

6. ECONOMY AND TOURISM

OBJECTIVES

- ET/a To support the Cambridge Area's position as a world leader in research and technology based industries, higher education and research, particularly through the development and expansion of clusters.**
- ET/b To manage carefully development pressures in South Cambridgeshire by favouring those uses which need to be located near to Cambridge.**
- ET/c To support existing businesses by applying positive policies towards the appropriate expansion of existing firms where appropriate, including through use of previously developed land, and the conversion / adaptation or replacement of suitable buildings for business use.**
- ET/d To reduce commuting distances and the need to travel, particularly by car, by bringing home and workplace closer together, and by encouraging employment opportunities in accessible locations, or accessible by sustainable modes of travel.**
- ET/e To support the rural economy and enable farm diversification.**
- ET/f To support the growth of the tourism industry of South Cambridgeshire, whilst ensuring new facilities and accommodation do not have an adverse impact on the built and natural environment.**

LIMITATIONS ON THE OCCUPANCY OF NEW PREMISES IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

POLICY EM/1 Limitations On The Occupancy of New Premises In South Cambridgeshire

Employment development, including change of use, will only be permitted if it can demonstrate it falls into one or more of the following:

- 1. Offices or other development, in the use class B1 (a), providing an essential service for Cambridge as a local or Sub-Regional Centre¹;**
- 2. High technology and related industries, in the use class B1 (b), primarily concerned with research and development, which show a special need to be located close to the universities or other**

established research facilities or associated services in the Cambridge Area²;

- 3. D1 educational uses and sui generis research establishments, required in the national interest, to be located close to existing major establishments in related fields (such as the universities, the teaching hospital, or private research establishments), in order to share staff, equipment or data, or to undertake joint collaborative working⁵;**
- 4. Other small-scale industries, in use classes B1 (c), B2, and B8 (up to 1,850 m²), which contribute to a greater range of local employment opportunities, particularly if it contributes to the development of locally-based skills or expertise (large scale expansion of such firms will not be permitted)⁴.**

The occupation of development will be controlled by condition or legal agreement, for a period of 10 years from the first date of occupation.

Footnotes:

¹ Offices: User restrictions will apply to offices over 300 m². 300 m² reflects PPG4 Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms (1992), which states that user occupancy restrictions are not necessary for developments of under 300 m² of office floor area. However, a condition or legal agreement may be necessary to prevent multiple small units being combined or let to a single office user who does not comply with the policy.

Essential Service: Local and sub-regional service or administrative facility with the majority of its business based in the Cambridge Sub-Region. Services might include banking, finance, management and business services, property services, legal and accounting services, educational, housing and recruitment services, medical and other professional scientific service and patent agents, and specialist component assembly.

² High Technology and Research and Development: The investigation, design and development of an idea, concept, material, component, instrument, machine, product or process, up to and including production for testing (but excluding mass production) where the work routine requires daily discussion and action on the part of the laboratory and design staff.

Cambridge Area: The area covered by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

³ Research Institutes: Provide accommodation for organisations whose primary purpose is to research or investigate ideas, theories and concepts, and / or to design and develop instruments, processes or products, up to and including production for testing, but excluding manufacture.

⁴ Other small-scale industries: 1850m² refers to the maximum size of occupation of any one user on a site.

