

Introduction

7.1 This Chapter sets out the Local Planning Authority's policies for employment development in the District and also considers Ministry of Defence land and development. Site specific policies are contained in Chapters 11-13, dealing with Winchester, the Major Development Areas and the Settlements. Employment development in the countryside is addressed in Chapter 4, Countryside and Natural Environment.

Strategic policies

7.2 Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9, 2001) highlights the interrelationship between economic, social and environmental issues. RPG9 emphasises that it is only through the rigorous application of sustainable development principles that economic success can be secured for the Region, whilst maintaining its environmental and cultural attractiveness, and fostering social inclusion. The Regional Economic Strategy produced by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) in 2002 also promotes sustainability principles to underpin economic success. One of SEEDA's key objectives is to promote economic growth focused on the new knowledge-based industries.

7.3 The Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review) aims to facilitate the growth and development of existing businesses whilst laying down the framework for new economic growth. Its policies allow for employment development on sites already with planning permission or in use for employment purposes, and within built-up areas as defined by Local Plans. The Structure Plan also permits development within rural settlements provided it is appropriate in scale and location. Employment commitments in the District in 2004 amounted to nearly 113 hectares of employment land, of which nearly 40% was at Whiteley. The Structure Plan does not contain a requirement for a specific amount of employment floorspace to be provided.

Employment in Winchester District

7.4 Employment in the District is concentrated in the service sector, especially public services. This is most pronounced in Winchester town centre where there is a concentration of public sector employment. Unemployment in the District is low (1.0% in March 2006), which is lower than the County level of 1.3%, which in turn is significantly lower than the national average.

7.5 Hampshire County Council has produced an "Economic Profile" of the District. This indicates that the District is one of the most prosperous areas in the country, with considerable economic strength. The District's environmental and heritage qualities are also recognised, along with the need to ensure economic growth respects these. There are, however, potential threats and weaknesses to the local economy, some of which the Local Plan can help to address. Most relevant is the possible increase in attractiveness of the District for industrial development, reflecting the large amount of land available, increasing labour supply and the spread of development pressure from the north of Hampshire. Conversely, the lack of available office development opportunities, especially in Winchester, is also a possible threat.

7.6 In 1996 over 80% of all jobs in Winchester District were in the service sectors and this proportion was even higher in Winchester itself. Public services account for a particularly high proportion, 44%, compared to 27% for Hampshire. The private service sectors are therefore somewhat less well represented in the District than elsewhere in Hampshire (40% of jobs in Winchester District compared with 51% in Hampshire).

7.7 As part of the Local Plan preparation process, a survey of local businesses was undertaken to assess likely requirements for additional (or reduced) business floorspace. The results need to be treated with some caution as this was not a

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comprehensive survey, but it did highlight a demand for smaller office units within the District, and Winchester town centre in particular. This, combined with the conclusions of the Economic Profile and concerns amongst the business community about the continued effect of office restraint in Winchester, suggest a more flexible approach is needed. This Chapter sets out office policies for Winchester which provide for the development of additional small-scale offices to meet the needs of local firms. At the same time, the concerns that originally led to the introduction of office restraint policies remain relevant, especially regarding additional housing pressures, traffic and imbalances in the employment structure and labour market.

Employment Strategy

New development

7.8 Strategic advice, existing employment development consents and analysis of economic and employment trends, suggest the following employment strategy:

- providing for the development of existing commitments (sites allocated in the previous Local Plan or with planning permission);
- a generally permissive approach to new employment development in the settlements, subject to local environmental and conservation constraints, the need to respect the scale and character of the settlements, and the scope for optimising use of previously developed land within existing settlements;
- making provision for appropriate levels of employment development within the West of Waterlooville Major Development Area and giving consideration to the possible need for employment provision as part of an MDA at Winchester City (North), if this development is needed;

- generally resisting the loss to other uses of sites which are currently in employment use, provided they are not causing problems and subject to consideration of sustainability principles;
- the restraint of employment development where conservation constraints are most severe (for example, substantial office development in Winchester could have harmful effects in terms of housing pressure, traffic growth and other development pressure if not carefully controlled).

7.9 A number of sites allocated for employment development in the earlier Winchester District Local Plan had not been developed. Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing advocates reviewing such allocations in order to avoid an oversupply of employment land which may not realistically be taken up. Following this advice these allocations have been reviewed against the factors set out below, which are based on Regional Planning Guidance:

- strategic importance of the site for employment purposes;
- current use and suitability for employment development;
- scope for optimising use of previously developed land and land within built-up areas;
- relationship of the site to the District's main built-up areas;
- scope for developing a mix of uses on the site;
- accessibility and potential for access by sustainable transport modes;
- likely market demand and developability.

