

8 EMPLOYMENT

List of policies:

- E1 Promote Suitably Located New Employment Uses
- E2 Criteria for the Development of a Site for a Single Major Employer
- E3 Resist the Development of Allocated Employment Land for Other Uses
- E4 Mixed Uses to Promote Employment Development
- E5 Allocation of Employment Land
- E6 Expansion of Existing Industry and Offices
- E7 Employment Sites with Deep Water Frontage
- E8 Employment Development in the Countryside
- E9 Employment Development Anywhere Within Settlements
- E10 Warehouse and Storage Uses
- E11 To Provide for Teleworking Facilities

Employment Facts

- o 4,812 people were unemployed on the Island in October 1996.
- o Island blackspots for unemployment are Newport, Ryde, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor.
- o Unemployment increases in the winter due to seasonal lay-offs.
- o Wages for men are about 24% below the national average.
- o Almost 45% of employment on the Island is concentrated in the service sector.
- o In 1993, there were 3,239 registered firms on the Island.
- o 95% of businesses employ less than 25 people.

Introduction

8.1 Whilst this plan recognises the importance of the tourist industry as a major employer and essential part of the Island's economy, the policies in this section are mainly directed towards industrial and business uses. Employment issues are also dealt with elsewhere in this plan under other subject headings, eg. Tourism, Retail etc. Whereas previous structure and local plans have concentrated on the provision of industrial floorspace, recent changes in planning legislation now mean that industry is included within a broader business use class. The philosophy of the business use class is to allow change between industrial, high-tech, studio and office use, thus enabling greater flexibility and freedom for businesses and aiding employment generation. The term

industry or industrial in this section therefore has a wide definition and covers a variety of business uses. The current categories of business use class as set out in the Use Classes Order are as follows:

- B1 Includes offices, research and development, studios, laboratories, high tech and light industry. These are best described as processes which could exist within a residential area, without detriment to its amenity by way of noise, vibration, fumes etc.
- B2 Covers general industrial uses such as shipbuilding and aircraft parts manufacture which, by their nature, are not acceptable within residential areas.
- B8 Covers warehousing and distribution

centres, but does not include retail warehouses, such as DIY centres and bulky household goods stores.

8.2 The Island is striving towards a prosperous economy and full employment and it is essential that the planning system does not unnecessarily hinder the development plans of businesses and does its full share to ensure that sufficient, suitably located employment land is made available and high value employment and strong economic growth encouraged. At the same time, however, care needs to be taken to ensure that excessive development does not affect the concept of balanced growth inherent in the plan. The prospect of too much development may appear unlikely, but over the longer term, Government or EU assistance could lead to a change of circumstances.

8.3 The main way the planning system can help towards business development is through the allocation of land. In terms of existing land allocations, there is already more than enough industrial land to permit expansion into the foreseeable future. While it is a fact that much of this has remained undeveloped for some time, this is more a reflection of the lack of demand and the low returns on investment, than any inherent problems in the land available. Future industrial development is likely to continue to require financial and practical assistance.

8.4 There are currently 65 hectares of employment land allocated in this plan. Of this total, 40 hectares are considered to be readily available for development, in that there is either an existing planning permission or there are little or no planning or physical constraints. A number of sites are currently under development on the Island, including St Cross Business Park in Newport and a major development at Great Preston Road, Ryde, with assistance from the Rural

Development Commission.

8.5 New development land used for the establishment or growth of manufacturing firms is likely to lead to employment growth. In the past, however, some development of industrial land has included the relocation of distribution centres and quasi-retail operations, such as car sale show rooms, from other in-town locations. More recently, the introduction of the B1 use class has seen more office-type uses relocate to cheaper and more accessible industrial land. The relocation of existing businesses, while giving them the opportunity to expand, will not necessarily in itself create new jobs.

8.6 The development of manufacturing industry, producing for wider markets does, on the other hand, have the potential for creating new jobs on the Island, and it is vital that land is made available for this type of growth. Between 1960 and 1992, the Island saw the development of some 65 hectares of industrial land. This represented development of an average rate of 2 hectares per annum, much of which was the relocation of firms described above. While there are still some industrial operations which would benefit from relocation to an industrial estate, it is considered that the demand for land for relocation will be lower than in the past.

