Park, West of Royal Mint
- Melin Corrwg
- Talbot Green Business Park
- Fillcare Plant and Warehouse
- Navigation Park
- Cwm Cynon Business Park North
- Robertstown Industrial Estate

6.14 Employment areas that scored poorly were those with older premises that do not meet the needs of modern businesses that are poorly located and have poor access. These sites include:

- Stelco Hardy, Treherbert
- Penygraig Industrial Estate
- The Old Parish Road, Ynysybwl
- Gasworks Road Industrial Estate
- Barry Sidings
- Hirwaun Industrial Estate, 14th, 16th and 17th Avenues
- Caemawr Industrial Estate
- Gelligron Industrial Estate, Tonyrefail
- Old Griffin Mill Field
- Factories at Salem Terrace, Llwynypia
- Bryngelli Industrial Estate
- Ty Rhiw Industrial Estate (Rockwood)

6.15 Of these poorly performing employment areas, it is recommended that the following sites are not retained for employment uses in the RLDP:

- Stelco Hardy, Treherbert
- Penygraig Industrial Estate
- The Old Parish Road, Ynysybwl
- Gasworks Road Industrial Estate

- Barry Sidings
- Old Griffin Mill Field
- Ty Rhiw Industrial Estate (Rockwood)

6.16 These sites would be expected to be redeveloped for non-B-class uses over the coming planning period as current uses move out. RCTBC should work with landholders to determine the most appropriate reuse of these sites. The remainder of these poorly performing sites are recommended to be retained as employment nodes as this remains the most logical and highest order for these areas. However, they should be closely monitored to determine whether they remain as employment nodes in the longer term.

Summary

- 6.17 In terms of overall supply, the **existing employment allocations provide some 58.8ha of available and developable employment land, comprised of 19.00 ha of Core Strategy Strategic Sites, 15.78 ha of Southern Strategic Area sites and 24.06 ha of other employment allocations.**
- 6.18 In the following chapter, this supply will be compared to forecast demand over the planning period.

7.0 EMPLOYMENT LAND FORECASTS

Introduction

7.1 The Welsh Planning Practice Guidance Note 'Building an Economic Development Evidence Base to Support a Local Development Plan' states that the assessment of future land needs should be determined by looking at both past trends and future forecasting methods, and highlights that these should include historic land take-up and future employment and population change. Neither approach provides a definitive answer, but they do provide an indication of growth patterns and directions. Trends and forecasts must also reflect market signals and they are considered in the context of the market overview undertaken as part of this study.

7.2 The two models are:

- Practice Guidance Method 1: Past Building Completions
This reviews the actual take-up of employment land and premises in the County Borough over time. The method is not wholly reliable as there will be peaks and troughs and different time periods taken can also result in different outcomes. For example, a period of sustained growth may show a high average take-up, whereas looking over a recessionary period could well reflect low or even nil take-up. Furthermore, it relies on the veracity and extent of data collected over time.
- Practice Guidance Method 2: Labour Demand Forecasting
This relies on the econometric forecasts which use a model that projects the likely jobs growth in different industry sectors. The jobs figures are then translated to land using a formula based on jobs to floorspace density, which in turn can be translated into the projected land need. This method uses **Oxford Economics forecasts**, which account for the most recent national and regional socio-economic and political changes and which could be seen as a baseline trajectory of employment. We have reviewed all sectors (growing and declining sectors) to assess changes in employment land and premises needs as well as growth sectors only.

Employment forecasts and the resulting estimations of employment premises and land have several limitations. The forecasts are based on national and regional trends with some local adjustments for some industry sectors, which means, at a local level economic activity is not always accurately

represented. For example, any differences in the economic performance during the pandemic recovery between RCT and the national averages, may not be adequately picked up within the forecasts. Also, merely translating jobs to land needs will not always reflect local property trends.

The econometric forecasts are useful in that they analyse each industry sector and, in conjunction with other market data, the forecasts can identify where sectors may be growing, or shrinking which in turn can inform land and property needs.

7.3 The forecast period for the ELR is 2022-2037.

Practice Guidance Method One: Past Building Completions

7.4 RCT has provided data on past land take up and building completions where known, drawn from the Annual Monitoring Reports (2012-2019) and Employment Land Availability Schedules (2017-2019). The employment land and premises data within the Annual Monitoring Reports has not been presented in an identical manner through the various editions or contained directly comparable data. Therefore, care needs to be taken in drawing out trends as a basis for forecasting. The following table summarises available data of employment land commitments, planning permissions and availability, drawn from these documents.