7.10 Using these factors, the relative sustainability of, and potential demand for, development of each of the sites previously allocated has been reassessed. Where justifiable the employment allocations are

carried forward into this Local Plan. Details of these sites are contained in the Settlements and Major Development Areas Chapters, and summarised in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Sites Allocated for Employment

Site location	Policy no.	Area of site (ha.)
West of Waterlooville	MDA.1	30
Hillson's Road, Curdridge	S.7	4.1
Solent 1, Whiteley	S.13	9.8
Solent 2, Whiteley	S.14	8.7
Little Park Farm, Whiteley	S.15	1.3

Table 4: Sites Allocated for Mixed Use including Employment

Site location	Policy no.	Area of site (ha.)
Abbey Mill, Bishop's Waltham	S.3	1.9
Freeman's Yard, Cheriton	S.6	1.1
Former Station Yard and Coach Business, Sutton Scotney	S.10	1.6

7.11 Tables 3 and 4 are not comprehensive lists of all sites that may be developed for employment uses. There are sites already with planning permission, and other appropriate development opportunities will come forward during the Plan period. The Tables include the size of the allocated sites. However, they do not estimate the amount of floorspace that may be accommodated, as this could vary considerably according to the type of development proposed.

7.12 The assessment of allocated sites indicates that there can be a more flexible approach to certain sites, hence their designation as mixed use allocations in Table 4. Employment use can be incorporated with other uses, including the possibility of housing or 'live-work' units (see Glossary). Live-work units will only contribute to meeting the required proportion of employment on a particular site where

they are designed and can be controlled to ensure that they provide genuine and useful workspace and that this will be retained.

7.13 There is also scope for some employment development, appropriate in scale and type, in the settlements. Such development, other than where already committed or allocated, will generally be limited to small-scale workshops, industries, offices, or other uses appropriate to their surroundings and locations. This is most likely to meet the needs identified by the business survey, provide flexibility of use, and provide for increases in local employment opportunities that reflect the character of the District's settlements.

Policy E.1

Small-scale commercial or business development, redevelopment or changes of use (normally falling within Use Classes B1, B2, or B8) will be permitted within the built-up areas of the settlements, provided:

- (i) *in the built-up area of Winchester, there is no conflict with Policies E.3 & E.4;*
- (ii) *it can be satisfactorily accommodated in terms of scale, density, character and design in relation to the settlement and the site;*
- (iii) *it would not place an undue burden on the local road network or generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for local or rural roads and nearby properties or settlements;*
- (iv) *it is accessible by public transport, is not likely to increase significantly the number and length of car journeys and makes adequate provision for access by cyclists and pedestrians;*
- (v) *it is not detrimental to the amenities or the operation of adjoining uses, particularly with regard to noise, traffic generation and hours of operation.*

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7.14 Small-scale employment development usually falling within Use Classes B1 (offices, research and development, and light industry), B2 (general industry) or B8 (storage or distribution) can often be accommodated in the settlements. Such development is important for businesses seeking to adapt and expand, but account needs to be taken of the possible harmful effects, particularly of B2 or B8 uses. It may be necessary to impose conditions to ensure that the requirements of Policy E.1 and other relevant Policies such as DP.3 and DP.10 - DP.12 can be met, for example relating to noise and working hours. In Winchester office development requires more strict control in order to ensure that it does not create pressures which would harm the special character of the town, and to avoid imbalances in the employment structure being exacerbated. Therefore, Policies E.3 and E.4 apply in Winchester.

7.15 Particular attention should be paid to the effect of the proposed development and associated activity on the immediate vicinity of the site and the surrounding area. While there is scope for mixing employment and other forms of development, it is important that problems are not created for future occupiers of business premises or nearby residents. Account will, therefore, be taken of the likely effect on nearby uses, especially housing, in terms of noise and disturbance, traffic and working hours. It may be necessary to impose conditions or seek planning obligations to control these factors (see also Policies DP.10 - DP.12).

