

SP11. Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth and Enterprise

1. Shropshire will deliver around 300 hectares of employment development from 2016 to 2038 and will protect established employment areas for employment uses. The strategic supply of land and protected employment areas are identified on the Policies Map and in the Authority Monitoring Report which will monitor the delivery of employment development.
2. Employment development will predominantly comprise Class B uses but will include some employment generating Sui Generis, Class A2, C1, C2, C2A and D1 uses with appropriate ancillary Class A1, A3, A5 service uses on larger sites or within employment areas. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that:
 - a. The site has the capacity to accommodate the scale of the proposed development;
 - b. The proposed use and any intensification of use conforms with neighbouring uses;
 - c. The infrastructure investment is sufficient to serve the proposed or intensified use;
 - d. Mixed-use employment developments including residential and retail will utilise the return from these higher land values to access and service the employment land; and
 - e. The scheme satisfies the requirements of national and local policies especially to protect the Green Belt, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, areas of landscape value and to conserve the natural and historic environment.
3. Development on allocated sites will be expected to satisfy the:
 - a. Economic growth objectives of Policy SP10 (Economic Growth Strategy);
 - b. Strategy for the settlement in which the proposed site is located;
 - c. Development guidelines for allocated employment sites or mixed-use sites containing an element of employment in Settlement Policies S1-S18, Strategic Settlement Policies S19-S20, Strategic Site Policy S21 or approved Neighbourhood Plans; and
 - d. Requirements of Local Plan policies relevant to the proposed location or the use of land.
4. Windfall Class B employment development on other sites including established employment areas will be supported, where the proposal is:
 - a. To expand the premises or to intensify the operation of an existing business;
 - b. For the change of use / conversion of an existing building to employment use;
 - c. Located on a site within or adjoining an established employment area;
 - d. For development of a suitable scale located within a Community Hub, Community Cluster or in the Countryside that satisfies Policies SP10 (Economic Growth Strategy), SP7 (Managing Development in Community Hubs), SP8 (Managing Development in Community Clusters), or SP9 (Managing Development in the Countryside);
 - e. For development within or immediately adjoining the Principal and Key Centres;
 - f. For major development including inward investment, that satisfies the objectives of Policy DP9 (Strategic Corridors) or is located on a Strategic Site identified in the Plan;

- g. Consistent with the economic growth objectives of Policy SP10 (Economic Growth Strategy); or
 - h. Distributed according to the strategic approach in Policy SP2 (Strategic Approach).
5. To support strategic and local employers, there is a presumption to protect allocated employment land and established employment areas primarily for Class B employment uses. Proposals for change of use or for the loss of employment land and premises will only be supported where:
- a. A contemporary market assessment of the employment land in the Settlement and the County demonstrates a satisfactory supply for the remaining period of the Local Plan; and
 - b. A comprehensive marketing exercise demonstrates the site is not suitable or viable:
 - i. For the established use; or
 - ii. Any other employment use; or
 - iii. Employment uses no longer conform with the majority of the neighbouring uses; and
 - c. The application demonstrates that the proposed use will make a significant contribution to the local economy, the local community or to other significant Local Plan objectives.

Explanation

- 3.95. This policy contributes to the economic vision and strategy for Shropshire set out in Policy SP10 (Economic Growth Strategy). These objectives are further supported by mixed use developments proposed on the 'Strategic Settlements and 'Strategic Site' identified in the Local Plan and on sites along the 'Strategic Corridors' identified in Policy DP9 (Strategic Corridors).
- 3.96. This policy seeks to provide certainty in the delivery of the economic growth strategy by shaping the delivery of the strategic land supply and the use of established employment areas to satisfy the objectives of the strategy. The aspiration for this approach is to promote a 'step change' in the economic productivity of the Shropshire economy.
- 3.97. It is proposed to plan for 300 hectares of land to be developed for Class B office, research and development, workshop, general industry, storage and distribution development for the period 2016 to 2038. The delivery of this development will satisfy the strategic approach set out in Policy SP2 (Strategic Approach) in relation to the settlement hierarchy and the proposed distribution of development within the County.
- 3.98. It is recognised that Shropshire has a diverse economic structure with a focus on 'service industries' and there will be a need for flexibility in the delivery of employment sites to allow for other employment generating uses. This policy recognises the need for flexibility in the development of the employment land supply to meet the needs of Shropshire and its communities. It is expected that employment development on allocated and larger windfall sites will primarily comprise Class B uses at around 80% of the land area. This includes a special presumption for recycling and environmental industries identified in the development guidelines for specific allocated employment sites.