Table 30 – Employment Land Availability Data

Monitoring Period	Employment Land Supply (ha)	Land Available on Operational Sites (ha)	Commitments (ha)	Land Lost to Alternative uses (ha)
2011/12	98			0
2012/13	98			0
2013/14	98			0
2014/15	98			0
2015/16	98		4.17	0
2016/17	156.02 of which 98.59 is available immediately	66.34		0
2017/18	156.12 of which 98.69 is available immediately	64.41		0
2018/19	145	54.19		0.78 (office conversion to residential)

Sources: RCT Annual Monitoring Reports; Employment Land Review Availability Schedules

7.5 RCTBC has provided further information on planning permissions over the last decade for B-class employment uses. The list of planning permissions includes new developments, extensions and change of use applications. For the purposes of this exercise looking at past building completions, the change of use applications are not relevant. It is an assessment of take-up of employment land, rather than reuse of existing buildings. The table below summarises this data for planning permissions that are known to have been implemented for B-class uses that are new developments or extensions.

Table 31 – Implemented Employment Land Planning Permissions

Monitoring Period	B1 (ha)	B2 (ha)	B8 (ha)	Mixed (ha)	Total (ha)
2011/12	0.223			0.439	0.662
2012/13		1.181	1.472	1.8	4.453
2013/14		0.35			0.350
2014/15	0.204			3.532	3.736
2015/16			0.144	3.122	3.266
2016/17		0.246		0.34	0.586
2017/18	0.435	1.219		1.14	2.794
2018/19	1.05	0.13		7.253	8.433
2019/20		0.056	1.3	2.005	3.361
2020/21		0.213	0.1	0.76	1.073
2021/22			0.56		0.560
2022/23	0.164				0.164
Total	2.076	3.395	3.576	20.391	29.438
Average	0.17	0.28	0.30	1.70	2.45

Source: RCTBC

7.6 The planning permissions information appears to provide a more complete account of past growth that summarised in the Annual Monitoring Reports. The known implemented planning permissions have been used as the basis to forecast for further growth over the planning period.

7.7 Employment land and premises demand can be forecasted based on the assumption that the past take-up rates would continue over the forecast period. Therefore, underlying this approach is that the future growth in RCT will be in line with past growth. If there are significant structural changes to the economy over the forecast period, this may not be the case, but provides a baseline indication of potential growth. The past decade has seen significant volatility in the market, which is continuing through 2023, which makes forecasting difficult. It has been observed more broadly in the economy that there has been a reduction in business confidence, which can flow through to investment choices in premises and development. However, it is considered that over the forecast period, the prospects are more likely

to be more stable economic conditions as unusual events (pandemic, war in Ukraine) are overcome.

7.8 Using the overall land take-up rate of 2.45 ha/yr and applying it to the forecast period 2022-2037 (15 years), the overall employment land requirement for the County Borough would be 36.75 ha.

7.9 The table below summarises the forecast by individual B-class uses, based on the averages for the uses over the last 12 years.

Table 32 – Method One Forecast – Past Completions

Use	2022-2037 Annual Average Employment Land (ha/yr)	2022-2037 Total Requirement (ha)
Offices (B1)	0.17	2.55
Industrial (B2)	0.28	4.20
Warehouse (B8)	0.30	4.50
Mixed (B1/B2/B8)	1.70	25.50
Total	2.45	36.75

Source: BE Group, 2023

7.10 It is recommended that a safety margin be included in the forecasts to allow for choice of sites and flexibility in the market. It is recommended to include a buffer equivalent to five-years' supply of employment land to provide a choice of sites by size, quality and location and to help ensure a continuum of supply beyond the end of the 2037 period. This also makes some allowance for the loss of employment land to non B-Class uses over the period. Based on the historic take-up trend this would generate a further land need of 12.25 ha, as outlined below.

- Office (B1): 0.17 ha/yr x 5 years = 0.85 ha.
- Industrial (B2): 0.28 ha/yr x 5 years = 1.40 ha
- Warehousing (B8): 0.30 ha/yr x 5 years = 1.5 ha
- Mixed (B1/B2/B8): 1.70 ha/yr x 5 years = 8.5 ha
- **Total Buffer 12.25ha.**

7.11 Added to the 2037 need figure, this increases the requirement to 49.0 ha to incorporate the buffer, including the following land requirements for the individual land use types.

