

Matter 5 – Economy and Employment

Issue 3 – Reuse of Employment Land and Buildings

Q1 Is the Plan sufficiently clear, and thus effective, on how development proposals for the reuse of existing employment land and buildings will be considered?

- 1.1 Yes, the Plan is considered to be sufficiently clear, and thus effective, on how development proposals for the reuse of existing employment land and buildings will be considered, however, the Council remains open to making the policies clearer should that be required.
- 1.2 The Plan effectively treats the reuse of employment land and buildings in two distinct ways. Firstly, there is a core of the most significant and cohesive employment land areas which the Plan seeks to retain and enhance. These are addressed primarily in the Plan at:

Protected Employment Areas

5.17 The existing allocated employment sites in the District are typically performing well with generally high levels of occupancy. There is a need to continue protecting these sites as important locations for economic activity, business start-ups and growth, provision of commercial services for the District, and employment.

5.18 Table 5.1 includes both key office and key industrial locations in the District. The proposed East Hemel Hempstead (Central) Employment Area and proposed Government-permitted Strategic Rail Freight Interchange are also included.

5.19 The designated protected employment areas are shown on the Policies Map.

Table 5.1 - Protected Employment Areas in St Albans District

...

EMP1 - Protected Employment Areas To protect and enhance the designated Protected Employment Areas in the District, proposals that are within the locations set out in Table 5.1 must demonstrate:

- a) No net loss of employment floorspace; redevelopment or intensification of existing employment uses will usually be supported;*
- b) That the use class will normally be B2, B8, or E(g); in the case of E(g) applications conditions may be applied to prevent a change of use to E(a-f) use classes; and*
- c) That small-scale services such as a creche or café are ancillary and do not compromise the functioning of the location for B2, B8 or E(g) uses.*

- 1.3 This is considered to provide clear criteria in the approach to the future evolution of these key employment areas.
- 1.4 Secondly, there are all the 'other' existing employment areas in the District. The Plan clearly and positively sets out that their potential reuse for employment uses would be supported in principle. This includes as set out in the Plan at:

Strategic Policy SP5 - Employment and the Local Economy

...

The Council will work with stakeholders and local businesses to support economic growth and productivity by maintaining current employment areas and creating new ones such that there is sufficient land and floorspace to cater for full employment and provide for different kinds of employment use. It will seek to intensify land uses where suitable and encourage new businesses and seek inward investment.

- 1.5 Alternatively, where reuse of the 'other' existing employment land and buildings for residential purposes is being sought, the Plan has no specific policy criteria to support this and it is not considered appropriate to impose criteria on any such proposal. Such development is (purposefully) not supported in relation to the Protected Employment Areas whose continuing employment role is an essential component of the Plan. In relation to other non-protected employment uses elsewhere, applications for alternative types of development will be considered on their individual merits and will be subject to other non-employment policies in the Plan.