The article will focus on how as part of assessment of the likely significant socio-economic effects of a development the number of jobs created may be assessed at the outline planning application stage. Matters to be addressed include:

- Outline planning applications and their requirements
- The quantification of employment proposals in outline planning applications
- The approaches towards assessment of employment effects: worst case, likely case
- The practice of ensuring the integration of the assessment of employment effects with other assessments (i.e. transport assessment)
- The practice of monitoring integration of the assessment of effects.

Large-scale employment or mixed employment and residential development proposals are frequently promoted through the planning system through the use of outline planning applications, with detailed designs (known as ‘reserved matters’) fixed subsequently at a later date. The outline planning process is well suited to such proposals in allowing the principle of development to be tested without the need to fix all aspects of design, and offering flexibility in the precise mix and disposition of land uses.

Environmental Assessment is often required depending on the scale of such development, its setting and the characteristics of the potential impacts.

The flexibility of the outline application approach has to be reconciled to the rigours of the EIA process which in the case of infrastructure projects will often require an assessment of the likely significant effects in terms of population commonly assessed in terms of ‘socio-economic effects’.

One particular aspect of EIA practice where this reconciliation is required is where employment development is promoted in an outline planning application.

Employment uses are known as ‘B Class’ uses which fall within the following planning use classes:

- B1 Business (a) Offices
- B1 Business (b) for research and development of products or processes
- B1 Business (c) Light Industry
- B2 General Industry
- B8 Storage or Distribution

Many outline planning applications that include employment development are for large developments that will be developed over many years. Outline applications therefore seek to maintain flexibility in the range of employment uses that might come forward in order to provide the maximum opportunity for the needs of the market for employment land to be met, and to provide an outline planning permission with suitable flexibility to meet these needs over the long term. A common approach is therefore to identify within the description of the development of the outline planning application a maximum area in hectares or floorspace in square metres for B Class Employment Uses within use classes B1/B2/B8 which could theoretically accommodate any single B Class use or mix of B Class uses up to this maximum without prescribing a precise split.

**Approaches to Assessment**

The assessment of likely Socio-Economic impacts will seek to identify the likely effects on population arising from the development and the associated social and economic effects including the level of job creation. The differing B Class uses have very different characteristics in terms of the numbers of jobs created as demonstrated in Table One below.

In assessing the level of job creation assumptions therefore have to be made regarding the likely floorspace of each B Class use over and above the flexible parameters established in the outline planning application.

There are three possible approaches towards identifying the likely job numbers and associated likely significant effects:

- **‘Worst’ Case**: One approach is to assume the maximum possible job creation and therefore maximum possible effect (or ‘worst’ case). This would generally involve assuming that the majority if not all of the floorspace created would be in office use which has the highest employment density.
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Table One: Table of Employment Densities:
Source: Employment Densities Guide 2nd Edition 2010, Homes and Communities Agency

Likely Case: A second approach is to promote a balanced mix of likely employment uses from across the spectrum of likely uses. The mix will depend on the specifics of the scheme promoted.

Identifying a Range: A further approach is to acknowledge the uncertainty that exists about the final mix of B Class uses and to test a range of likely mixes (such as an office-led or industry-led scenario). The likely job numbers would therefore be identified within a range.

The approach adopted will also need to be consistent with the other assessments required to be undertaken in support of the outline application / EIA. Differing B Class uses have different trip generation characteristics in transport terms, differing visual effects in terms of the size and scale of built form and differing characteristics in terms of the production of waste, noise or pollution.

Practical experience suggests that many of these differing characteristics can be accommodated within suitable parameters and mitigants (such as building height and strategic landscaping for visual effects). However, the issue of trip generation is often the most volatile characteristic of employment uses in terms of the number of trips generated, the timing of the trips within peak hours, the mix of HGV trips and car trips and the associated impacts of the trips on other assessments, notably noise and air quality. On this basis an outline application and EIA that assesses a Likely Case employment mix offers significant advantages in avoiding the exaggeration of trips that a ‘worst’ case assessment would offer, while testing a reasonable maximum.

The final mix of B Class uses must be kept under review at the reserved matters stage to ensure that parameters tested at the outline stage are adhered to, or that if the parameters are varied in some way that likely significant effects are screened to ascertain whether further EIA is required. Planning conditions should also be used at the outline stage to ensure that the parameters tested by EIA are properly reflected in subsequent reserved matter submissions.


1 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 Schedule 2 identifies infrastructure projects (industrial estate development projects; urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks, sports stadiums, leisure centres and multiplex cinemas) where the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare as ‘Schedule 2 Development’ which depending on the characteristics of the development, the location of the development and the characteristics of the potential impact may be EIA development.

2 Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended.