

10. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TOPIC AREA

BD1 EMPLOYMENT LAND

About 150 ha of land is made available for business development (Use classes B1, B2 and B8 uses) within the period 1991 to 2011.

10.1 In accordance with requirements set out in the Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011, the District Council is seeking to allocate land for employment generating development over the plan period 1991 to 2011. The Structure Plan employment provision for North Wiltshire is for about 150 hectares of land a large amount of the proposed employment land provision has already been completed or committed through planning permissions and local plan allocations. From the proposed employment land provision of about 150 hectares, around 52 hectares of land for employment uses remains to be identified.

10.2 The following table illustrates the employment requirements of the Structure Plan and how this relates to employment provision in the District from 1991 to 2011.

Table BD1: Employment Land Provision. Land to be provided over plan period. Figures as at 1st April 2004.

STRUCTURE PLAN PROVISION AND COMMITMENTS:	LAND IN HECTARES:
Structure Plan Requirement	150
Completions 01/04/91 – 31/03/04	36.27
Commitments (outstanding planning permissions) at 01/04/04 – (Planning consents only counted):	63.21
General Area: (Includes the difference between the gross and net hectares of employment zones)*	18.74
Total (as at 01/04/04) =	118.22
Structure Plan provision less permissions: (150 –118.22)	31.78
Proposed Allocations:	47.38
Total Land Provision:	165.60

Source: Wiltshire Structure Plan Monitoring, Employment Land & Floorspace, Report, 2004

*Please note, the General Area includes ALL land within an employment zone, and not just the buildings in association with that use, i.e. to include internal roads / parking areas / landscaping etc within employment sites.

Development shall be permitted for business development (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) on the following allocated sites, and outstanding allocations (from Adopted 2001 Local Plan):

Proposed Local Plan Allocations

Site	Area (Ha)
East of Beversbrook Farm and Porte Marsh Industrial Estate, Calne	4.4
Hunter's Moon, Chippenham	5
East of Leafield Industrial Estate, Corsham	3.29
Former St Ivel Site, Wootton Bassett (as part of a mixed use scheme)	3
Cocklebury Road, Chippenham (as part of a mixed use scheme)	2.5
Garden Centre, Malmesbury	3.9

Outstanding Local Plan Allocations

Site	Area (Ha)
Littlefields (Bath Road), Chippenham	13.2
Braydon Lane, Cricklade	2.7
Land to the North of Tetbury Hill, Malmesbury	1
Brickworks, Purton	3.1
Templars Way, Wootton Bassett	3.44
Interface Business Park, Wootton Bassett	1.85
Total Amount of Land Allocated	47.38 hectares

The District Council would also support further employment opportunities as part of mixed use development schemes at the Foundry Lane and Flowers Yard sites in Chippenham. It is envisaged that the redevelopment in each case will be predominantly based upon residential uses, employment activities will make a positive and sustainable contribution to the local area. Business development on these sites will be additional to the provision set out in Table BD1.

10.3 The Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 regards employment land as that which falls within the following use classes: B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution). Whilst other uses (such as retailing, leisure and education uses) provide job opportunities, Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 act as a measure of economic strength.

10.4 In the interests of sustainability and with regard to Structure Plan requirements, the proposed employment allocations will be directed to the major settlements within the

District which exhibit greatest growth potential over the plan period to 2011. The proposed allocations will reinforce existing, established employment zones at these major settlements, reducing the need for out commuting where potential workforce growth exceeds outstanding employment allocations in these settlements.

10.4a The Adopted Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Local Plan 2011 includes the allocation of a number of preferred areas for strategic and local scale waste management facilities, on employment sites across the District. Employment allocations may, due to their shared characteristics and likely traffic generation, also be suitable for waste processing uses. Applications that are on a safeguarded site for such an allocation, such as the Purton Brickworks will need to have regard to the provisions of the Waste Local Plan.

10.5 The employment allocations have been identified which provide accessibility by a range and choice of sustainable transport modes, where sites are well related to the main settlements, road network and the strategic/ local lorry routes as identified in Wiltshire County Council's Local Transport Plan.

BD2 SAFEGUARDING EXISTING BUSINESS USES

Land and Buildings in existing business use (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) or, if vacant, last used for business purposes, or committed for such uses, will be safeguarded for these uses, unless:

- i) The continued use of the site for business uses raises unacceptable environmental or traffic problems, harming the character or amenity of the surrounding area;**
or
- ii) An alternative use or mix of uses offers greater benefits to the community and/or increases the employment capacity of the site through the creation of a higher number of jobs;**
or
- iii) The retention of a site or premises for business use has been explored fully without success (where actively marketed for at least 1 year at an appropriate market rate), and where the site is no longer required to meet economic development needs.**

10.6 The District Council will safeguard existing employment sites from redevelopment for alternative uses, where the existing site serves the local economy and provides opportunities for local employment. However, the Council recognises that it is important to adopt a flexible approach and to give sufficient scope to enable the release and reuse of surplus or otherwise unsuitable employment sites where appropriate.