8.7 New allocations on greenfield sites can be controversial, with no guarantee that they would have any effect on the rate of business development. Nevertheless, in order to ensure a continuing choice of sites for developers, new land allocations should be made. This will help, over the long term, to ensure a suitable choice of sites will be available to potential developers and guarantee that land shortages will not prejudice appropriate economic development.

8.8 The car has revolutionised all of our lives, changed the way we live and allowed

Objectives:

The objectives of this section of the plan are:

- to promote and encourage a range of employment uses to retain and enhance the Island's economy;
- to ensure the availability of sufficient useable land for future employment needs;
- to locate new development so as to reduce the need to travel;
- to resist the development of allocated employment land for other uses.

Promote Suitably Located New Employment Uses

E1 The Council will promote and encourage the development of new and existing employment uses, and will approve suitably located developments in appropriate locations on allocated land within, or adjacent to, existing settlements, so as to reduce the need to travel to work by car. The development should be easily accessible by public transport, on foot, or by bicycle.

us to extend the distance between the workplace and home. Its increased use has, however, brought with it the disadvantages of pollution, danger and congestion. Whilst actively assisting the development of suitably located employment, the Council is keen to reverse the reliance on the car by

encouraging the retention and development of workspace near to where people live, where it can be easily accessed by methods of transport other than private car.

8.9 While there has been little success in recent years in attracting mainland

Criteria for the Development of a Site for a Major Employer

E2 Planning applications for employment related development to meet the requirements of a major employer (ie an employer generating a significant number of new jobs) who wishes to redevelop on, or relocate to the Island and which would be to the overall benefit of the Island community, will be acceptable in principle on any suitable sites allocated for development. Where no suitable site is available, consideration will be given to a new site. The criteria for assessing new sites will be as follows:

- a there must be good access to one of the cross-Solent ferry links;*
- b they must be outside the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and identified nature conservation designations and must not cause detriment to these areas;*
- c they must adjoin the main road network, be readily accessible by public transport and have good foot and cycle links;*
- d they must not have a significant impact on adjoining uses;*
- e they must be located near to the potential workforce;*
- f development on the site should provide substantial positive benefit to the Island;*
- g the development will not result in the loss of any of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Agricultural Land classification grades 1, 2 or 3a).*

Any other form of development which is considered by the Council to be piecemeal, not for a single major employer, or is likely to prejudice the likelihood of the site being taken up by a major employer generating development, will not be permitted.

companies to the Island, hopes remain high that a suitable major employer will eventually be persuaded to relocate. Discussions and practical efforts have centred on attempting to entice a major manufacturer or government department to the Island, the establishment of a major tourist facility, such as Center Parcs, and most recently the feasibility of an Island University. The main benefit of any major development such as these is the boost that they would give to employment and the economy generally.

8.10 While development on the scale required could have a major environmental impact, there seems little doubt that if a suitable proposal was forthcoming, it would generate support. Every effort should be made to encourage a development of this type to locate on one of the sites allocated in this plan. It is recognised however that these sites may not be appropriate for all types of uses and the policy provides a means of selecting an alternative suitable site in exceptional circumstances. It is important to emphasise that this policy should only be used in relation to developments which would provide a substantial positive benefit to the Island, and where no other suitable allocated sites are available.

Resist the Development of Allocated Employment Land for Other Uses

E3 *Planning applications which protect or enhance the employment use of existing and allocated employment land and premises will be approved. Applications for the change of use of land or premises to those outside employment use will not be permitted. The only exceptions to this policy will be where:*

- a** *there is an identified need for the proposed use and no other suitable site is available; or*
- b** *where alternative equivalent floorspace suitable for employment purposes can be found in the area without releasing land outside the development envelope boundary for development; or*
- c** *the loss of the site would not prejudice the ability of the area to meet local employment needs; or*
- d** *the development involves the relocation of a non-conforming use from an unsuitable existing site*
- e** *the proposal is for the overall development of the site and involves an acceptable mix of uses.*

8.11 One of the main aims in allocating employment land is to help create jobs. The Island is at a disadvantage in comparison to the mainland however, and it has proved difficult, despite various initiatives and promotions, to encourage new industrial development to this side of the Solent. At the same time established Island companies have been unwilling to expand during a period of economic uncertainty. As a result employment sites have been slow to develop and vacant sites are under pressure for development to other uses. The Council

remains committed to job creation and believes that existing and proposed employment allocations should be protected from other development to ensure adequate provision remains. There may be exceptional circumstances where employment land is released for an alternative development, however the Council will, in such circumstances, wish to be assured that a suitable replacement site is available, or an acceptable mixed-use is proposed, prior to approval being granted.

