

## Section 3: Employment

Stratford-upon-Avon currently enjoys relatively high levels of employment and this must continue as the town continues to grow. The focus of this Neighbourhood Development Plan is therefore on retaining existing employers in the town as well as attracting additional high value-added employment.

The Employment Land Study carried out in 2011 recommended that there is a need for additional employment land in the form of a business park in Stratford-upon-Avon and that this should ideally be located close to the A46 and the new Parkway railway station.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan sees this as an opportunity to remove unneighbourly or inappropriately sited uses from current industrial estates at Western Road, Wharf Road, Masons Road and Timothy's Bridge Road and to relocate them to a more sustainable location on the edge of the town where it would also allow commercial traffic such as HGV's to access these businesses directly from the A46 without passing through the town.

It is important to remember that retail and leisure activities associated with Use Classes A1, A3, A4 and A5 are a vital source of employment in the Neighbourhood Area, but these are dealt with more directly in the Town Centre section of this Plan.

More direct employment generating uses include those in Class A2 (Financial and Professional services accessed by the public); B1(a) (Offices other than those in A2); B1(b) (Research and Development, laboratories, studios); B1(c) (Light Industrial); B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage or Distribution). Tourism and culture are also significant providers of employment in the town.

One of the three roles in achieving sustainable development is the economic role (NPPF, paragraph 7). Contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure is pivotal to achieving this role. This Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to provide the local policy framework to deliver this role.

**Objective A: Promoting New High Quality Employment Opportunities in Appropriate Locations and Encouraging the Retention of Existing Employers in the Neighbourhood Area**

Stratford-upon-Avon is the largest town in the district with a strong brand and image and offers a high quality of life both to live and work. It has a high business density, with a critical mass that would support the deliverability of new employment opportunities and development. It has a well educated population, though many out-commute to work elsewhere, and this objective seeks to encourage businesses offering high added-value employment to relocate or start up in the town whilst retaining and supporting existing major employers.

This Objective is in accordance with the District Council's Corporate Strategy (Feb 2011) and Business and Enterprise Strategy adopted in 2012.

**Policy E1 – Protecting Existing Employment Sites**

Proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of land or premises identified for or currently in employment use will not be permitted unless:

- a) There is a sufficient supply of sites for a range of employment uses to meet both immediate and longer term requirements over the Plan period; and
- b) The applicant can demonstrate that the site/premises is no longer capable of meeting employment needs; or
- c) Development of the site for other appropriate uses will facilitate the relocation of an existing business to a more suitable site; or
- d) Unacceptable environmental problems are associated with the current use of the site and the proposal will remove them; or
- e) The site is located in the town centre and the proposed use will contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre or forms part of a regeneration project.

## Explanation

There are a number of business parks and industrial estates in the Neighbourhood Area, as well as office uses in the town centre or in individual buildings throughout the Neighbourhood Area. Many units are of good quality and are likely to attract occupiers and future investment, but some are of poor quality or are not conveniently located and are unlikely to attract the necessary investment and should be re-provided in a more sustainable location.

The Employment Land Study 2011 lists a number of use class B employment sites that are within the Neighbourhood Area. These are summarised as:

Name/Location	Quality of Stock	Quality of Environment	Strategic Road Access	Public Transport Provision	Access to Amenities
Western Road Industrial Estate	Poor	Poor/Very Poor	Average	Good	Good
Masons Road	Poor	Reasonable	Average	Good	Good
Timothy's Bridge Road	Average	Good	Good	Good	Good
Shottery Brook Business Park (Timothy's Bridge Road)	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Avenue Farm (Birmingham Road)	Average	Reasonable	Good	Good	Good
Stratford Business and Technology Park (Banbury Road)	Good	Good	Good	Poor	Poor
Clifford Park Business Centre	Good	Good	Weak	Poor	Poor

In addition, though not mentioned in the Employment Land Use Study, there is the large NFU Mutual Insurance Company headquarters at Tiddington which is a B1(a) use, and small industrial units established in converted farm buildings north of the A46 at Burton Farm/Manor Farm (Bishopton Hamlet) and Langley Farm (off A3400 Birmingham Road).