10.7 Pressure to find land for residential uses should not reduce local employment opportunities by leading to a reduced mixture of uses in the locality and should be judged on the above criteria, depending on the site's location, size and role.

BD3 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ON UNALLOCATED SITES

Proposals to provide business development within the framework boundaries of Chippenham, Calne, Wootton Bassett, Corsham, Malmesbury and Cricklade, will be permitted subject to:

- i) The proposed use being of an appropriate size and form for the location; and**
- ii) The proposed use being accessible by a range of transport modes.**

10.8 Whilst employment allocations are identified at the major settlements within the District, employment opportunities which are beneficial to the local economy will be encouraged on unallocated sites. Proposals for business uses may be attracted to a range of smaller sites within the main settlements, including vacant units, accommodation above shops etc. Whilst the pressure for residential development on urban, brownfield sites is acknowledged it is the purpose of this policy not to sterilise opportunities for incremental business growth where an appropriate proposal is submitted to the District Council.

10.9 Sites that are suitable for business development within these settlements will also be more accessible by a range of transport modes, which is supported in the interests of sustainability.

RURAL EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

BD4 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT WITHIN, OR ON THE EDGE OF VILLAGES

Development proposals to provide new small scale or expanded business uses (Use classes B1, B2 and B8) will be permitted within, or adjoining villages with framework boundaries, provided that:

- i) The development is appropriate with regard to the settlement's scale, form and character; and**
- ii) The proposal will not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding road network.**

10.10 The District Council seeks to encourage economic vitality within rural areas, where compatible with the scale, character and appearance of the settlement. It is considered that there are opportunities for small-scale business and industrial developments in locations that are well related to villages, where these settlements are accessible to a range of local services and by a range of transport modes. This may be in the form of either new buildings or the conversion and reuse of existing buildings.

BD5 RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals for business uses (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) in the countryside will be permitted where development:

- i) Involves the re-use of existing rural buildings suitable for conversion, where the architectural and historical interest of the original building is not compromised; or**

- ii) **Involves limited new building located within or well related to an existing group of buildings which respects local building styles and materials, and is in keeping with it's surroundings; or**
- iii) **Involves the limited expansion or replacement of an existing premises, where the development would be more acceptable and sustainable than might otherwise be achieved through conversion;**

and in all cases;
- iv) **The proposal does not lead to dispersal of business uses that would be detrimental to town and village vitality and economic viability; and**
- v) **Due consideration is given to the impact on the road network in the vicinity of the development.**

10.11 Whilst proposals in the open countryside, remote from settlements, are not normally appropriate, opportunities for the re-use of existing, or new/replacement buildings may be acceptable where the development is of a appropriate scale and situated within or are well related to an existing complex of buildings. Buildings suitable for conversion comprise those that are not ruinous and where conversion would not perpetuate a rural eyesore, nor lead to over intensive development or unsightly external storage. A new/replacement building may be viewed as being more acceptable and sustainable if for instance the development would bring about an environmental improvement in terms of the impact of the development in its surroundings and landscape. A proposal which is extensive in size and scale, or which is unsympathetic to its surroundings will not be considered appropriate in this context.

10.12 The proposed development must be compatible with the rural surroundings and may provide opportunities to promote the local rural economy through change of use to business uses which can have a positive impact on local employment.

BD6 RE-USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS

In the countryside, the re-use of buildings will be permitted provided that:

- i) **The proposed use will be contained within the building and does not require extensive alterations, re-building and or extension; and**
- ii) **The proposed use respects both the character and setting of the subject building and any distinctive local building styles and materials; and**
- iii) **Consideration is given to whether a building by reason of its design and or location would be more appropriately retained in or converted to, in order of preference, employment, community, or residential use; and**
- iv) **There being no abuse of the concession given to buildings erected with the benefit of permitted development rights; and**
- v) **The proposal will not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding road network.**

10.13 The District Council's first priority will be to ensure rural buildings are re-used for purposes that make a positive contribution to the rural economy. The characteristics of different buildings will influence their suitability for preservation and other uses. In general, the order of preference for these uses are agricultural uses, countryside related uses (ie equestrian centres, sports facilities etc), community uses (i.e. village halls), specialised industrial uses (i.e. small workshops) and social activities (i.e. restaurant/public house). Any residential development will require special justification. If the existing building is in poor structural condition that in part requires complete reconstruction, an application must include full details of the structural work necessary and a design statement.

