BUSINESS

This chapter takes into account provision of land for, and development relating to, those employment uses defined under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as Business (B1); including Offices (B1(a)), General Industrial (B2), and Storage or Distribution (B8). Hotels (C1) are also considered in this chapter. Whilst other uses such as retail and leisure generate significant employment, they are dealt with elsewhere in the Plan. In strategic terms Ealing is part of 'The Western Wedge' sub-region of London. It is an attractive location for business, industry and commerce, and provides a range of employment for a wide area. However parts of the Borough are in need of renewal, notably Park Royal and Southall, where more traditional manufacturing activity has declined. The policies set out here aim to complement the Council’s regeneration and transport policies.

The overall strategic Policy 1.6 for business areas and development is:

To promote balanced economic development; with an emphasis on employment serving community regeneration areas, encouraging a high quality, modern, attractive working environment and local enterprise. New development will also be expected to be consistent with the principles of continuous environmental improvement.*

There are seven policies for Business, and these, together with their justifications, are set out on the subsequent pages of this chapter.

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Policies for Business

6.1 Supply of Land and Property for Business Use

1. The Council will seek to develop a sustainable economic mix in the area; by retaining an appropriate land supply for industrial and warehousing units in Major Employment Locations, light industrial uses on Employment Sites, a wider range of employment uses including offices in shopping centres and at transport nodes, and smaller local economic activities at non-designated sites.

* DCLG Direction 2007: this policy not saved. See Appendix
2. In addition, in appropriate circumstances, the Council will permit small-scale business use in residential property, provided that there would be no detriment to the local environment, and there would be continued residential occupation of the individual residential unit concerned.

Broad areas for employment uses are recognised:

**Major Employment Locations (MELs):** Areas where employment uses will be concentrated, particularly industrial and ancillary uses. The Council will encourage the retention, location, and expansion of industry in these areas, particularly those industrial or commercial enterprises currently in residential areas, which require improved premises or are generating unreasonable disturbance (see also Policy 6.4).

**Employment Sites:** The Council will encourage employment uses such as light industrial, small scale office, or appropriate mixed uses, in order to minimise any adverse effect on adjoining residential areas, and which provide as much local employment on their site as is compatible with their location.

**Shopping Centres:** Multi-purpose areas with retail, employment, community, cultural, tourism, and other uses benefiting from relatively centralised locations, as well as residential uses. The Council will encourage the retention and expansion of such uses and support a wide range of employment opportunities.

**Non-designated sites:** Other development which provides employment outside the above areas will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that the scale is appropriate and the proposal is environmentally compatible. Permission will normally be granted where the proposal:

(i) Contributes to the improvement of amenity and environment;
(ii) Does not adversely affect local traffic conditions;
(iii) Provides small units with shared facilities;
(iv) Will meet local employment needs, bearing in mind the location of the development in relation to, for example childcare, public transport, and suitability for people with disabilities.

**Business Use in Residential Property:** also provides for an increasing, though small, proportion of business use in the borough.

The Council will actively promote, monitor and manage its industrial capacity in light of local and strategic assessments of need, releasing surplus capacity to other activities, especially housing, in line with pan London and national policy.

Sustainable development recognises the interdependence between housing and employment policy and the need for a proper balance between houses, jobs and other services. Protection of land designated for industrial use will ensure job opportunities for local residents. Nineteen percent of jobs (21,600) in 1998 were in manufacturing, transport, storage, and communications (1998 Annual Employment Survey ONS/GLA). There was a net outflow of workers in 1991 of nearly 20,000 (1991 Census). Arguments for reducing the need to travel support the retention of a wide range of employment sites. Furthermore the number of economically active is expected to increase by 6,000 between 1996 and 2006 (1997 Round of LRC Demographic Projections).

The changing economic structure has seen large growth in the service sector, particularly in business services. The importance of focusing growth in town centres or at other major public transport interchanges is recognised. The objectives of preserving a broader economic base...
and encouraging a diversity of activity will nevertheless be facilitated by land use policies aimed at protecting employment land from other development pressures.

Whilst unemployment has fallen recently, to 3.6% (5,186 claimants – February 2001 (GLA and ONS Claimant Count), some parts of the Borough continue to experience higher levels of deprivation. Development of community strategies (see Strategy Chapter) to generate sustainable economic development will have land use implications, and the need to link regeneration initiatives to planning policy, maximising urban renaissance, and non-car travel is recognised. Sites with potential for development are listed in Chapter 10 in Schedule 10.21 and on Map Sheet 15. They are also shown on the Proposals Map. Development briefs have been approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Site modernisation and expansion will be encouraged.

