

Chapter 7

Business and Industry

Corporate Aims

1. We will develop a strong and sustainable local economy, encouraging business and investment into Eastbourne.
2. We will make Eastbourne a safe place to live, work and visit.
3. We will protect and improve health and reduce health inequalities within Eastbourne.

Corporate Objectives

- P1: Promote Eastbourne as a place for business investment and as a tourist destination.
P2: Work with all agencies and landowners to retain and grow existing businesses.

Policy Objectives

1. To retain existing business and industrial premises;
2. To make provision of land and premises for the future needs of the town's business and industry, including the needs of small businesses;
3. To provide sites suited to the needs of business and industry seeking to locate to the town;
4. To seek high standards of amenity and design.

Introduction

- 7.1 This chapter has been prepared taking into account the objectives of the Council's Economic Development Strategy 1998-2003. Where relevant the relationship between planning policy and these objectives is identified.
- 7.2 Industrial employment in Eastbourne is centred upon purpose-built industrial estates (a gross floorspace of 545,200 sq. metres on 7 industrial estates) and in "mews" type premises in the older areas of the town, particularly the Town Centre, the Old Town and parts of Devonshire and Roselands wards.
- 7.3 Purpose-built offices are in the Town Centre and Upperton Road/St Leonards Road area, with a number of smaller offices in converted premises, predominantly in the Town Centre. Vacancy levels have been high in the purpose-built accommodation following decisions by "PPP" and "South East Water" to leave the town.
- 7.4 Precise figures for the numbers employed in business and industry within the Borough are difficult to obtain from official sources. The Census of Employment shows that manufacturing employment fell from 3,400 people in 1991 to 3,300 people in 1996, and there also appears to be a decline in the number of service industries which require office space (eg transport, banking, finance declined from 4,100 persons to 4,000 persons between 1991 and 1996). However the Census of Employment is only one measure and does not, for example, include self-employed people. To try to understand the employment situation further a survey of businesses in the Borough has been undertaken. Background Paper No. 6 sets out the results of this survey which has been used to inform the policies and proposals of this Plan³⁷.
- 7.5 At the time of the 1991 Census the Borough was a net importer of workers, with more people coming into town to work than Eastbourne residents commuting to work elsewhere. However, there were indications by 1996 that this situation had changed as the total number of jobs within the town appeared to have declined and the workforce (i.e. the number of economically active residents) had grown. This situation is likely to continue as the number of economically active people is projected to increase from 35,530 persons in 1991 to 43,077 persons in 2011³⁸. This means that in effect Eastbourne would become a 'dormitory town' with many residents commuting out of town to find work unless new employment opportunities are provided.
- 7.6 Economic development of the Borough has in part been constrained by relatively poor road and rail links to the rest of South East England, and the Council has been lobbying for improved accessibility. However the advent of e-commerce offers a new opportunity and the town's attractive environment may be an important factor in attracting such business. Nevertheless the Council will continue to press for improved transport links so that business and investment continues to be attracted to the town.
- 7.7 The Use Classes Order (1987) (as amended 1995) distinguishes a number of categories of business and industrial development. The following are appropriate to Eastbourne:

³⁷ Background Paper No.6: Business Survey

³⁸ For further details see Background paper No.2: Demography

- Use Class B1-Business (this includes offices, research and development, light industry including craft and starter units);
- Use Class B2-General Industry;
- Use Class B8-Storage and Distribution.

