

**BIRMINGHAM PLAN 2031****Statement by CPRE Warwickshire****MATTER J – Employment and Waste Provision**

*Matter covered: HS2 Safeguarding Zone*

**(6) What is the significance of the ‘HS2 Safeguarding Zone’ designation on the Policies Map for the Core Employment Areas which it covers?**

The HS2 Safeguarding Zone is not a Policy of the Plan and is not mentioned in the text of the Plan. It arises because the Department for Transport issued details of safeguarded land for HS2. Within this land as shown (stippled) on the Policies Map, applications for permission have to be referred to the Secretary of State, so that if not refused they may be called in for his determination. The Local Plan is required to take notice of the Safeguarding Zone, but it is less specific as to whether it can continue to allocate land for the uses intended or not.

In most of the safeguarding zone there are parts of industrial estates affected, but in practice the land to be taken from these seems minimal.

The Safeguarding Zone includes the Birmingham Landor Street Freightliner terminal, but this is railway land already. It includes the area of Eastside north of the existing main line which is sought for the future HS2 terminal station. This land is vacant now.

The serious effect of the Safeguarding Zone is to blight the Washwood Heath Core Employment Area. HS2 wants this location for a High-speed train depot, although there are alternative locations outside the City urban area which could be used.

Unfortunately the Plan is not explicit that the blighting of Washwood Heath has created the need to replace the lost industrial land there with a new greenfield site at Peddimore (Policy GA6). The December 2010 consultation draft Plan did not see any need for greenfield land for industrial needs and assumed that Washwood Heath would be one of the Core Employment Areas. As it is existing industrial land, no specific policy or allocation was necessary. There are no Proposals in the Local Plan which conflict with the Safeguarding Direction, but there is land which cannot be developed because of the Direction.

That the Safeguarding of the Washwood Heath area (54 ha) for HS2’s use has led to greenfield land being proposed for release for employment users is accepted by HS2 Ltd.

As there are alternative locations for the high-speed train depot outside the urban area of Birmingham, and as the Washwood Heath site is the most significant employment land in the City, the safeguarding is causing serious harm.

The relevant paragraphs of the 2012 Employment Land Review (EMP2) are attached.

## EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW 2012 (EMP2)

### Extracts

#### **From Executive Summary**

The 2012 Employment Land Review shows that the available supply of high quality employment land within the City is currently falling short of UDP targets in both the best and good urban land categories. In particular, the proposed safeguarding of the Washwood Heath sites for the High Speed rail depot means that the City's largest industrial site at 54 hectares can at least in the short term no longer be considered as being available for industrial development. There is now an urgent need to identify new development opportunities in the best urban market. The removal of the Washwood Heath sites means that the total supply of best urban land will fall to 77 hectares which is a record low.

#### **Main Report paragraph 5.4 page 23**

In contrast to readily available land, the supply of sites not readily available for development increased from 51.96 hectares in 2009 to 74.19 hectares in 2012. However, the not readily available supply includes the Washwood Heath sites (Alstom, LDV and PXP 54.78 hectares in total). The sites at Washwood Heath are within the draft HS2 safeguarding area, and as such they are effectively 'blighted' and cannot be considered part of the overall land supply at the current time. While some employment will be generated by the use of these sites for the HS2 depot, their potential loss is a significant blow to the City's overall employment land supply reducing the not readily available supply of best urban land by 70% and the total supply of best urban land to a record low of 77.45 hectares. Furthermore, the Washwood Heath sites are considered by the market as one of the best quality industrial opportunities in the City due to their ability to accommodate large footprints, with good access to the strategic highway and rail network and owners willing to work together to bring them forward for redevelopment in a comprehensive manner.