Mixed Uses to Promote Employment Development

E4 *Planning applications for mixed-use development (including housing, but not retail), on land allocated for employment uses will be approved, providing:*

- a** *it can be shown conclusively that the development of a mix of uses is necessary for the appropriate development of the employment use and that no excess profits are being made. The secondary development should be just sufficient to effectively fund the primary use, taking into account normal developer profits;*
- b** *the site and surrounding area is appropriate for the mix of uses proposed;*
- c** *the mix of uses proposed are complementary to each other, with satisfactory layout and design;*
- d** *the application is for the whole of the allocated site;*
- e** *full details of the phasing programme are provided;*
- f** *appropriate agreements are drawn up to ensure that the employment elements of the scheme are both completed and retained for employment use;*
- g** *the primary use of the site will conform with the development plan allocation and be a necessary and appropriate development;*
- h** *full financial details of the development costs and financial returns are provided to the Council;*
- i** *there is a current demand for the proposed industrial development.*

8.12 The development of employment land has always been difficult on the Island because of low rental levels achievable for industrial buildings. Historically, most development not directly built by a company for its own use has had funding support or grant aid from outside agencies. Although grant aid is still available in certain areas for particular types of development, the planning system can be used to help achieve long-term objectives through the consideration of mixed uses and cross-subsidisation. In simple terms, this means one type of development, probably housing, subsidising the development costs of the main user of the site.

8.13 Mixed use developments can be more sustainable than a single use

development and help create vitality and diversity and reduce the need to travel. It is however important to ensure that the development of the use for which the land is allocated remains the primary purpose of the mixed-use development. It should not be seen as a back-door method of achieving residential development on land which is needed for employment purposes. For this reason, the policy contains a range of criteria under which any mixed-use development on employment land will be judged. It is not expected that this policy shall be applicable to all employment sites, as clearly mixed uses would not be appropriate in certain areas. Sites where the policy may apply include, E5(10), E5(11), E5(13), E5(14) and E5(20), as set out in Appendix B.

Allocation of Employment Land

E5 Planning proposals for employment development will be considered in principle on employment sites allocated on the Proposals Map and set out in Appendix B.

8.14 The Council is aiming to achieve a more buoyant Island economy with full employment. Whilst the Island workforce is growing in the long term, this has been at a relatively slow rate and it is essential therefore that this plan and the planning system do their full share to encourage a balanced economic growth. Whilst one of the main ways this can be achieved is by the allocation of sufficient suitably located employment land, the Council will also support initiatives which will address the Island's higher than average level of unemployment and will approve, subject to the other policies of this plan, planning allocations which will create training facilities and opportunities which will help meet the needs of existing or potential employers.

8.15 Over 40 ha of employment land has been brought forward from either the previous local plans, or with planning approvals. This plan has allocated an additional 25 ha of new industrial and employment land, within or close to the Island's main settlements. The principal sites are shown on the proposals map and are included in Appendix B to this plan. Individual plots, sites or remnants of larger employment development sites have been illustrated where possible. In addition, there are existing underused or vacant, or newly built properties which add to the effective land available to generate new employment.

8.16 Details of the employment sites have been included within Appendix B to this plan and are indicated where scale allows on the proposals map.

Expansion of Existing Industry and Offices

E6 Planning applications for the expansion of existing industry and offices will be approved, particularly where this will lead to additional job opportunities. Exceptions to this policy will be where:

- a the proposal involves the intensification or extension of an existing non conforming use, which is having an unacceptable impact on the surrounding area;
- b the use is inappropriate in its existing location and it is not possible to overcome identified problems.

8.17 The Council is keen to support the development and growth of existing firms either by expansion or intensification on their existing sites, or relocation to new larger sites which will allow them to expand. This represents one of our best opportunities for

effective economic development and job creation. The Council will, however, seek to ensure that where an existing concern wishes to expand within its existing site, such an increase of activity would not cause unacceptable problems in that location.

Employment Sites With Deep Water Frontage

E7 Planning applications to develop existing employment/industrial sites which have deep water frontages will only be approved where this type of location is essential to the proposed marine related employment use.