- B1: 3.4 ha
- B2: 5.6 ha
- B8: 6.0 ha
- Mixed: 34.0 ha
- **Total: 49.0 ha**

Practice Guidance Method Two: Labour Demand Forecasting

- 7.12 This method is based on the Oxford Economics forecasts for RCT to 2037. These forecasts are econometric models based on available data at the time, include demographic, economic and population data. They break down national trends to local levels and thus are more limited in forecasting small areas that might have different economic and socio-economic characteristics to the national averages.
- 7.13 The forecasts break down employment to the level of 18 industry sectors. Employment in some of these sectors is likely to be fully (or nearly all) within B-class employment workspaces, such as manufacturing, professional services and administration. Conversely, some sectors are all or almost all out of B-class land, such as agriculture, mining and accommodation and food services. However, many sectors are mixed, with a component of their employment likely to be in B-class employment workspaces, but also located within other spaces. For example, transport and storage would include employment on B8 warehousing land, but employment would also include self-employed hauliers and drivers that would not be based at a particular B-class site. Therefore, for each sector, an estimate has been made on the proportion of employment that is likely to be located within B-class employment spaces (and thus infer a demand for employment land). These estimates have been based on BE Group's experience with other areas across Wales and England and have been accepted in Examinations in Public.
- 7.14 The following table is a summary of the Oxford Economics forecasts by five-year interval. It is noted that between 2022 and 2037, the forecast change in total employment is only 186 jobs (growth of 0.2 percent). However, the growth trajectory is not linear, with an anticipated peak in 2027 of some 95,470 jobs, which is an increase of 2,000 over the 2022 figure. Therefore, the forecasts project a relatively rapid growth in employment in the near-term, followed by a gradual decline.

7.15 For the particular sectors, Oxford Economics projects the largest growth sectors to be human health and social work (+970 jobs), wholesale and retail trade (+800) and construction (+700). However, some sectors are forecast to decline, most notably manufacturing (-3,390 jobs). This will have a substantial impact on forecast employment land and premises demand based on these forecasts, as manufacturing is a key B-class employment user and a negative change in employment infers a negative demand for land and premises (although this may not be the case in practise).

Table 33: Employment Forecast by Broad Sector

Sector	2022	2027	2032	2037	Change 2022-2037	Percent Change
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	575	594	574	545	-31	-5.3%
Mining and quarrying	56	48	40	33	-23	-40.5%
Manufacturing	11,005	10,018	8,765	7,612	-3,393	-30.8%
Construction	8,953	9,429	9,571	9,654	701	7.8%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	17,407	18,326	18,321	18,203	796	4.6%
Transportation and storage	3,250	3,315	3,248	3,174	-77	-2.4%
Accommodation and food service activities	5,848	6,224	6,278	6,249	401	6.9%
Information and communication	1,259	1,330	1,348	1,361	102	8.1%
Financial and insurance activities	779	799	794	785	5	0.7%
Real estate activities	935	965	974	976	41	4.4%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	4,315	4,603	4,692	4,749	433	10.0%
Administrative and support service activities	5,258	5,600	5,739	5,887	629	12.0%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	3,690	3,524	3,363	3,199	-491	-13.3%
Education	9,953	9,928	9,844	9,723	-229	-2.3%
Human health and social work activities	13,532	13,803	14,207	14,504	972	7.2%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	2,170	2,325	2,415	2,480	310	14.3%
Other service activities	2,432	2,629	2,695	2,724	292	12.0%
Utilities	2,052	2,013	1,900	1,800	-252	-12.3%
Total	93,471	95,474	94,769	93,657	186	0.2%

Source: Oxford Economics, 2023

7.16 The following table provides the forecasted change in employment floorspace demand generated by the changes in employment numbers from Oxford Economics. This analysis has reflected Welsh Practice Guidance and includes the following:

- Identify which industry sectors are likely to take up employment land, including the proportion of that sector's employment on B-class employment land (Table 34).
- Adopt appropriate employment densities to convert employment numbers to floorspace demand (see Table 35).
- Adopt a plot ratio to convert floorspace to employment land demand (see Table 35).

Table 34 – Labour Demand Forecast, 2022-2037

Broad Sector Groupings	Jobs, Split by Sector 2022-2037	Land Use	Weighting	Jobs, Split by Sector 2022-2037	Jobs, by use, which <i>Do Not</i> Require B-Class Premises. 2022-2037
Non B-Class Uses					
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	-31	Non B	-	-	-31
Mining and Quarrying	-23	Non B	-	-	-23
Accommodation and food service activities	401	Non B	-	-	401
Arts, entertainment and recreation	310	Non B	-	-	310
Total	658			-	658
B1 Mostly Office Uses					
Administrative and support service activities	629	B1	1	629	-
Information and Communication	102	B1	1	102	-
Professional, scientific and technical activities	433	B1	1	433	-
Real estate activities	41	B1	1	41	-
Financial and Insurance Activities	5	B1	1	5	-
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	-491	B1	0.22	-108	-383
Human health and social work activities	972	B1	0.22	214	758
Education	-229	B1	0.22	-50	-179
Other service activities	292	B1	0.22	64	228
Total	1,754	-	-	1,330	424
B2/B8 Uses					
Manufacturing	-3,393	B2	1	-3,393	-
Utilities	-252	B2	0.26	-66	-187
Construction	701	B2	0.26	182	519
Transportation and storage	-77	B8	0.48	-37	-40
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	796	B8	0.1	80	716
Total	-2,226	-	-	-3,234	1008

Source: BE Group analysis of Oxford Economics forecasts, 2023

7.17 The above table's analysis has found that there will be some 1,330 additional jobs in B1 office space in RCT in 2037, over 2022 levels. The analysis also has found that there will be some 3,234 fewer jobs in B2/B8 spaces in RCT by 2037, compared to 2022 levels.