Existing employment

7.16 Employment in Winchester District is dominated by the service sector. In 1997 88% of jobs in the District were in this sector and the proportion was slightly higher in Winchester itself. These proportions are higher than either the Hampshire or national averages. It is important to control any further increases in the dominance of the service sector so as to maintain some variety in the employment structure of the District, to

avoid over-dependence on particular sectors, to retain a range of employment opportunities close to where people live, and to avoid excessive commuting into or out of the District and its settlements.

Policy E.2

In order to retain and increase the variety and number of employment opportunities in the District, proposals involving the loss (by change of use or redevelopment) of existing sites or premises in lawful use within Use Classes B1, B2 or B8 (or sites permitted or allocated for these uses) will only be permitted where:

- (i) the retention or expansion of the existing use would cause overriding environmental or highway objections which the proposed development would overcome; or*
- (ii) the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the need for the proposed development outweighs the benefits of retaining the existing use.*

7.17 It is important throughout the District that uses within Classes B1, B2 and B8 are not unnecessarily lost. However, the Local Planning Authority recognises that there may be existing uses within these classes that are causing unacceptable environmental or traffic problems. Alternative employment uses that are more appropriate to these areas will be encouraged. In Winchester, these uses should accord with Policy E.4, which resists office development outside the town centre.

7.18 In formulating Policy E.2, the Planning Authority has taken account of the likely needs for other development and made provision accordingly. However, while employment sites and premises should be viewed as a valuable long-term resource, there may be unforeseeable circumstances where the need for a particular development outweighs the benefits of retaining the existing employment use.

7.19 The loss of existing employment land in Use Classes B1, B2 or B8 will be resisted in

order to retain a variety of employment opportunities throughout the District. In order to retain those employment sites that are the most sustainable, the factors outlined in paragraph 7.9 of this Chapter may be relevant in assessing the relative merits of existing employment sites and whether they would be more suited to alternative uses. Therefore, the loss of established employment sites, such as those in the main industrial estates, sites in the larger settlements which are reasonably well served by public transport and where there is likely to be some market interest in employment development will be resisted. Conversely, alternative forms of development may be more acceptable on isolated employment sites in small settlements that are poorly served by public transport and located away from the strategic road network. In the countryside, the loss of employment sites and premises to residential use would not be appropriate and low-intensity or agriculture-related uses may be the only acceptable option if employment sites cannot continue in their existing use.

- 7.20 Policy E.2 applies throughout the Plan area, including employment uses in the countryside. The retention of business uses in converted rural buildings will be encouraged.
- 7.21 There are also other business uses in the countryside that are not in converted rural buildings, but are lawful employment uses, and these firms may from time to time need to replace buildings. Where such a need is demonstrated, planning permission may be granted, but each proposal will be judged on its merits. To be acceptable, the proposal should achieve environmental benefits and a more efficient use of the land without materially increasing the amount of built development on the site. The proposal should also meet the requirements of Policy CE.18 in the Countryside and Natural Environment Chapter and the main requirements of Policy CE.17, particularly those that relate to the effect on the locality and travel needs.

- 7.22 The re-use of employment sites in the countryside for housing will be resisted (see Policy CE.17).

Office development in Winchester

- 7.23 The pressures for office development (Use Class B1[a]) in Winchester have long been a cause for concern. An office restraint policy was introduced in the mid-1970s, followed by employment restraint policies in the Mid Hampshire Structure Plan and the Winchester Area Local Plan. These policies generally limited increases in office floorspace to 200 square metres. Despite the restraint policies, office floorspace increased by 76% between 1974 and 1990.
- 7.24 Accordingly, the earlier Winchester District Local Plan strengthened office restraint policies by controlling the expansion of office floorspace (including changes of use where planning permission was needed), and by controlling the uses incorporated in redevelopment schemes. During the 1990s a relatively weak office development market and a very strong housing market, in combination with the earlier District Local Plan's restrictive office policies, resulted in a net reduction of office floorspace in Winchester of about 14% between 1994 and 2000.
- 7.25 Previous restraint policies were based on the concerns that extensive office development would bring about the following harmful effects:
- increased development pressures, not only for offices themselves, but also for other forms of development such as housing, car parking, services and roads. This would serve to increase pressure to extend the built-up area of the town;
 - increased commuting into the town which is already at a high level and conflicts with the aims of sustainable development;
 - increased pressures for traffic and parking improvements, in conflict with the Plan's planning and

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transportation strategy;

- increased congestion which can make the town a less attractive place in which to live, work or shop;
- increased imbalances in the employment structure towards service and administrative employment, possibly resulting in skill shortages and “overheating” of the local economy.