The Existing Stock

- 7.8 To maintain and promote a vital local economy it is important that the existing stock of business and industrial premises is retained, and these are listed in Background Paper No. 7 Business and Industrial premises. The smaller, older premises, for instance, provide reasonably priced accommodation for providers of local services, as well as providing opportunities for the start-up of new businesses. Whilst existing larger premises may also meet the needs of existing firms expanding within the town who do not necessarily require purpose-built accommodation.
- 7.9 PPG3: Housing, advises local authorities to explore ways in which additional housing can be created through re-use/conversion of existing buildings, including commercial buildings. However, careful consideration of local circumstances suggest that a policy framework enabling either the 'carte blanche' or selected loss of existing commercial buildings for other uses, and housing in particular, is inappropriate. In order to provide for a sustainable future for Eastbourne it is important that provision is made for both homes and jobs. A significant reduction in the existing stock of business and industrial premises would exacerbate the trend toward the Borough increasingly becoming a dormitory town which will work against the fundamental principle of working toward a sustainable town, and would be unlikely to assist economic growth and diversification.
- 7.10 It is recognised, however, that some sites and premises no longer meet the current market needs and may well remain empty during the Plan period. In particular some of the stock of purpose-built office accommodation may be unsuitable for the needs of a modern 'high-tech' office although the site may still be well located for employment use. Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared setting out how a full test for redundancy of such buildings will be determined. However the Council will be supportive of proposals for the replacement of existing business and industrial premises with new premises suited to modern market requirements. In particular the Council will be supportive of schemes that bring back vacant and derelict employment premises into use.
- 7.11 It is also recognised that use of some of the older premises within residential areas causes disturbance to local residents. The views of the Council's Environmental Health Division will, therefore, be an important consideration where permission is sought for the loss of such premises. In particular their view as to whether the premises have been subject to noise/nuisance complaints over a period of time will be sought.

Policy BI 1: Retention of Class B1, B2 and B8 Sites and Premises

Planning approval for the conversion or redevelopment of land or buildings currently or last in class B1, B2 or B8 use for non-employment use will not be granted unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that:

- a) the site or premises is genuinely redundant and is unlikely to be re-used or redeveloped for industrial or commercial use within the Plan period, having regard to one or more of the following factors:
- (i) the site with or without adaptation would not be capable of accommodating an acceptable employment development;
 - (ii) no effective demand exists or is likely to exist in the future to use the land or buildings for employment generating activities including the length of time the property has remained vacant and attempts made to let it and the demand for the size and type of employment premises in the area; and
 - (iii) the condition of the property and works required to make it suitable for employment either through refurbishment or redevelopment would be uneconomic; or
- b) continued use of the premises would cause undue disturbance to residential neighbours; or
- c) access to the premises does not meet acceptable highway safety standards and cannot be reasonably improved.

Where approval is sought for the loss of premises in B2 use to other uses applicants will be required to demonstrate that the premises have been marketed for a B1 use for a period of time that reflects the likely demand for premises of this size elsewhere in Eastbourne.

Planning approval will be granted, subject to the criteria in Policy BI 7, for the replacement of existing business and industrial premises which no longer meet market needs with new B1, B2 or B8 uses or appropriate facilities for waste recycling or reprocessing.

- 7.12 Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared to assist definition of genuinely redundant sites and premises and will address the following factors:
- a) suitability of the site or premises for employment use, including assessment of floor to ceiling heights and the complexity of the floor layout, and provision of adequate operational parking, and servicing spaces;
 - b) the marketing strategy employed. It will be necessary to demonstrate that:
 - the site or premises have been marketed at a price that reflects those prevailing locally for sites or premises in this condition;
 - the site or premises have been marketed for a period of time that reflects the likely demand in Eastbourne for the sites or premises of similar size;
 - measures have been adopted to make the sites or premises attractive to different types of business user.
 - c) whether the cost of demolition or refurbishment, including scope for improvement of environmental quality of site and surroundings, would be in excess of the likely future value for employment uses.
- 7.13 Within the existing industrial estates there are very limited opportunities for infill developments, and the Council will continue to support industrial proposals within these areas.

Policy BI 2: Designated Industrial Areas

Planning permission will be granted for new B1, B2 or B8 uses in the designated industrial areas, subject to the criteria set-out in Policy BI 7 below.

