

EC3 Protecting Employment Land and Buildings

Outside of town centres the redevelopment or change of use of existing and committed employment land and buildings (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) for other uses will not be permitted unless:

- a) it can be demonstrated that there is an adequate supply of allocated employment sites in the District having regard to quantity and quality;
- b) it can be demonstrated that the use of the land or buildings for the existing or alternative employment uses would not be viable;
- c) it can be demonstrated that the site is not suitable for employment uses due to unacceptable and unavoidable impacts upon nearby residential uses;
- d) it is land identified as being suitable for other uses as part of the identified Canalside and Employment Regeneration areas as set out in DS8 or the Canalside DPD; or
- e) the proposal is solely for affordable housing as defined in national guidance.

The redevelopment or change of use of existing or committed of employment land and buildings (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) on the sub regional employment land allocation ([DS16](#)) or the [Thickthorn, Kenilworth allocation \(E2\)](#) will not be permitted.

Explanation

3.31 It is important to ensure that an adequate supply of employment land is provided throughout the plan period to meet current and future business needs and support existing and growing economic sectors. This is both in terms of the overall quantity and quality of the supply but also allowing for choice. The district has a wide range of employment areas catering for different employment needs from high quality employment sites such as Warwick Technology Park to more traditional industrial areas meeting specific local needs. Committed and allocated sites also make up an important part of the employment land portfolio in providing for future demand. This policy applies to the protection of B Class (Use classes B1, B2 and B8) employment uses.

3.32 The District has in the past experienced and continues to experience pressure for the redevelopment of existing employment land for other uses particularly for residential development. The Council is committed to protecting the supply of employment land in the District. However, it is recognised that there may be instances where employment land or buildings may no longer meet identified business needs.

3.33 National policy is clear that land allocations should be regularly reviewed and, where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for employment purposes, applications for other uses should be considered on merit.

3.34 The Council has identified the amount of employment land required during the plan period to support economic and housing growth. The balance between the demand and existing supply has been considered both in terms of the overall quantity and the quality of the land available. This exercise led to the reallocation of certain sites for residential uses.

3.35 The Council has also identified four existing employment areas of poorer quality land which may be suitable for redevelopment during the plan period as part of wider regeneration proposals. Three of these areas (Sydenham Industrial Estate, Cape Road/Millers Road, Montague Road) will be brought forward through the Canal side DPD (see policy DS17). This is important in refreshing the Districts' stock of employment land and will include the provision of replacement land as part of the overall employment land requirement as set out in DS8. The redevelopment of these identified employment

Dave Barber 7/10/16 12:39

Deleted: .

areas is important in addressing environmental issues arising from the sites being historically located within or adjacent to existing residential areas.

3.36 It is recognised that operating businesses may be affected by this policy. In such circumstances it is expected that alternative provision should be made available to any firms displaced as part of the redevelopment proposals taking account of the existing site characteristics and requirements of the business. In particular any need to be located near to the existing workforce and market should be taken into account. Proposals which fail to demonstrate how the scheme will contribute to the overall regeneration of the area in line with the principles set out in the Canalside DPD and DS8 are unlikely to be suitable.

3.37 The Council recognises that there may be other instances where employment uses could have a negative impact on the amenity of nearby residential uses and therefore redevelopment for other uses would be preferable. This is both in terms of impact on residential uses in the immediate vicinity but also those nearby which could be affected by the operations of the business, for example the frequency of heavy goods vehicles.

3.38 During the plan period there may be other economic and structural changes in the economy which change the demand for employment land. This policy will ensure necessary employment land is retained but also allow flexibility for the instances where employment land or buildings are no longer suitable to meet identified business needs. The criteria in this policy identify the circumstances through which this may be demonstrated. The Council will continue to work with the business community to monitor land and building requirements throughout the plan period.

3.39 In order to demonstrate that employment land or buildings are no longer suitable for an employment use the applicant will be expected to provide evidence that the site has been actively marketed for a period of two years at a level consistent with current local market conditions. This evidence should include whether the size and quality of space provided matches local demand, current market conditions and expected future market trends.

3.40 Notwithstanding the fact that the Council wishes to protect its existing supply of employment land, it is considered that the need to provide local affordable housing in the District is one instance where the redevelopment of existing employment land for housing may be acceptable. Although this Plan allocates sufficient land for the provision of its total housing requirement over the plan period, the affordable housing element may not be fully deliverable through Policy H2.

3.41 This policy applies to existing employment land and available employment land identified in table 1 below and shown on the Policies Map. The District's portfolio of available employment land includes sites with planning permission, those covered by Development Briefs or allocations from the previous local plan. These sites contribute towards meeting the overall employment land requirement set out in policy DS8 of this plan

Available Employment Land

Site

Station Area

Land rear of Homebase, Princes Drive

Tachbrook Park

Queensway Industrial Estate

Tournament Fields

Tournament Fields (land adjacent to A46)

Stoneleigh Park

Stoneleigh Deer Park
Former Honiley Airfield
Total

3.42 All of the sites in this table are considered by the Council to be suitable for B Class employment uses and will be protected for such uses through this Plan. It is considered that part of the land covered by the Station Area Brief at Former Fords Foundry may also be suitable for car parking in connection with Leamington Railway Station.

3.43 This policy does not apply within the designated town centres of Royal Leamington Spa, Warwick and Kenilworth. The Council is also committed to the protection of employment land in the town centres through Policy TC11 which identifies protected town centre employment areas

3.43a In the case of the sub regional employment site in the vicinity of Coventry Airport (DS16) and the employment allocation at Thickthorn, Kenilworth (E2), redevelopment proposals for other uses will not be permitted. This reflects the former Green Belt status of these locations where exceptional circumstances for the the release of the land from the Green Belt has been justified in the basis of compelling and clear evidence of an employment land need in those locations.