7.18 Table 35 takes the total net jobs figures for B1 and B2/B8 uses identified above and converts them first into floorspace (sqm) by the rates per worker shown. These worker densities are presented as a range, representing potential different outcomes of workspaces in RCT. For offices, higher densities (i.e. less floorspace per worker) would be in call centre or city centre locations, with lower densities in locations where floorspace is not at a premium price or in workplaces that require some lower intensity spaces. Therefore, for RCT a mid or low density level is more likely, given its economic function. For industrial and warehousing the higher density workspaces will be manufacturing and lower densities will be for warehousing uses. The table then converts that floorspace into land (hectares) at 40 percent or 4,000 sqm/hectare coverage, i.e. dividing the floorspace by 4,000 sqm.

Table 35 – Floorspace and Land Requirement Forecasts

Offices (B1)	Based on 1,330 additional workers, sqm	Plot Ratio at 40 percent Coverage, ha
12	15,960	3.99
16	21,280	5.32
20	26,600	6.65
Industrial (B2/B8)	Based on 3,234 less workers, sqm	Plot Ratio at 40 percent Coverage, ha
50	-161,700	-40.43
67	-216,678	-54.17
85	-274,890	-68.72

Source: BE Group analysis, 2023

7.19 The projections for employment floorspace in RCT, based on the Oxford Economics forecasts, show that there is a positive demand for office floorspace, but that this is more than offset by a large negative demand for industrial and warehousing floorspace. This is due to the projected trajectories of growth of the sectors likely to be located in such spaces, with office-based sectors forecast to grow and manufacturing and to lesser extents utilities and transportation expected to decline in employment numbers.

- 7.20 It is important to note that this methodology assumes that there would be a constant density of workers per floorspace. This may not be the case over the forecast period as changes in operation (e.g. automation, efficiency improvements) may mean that the worker levels change but that the overall floorspace needs of an operation may not. Therefore, in declining employment sectors, such as manufacturing, it may not be the case that there will be a commensurate decline in floorspace requirements. It is also noted that industrial premises have seen more activity in property transaction levels over the last decade and the planning permissions have include a range of industrial schemes, which indicate that the local evidence for RCT's industrial market is more positive than inferred from the Oxford Economics forecasts.
- 7.21 For professional services, public administration and other office-based sectors, this approach assumes that all workers would be located in B1 office space. With changing workplace patterns precipitated by the pandemic but that will remain in place to an extent as Welsh Government policies support homeworking, not all of these workers are likely to be in B1 office space, with an increasing proportion working from home (partly or fully). However, it is noted that the forecast demand for office land growth is 4.0-6.7 ha and thus such workplace pattern changes are unlikely to have an overly substantial effect on overall land demand and allocations.
- 7.22 For each use, offices (B1) and industrial (B2/B8), three employment density levels (the amount of floorspace required for each job) are considered. Comments on these density options are provided:

Offices

- 12 sqm per worker – Would be applicable to a quite high-density service sector operation such as a call centre or city centre offices. This is considered too dense for RCT as a whole, though some individual premises may be at such levels.
- 16 sqm per worker – Mid-level density level, this is identified in Welsh Practice Guidance (para 6.5.1, page 39) as an average floorspace/worker rate for office uses in Wales. It reflects a mix of town centre and business park density levels.
- 20 sqm per worker – A comparably low employment density, reflective of more specialist facilities such as design studios, co-working and maker spaces.

Industrial

- 50 sqm per worker – This high density relates to B1 light industrial uses, which are evident throughout the County Borough, particularly in smaller settlements. However, it is not an appropriate level for mid to larger premises.
- 67 sqm per worker – Mid-level density level, this is identified in Welsh Practice Guidance (para 6.5.1, page 39) as an average floorspace/worker rate for industrial/warehouse uses in Wales. Allows for a mix of high-density light industrial and mid-density B2/B8 uses.
- 85 sqm per worker – This low-density level would be most applicable to the largest B8 logistics facilities, National and Regional Distribution Centres. RCT does not have an industrial sector strongly skewed towards the logistics/warehousing sector and thus this would not be an appropriate County Borough-wide average.