- 6.1 New employment growth must be managed to ensure the very qualities that attract firms in the first place remain, and to ensure employment land is reserved for firms that need it most. RPG6 Policy 26 states that Development Plans should continue to include policies for the selective management of development within the area close to Cambridge, discriminating in favour of uses that have an essential need for a Cambridge location. This approach is continued in Policy P9/7 of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan.
- 6.2 The policy reserves employment land for development that can demonstrate a clear need to be located in the area, to serve local needs, or contribute to the continued success of the Cambridge Sub-Region as a centre of high technology and research. This may be in order to share staff, equipment or data, or undertake joint collaborative projects.
- 6.3 Large-scale manufacturing, distribution and warehousing, and office firms that could equally well locate in other areas of the County, will not be permitted. This approach is necessary to manage the intensive development pressure in and around Cambridge. Given the need to protect the environment, employment land in the District is a scarce resource. The policy also supports the further development of the clusters of high technology, research and development.
- 6.4 Small-scale developments in industry will be permitted, where they can contribute to providing a better balance of local job opportunities, and contribute to the development of local skills.
- 6.5 South Cambridgeshire already contains a number of research institutes of national importance, associated with the University or other research establishments. Proposals for new research establishments, or the expansion of those existing, must demonstrate a specific need to be located near the existing establishments in the Cambridge area. Where there is conflict between proposals and other policies and proposals in the plan, the applicant must demonstrate that they are outweighed by evidence of national interest. Proposals will be considered against the development principles detailed in the plan, and environmental impact of new development should be minimised. Future occupation will be restricted to the uses specified by conditions or legal agreement.
- 6.6 Supporting text to Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003 Policy P9/8 states that exceptionally, office style employment serving a regional function may be located in the Sub-Region. However, it would not be desirable for national headquarters, call centres, or similar to develop in the vicinity of Cambridge. As any regional offices are to be an exception, it is appropriate that they are focussed in the City of Cambridge itself, rather than the rural areas of South Cambridgeshire.

MEETING HOUSING NEEDS FROM EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

POLICY EM/2 Meeting Housing Needs From Employment Development

Employment development proposals likely to have an impact on the demand for affordable housing in the Cambridge Sub-Region, will be expected to mitigate such impacts by making either:

- 1. A financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing off-site; or**
- 2. A provision of affordable housing on-site.**

If the employers of staff recognised as key workers can demonstrate that they are providing or contributing to the provision of key worker housing for their staff, this will only satisfy the affordable housing requirement of this policy where the employment development is to be occupied by that employer.

- 6.7 New employment development increases pressure on the housing market, and a lack of suitable affordable housing can lead to recruitment difficulties, unsustainable travel patterns and hinder development and expansion of clusters. Developments will therefore be expected to mitigate these impacts. Employers with local land holdings which can be developed without a change to policies in the Local Development Framework will be expected to make provision for their own workers on that land before provision can be made elsewhere, unless it can be demonstrated that the land is needed for the core activities of the employer. Further guidance on requirements will be provided in a supplementary planning document.

PROMOTION OF CLUSTERS

POLICY EM/3 Promotion of Clusters

Development proposals in suitable locations will be permitted which support the development of clusters, in the following sectors:

- 1. Biotechnology and biomedical;**
- 2. Computer services;**
- 3. Electronic engineering;**
- 4. Information technology / telecommunications;**
- 5. Medicine;**
- 6. Research and development;**
- 7. Other locally driven high technology clusters as they emerge.**

Employment Land Allocations especially suited for cluster development are Northstowe, and the urban extensions to Cambridge. Area Action Plans will indicate the availability and suitability of sites for cluster

development, and encourage provision of a range of suitable units, including incubator units.

- 6.8 South Cambridgeshire is home to a number of clusters. A cluster is a group of independent companies operating in a specific field of industrial or economic activity with representation from across the value chain, ranging from academic institutions with sector expertise to venture capitalists and specialized suppliers (Regional Economic Strategy, EEDA 2004). The benefits of clustering may be spread over a relatively wide area, depending on the nature of the firm. Clusters are of great importance to the success of not only the local, but also the regional and national economy.
- 6.9 Clusters have specific requirements for premises and development sites. The Local Development Framework will aim to allow suitable sites for small firms to start up and expand, but also support the development of more mature clusters. This is consistent with Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003 policies P2/4 and P9/6.

DEVELOPMENT IN ESTABLISHED EMPLOYMENT AREAS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

POLICY EM/4 Development In Established Employment Areas In The Countryside

In defined Established Employment Areas In The Countryside, redevelopment of existing buildings, and appropriate infill development for employment use may be permitted.