10.14 The conversion of buildings to business uses may have a more positive impact on local employment opportunities. Some buildings are well related to existing settlements where their use for employment purposes will promote economic activity within a rural area creating local jobs and providing a more sustainable environment.

BD7 FARM DIVERSIFICATION

Proposals for farm diversification will be permitted where:

- i) The proposal would not materially prejudice the agricultural operations of the farm;**
- ii) The scale of activities associated with the development is appropriate to the rural context and will not undermine the viability of uses in the surrounding settlements;**
- iii) The proposal does not adversely affect the character of the surrounding environment and amenities of local residents; and**
- iv) The proposal will not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding road network.**

10.15 Agriculture is the primary use of rural land and the use that most influences the physical appearance and character of the countryside. However, employment in agriculture has generally fallen steeply and farmers are increasingly diversifying into other activities to supplement their incomes.

10.16 Government guidance emphasises the importance of diversification into non-agricultural activities for many farm businesses. Following the consistent decline in farm incomes, this provides a strong opportunity to broaden the base of the rural economy and to provide new and varied employment opportunities in rural areas.

10.17 Diversification can include a wide range of enterprises of an appropriate scale, including non-food crops, woodland planting, recreation and leisure uses, the management of land to provide environmental benefits, farm shops, craft workshops and small-scale tourist attractions, contracting, equestrian businesses, woodland management, 'pick your own', nature trails, holiday accommodation and light industrial use. Such activities often help to sustain agricultural, forestry or horticultural holdings as viable units, and hence they can reduce the likelihood of farm fragmentation. However, PPS7 (Planning Policy Statement 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) demonstrates that the appeal of the countryside is central to its economic prosperity and that development should therefore

be of an appropriate scale and nature, so that they do not have an adverse impact upon the character, appearance or quality of the surrounding countryside. They should also be capable of being served by the existing local transport network.

10.18 In assessing the acceptability of diversification proposals, a significant consideration will be the requirement for new buildings to be provided. Matters relating to new buildings and changes of use within rural areas for employment purposes are contained within policies BD4 and BD5. Where diversification proposals require new building work, applicants will need to demonstrate that these proposals are satisfied in this regard.

BD8 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Proposals for telecommunications development, including applications for prior approval under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 1995, will be permitted provided that:

- i) There is a demonstrable need for the development;**
- ii) Where proposals are sited within nationally designated areas including Areas of Outstanding National Beauty, it can be demonstrated it is in the national interest and incapable of being accommodated outside these areas;**
- iii) Opportunities to share existing buildings, masts or other structures have been fully explored; and**
- iv) Proposals are sited, designed and landscaped so as to minimise impact on the built or natural environment.**

10.19 The Government's framework for telecommunications development is set out in PPG8 (Planning Policy Guidance note 8 – Telecommunications). This outlines the importance of good communications both economically and socially and sets out the Government's policy to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems, whilst minimising the environmental impact of any installation.

10.20 Siting and design are particular concerns and operators proposing new masts should show that they have fully explored the possibility of mast sharing or use of existing buildings or other structures. Only where it can be clearly demonstrated that the technical needs of the operator cannot be achieved by siting apparatus on an existing mast, building or other structure will new masts be permitted.

10.21 Within the District it has become apparent from the consultation responses to previous planning applications for telecommunications masts there is a perception these transmitters are a threat to public health. A Government commissioned report published in the year 2000 concluded that "the balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations" but the possibility of harm could not be ruled out with confidence. The Government accepts that more research is required but it advises that any risk to health should be regulated under Health and Safety legislation rather than by the planning system. The only material consideration for the Local Planning Authority should be compliance with current European Union guidelines on public exposure to electromagnetic fields. Planning applications should therefore include a

statement explaining how the proposal will comply with the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) which have been adopted by the E.U. Council.

10.22 [deleted]

BD9 SIGNS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

Permission will be granted for signs and advertisements provided:

- i) They would not prejudice public safety;**
- ii) They are suitable in size, siting and design for both the building and/or the immediate locality; and**
- iii) Cumulatively with existing and other proposed signs and advertisements, they do not affect the visual amenity in the locality.**

10.23 Under current legislation, the District Council controls outdoor advertising in the interests of amenity and public safety. In Conservation Areas and with regard to listed buildings, advertisements should relate sensitively to the building to which they are fixed and/ or to the character and appearance of the street scene or local area. In particular, regard will be had to the design, materials, colour, siting and method of illumination.

10.24 Public safety will also be a significant factor particularly where the proposed signage is likely to give rise to confusion, or interfere, with traffic signs and signals, or will result in glare or dazzle.