7.23 Based on the above, the recommended land needs between 2022 and 2037 for RCT based on Method Two are:

- B1 Offices – 1,330 additional jobs at 16 sqm per worker and a 40 percent plot ratio = **5.32 ha**
- B2/B8 Industrial – 3,234 less jobs at 67 sqm per worker and a 40 percent plot ratio = **-54.17 ha**
- Total net need = **-48.85 ha**

7.24 Therefore, assessing employment land using this approach, there is a large negative requirement for employment land in RCT over the forecast period to 2037. While there is a positive requirement for office space, this is more than counteracted by the very large calculated negative requirement for industrial space, primarily due to the forecast reduction in the manufacturing workforce of almost 3,400 between 2022 and 2037. However, as discussed earlier, a reduction in manufacturing jobs may not result in a commensurate reduction in demand for employment floorspace. This is because the reduction in employment may not be related to reducing output or demand; rather it may be due to increasing efficiencies or improved automation. Furthermore, if a business reduces employment, they may not immediately release the commensurate level of floorspace, either retaining it for stock/plant or for longer-term needs. As seen in the socio-economic profile of RCT, there have been recent declines in the number of jobs in manufacturing, though an increase in the number of

businesses in that sector. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that there will be reduced manufacturing floorspace and land that could be released for other employment uses or non-B-class uses.

7.25 Therefore, it is prudent to look at just the growth employment sectors to identify the scale of additional floorspace and land required to support the growing areas of the economy.

7.26 If just looking at growth sectors, RCT would have the following requirements.

- B1 Offices – 2,474 additional jobs at 16 sqm per worker and a 40 percent plot ratio = 9.90 ha
- B2/B8 Industrial – 1,497 extra jobs at 67 sqm per worker and a 40 percent plot ratio = 25.07 ha
- Total growth sector need = **34.97 ha**.

Comparing Methods One and Two

7.27 No forecasting method is perfect and appropriate to account for every scenario. Therefore, it is prudent to review the results of Methods One and Two for RCT.

7.28 The Method One approach is a simple extrapolation exercise of past growth rates over the forecast period. As outlined early in this chapter, it is reliant on the veracity of the data available and with limited Annual Monitoring data there are limitations to this approach. The list of planning permissions that had been enacted provides a better indicator of past growth rates. Looking forward, adopting a simple average over the forecast period assumes the trends in the past will continue to 2037 (on average).

7.29 The Method Two approach, looking at employment growth projections for the area, has resulted in a significantly lower forecast than the Method One results, particularly if looking at all sectors, rather than just growth sectors. It is recommended that the growth only approach is a more appropriate forecast than the net approach due to the following reasons:

- Will the decline in jobs lead to the release of land? Experience suggests that even where businesses are contracting, they will continue to hold on to sites

in anticipation of future improvements. Also, where jobs are being lost to automation, those new automated processes will still require land on which to operate.

- Land take-up/property needs can be for different reasons such as modernisation or geographic relocation, or land banking for future needs.
- The local market intelligence suggests a healthy interest in industrial and warehousing premises in the market and a more modest interest in office properties.
- Expansion may also be within existing premises or on expansion land not accounted for in land allocations.
- The underlying assumption with the net growth approach is that growing sectors can take space being released by declining sectors, but this may not always be possible or appropriate.

7.30 Therefore, for the Method Two approach, it is recommended that the growth only forecast be adopted.

7.31 The Method Two approach, which uses Oxford Economics forecasts, has resulted in a lower forecast than the Method One approach. The Oxford Economics forecasts have attempted to incorporate latest economic and socio-economic information and trends, though these are typically at nation-wide level and may not sufficiently take account of local RCT characteristics.

7.32 The following table summarises the forecasts, including a comparison to the existing, realistic supply of employment land in RCT. This includes an allowance of a buffer equivalent to five-years of growth for each of the scenario options. This is to enable choice in the market and fluctuations in growth.

Table 36 – Land Forecast Models – Summary

Model	Land Supply	Land Need 2022-2037, ha	Flexibility Buffer (five years take-up rate) ha	Land Need Incl. flexibility buffer	Surplus/Deficit, ha
Practice Guidance Method One: Past take up	139.81	B1 Office: 2.55 B2 Ind: 4.20 B8: 4.50 Mix: 25.50 Total: 36.75	B1 Office: 0.85 B2 Ind: 1.40 B8: 1.50 Mix: 8.50 Total: 12.25	B1 Office: 3.40 B2 Ind: 5.60 B8: 6.00 Mix: 34.00 Total: 49.00	90.81
Practice Guidance Method Two:	139.81	<i>Net Change</i> B1: 5.32	<i>Net Change</i> B1: 1.77	<i>Net Change</i> B1: 7.09	<i>Net Change</i> 186.89

Model	Land Supply	Land Need 2022-2037, ha	Flexibility Buffer (five years take-up rate) ha	Land Need Incl. flexibility buffer	Surplus/Deficit, ha
Labour Demand Forecasting		B2/B8: -54.17 Total: -48.85	B2/B8: - Total: 1.77	B2/B8: -54.17 Total: -47.08	Growth Only 93.18
		<i>Growth Only</i> B1: 9.90 B2/B8: 25.07 Total: 35.97	<i>Growth Only</i> B1: 3.30 B2/B8: 8.36 Total: 11.66	<i>Growth Only</i> B1: 13.20 B2/B8: 33.43 Total: 46.63	

Source: BE Group's analysis, 2023

*Realistic land supply of allocated sites only, not including candidate sites.