Provision of Employment Land

- 7.14 D.T.Z. Pieda Consulting Limited conducted a detailed survey of strategic employment sites within East Sussex³⁹ and found that in the Eastbourne market area there is a strong demand from local firms for industrial space, with a much weaker demand for significant office development. This has been confirmed by the Business Survey, with a particularly strong requirement for B2 floorspace. It is, therefore, important to ensure that an adequate supply of land for employment purposes is available otherwise firms will consider leaving the area to fulfill their expansion requirements and the number of jobs in Eastbourne will continue to decline. It is also important that land is available for 'foot-loose' business, such as e-commerce and 'call-centres', seeking to move to the town so that additional jobs can be created locally for the expanding workforce.
- 7.15 Existing policy allocates land for employment use at South Broadwater (17.9 ha) and land off Hammonds Drive (1 ha); whilst outline planning permission exists at Sovereign Harbour (8.9 hectares). D.T.Z. Pieda noted that there are major obstacles to the development of South Broadwater but that Sovereign Harbour should be a priority site as there are no significant constraints to its immediate development. The Council fully recognises the problems associated with development at South Broadwater and work is continuing with the view to bringing forward this land, including exploring the use of 'gap' funding to assist with the high costs of developing this area. However the problems associated with this site are not regarded as insurmountable and it is anticipated that the land could be made available toward the end of the Plan period.
- 7.16 The County Structure Plan identifies the floorspace requirement for the period 1996-2011 for Eastbourne and the South Wealden Area. This requirement is as follows:

Total B1, B2 and B8 Floorspace requirement
1996-2011: South Central Area
(Eastbourne and South Wealden): 175,000-200,000 m²

Progress towards this requirement at 1 April 2001 was as follows:

	EASTBOURNE⁴⁰	Square metres SOUTH WEALDEN	TOTAL
Floorspace completed			
1996-2001	8,131	18,175	24,530
Commitments as at 1 April 2001	6,580	27,900	56,608
Sovereign Harbour	30,000	-	30,000
Allocations in adopted Plans	48,700	22,188	70,888
TOTAL:	93,411	68,263	161,674

In the short term it is envisaged that a proportion of this outstanding strategic requirement will be provided at Polegate and Hailsham to provide for the needs of the wider area but further floorspace is likely to be required within the South Central Area to provide for economic development and diversification, including meeting the needs of local firms seeking to expand. This Plan, therefore, makes provision for an additional site for business and industrial purposes on land North West of St Anthony's Hill (see Policy BI 5 below) for local needs (7.4 hectares, estimated 20,000m²). As the availability of employment sites is an essential component of economic development and considerable importance is attached to business investment in the town, both by the Council

³⁹ DTZ Pieda Consulting "Development of Strategic Sites in East Sussex", September 1998

⁴⁰ At 1 April 2003 Eastbourne had 7,822m² of floorspace completed (1995-2003), 4,560m² gross (-1640m² net) floorspace committed plus 30,000m² of floorspace of Sovereign Harbour. Allocations total 48,700m² giving a total contribution of 91,082m² gross (84,882 net).

and by regional bodies, it is not considered appropriate to rescind any existing employment allocations or commitments in favour of non-employment uses. Although in response to an assessment of local needs, through the Business Survey, it is considered appropriate to re-evaluate the types of business use to be permitted on each site. In this context it is considered appropriate to re-affirm the commitment to a quality business park at South Broadwater and to B1 use on land off Hammonds Drive.

- 7.17 Structure Plan policies E5 and W9 indicate that industrial or semi-industrial sites are generally suitable for waste management/recycling uses. Such uses will be supported where a need can be demonstrated, where they would be environmentally acceptable and would not conflict with other site specific policies of this Plan.

Policy BI 3: Allocations for Class B1 Use	
<p>The following sites are allocated for B1 use subject to compliance with the policies of this Plan, including:</p> <p>a) the criteria set-out in Policy BI 7 ;</p> <p>b) infrastructure requirements (Policy IR2).</p>	
Site	Comment
South Broadwater, between Upperton Farm and Broadwater Lake. (10.1 ha)	Allocation for a high quality business development.
North West of Hammonds Drive. (0.94 ha)	Small 'starter units' may be appropriate. Subject to landfill.