7.26 Whilst the above concerns remain valid, a more flexible approach is necessary in order to address the concerns of the local business community and the need for smaller office units, particularly in Winchester town centre. The town centre offers the greatest opportunity for more sustainable development as sites are likely to be well served by public transport and accessible by walking and cycling.

~~Policy E.3~~ This policy expired on 7th July 2009

Within the defined town centre of Winchester (see Inset Map 31), office development, extensions or changes of use to offices (Use Class B1[a]) of 200m² floorspace or less will be permitted.

Exceptionally, development of more than 200m² will be permitted for established organisations where:

- (i) an operational need for expansion/relocation within Winchester can be demonstrated;*
- (ii) appropriate measures are proposed to address transport implications, including production of a Green Travel Plan;*
- (iii) satisfactory measures are proposed to avoid additional pressures being placed on the local housing market and supply of affordable housing.*

7.27 In line with the sequential approach and the sustainability criteria outlined in paragraph 7.9 of this Chapter, Policy E.3 provides for the expansion of small local businesses where there is scope for such development. Opportunities are greatest in Winchester town centre where sites are

well served by public transport, and accessible by walking and cycling. Such small-scale development should minimise any harmful effects of office development.

7.28 Where an established organisation within the area can demonstrate a clear operational need to justify more substantial development (or where a scheme of several smaller units is put forward amounting to more than 200m²) this may exceptionally be permitted. However, this would require a number of issues to be addressed in the proposal. A Green Travel Plan will be required to identify what provision is made to deal with additional travel demands, including making appropriate financial contributions for relevant measures. It will also be necessary to assess and deal with the additional pressures that such a development may place on the local housing market, especially in terms of affordability. Such an assessment would need to include measures to address any issues raised, for example by the provision of, or contribution towards, affordable housing and/or ‘key worker’ housing for employees unlikely to be able to rent or to buy housing locally. This aspect is very important if new employment development is not to place unacceptable pressure on local housing provision or lead to excessive commuting.

7.29 Outside the town centre boundary, restraint of office development continues to be appropriate, including proposals to re-use or redevelop existing offices. In these cases alternative uses, particularly housing, will be promoted.

Policy E.4

Planning applications for office (Use Class B1[a]) development outside the defined town centre of Winchester (see Inset Map 31), including new development, extensions, redevelopment and changes of use, will not be permitted, including:

- (i) where planning permission is required, the redevelopment or change of use of sites or premises used or allocated for*

non-office use, including Use Classes B1(b), B1(c) and B8;

- (ii) *the replacement of existing office (Use Class B1[a]) floorspace.*

Where a need for office development is demonstrated, in accordance with Policy E.3(i), the change of use or redevelopment of an existing employment site outside the town centre may exceptionally be permitted provided criteria (ii) and (iii) of E.3 are met and a sequential search has shown that there are no suitable sites within the town centre available. Any site proposed would need to have good accessibility to public transport and by walking and cycling.

- 7.30 Policy E.4 applies to any self-contained office (Use Class B1[a]) development within the built-up area of Winchester, as defined by Policy H.3. However, the development of offices which are completely ancillary to another use will normally be acceptable where their size is minimised. Policy E.4 can only apply to proposals which require planning permission and does not, therefore, affect the permitted development rights of existing buildings (unless they are otherwise restricted).

Industry

- 7.31 It has been noted above that Winchester's employment structure is dominated by service employment, particularly in the public sector. This is reflected in the fact that, despite the recession of the 1990s, some skill shortages still remain in certain service employment sectors. Clearly, with such a relatively small manufacturing base, Winchester is very vulnerable to even small losses of manufacturing employment. Its heavy reliance on service industries, could also be an area of weakness.
- 7.32 It is, therefore, particularly important that industrial and warehousing land and premises (Use Classes B1[b], B1[c], B2 and B8) are not lost to other uses. Policy E.2 seeks to achieve this and, along with Policy E.4, is intended to safeguard Winchester's limited stock of industrial land and

buildings. Whilst in employment terms it may seem desirable to expand Winchester's manufacturing base, the scale of development needed to make any significant impact would conflict with the planning strategy for the town.