7.33 Therefore, including buffers, the Method One approach results in the highest land requirement of 49.0 ha between 2022 and 2037, though is only slightly higher than the Method Two growth only approach of 46.63 ha over the forecast period. Therefore, these two approaches have a degree of consistency, which provides some confidence of the approach. Either approach for calculating demand still results in a significant surplus of employment land supply by 2037 if all sites are available.

7.34 Although only slightly higher, it is recommended that the Method One approach be adopted for calculating demand for employment land in RCT. As the higher level, planning based on this level is more prudent.

7.35 **Therefore, the recommended requirement for employment land between 2022 and 2037 in RCT is 49.0 ha, including an allowance for a buffer.** Under this approach, there is expected to be a surplus of some 90.8 ha of employment land given current supply.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

8.1 The following summarise the key findings of this study:

Economic Profile

- The population of RCT at the time of the 2021 Census was 237,650, which is the second largest local authority area in South East Wales and accounts for 7.6 percent of the Welsh population.
- Population growth since the 2011 Census has been 1.4 percent, which is in line with the Welsh average.
- The unemployment rate in RCT is low (2.8 percent) and the economic activity rate is high (77.0 percent). Combined these indicate the labour market is functioning near capacity and businesses are likely to be struggling to find adequate staff, particularly to grow the business.
- There are significant areas of deprivation within RCT, with 26 of the County Borough's 154 LSOAs in the top ten percent of most deprived areas in Wales. Therefore further employment opportunities and interventions within RCT should help address deprivation, through entry level positions and support to enter the labour market.
- Retail and health are key sectors of employment within RCT, indicating that the local economy is geared to serving the residential population, rather than having a broader function.
- Business count and jobs data show a non-uniform level of growth throughout the County Borough. Some sectors, such as manufacturing and financial services saw recent declines in the employment in these sectors, though an increase in the number of businesses. Therefore, while employment may be declining, there could be increasing need for business locations to support business number growth.

Property Market

- Economic shocks have impacted the UK's economy, including the property sector, over recent years. The combination of impacts from Brexit, the pandemic, cost of living crisis, labour shortages and political uncertainty has impacted on overall business confidence.

- The logistics/warehousing sector across South Wales has performed well, with very good demand for premises and land, which has seen tightening of supply in some areas.
- Small, good quality workshop space has also seen good regional demand, with occupier interest remaining resilient in uncertain economic conditions.
- The office market across Wales has been significantly negatively impacted by the pandemic restriction and resulting changing workplace practices. Some businesses continue to operate on a hybrid model combining in-office and home working practices.
- The Welsh Government has outlined a policy of no more than 50 percent of its workforce working from a central office at any one time as part of achieving a wider strategy of 30 percent of the Welsh workforce working from or near home.
- As such, it is expected that office demand will remain subdued in the foreseeable future.
- RCT's industrial property transactions have seen a broad range of unit sizes being transacted. While the bulk of transactions are for smaller units (70 percent of units transacted less than 500 sqm), some transactions recorded have been for very large units (5 percent for >5,000 sqm). While lower in overall volume, units of this size are difficult to locate and planning for employment land should include consideration of such units.
- RCT's office property transactions are dominated by small units. Furthermore, transaction levels were already lower than the highs of 2012 and 2013 and are likely to remain low for the foreseeable future.
- Vacancy levels have seen an increase in recent years, during the economic uncertainty, though are considered moderate overall. However, some employment areas are seeing significantly higher levels of vacancies due to the individual conditions of those areas.

Employment Land Supply

- The existing employment allocations provide some 58.8 ha of available and developable employment land, comprised of 19.00 ha of Core Strategy Strategic Sites, 15.78 ha of Southern Strategic Area sites and 24.06 ha of other employment allocations.

- Sites with more than 10 ha of developable land provide opportunities for significant, integrated employment developments. The sites of this scale in RCT are:
 - **Land South of Hirwaun (15.0 ha):** Very large brownfield site that has the potential to be a major employment node for the Valleys. The site is a current Strategic Site allocation, which is of a large scale. The site has been subject to opencast coal mining, though works have been undertaken to restore the site to allow for its development. This may also be considered a strategic sub-regional development opportunity, in association with the considerable investment in the dualling of the A465 in the Heads of the Valleys area.
 - **Coed Ely (15.78):** Site with construction ready plots, this will be a near term development for B1 and B2 uses.
 - **Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Main and 4th Avenue (10.04 ha):** Hirwaun Industrial Estate has recorded slow development in recent years, with limited demand/interest from the market.
 - **Pencoed Technology Park (6.6 ha):** Although less than 10ha, this is a high profile site, appropriate for large businesses and headquarter sites. With access to the M4 and being actively marketed, this area will be a near term prospect.