- 3.99. Other employment uses may therefore comprise 20% of the land area to maintain these uses below the historical rate of non-Class B development on employment land. The other employment generating uses that are considered to be acceptable on allocated and windfall employment sites are considered to be Class A2 financial and professional services, Classes C1, C2 or C2A residential accommodation providing 'hospitality', 'care' or 'specialist care' services, Class D1 for the provision of medical, health or day care services. Sui generis uses will be permitted where they include commercial or industrial activities that generate significant employment opportunities.
- 3.100. Where these uses are not maintained within the acceptable levels of provision, these uses must be justified as a loss of employment land from the strategic land supply. Ancillary service uses will be supported for Classes A1, A3, A5 where these uses are clearly ancillary to the principal proposed use of the land.
- 3.101. Where employment uses are provided in a mixed-use development including residential and retail uses, the return from the higher land values must be used to commence the development of the employment land. This will require a cross subsidy from the higher value uses to provide a highway access and distributor road with servicing into the employment land and to engineer the land to market ready plots with the full range of services provided to the plot boundaries.
- 3.102. To deliver this development, a strategic supply of employment land is identified on the Policies Map and in the Shropshire Authority Monitoring Report at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/monitoring-and-site-assessment/authority-monitoring-report-amr/>. The Authority Monitoring Report identifies a portfolio of sites and records both the delivery of development on completed sites and the 'pipeline' supply of sites with planning permission, the saved SAMDev Plan allocations identified in Appendix 2 and those allocated in Settlement Policies S1-S18, Strategic Settlement Policies S19-S20 and the Strategic Site Policy S21. The saved SAMDev Plan and Local Plan allocations will be accorded the same weight in planning decisions. The Authority Monitoring Report also identifies the established employment areas protected by this policy.
- 3.103. This policy recognises the need for flexibility over the location and scale of employment development. This allows for windfall development primarily for the growth of existing businesses through the expansion of their business premises, redevelopment of existing employment areas or through the conversion or change of use of other existing buildings, where this complies with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.
- 3.104. The need for new sites is also recognised, where these demands may not be met on allocated employment sites. The primary focus for this development, particularly for inward investment will be the Strategic, Principal or Key Centre located on the identified 'strategic corridors'. Major development on windfall sites may also be permitted on brownfield sites located close to the Strategic, Principal or Key Centres on the identified 'strategic corridors'.
- 3.105. New development will also be permitted on sites of a suitable size within the Community Hubs in addition to any saved employment allocations.

- 3.106. In the Community Clusters settlements and in the Countryside, the location, scale, land use and impacts of windfall development proposals must conform with the existing land uses, settlement form, environmental qualities.
- 3.107. Development in rural areas beyond preferred settlements (i.e. Community Hubs, Clusters and Countryside) should be appropriate in scale and impact to the proposed location for the development. This should address the accessibility of the site, the character and quality of the landscape setting and protection of the natural and historic environment. This policy recognises that small scale economic developments (up to 1ha) including workshops, professional services, goods distribution companies should be supported in the Community Hubs and Community Clusters. In the Countryside, agricultural and non-agricultural diversification and green tourism and leisure may also be supported at a scale that is appropriate for their location as these are important economic activities in the rural economy.
- 3.108. All development proposals should respond positively to the presence of environmental constraints on and around potential development sites particularly in relation to the Shropshire Green Belt, the Shropshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the landscape and character of the surrounding area and the significance of the natural and historic environment. These matters are addressed further in the objectives of other policies in the Local Plan and in Neighbourhood Plans, Community / Parish Plans and in growth strategies for settlements across the County.
- 3.109. The 'Strategic Corridors' in Policy DP9 (Strategic Corridors), provide flexibility to facilitate a 'step change' in our economic performance. The 'Strategic Corridors' comprise groups of settlements on transport corridors where releasing additional employment land, may help support existing business and attract larger windfall developments into the County. The primary purpose here is for Shropshire to respond positively both to demand from the growth of existing business or to demand from new businesses attracted into the County as inward investment. This may require the release of significant sites with the potential to function as 'growth zones' on the 'strategic corridors' for larger employment or mixed-use developments.
- 3.110. Shropshire Council places a premium on the protection of existing employment land and premises in the County. This protection is important because these established business locations accommodate our existing employers, provide grow on space and increase our capacity to accommodate new growth and investment. In particular, this ensures that strategic and local employers will secure their operational base and meet their future development needs for growth and expansion of their business.
- 3.111. It is recognised that employment sites and buildings may be suitable for other uses or may be affected by permitted changes of use rights, but their loss still affects our economic capacity and productivity. This policy recognises such losses may occur and supports them where satisfactory evidence is provided. This evidence must justify the need for the alternative use proposed, the loss of the utility of the site in terms of its suitability and viability for employment uses and the impacts on the supply of employment sites and premises in Shropshire.
- 3.112. The protection of existing employment areas is based on evidence of the purpose, viability and redevelopment potential of the sites. This evidence is set out in the Shropshire Strategic Sites and Employment Areas Study for

Shrewsbury (Phase 1) and the Market Towns and Key Centres (Phase 2) which identify a hierarchical ranking of existing employment areas in the principal settlements of the County which is shown in Figure SP11.1 below:

Figure SP11.1: Hierarchy of Existing Employment Areas

The protection of existing employment areas will be proportionate to the significance of the site in accordance with the following guidance. The hierarchy of existing employment areas shown on the Policies Map for Shrewsbury, the Market Towns and Key Centres is presented in the Authority Monitoring Report.

- 1. Regional and Sub-Regional Sites** – identified sites are expected to deliver:
 - a. Uses specified for the area but will only include new waste management development where there are opportunities for co-location with existing waste management operations;
 - b. High quality development with skilled employment including inward investment providing strong economic benefits to enhance the Shropshire economy;
 - c. Non class B uses will be ancillary to the proposed development or will improve the benefits and viability of the employment area.
- 2. Key Shropshire / Local Sites** – identified sites are expected to deliver:
 - a. Good quality development providing strategic and local employment opportunities with clear economic benefits for the Shropshire economy;
 - b. Uses specified for the area including waste management facilities;
 - c. Opportunities for mixed commercial development on Key Local Sites where appropriate in relation to policy.
- 3. Mixed Commercial Sites** – identified sites are expected to deliver:
 - a. Mixed commercial uses (excluding retail) to provide affordable business locations and accessible local employment;
 - b. Class B employment uses including waste management facilities on regeneration opportunities which support the physical and economic improvement of the area.

- 3.113. The methodology in the Shropshire Strategic Sites and Employment Areas Study and the tests in this policy will also be used to determine the degree of protection to be afforded to existing employment areas not shown on the Policies Map. This will include commercial office locations (including those affected by permitted development rights) and existing employment sites in rural locations. The significance and protection of sites not previously identified in the Plan will be recorded in the Authority Monitoring Report.