Note: Planning briefs will be prepared to guide development of the sites identified in Policy BI 3.

Policy BI 4: Retention of Employment Commitments⁴¹		
<p>In order to retain land for employment purposes planning permission will not be granted for uses other than B1, B2 or B8 uses on land and buildings committed for employment use (subject to Policies BI 3 and BI 4, BI 5).</p> <p>In the event that planning permission expires on the following sites, the Council will grant planning permission for industrial and business uses as specified, subject to other policies in this Plan.</p>		
Site	Hectares/Floorspace	Comment
Sovereign Harbour (EB/1995/0267)	8.9 hectares	Class B1 use only. Sovereign Harbour is a preferred site for aggregate extraction and a mineral consultation area in the adopted Minerals Local Plan. Any proposal should exploit opportunities for gravel extraction as part of the development
Adjacent to Willingdon Drove	4860 square metres	
White Knight Laundry, Hammonds Drive	1400 square metres	

- 7.18 Existing commitments within the Town are for B1 uses. However the Business Survey has shown this would meet only a section of the town's likely requirement. Within the existing industrial estates there are a number of manufacturing companies (B2 use) who require additional floorspace beyond the capabilities of their existing site; including further storage and distribution facilities (B8 use). It is, therefore, important that provision is made to enable these companies to continue to flourish within Eastbourne as they make a major contribution

⁴¹ Site information given as at 1 April 2003. Please consult the Council's annual employment floorspace monitoring report for more up-to-date information.

to the local economy. In addition it is also important to enable new manufacturing industry to locate in the Town.

- 7.19 It is, therefore, appropriate to identify particular sites where manufacturing and storage and distribution uses may be appropriate. Land in South Broadwater, east of the proposed Tutts Barn roundabout, lies immediately adjacent to the railway and close to Courtlands Road industrial estate and is considered suitable for wider manufacturing use. Whilst the land North-West of St Anthony's Hill was previously allocated for residential use but in the light of the Housing Capacity Survey undertaken by the Council is now considered to be more appropriate for employment use due to its close proximity to the Hawthorn and Compton Industrial Estates.
- 7.20 Central Government is requiring local authorities to consider promoting 'clusters' or networks of knowledge driven companies, and the Borough is looking at ways to actively promote the greater use of solar technology which might include a 'solar technology park' which would incorporate industrial units for assembly and fabrication of solar technology equipment. Allocating certain sites for general industrial use may assist the successful implementation of such an initiative.

Policy BI 5: Allocations for Class B1, B2 and B8 Use	
The following sites are allocated for B1, B2, B8 uses, subject to compliance with the policies of this Plan, including:	
a) the criteria set-out in Policy BI 7 ;	
b) infrastructure requirements (Policy IR2).	
Site	Comment
East of the proposed roundabout at Tutts Barn (7.8 ha)	Much of this site is former railway sidings
North West of St Anthony's Hill (7.4 ha)	Precise site boundaries subject to agreement of St Anthony's link road.

Note: Planning briefs will be prepared to guide development of these sites.

- 7.21 It is considered that the land allocations identified in this chapter, together with other provisions in the shopping and Town Centre chapters, make adequate provision for the needs of business and industry. However PPG4⁴² advises planning authorities to recognise that many businesses can be carried out in residential areas without causing unacceptable disturbance. Indeed the Council is supportive of home-based working, where the use is ancillary to the main residential use, because it is highly sustainable. The Council will need to be satisfied that alternative sites or premises are not available elsewhere where planning approval is sought for business or industrial uses in the predominantly residential areas or tourist areas because importance is attached to the retention of the existing dwelling stock (see paragraph 6.11) and to retaining an area where the needs of tourists should prevail (see paragraph 13.10). In view of the effect on residential amenity it is unlikely that larger scale business or industrial uses will be appropriate in the predominantly residential areas or the tourist accommodation area.