Ministry of Defence Land

- 7.33 There are a number of sites throughout the District that are currently owned and operated by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Planning permission is required for development by the Ministry of Defence and its proposals will, therefore, be subject to the relevant policies of this Plan. The paragraphs below set out the approach that will be taken where development is proposed on MOD sites, or where such sites become surplus to requirements.
- 7.34 The most significant MoD establishments lie within the countryside, where there is a general presumption against built development. The expansion of military activities on rural sites will be considered against the Plan's objectives to protect the character of the countryside from harmful development.
- 7.35 To be acceptable, development on MoD sites within the countryside should be operationally essential, with no reasonable scope for it to be accommodated on an alternative site within a settlement or another establishment. Operational MoD development should minimise harm to the character of the countryside.
- 7.36 In the case of development on operational MOD sites in the countryside, development should be small-scale and sensitively located so as not to increase visual intrusion. If more substantial development is essential, proposals should be accompanied by a full site appraisal and/or planning brief which respects the physical and policy constraints and opportunities affecting the site. Early consultation with the Local Planning and Highway Authorities will assist with preparation of a site assessment and is encouraged.
- 7.37 Should existing MOD sites in the

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countryside become surplus to defence requirements, their re-use or redevelopment will be permitted, provided that any resultant development proposals are appropriate to the site and its surroundings.

- 7.38 Having regard to the varied form, function and constraints of existing MoD sites within the countryside, the re-use/redevelopment potential of each site will require careful assessment. To conserve the character of the countryside, it is important that development is confined to existing built-up parts of the site. New buildings or structures will not be permitted on predominantly open, undeveloped, agricultural or recreational land. MoD establishments often include utilitarian buildings, sometimes of a temporary construction. Development proposals should, therefore, provide for the removal of any buildings that are visually intrusive and their replacement by new development (where appropriate) or restoration of the site. The amount of new development should not exceed that existing, and in most cases it will be appropriate to seek a significant reduction in the amount of built development, especially on the more sensitive and prominent sites. The major MoD sites are listed below.
- 7.39 **Fort Southwick:** This is one of a series of six hill forts along the chalk ridge of Portsdown Hill, built for the defence of Portsmouth. It was built in the 1860s and is a Grade I listed building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Therefore, any proposed work would require close liaison with English Heritage. The site also includes a significant area of open land on both escarpments of Portsdown Hill, currently in agricultural use. It falls partly within Portsmouth City Council's area, and consideration of the future of the site will require co-operation with both Local Authorities.
- 7.40 **Portsdown Main:** This establishment extends along the crest of Portsdown Hill. Much of the site falls within the area of Portsmouth City Council, and any development proposals for the re-use of the site should be prepared in close liaison with both Authorities. A comprehensive planning brief has been adopted by the two Authorities and the MoD and has regard to existing constraints, particularly access and prominence in the landscape (Portsdown Main Planning Brief, 1998). The brief provides for a mix of uses, including light industry, hotel/conference centre, leisure and residential, but with an emphasis on employment uses.
- 7.41 **Portsdown West:** This site is also located on Portsdown Hill. Any proposals for further development on this site are unlikely to be acceptable given its prominence.
- 7.42 **Sir John Moore Barracks:** This Barracks falls largely within an area of countryside between Winchester and Littleton, which is defined as a Local Gap (see Policy CE.2). It was opened in 1985 as a training centre and the site comprises a number of facilities including living accommodation. Having regard to the need to prevent coalescence between Winchester and Littleton, proposals for expansion are unlikely to be acceptable.
- 7.43 **Worthy Down Camp:** The Camp is an Army education and training centre and provides living accommodation as married quarters. It is located in an area of countryside that separates South Wonston and Kings Worthy. Any proposals should have particular regard to these characteristics.
- 7.44 **Southwick Park:** The former 'HMS Dryad' has been largely vacated by the Royal Navy and has become the Defence College of Police and Personnel Administration. However, a wider review of defence training needs is ongoing and may result in further changes. The site is located in the countryside beyond the defined built-up area of Southwick and the Local Plan's Countryside and Natural Environment Chapter and paragraphs 7.33 – 7.38 above provide appropriate guidance that will be relevant whether the site is retained in

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defence use or becomes surplus to requirements.

- 7.45 The area occupied by the establishment contains a number of important heritage features, ranging from Roman earthworks to the listed building of Southwick House and Clocktower. Southwick House was the Headquarters for the planning of the D Day landings in 1944 and has recently been restored. The Operation Overlord map remains in the building, is of great historic significance, and should be retained on site, with, if possible, access open to the public. Most of the other buildings are modern and of little architectural merit. Some are intrusive in views from Portsdown Hill and, if new development or redevelopment are proposed, the opportunity should be taken to remove or replace these buildings.