The following Established Employment Areas in the Countryside are defined on the Proposals Map:

- a. Buckingway Business Park;**
- b. Cambourne Business Park;**
- c. Cambridge Research Park, Landbeach;**
- d. Site to North of Cambridge Research Park, Landbeach;**
- e. Granta Park, Great Abington;**
- f. Wellcome Trust Genome Campus, Hinxton;**
- g. Norman Way Industrial Estate, Over;**
- h. Vantico, South of Duxford;**
- i. Convent Drive / Pembroke Avenue site, Waterbeach;**
- j. Brookfields Business Estate / Park, Twentypence Road, Cottenham.**

Infilling is defined as filling small gaps between built development. Cumulative impact of proposals will be considered. Permission will be refused where there would be a negative impact on surrounding countryside, or landscape character area. Developments will be subject

to other policies in the plan, in particular policy EM/6 on the expansion of existing firms.

- 6.10 New employment development outside village frameworks will generally not be permitted. This is to protect the countryside from unnecessary development, which can be visually intrusive, but also lead to unsustainable patterns of development. However, South Cambridgeshire contains a number of established employment areas in the countryside, which are identified on the Proposals Map. The policy provides a context for considering planning applications on these sites.
- 6.11 Within these areas, appropriate infill and redevelopment will be permitted, subject to consideration of land supply across the District, and other policy concerns. This will enable more efficient use of the sites, and allow them to be adapted for the needs of existing and future users.
- 6.12 The sites identified are outside village frameworks, and not in the Green Belt. Employment sites created from the conversion of agricultural buildings have not been included, as these were permitted through specific policies, and are not intended for extension.
- 6.13 This policy does not cover Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt, which are dealt with elsewhere in the plan.

NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

POLICY EM/5 New Employment Development

Planning permission will be granted for new small-scale employment development, in the B1 – B8 Use Classes provided that the development would contribute to a greater range of local employment opportunities, or facilitate cluster development, at the following locations:

- 1. Within village frameworks; or**
- 2. Within Northstowe and Cambridge East; or**
- 3. Previously developed sites next to or very close to village frameworks of Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.**

- 6.14 Sensitive small-scale employment development can help sustain the rural economy, and achieve a wider range of local employment opportunities. It can enhance the vitality of rural centres, and reduce the need to travel. There is also potential for cluster related firms to develop on an appropriate scale.
- 6.15 Employment development may provide the opportunity to make best use of a previously developed site, including vacant, derelict, or under used land. The

policy provides an element of flexibility for the redevelopment of suitable sites adjoining or near to the more sustainable villages in the District.

- 6.16 Small-scale development in this context is considered to be firms who employ 25 people or less.

EXPANSION OF EXISTING FIRMS

POLICY EM/6 Expansion of Existing Firms

Development for the expansion of existing firms will be permitted:

- 1. Within village frameworks; or**
- 2. Within Northstowe and Cambridge East; or**
- 3. Previously developed sites next to or very close to village frameworks; or**
- 4. Established Employment Areas In The Countryside listed in Policy EM/4.**

A firm or business will be considered as 'existing' if a significant element of its operation has been based in the Cambridge Area for a minimum of five years prior to the date of any planning application for development.

Expansion will not be permitted where it consolidates a non-conforming use, or causes problems with traffic, noise, pollution, or other damage to the environment.

- 6.17 It is important that firms have the opportunity to expand for the continued success of the business, but this must be in appropriate circumstances. The scale of growth must not conflict with other policies in the plan. The expansion of existing firms will generally be given preference over firms wishing to move to the area. This is consistent with the policies of restraint applying to the Cambridge area.