Over the plan period the Employment Land Study 2011 recommends that there is a need for allocation of additional employment land in the form of a business park for B1 uses at Stratford-upon-Avon, suggesting this should be at around 5 hectares (ha) in size, though an allocation of over 5 ha might be justified. The best location for new employment development would be close to the A46 and the Stratford Parkway Station. The Study also suggests that there is potential for selective release of existing poorer quality employment land in Stratford-upon-Avon and recommends that mixed-use redevelopment of poorer quality, older stock on Masons Road and within the Western Road Industrial Estate is considered.

### **Policy E2 – Promoting New Employment Opportunities on the Outskirts of the Town**

The Core Strategy includes proposals to establish new employment areas in the following locations:

- 1) Land south of the Alcester Road (A46), west of the Wildmoor Roundabout (Proposal SUA.2); and
- 2) Land east of the Birmingham Road (Langley Farm), north of the A46 at Bishopton (Proposal SUA.3)

This Neighbourhood Development Plan supports the inclusion of these employment allocations in accordance with the Proposals Map. Development proposals on allocated sites will be considered against the criteria set out in the Site Specific Briefs (Policies SSB2 and SSB3).

In the event that either or both of these were not to materialise during the plan period this Policy would support other suitable locations that might then come forward in order to deliver the employment objective.

A detailed masterplan or development brief must be carried out to establish general design principles and parameters for these new parks in accordance with Policy BE3.

### **Explanation**

Consultation with Stratford-upon-Avon residents showed considerable support to go further than the suggestion in the Employment Land Study 2011, by creating a larger employment site or sites close to the A46 in order to remove unneighbourly or poorly sited uses from current industrial estates at Western Road, Wharf Road, Masons Road and Timothy's Bridge Road and relocate them to a more sustainable location and this preference is reflected in Policy E2 above.

### **Policy E3 – Promoting Financial and Professional Services in the Town Centre**

Proposals for new financial and professional services within the town centre will be supported providing they do not conflict with other policies in this Plan, for example Policy TC2.

#### **Explanation**

National planning policy supports focusing high trip-generating uses, including office development, within town centres where there is access to a range of sustainable modes of transport.

Class A2 uses (Financial and Professional services) should continue to be located in the town centre. There is no fundamental reason why B1(a) uses could not be part of mixed use developments in the town centre or in residential areas. However, in the case of Stratford-upon-Avon, physical and heritage constraints mean that there is very little scope for providing large-scale B1(a) office developments in the town centre itself. In the short-term, as a significant volume of new B1(a) office floor space has come forward, there is a localised oversupply and any further applications must have a strong justification to be permitted.

### **Policy E4 – Promoting Employment Associated with Culture, Media and Tourism**

Proposals for cultural, media and tourism based services within the Neighbourhood Area will be supported providing they do not conflict with other policies in this Plan.

#### **Explanation**

The economic benefit to the Neighbourhood Area from tourists and visitors to cultural venues is significant and employment creation in these areas should be supported.

Stratford-upon-Avon is internationally renowned due to its association with Shakespeare and the Theatre. It has been, and remains, a destination for visitors to its historic houses and its attractive riverside setting. Development that creates or maintains employment in the areas of culture, media and tourism would be supported where appropriate.

### **Policy E5 – Work/Live Units**

Proposals for small scale mixed use development (new build or conversion), comprising of workspace and living space will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- a) Have suitable independent access to both uses;
- b) Have an appropriate level of off road parking to serve both uses;
- c) Have independent service facilities (e.g. kitchen, toilet etc.) for the workspace which do not rely on the living space;
- d) Be in reasonably accessible locations to service facilities by means other than a private vehicle;
- e) In the case of conversions, the building should be of a permanent and substantial construction, structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding or extension;
- f) Have an adequate residential curtilage without having a detrimental impact on the building and its rural setting; and
- g) Have secure arrangements in place via a planning condition, to tie the two elements together to prevent future separation

### **Explanation**

Mixed use schemes where an occupier can work and live within the same planning unit has the benefit of removing the necessity to travel to work and therefore such schemes are a relatively sustainable form of development that would otherwise not be supported in rural locations.

Proposals that simply show a small study space within the domestic layout will not be considered acceptable as a Work/Live scheme. Such schemes will continue to be considered as residential uses.

The internal arrangement within these schemes should be flexible enough to allow a business to expand, as well as being adaptable to changes in technology. This also means the dimensions of the living space should allow for flexibility. Consequently,

there is no definitive ideal workspace size. However, a large single space lends itself to sub-division as a result of changing needs rather than a series of rooms.