Policy BI 6: Business and Industry in Residential and Tourist Areas
Within the predominantly residential areas (see Policy HO2) and the tourist accommodation areas (Policy TO1) planning permission will be granted for small-scale Class B1 uses where it can be demonstrated that alternative sites or premises are not available elsewhere in the Borough and that the proposed development would not have a detrimental effect on residential amenity (see Policy HO20)
Small scale extensions to existing business and industry within these areas will be

⁴² Planning Policy Guidance Note 4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms, DOE (1992)

permitted where it can be demonstrated that it will not be detrimental to local residential amenity (see Policy HO20).

Provision for Small Business

- 7.22 Major land allocations generally provide for the needs of larger employers. However the requirements of small business also need to be taken into account since many provide valuable goods and services for the local community. It is also important to support this sector as today's small businesses may be the large employers of the future.
- 7.23 Policies elsewhere in this Plan may assist this sector:
- Policy BI 1 should assist the retention of smaller, older units across the Borough;
 - Policy SH2 which allows for the managed decline by permitting the change of use of retail premises to Class B1 (business use) of some declining shopping parades could also assist in the provision of additional accommodation;
 - Policies TC10 and TC11 allow for further business use within prescribed areas of the Town Centre.
- 7.24 However it is recognised that this older accommodation is not necessarily suited to the needs of all small business and it is appropriate to encourage the provision of small 'starter' units within the areas allocated for employment use (see Policies BI 3 and BI 5). In particular the land North of Hammonds Drive is appropriate to such a use. The positive stance on the replacement of existing business and industrial premises in Policy BI 1 with modern premises may also benefit this sector.

Design and Environmental Standards

- 7.25 Industrial and commercial development can be difficult to integrate into the built-environment and may have an unacceptable impact on surrounding properties. It is, therefore, important to identify a set of criteria against which such proposals should be judged.
- 7.26 Crime prevention measures are most cost effective if implemented at the time of the development and it is important that such measures are considered as Circular 5/94 makes it clear that crime prevention can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Specific attention is also paid to crime prevention in PPG1 (1997). Developers and architects for all schemes which involve large scale proposals should, therefore, address this issue early in the design process.
- 7.27 In particular the Council is committed to a high standard of design on the business and industrial estates within Eastbourne Park, and will provide detailed design guidance to promote appropriate development.

Policy BI 7: Design Criteria

New business and industrial development will be required to comply with the following:

- a) a well designed scheme in terms of siting, scale, and materials (see Policy UHT1);
- b) landscaping, tree and shrub planting to help conserve the site and screen it from adjoining main roads or residential areas;
- c) appropriate noise reduction measures such as double-glazing, screen walls and noise barriers;
- d) safe and convenient access arrangements for pedestrians, people with disabilities, cyclists and those using public transport, including provision of changing/washing facilities (see Policy TR6);
- e) adequate off-street car parking (including appropriate provision for people with disabilities), access and loading facilities in compliance with adopted parking standards (see policy TR11), including, where appropriate, adherence to an agreed Travel Plan (see Policy TR3);
- f) appropriate measures are included for safety and security, including crime prevention measures in layout and design (see Policy UHT1);
- g) Policies of this Plan for environmentally sustainable development, including Policies NE3 (conservation of water resources); NE4 (sustainable drainage systems); NE5 (minimisation of construction waste); NE6 (recycling facilities); NE11 (energy saving measures);
- h) provision of recycling facilities accessible to the public.

- 7.28 In order to diversify Eastbourne's economic base it is necessary that appropriate infrastructure is available to enable businesses to trade and communicate electronically. Policy US10 seeks such provision so that the Borough can participate in the "Wired Region" being promoted in the Regional Economic Strategy.

