

Policy EMP3

Retaining and Optimising Existing Employment Land

1. Any proposal that would undermine or diminish the role and function of designated employment land, as shown on the proposals map, will not be permitted.
2. Proposals to redevelop, reconfigure, intensify or expand activity on existing employment land within built-up area boundaries, or within the Green Belt (where they accord with national Green Belt policy) will be permitted where they:
 - a. Optimise the overall employment capacity of the site and represent the regeneration or most efficient use of the land;
 - b. Meet a need identified within the Council's most up-to-date Economic Needs Study (as a starting point);
 - c. Minimise the need to travel by private vehicles and seek opportunities to enable better access to sustainable and active modes of travel;
 - d. Have no unacceptable impact on highways, including consideration of access and parking;
 - e. Generate activity appropriate to the location, taking into account the amenity of surrounding development;
 - f. Have no unacceptable impact on the natural and built environments (with very careful consideration required in proposals involving heritage assets or their settings); and
 - g. Have no unacceptable impact on the landscape and visual amenity (with very careful consideration required in proposals involving a National Landscape or its setting).
3. Proposals to change the use of existing employment land in Use Classes B2, B8, E(c) or E(g) away from those uses, including vacant sites and buildings last in those uses, will only be permitted where:
 - a. The land has been allocated for an alternative use through this Local Plan;
 - b. The Council's most-up-to-date Economic Needs Study recommends the land for release;
 - c. The land is demonstrably unsuitable for its existing or last use (see Paragraph 3.11 for guidance on the implementation of this criterion); or
 - d. The existing or last use is unlikely to be taken up for its continued use and is no longer viable (see Paragraphs 3.12 and 3.13 for guidance on the implementation of this criterion).
4. Where Criterion 3 has been satisfied, proposals for alternative uses will be considered in the following sequential order:
 - a. The use allocated through this Local Plan (where relevant);
 - b. Suitable uses within Use Classes B2, B8, E(c) and E(g);
 - c. All other employment generating uses;
 - d. A mixture of residential and employment generating uses; and
 - e. A wholly residential scheme.