Provision of training, education, and childcare, related to development proposals, will be pursued through the use of planning agreements (see Table 1A).

Environmental concerns support: the retention of cohesive areas with good access; designated Major Employment Locations (see Chapter 10, Sites and Areas Schedule 10.14), for general industrial (B2) and warehousing (B8) uses; business uses (B1) as more appropriate on smaller sites; and Employment Sites adjacent to residential areas (see Chapter 10, Sites and Areas Schedule 10.15). Encouraging mixed uses will enable better use of sites in certain areas, particularly in shopping centres, and may contribute to regeneration through conversion of vacant premises to business uses and the development of live/work units.

6.2 Proposals for Office Development

1. The Council will normally permit proposals for office development at an appropriate scale and in accordance with the sequential test, in:

   (i) Town Centres - Ealing, Southall, Acton, Greenford, and Hanwell;
   (ii) Sites on the edge of town centres;
   (iii) Other shopping centres and local parades;
   (iv) At transport nodes in Major Employment Locations, i.e. Westgate, Southern Gateway, Greenford Station, and adjacent to Chiswick Park Station;
   (v) Employment Sites.

2. Mixed uses will be encouraged where major development is proposed.

Proposals on new sites that are consistent with the above will be considered in the context of their contribution to the character and amenity of the area, an appropriate mixture of uses and the possible over-provision of offices in the areas concerned. Town Centre strategies will provide detailed guidance. Net loss of residential accommodation will be resisted.

Additionally, in determining applications for major office development the Council will take into account:

   (i) Sustainable development objectives; specifically the contribution to sustainable patterns of travel and likely impact on existing transport infrastructure capacity (see Chapter 9 Transport) to town centre development, and the need for other land use requirements, regeneration initiatives, and social inclusion issues; and
(ii) Market demand for office space, characteristics of existing supply, and office projects with outstanding planning permission, or identified elsewhere in the Plan.

6.2-J2

Strengthening town centre policies includes more intensive development, more mixed use development (see Policy 4.2), and applying a sequential approach to office development, favouring accessible town centre sites before peripheral ones. The London Office Policy Review 2000 noted that Outer West London was an area of high demand and moderate supply, with demand for new floorspace (unlike second hand floorspace) outstripping supply.

6.3 Alternative Development of Office Buildings

1. The Council will give favourable consideration to proposals for change of use/ conversion of offices to other uses, which provide significant employment opportunities.

2. Outside Major Employment Locations and Employment Sites, conversion of offices to residential use may be permitted if residential policy requirements are met, and subject to an appropriate balance of employment and residential uses in town centres.

The amount of vacant office floorspace in Ealing in 2000 was 21,000 sq.m (West London Inward, Aug. 2000) a substantial reduction from the previous year; nevertheless conversion of office space to residential has been taking place, and may continue to contribute to meeting housing targets.

6.4 Industry and Warehousing in Major Employment Locations

1. Within Major Employment Locations, industry is the preferred use. Warehousing development may be allowed if the site has access to Strategic Roads or Main Distributors, or rail/canal links, and the project would not have a detrimental effect on residential amenity. B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage or Distribution) uses on sites adjoining residential areas will be unacceptable, unless the environmental impacts can be overcome by appropriate mitigation measures.

2. The Council will also seek to ensure that warehousing development is to, or is capable of being adapted to, industrial standards, including plot ratio and floor loading for machinery.

Ealing’s location close to the central London market and to Heathrow, and its links to the national transport network, has led to the development of significant industrial and distribution activity. Policies for business use will continue to support these functions.
Demand for industrial land is reflected in the amount of vacant industrial and commercial sites and premises available – about 165,000 sq.m (West London Inward, Aug. 2000). This is not excessive as a percentage of total stock (c.7%), given the volume of new development that is taking place, the increases recorded in the numbers of manufacturing and distribution units, and start ups of new businesses in the Borough. A tendency for lower site coverage in new development supports arguments for retaining industrial land. 6.4-J2