Employment Land Forecasting

- Planning permissions for new/extended employment schemes that have come forward have averaged about 2.45 ha/yr over the last 12 years.
- Forecasting land requirements based on this past average gives a requirement for about 36.75 ha of employment land to 2037. With an addition of a buffer to allow for flexibility equating to five years' supply, the requirement increases to 49.0 ha (Method One).
- Oxford Economics forecasts that the number of jobs in RCT will increase by only 186 jobs between 2022 and 2037 to 93,657. However, this change is not uniform throughout the economy with health, wholesale and retail trade and construction expected to see significant increases and manufacturing forecast to have a substantial decline in employment.
- Employment land forecasts based on the Oxford Economics jobs forecasts show that there would be a requirement of 5.3 ha of land for offices and a *negative* requirement of -54.2 ha for industrial land. This is counter to recent

trends, which have seen higher activity levels in the industrial sector compared to the office sector.

- It is prudent to just consider growth sectors as declining sectors may not readily release surplus land to meet the needs of growing sectors. Just looking at growth sectors in the Oxford Economics data, the forecast requirement for land for offices is 9.9 ha to 2037 and for industrial space is 25.1 ha. Applying a buffer to allow for flexibility, the forecast overall land requirement to 2037 is 46.6 ha (Method Two).
- It is recommended that the Method One approach is adopted for the employment land requirement for RCT to 2037.

Recommendations

8.2 The following section provides a suite of recommendations to guide employment land provision in RCT to 2037, including guiding policy development for the RDLP.

Recommendation 1: Employment Land Requirement to 2037 is 49.0 ha.

8.3 The employment land forecasting in Chapter 7.0 assessed the requirement from two approaches in accordance with Welsh Government guidance – from past take up and using employment forecasts. The Method One past take-up approach forecasts a requirement of 49.0 ha between 2022 and 2037, including allowance for a buffer to provide flexibility in the market equivalent to five years of growth.

8.4 Method Two using employment forecasts for all sectors (growing and declining) results in a negative requirement for employment land of -47.1 ha (including buffer for offices). However, if just looking at growth sectors, the requirement for employment land is 46.6 ha (including buffer). It is considered that looking at growth sectors only is appropriate as it is not always the case that released land or premises from declining sectors can easily be repurposed for growth sectors (if released at all).

8.5 The Method One and Method Two (growth only) scenarios provided similar requirement levels, which provides a level of confidence to the analysis. However, it is recommended that the requirement to be adopted is that for Method One (49.0 ha) as this approach appears to better reflect on-the-ground market dynamics in respect to the take up of industrial land and at any rate it would be prudent to plan for the higher trajectory.

Recommendation 2: Employment Land Allocations

8.6 This section outlines the recommendations for employment land allocations for RCT.

8.7 The current available and developable land supply is 58.8 ha, which in comparison to the forecast requirement results in a surplus supply of 9.8 ha. This land supply has excluded smaller sites and sites that have been assessed as having constraints that preclude development for employment uses.

8.8 The employment land allocations are:

Table 37 – Recommendations for Employment Sites with Available Employment Land

Site Ref.	Site Name	Remaining site area (ha)	Comments and Recommendations
CS3.3/ C42	Phurnacite Plant Site (Extension to Aberaman Industrial Estate)	4.0	Retain for growth of Aberaman Industrial Estate. Good potential for mid to large B2/B8 uses. Could be developed in the near term as required.
CS3.5/ C41	Land South of Hirwaun	15.0	At least 15 ha, this represents a reduction from the existing LDP's allocation of 36 ha for employment, recognising the significant existing employment sites across Hirwaun and balancing with providing sufficient choice in this locality within the RLDP period. Even at this reduced level, it would be expected that this employment site would not be fully developed until beyond the current planning period (2037). This land would come forward as part of the wider development of this strategic site. Further land could be considered to be safeguarded for very long-term employment uses.
SSA14.1/ TT1	Coed Ely, Tonyrefail	15.78	Leading development scheme likely to be completed in near term. Several plots have commitments for development/occupation.
C2	Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Main and 4th Ave	10.04	In-fill sites appropriate for expansion of the industrial estate, though demand is muted in Hirwaun and thus will take a considerable time to come forward. Retain for employment, but will be a long-term prospect, potentially beyond the planning period.
C28	Aberaman Park Industrial Estate, Units 40-42	1.44	Retain as an in-fill employment area. Suitable for B2/B8 unit(s), potentially with ancillary B1.
C33	Cwm Cynon Business Park South	2.97	Retain for employment. These sites are developable in the near term and suitable for B1/B2/B8 uses.
R24	Maerdy Road Industrial Estate	1.4	Potential for B1/B2/B8 units, likely to be developed in the medium to longer term.
TL11	Ely Meadow/Gwaun Elai	0.40	Small site developable in the short term, likely for small B1 or hybrid units.
TL36	Pencoed Technology Park	6.6	Appropriate for employment uses, including high-quality, mid and large units. Key site to attract regional businesses to RCT that would provide for strategic needs.
TP19	Treforest Industrial Estate, Main Avenue	0.39	Retain as an in-fill employment area, suitable for B1/B2/B8 uses. Development likely in the short to mid term.
TT4	Parc Eirin including Ensinger	0.82	Retain as an in-fill employment area, suitable for B1/B2/B8 uses. Development dependent on demand and likely in the mid term.