LOSS OF RURAL EMPLOYMENT TO NON-EMPLOYMENT USES

POLICY EM/7 Loss of Rural Employment to Non-Employment Uses

The conversion, change of use or re-development of existing employment sites to non-employment uses within village frameworks should be resisted unless one of the following criteria is met:

- 1. It is demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand; or**
- 2. The overall benefit to the community of the proposal outweighs any adverse effect on employment opportunities and the range of available employment land and premises; or**
- 3. The existing use is generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution, or unacceptable levels of traffic.**

Applications for change of use of premises in, or last occupied by, employment use will need to be accompanied by documentary evidence that the sites are not suitable or capable of being made suitable for continued employment use. Evidence would be required that the property has been adequately marketed for a period of not less than twelve months on terms that reflect the lawful use and condition of the premises.

- 6.18 Employment sites within village frameworks are a scarce resource, which should be retained. It will often be the case that new employment developments in village frameworks will be limited due to their potential impact on village character. Making best use of existing employment sites reduces the pressure for development of new sites, including new sites in the countryside. It also provides a greater range of employment opportunities and reduces the need to travel. Sites should be retained to provide local employment, unless specific factors indicate otherwise.

CONVERSION OF RURAL BUILDINGS FOR EMPLOYMENT

POLICY EM/8 Conversion Of Rural Buildings For Employment

The change of use or adaptation of buildings (without extension) in the countryside for employment use will be permitted provided the following apply:

- 1. The buildings are structurally sound;**
- 2. The buildings are not makeshift in nature, and are of permanent, substantial construction;**
- 3. The buildings are capable of re-use without materially changing their existing character or impact upon the surrounding countryside;**
- 4. The form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings.**

Any increase in floor area will be strictly controlled, and must be for the benefit of the design, or in order to better integrate the development with its surroundings. There will be a general presumption against future extensions of such buildings. Incidental uses such as car parking and storage should be accommodated within the group of buildings, or on well related land where landscaping can reduce the visual impact of the new site.

Employment generated must be in scale with the rural location. Developments resulting in significant numbers of employees or visitors must only be located near to larger settlements or accessible by public transport, cycling, or walking. The cumulative impact of the conversion of a number of buildings on adjoining sites will also be considered.

- 6.19 South Cambridgeshire contains a stock of rural buildings. Where buildings are no longer required for their original use, predominantly agriculture, they can provide a valuable opportunity to provide employment and support the rural economy. Potential uses include farm diversification, commerce and industry, and for tourism or recreation. There is also potential for 'lower tech' industries, contributing to providing a greater diversity of employment opportunities across the District.
- 6.20 Due to their location, such developments must be carefully controlled. It is crucial that design takes account of the character and appearance of the existing building, and the surrounding area. It is not sufficient to simply retain the frame of a building, and substantially reconstruct around it.
- 6.21 Developments should be of a scale appropriate to their location, as large employment developments in the countryside may conflict with the principles of sustainable development, resulting in unsustainable traffic movements, and potential environmental harm. Developments resulting in significant numbers of employees or visitors should be located near to settlements or accessible by public transport, cycling, or walking. In areas without such access, small-scale business development may still be appropriate where it only results in a modest increase in daily vehicle movements. This may require the production of a Travel Plan and /or mitigation of traffic impact in accordance with Policy TR/3.

REPLACEMENT BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

POLICY EM/9 Replacement Buildings In The Countryside

Replacement buildings in the countryside for employment use will only be permitted where:

- 1. The buildings are not makeshift in nature, and are of permanent, substantial construction;**

- 2. It would bring about an environmental improvement in terms of the impact of the development on its surroundings and the landscape;**
- 3. It would result in a more acceptable and sustainable development than might be achieved through conversion.**

Any increase in floor area will be strictly controlled, and must be for the benefit of the design, or in order to better integrate the development with its surroundings.

- 6.22 Planning Policy Statement 7 paragraph 19 is supportive of the replacement of suitably located, existing buildings of permanent design and construction in the countryside for economic development purposes where it would bring about environmental improvement, and result in a more sustainable development.