Whilst flexibility of use will be encouraged, this will be enhanced by ensuring development is to industrial standards, with plot ratios not normally exceeding 1:1 and site coverage 75%, although higher densities might be permitted in areas of high public transport accessibility. On average, employment in warehousing is still lower than in industry, although the difference is reducing. Recent surveys suggest 31.8 sq.m per worker for industrial use, 40.1 sq.m for warehousing, and 17.9 sq. m for offices (‘The Use of Business Space’ SERPLAN/Roger Tym and Partners 1997). The importance of job creation in regeneration areas is recognised. 6.4-J3

The Council will encourage regeneration in the Major Employment Locations by encouraging redevelopment and refurbishment of out-dated buildings and sites; bringing into full use vacant and under used buildings and sites; and encouraging the development of small scale nursery industrial units. 6.4-J4

In addition, the Council will provide detailed planning briefs and advice to assist in the provision of high quality development, especially where mixed use developments are desirable. The required mix of uses will normally be specified. 6.4-J5

Where appropriate, liaison with appropriate authorities will take place in order to assess the danger of environmental pollution and other hazards, so that appropriate conditions on development can be imposed and undesirable proposals can be resisted. Care will be taken particularly where development adjoins residential areas. 6.4-J6

Several of the Borough’s MELs have Strategic Employment Site status and are designated at London-wide level as Preferred Industrial Locations or Industrial Business Parks (see Chapter 10, Sites and Areas Schedule 10.14; also The London Plan, Annex 2), where loss of land to other uses is to be opposed. At other industrial sites, strategic advice recommends that a small loss of industrial land might be acceptable in West and South London. In this context, the 2004 Plan for the Environment has redesignated the Ruislip Road MEL as a Special Opportunity Site for the development of housing and business use on Urban Village principles. 6.4-J7

**6.5 Ancillary Development in Major Employment Locations**

To maximise or retain employment potential and enhance the attractiveness of Major Employment Locations, the Council will seek to ensure that:

(i) Complementary amenities including open space, sitting out areas for employees or the general public, leisure and shopping facilities, will be retained and improved, or augmented. A high standard of design and landscaping will be required in development proposals. New development should make provision for, or be well related to, existing amenities, and where appropriate contribute to their improvement; land for this purpose will be safeguarded;
(ii) Appropriate physical infrastructure, particularly improved accessibility, is encouraged;

(iii) The development of shared services for joint use is encouraged, e.g. energy supply, display facilities, transport, security services, social amenities etc. and that consideration is given to joint sponsorship of such services with existing enterprises.

The importance of a high quality environment in attracting and retaining industry and meeting the needs of the workforce is recognised, particularly in areas with potential as industrial business parks. This may benefit any clusters of economic activity which have been identified in West London. The scope for achieving more sustainable means of transport will be assessed as Green Travel Plans are submitted.

6.6 Workspace for Artistic and Cultural Activities

The Council will encourage the development of artistic and cultural facilities and workspaces to enhance the economic potential of various parts of the Borough, which offer other amenities and adequate transport facilities, or which have suffered economic or visual decline, including:

(i) Ealing Broadway / Ealing Green;
(ii) Central Southall;
(iii) Central Acton;
(iv) Hanwell Broadway and Environs.

The Council will encourage tourism-related development which is consistent with improved artistic and cultural provision in the borough, having regard to the borough's diverse population. The creative and cultural sector is recognised as a key area of economic activity in the Borough. The identified areas are all within defined town centre boundaries.

6.7 Hotel Development

Proposals for new hotel building or for the conversion of existing premises to a hotel, will be given positive consideration on sites in town centres, and in areas with good public transport access. The development will be assessed in relation to the Council's employment and environmental policies, and on the basis that there would be no loss of housing.

Tourism related activity is increasing, and the growing difficulties in meeting demand in Central London puts increasing pressure on outer London, to provide accommodation for tourists requiring access to local, national, and international transport networks. The Council recognises the issues arising for housing, traffic, and the use of open land, and the potential conflict that
might arise from hotel development. However it also recognises the opportunities for employment, leisure provision and added vitality to town centres associated with such development.

6.7J1

Given the level of housing need in the borough, the Council will generally resist the change of use of accommodation that is, or was last used for housing, to convert to hotels or guest houses for tourists. This will relate particularly to proposals affecting types of housing which are in short supply and meet a need for social housing in the borough.

6.7J2

The Council will encourage tourists and visitors to use public transport and will seek improvements in rail, tube and bus services serving visitor attractions. Where it does not cause undue traffic congestion or loss of amenity, the provision of coach parking will be encouraged at new hotel development and visitor attractions.

6.7J3