8.18 A large part of the Island's industrial activity has in the past been marine related. As a result, employment sites that have deep water access have been a vital component of the economic prosperity of the Island. The Council recognises the importance of the Island's waterside boat building and repair yards to its employment, tourist, recreation and leisure objectives. Planning applications to develop employment/industrial sites which have deep water

frontage will be approved where the proposal is either for a marine related employment use which required access to a deep water frontage, or for other employment uses which can be shown to support the continuation of the existing marine related employment use. In either case, the proposal should be accompanied by a whole yard plan which shows all existing uses and intended relationships between the existing uses and proposed new uses.

Employment in the Countryside

E8 Planning applications for employment related development on land outside the development envelope boundaries will be approved where the proposal is of benefit to the rural economy, is of a scale and design appropriate for the location and meets at least one of the following criteria:

- a the development allows for the expansion of firms which could not be expected to relocate;***
- b the application is for the re-use of a suitable agricultural or other appropriate rural building;***
- c where the development is associated with an existing farm complex or other employment operation and is compatible with, and complementary to, that use.***

8.19 The Council recognise the role that rural areas can play in the economic regeneration of the Island, parts of which have been designated a Rural Development Area, and will encourage appropriate development for employment related purposes, providing certain safeguards are met. The Council will allow the limited expansion of existing firms and the development of industries appropriate to the countryside, where these can be located in suitable buildings, or within working farm complexes.

exceptional circumstances and where there is a proven need. The development should be of benefit to the local economy, must upgrade or improve the existing facility and will be expected to maintain, protect and enhance the area. The design should be of the highest standard and reflect the character of its surroundings. Any development which is considered to have a detrimental effect on the landscape will not be permitted. Permission may be granted, subject to conditions, limiting the use to the life of the buildings and/or removing permitted development rights for extensions. Outside working and storage of materials and waste may be restricted by condition.

8.20 Planning applications for employment related major development or new buildings within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will, however, only be approved in

8.21 Developments within the B1 business

Employment Development Anywhere Within Settlements

E9 Planning applications for appropriate scale business class development (B1) use will be permitted within development envelope boundaries. The Council would, however, wish to be assured that this type of use would continue to be compatible with adjacent land uses at the scale proposed.

use class are, by definition, appropriate within a residential area and can often be satisfactorily accommodated within the fabric of existing settlements, without detriment to the environment, and with positive benefits for the community. Mixed residential and employment uses are considered appropriate in most developed areas, providing that basic standards are met. While certain developments may be acceptable, growth on the site may lead to an undesirable intensification which could cause problems to

neighbours. The Rural White Paper, published in October 1995, proposed the establishment of a rural business class which would limit the growth allowed to manageable and acceptable levels. This proposal may be equally desirable within urban areas where neighbour conflicts can become serious. The Council will consider the Government's proposals carefully and will implement them if appropriate.

8.22 The Council recognises the need for

Warehouse and Storage Uses

E10 Planning applications for warehouse storage and distribution activities (Class B8), on employment sites within development envelopes will be approved subject to the following criteria:

- a the site is suitably located, with good access to the main road network and the ferry terminals;*
- b the type of storage being proposed is acceptable and compatible with neighbouring uses in the locality;*
- c the highway network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the development proposed;*
- d the general degree of disturbance likely to be caused is acceptable;*
- e the design and appearance of the buildings and level of landscaping proposed are acceptable.*

sufficient warehousing storage and facilities on the Island. However, it is concerned that such uses can, by the nature of their use and operation, cause nuisance in terms of traffic generation. The Council is therefore keen to ensure that such proposals are suitably

located, have good access to the highway network and are compatible in terms of use, design and appearance, with neighbouring development.

8.23 The development of information

To Provide For Teleworking Facilities

E11 Planning applications to provide "teleworking" facilities, whereby groups of individuals can share information technology and office facilities to allow them to work close to home, will be approved providing they meet the following criteria:

- a the building is suitable for the use and located within or close to an existing settlement; and*
- b the use of the building is compatible with the amenity of adjoining nearby uses.*

technology has made the option of working from, or near, home increasingly attractive, particularly where this will reduce travelling distances to work and offer a more pleasant working environment. Depending on the type of activity, many small businesses can be carried out without detriment to the amenity of neighbours. Where the scale and type of

activity are such that planning permission is required, the Council must be satisfied that the use will not cause environmental problems or detract from the rural amenities of the area as a result of, for example, noise, or traffic generation.