FARM DIVERSIFICATION

POLICY EM/10 Farm Diversification

Well-conceived farm diversification schemes, involving uses that need to be located in the countryside, where they are directly related to supporting a working farm, will be permitted if:

- 1. They are consistent in scale with their rural location;**
- 2. Existing buildings are re-used where possible, and if not replaced, in accordance with policy EM/8 and EM/9;**
- 3. Any new development is part of an existing group of buildings.**

Applications may be supported by a farm plan, to demonstrate how a proposal fits into the wider farming picture and set out its environmental consequences.

- 6.23 Farming still makes an important contribution to the South Cambridgeshire economy, but increasingly farms are having to diversify into non-agricultural activities, for the business to remain viable. This could include planting of woodland, farm shops, farm-based food processing and packaging, craft workshops, sporting facilities, fishing lakes, equestrian businesses nature trails or holiday accommodation. In order to protect the quality and distinctiveness of the local landscape, the Council wishes to prevent uncoordinated development in rural areas and the piecemeal stripping of assets from farms without regard for the viability of the holding.
- 6.24 Paragraph 30 of PPS7 advises that Local Planning Authorities should be supportive of well-conceived farm diversification schemes for business

purposes that contribute to sustainable development objectives and help to sustain the agricultural enterprise, and are consistent in their scale with their rural location. RPG6 Policy 12 supports diversification appropriate to the environmental and ecological setting, and Policy P2/6 of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan also supports employment growth on an appropriate scale to allow farm diversification.

- 6.25 Farm plans may be submitted to support applications relating to farm diversification proposals. They can demonstrate how a proposal fits into the wider farming picture and set out its environmental consequences.

TOURISM FACILITIES

POLICY EM/11 Tourism Facilities

New tourism facilities in the District will only be permitted where they relate to, and are in keeping with, the District's heritage and countryside.

- 6.26 As the District entirely surrounds the historic city of Cambridge, it is under pressure for new tourism related development. The focus of tourism in the area will remain the City, but the District contains a number of important tourist attractions, attractive countryside, and visitor accommodation, and provides an opportunity for visitors to the city to experience the wider area. Tourism also provides opportunities to diversify the rural economy and create employment.
- 6.27 In keeping with the location, new tourism developments should concentrate on the appreciation and utilisation of the District's heritage, recreation facilities, and countryside, rather than the introduction of new large-scale visitor attractions unrelated to the area. Proposals should be designed to a high standard and be appropriate in scale and location so that the environmental impact and associated visitor management problems are minimal.

TOURIST FACILITIES AND VISITOR ACCOMMODATION

POLICY EM/12 Tourist Facilities and Visitor Accommodation

Outside village frameworks, development to provide overnight visitor accommodation, holiday accommodation, public houses and restaurants will only be permitted by change of use / conversion, or through appropriate replacement of buildings not requiring large extension, or by appropriately modest extensions to existing facilities.

Development of holiday accommodation will be limited to short-term holiday lets through conditions or legal agreement. Permitted development rights may be removed in the interests of amenity.

- 6.28 The City of Cambridge and surrounding attractions attract a large number of visitors every year, and consequently there is significant demand for tourist accommodation. The focus for new accommodation should be the villages, and development must be of a type in keeping with the settlement size, scale and form. Consequently developments may be more suited to Rural Centres. Focusing new tourist accommodation into the larger villages allows access for visitors to the public transport network and local services, thus promoting the goals of sustainable development.
- 6.29 In the countryside, holiday accommodation is a vital part of the rural economy, providing another means of farm diversification, and opportunity to reuse redundant rural buildings, but at the same time the countryside must be protected from inappropriate development. Developments permitted under this policy must be carefully controlled to ensure housing policies restricting development in the countryside are not compromised. Developments will therefore be restricted by legal agreement to ensure they are only used for short-term holiday lets.