Sources: BE Group assessment, 2023

8.9 This range of sites totalling 58.8 ha would still leave a moderate surplus of employment land in comparison to the forecast demand for 49.0 ha over the planning

period. However, it is appropriate to provide a surplus of employment land, particularly in an area such as RCT, which is a broad area with a wide range of markets – small Valley villages/towns, northern Heads of the Valleys area, southern areas with connectivity to M4. The dispersed layout of settlements means that a higher level of employment land and facilities is required to provide local services and employment opportunities. In particular, to address significant deprivation levels, the provision of locally available employment opportunities is important to improve accessibility to employment.

- 8.10 The suite of sites include large sites in the north (Hirwaun Industrial Estate, Land South of Hirwaun) and south (Coed Ely and Pencoed Technology Park) which will provide significant land options, with choice of location, market position and timing. Furthermore, the Pencoed Technology Park and Land South of Hirwaun sites provide strategic sites, providing opportunities for RCT to attract regionally significant occupiers.
- 8.11 Some very small in-fill sites are located within existing industrial estates, in addition to the above list of sites. While the assessment in Chapter 6.0 generally excluded these sites, due to their small scale, if they are brought forward for development for appropriate employment uses, they would add to the level of activity within their estates.

Recommendation 3: Existing Employment Area Protection

- 8.12 RCTBC should continue to support and protect existing employment areas, encouraging the primary uses to be B-class employment uses. However, it is recognised that in many employment areas there is an expectation of non-B-class uses to support the core uses, such as retail, sui generis, takeaway outlets, etc. This has occurred throughout the County Borough. This should only be supported where it is ancillary to and supportive of the core B-class employment uses.
- 8.13 Chapter 6.0 included a review of the existing employment areas in RCT (Table 29), including a scoring of each area. Some of these areas scored poorly, as they are not in prominent locations and the quality of premises is poor. However, the scoring is not the only metric of whether the sites should remain as employment nodes, with qualitative analysis of the functionality of each site (i.e. there is not a minimum score cut-off, below which a recommendation of de-allocation is given).

8.14 The following existing employment areas are recommended to not be safeguarded for employment:

- Stelco Hardy, Treherbert
- Penygraig Industrial Estate
- The Old Parish Road, Ynysybwl
- Gasworks Road Industrial Estate
- Barry Sidings
- Old Griffin Mill Field
- Ty Rhiw Industrial Estate (Rockwood)

8.15 These sites can be released for other purposes once current employment activity is completed. These sites would be expected to be redeveloped for non-B-class uses over the coming planning period as current uses move out. RCTBC should work with landholders to determine the most appropriate reuse of these sites.

8.16 Other sites that performed poorly but are recommended to continue to be safeguarded for employment are listed below. These sites should be monitored and reviewed regularly for on-going appropriateness for employment uses.

- Hirwaun Industrial Estate, 14th, 16th and 17th Avenues
- Caemawr Industrial Estate
- Gelligron Industrial Estate, Tonyrefail
- Factories at Salem Terrace, Llwynypia
- Bryngelli Industrial Estate

8.17 Other employment areas scored higher and are performing better as existing economic nodes and should continue to be safeguarded for employment.

Recommendation 4: Future Reviews

8.18 Paragraph 7.10 of the Welsh Government Practice Guidance – Building an Economic Development Evidence Base to Support a Local Development Plan, states that: *“Reviews of the whole evidence base, both larger than local and local studies, will most likely reflect the 4 year development plan cycle; however, an earlier review might be considered if certain employment land related targets are not being achieved and are identified through the LDP Annual Monitoring Report.”*

- 8.19 In light of this it is recommended to conduct regular updates of the forecasts and planning for employment land. Furthermore, the annual monitoring and employment land availability documents should continue to collate data on employment land and premise completions and permissions in a consistent manner.
- 8.20 The COVID-19 pandemic, changes to workplace dynamics and current economic volatility highlight the need for reviews in light of changing circumstances.

Recommendation 5: Maintain Awareness of External Influences

- 8.21 Welsh planning policy highlights the importance of joint working and ‘more than local’ planning, to understand the interconnectedness of local authority areas. Regional and sub-regional collaboration is appropriate for employment land, particularly in relation to strategic sites and demand along the M4 and Heads of the Valleys corridors.