

6 EMPLOYMENT

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This chapter of the Plan sets out policies and proposals designed to assist economic growth and the creation of employment opportunities.
- 6.1.2 The principal focus is on development for employment purposes within Part B of the Use Classes Order. Proposals for retail and allied uses within Part A are dealt with in the following chapter, Town Centres and Retail, which also deals with larger scale office proposals. Although within Part B, these fall to be assessed under the sequential approach used to guide the location of town centre uses.
- 6.1.3 A background paper has been produced to support the Plan's employment policies and proposals. The paper incorporates the results of several studies which have been used to inform the Plan:
- Industrial Land Needs Survey 1999, a questionnaire based survey of the future land requirements of local firms
 - Herefordshire Land and Workspace Survey 1999, an assessment of the demand for and supply of employment land and buildings in the County, undertaken by consultants for Advantage West Midlands.
 - analysis of enquiries to the Council for land and premises
 - justification for additional employment land at Ross-on-Wye
 - analysis of past build rates
 - estimation of employment requirements related to housing development to ensure balanced growth.
- 6.1.4 Further statistical information on these aspects can be found in the Herefordshire Economic Assessment 2005-2007, published jointly with the Learning and Skills Council, the Chamber of Commerce and Business Link.
- 6.1.5 The Plan's employment policies support the objectives of the Herefordshire Partnership's Economic Development Strategy, particularly infrastructure and workspace improvements to increase the competitiveness of the local economy. The policies were developed through a Herefordshire Partnership thematic group dealing with business, economy and tourism. The Regional Economic Strategy produced by Advantage West Midlands in 1999 and reviewed in 2004 offers a 10 year vision for economic development which is set within the overall framework of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The Strategy recognises the challenges and opportunities represented by areas such as Herefordshire and identifies actions such as workspace and infrastructure provision as key elements of local economic development. In particular, the Strategy's proposals for regeneration zones, which link need with areas of opportunity, support the locational strategy of the UDP which emphasises the role of Hereford, the market towns and local service centres in meeting the requirements of the rural hinterland.

6.2 Aims and objectives

- 6.2.1 The policies in this chapter aim to:
- ensure a better balance of population and employment opportunities in communities throughout the County
 - enable the provision of suitable land and premises to meet the identified and anticipated needs of both indigenous growth, including the expansion of existing businesses and start ups, and inward investment
 - positively support the diversification of employment opportunities within the rural areas.

6.2.2 The policies have the following more specific objectives:

- to direct most new employment to Hereford and then the market towns having regard to Hereford's sub-regional role and the aim of balancing population and employment
- to ensure that the land identified is readily capable of development for the uses proposed
- to ensure that the land identified provides a portfolio of employment sites to reflect the differing development needs of businesses and to give a choice in terms of size, location, quality and Use Class
- to ensure that in terms of location, sites for employment development, (both new and changes of use) contribute to reducing the need to travel and are readily accessible from local housing and by a choice of modes of transport
- to ensure that land developed for employment purposes is wherever possible situated within settlements in preference to the use of greenfield land
- to avoid the loss of existing employment land and premises to other uses
- to encourage suitable rural employment opportunities within and adjacent to local service centres and other settlements
- to encourage the re-use of rural buildings for employment purposes and enable agricultural development and farm diversification.

6.3 Strategy and general policy

- 6.3.1 The key issues identified in Chapter 2 of the Plan emphasise the County's narrow economic base and its dependence on declining industries, and correspondingly low levels of activity in 'growth' sectors. The Herefordshire economy is vulnerable to structural change with relatively high levels of employment in low wage sectors. The rural economy is of particular concern, with agriculture in a period of long term change which has linked effects on associated businesses as well as on the viability of rural communities and the wider landscape. These changes are likely to be felt most severely in peripheral rural areas where growth sectors are poorly represented.
- 6.3.2 The County's economic vulnerability has been reflected in and recognised by its inclusion in a wide range of European, national, regional and local funding and other initiatives. These include EU Objective 2 and Advantage West Midlands, Regeneration Zone and Market Towns Initiative.
- 6.3.3 The Plan's overall development strategy, set out in chapter 3, has been developed alongside the strategic approaches being taken through Objective 2 and the Rural Regeneration Zone. Through these programmes, regeneration activity will be concentrated in key locations with the greatest potential to create sustainable employment growth and maximise employment opportunities, to the benefit of the wider rural areas. Under Priority 2, which covers physical infrastructure activity under Objective 2, Strategic Development Areas have been identified. These Areas are deemed to be those with the greatest economic development potential into which significant infrastructure should be concentrated. The Areas are defined in terms of criteria linking opportunity and need which in turn underpin the Rural Regeneration Zone set out in the Regional Economic Strategy. In Herefordshire, Hereford and the five market towns are defined as such Areas, together with Pontrilas and with links to the QinetiQ site at Malvern. The expectation is that by focussing resources to such areas of opportunity, the needs of the wider rural areas will also be met in a sustainable manner. The selected locations offer a wide range of business, social and community services to the wider rural areas. The Hereford colleges at Folly Lane and Holme Lacy for instance offer educational and training opportunities to the wider rural areas in the County, with potential to expand links to business. In particular, major infrastructure investments will be limited to sites within the Areas, which form a template for the spatial targeting of investment and resources which is echoed in the UDP. In rural locations outside the selected Areas, regeneration activity is set out in the Zone Implementation Plan.

- 6.3.4 Plan policies have been developed to co-ordinate with and support this overall approach. Employment growth will be promoted principally in Hereford and the market towns, and to a lesser extent in the main villages. A sustainable balance is sought between housing and employment growth whilst protecting the environment. Policies are set out to support the growth and expansion of indigenous firms, as well as the attraction of new businesses into Herefordshire, enabling a clear framework for investment decisions and suitable conditions to facilitate economic growth. Within the countryside, well conceived farm diversification schemes for business purposes that are consistent in their scale with their rural location and which wherever possible re-use rural buildings will be pursued.
- 6.3.5 The County's employment land needs over the Plan period have been assessed having regard to the aim of achieving a better balance between population and employment and to the UDP's strategy for the location of new housing development 1996-2011. The approach assumes that, for each hectare of land required for development, 20% would be for employment uses and 80% would be for housing. Applying these figures to the UDP housing requirement suggests a need to make provision for approximately 100 hectares of employment land. While this figure provides an overall strategic requirement, allocations in particular areas are also based on local circumstances and take up rates. As such this figure will not totally be met. The requirement for further employment land has been distributed to Hereford, the market towns and the rural areas in line with the proposed distribution of housing, in order to achieve balanced growth. Allowing for existing allocated and committed sites, which have been taken as 'givens', the approach shows significant additional requirements at Hereford and Ross-on-Wye. Further detail and justification of the approach taken is given in the background paper.

Part I policy

S4 Employment

The diversification and regeneration of the County's economic base will be provided for by:

- 1. making provision for 100 hectares of land for Part B employment development in the County. This provision includes land allocations in a range of locations throughout the County and existing planning permissions. In addition to the larger scale allocations, policies will permit suitable employment development in the rural areas which are consistent in scale with their location, in order to help ensure balanced communities and to secure rural regeneration;**
- 2. ensuring that a suitable portfolio of land is identified in terms of choice of sites, size, quality, location and Use Class to meet differing needs, and that sufficient land is available which is readily capable of development and well served by existing infrastructure or capable of being served; and**
- 3. building a strong, competitive and innovative economy with a balanced mix of businesses, jobs and homes through which the local economy can flourish.**

Guiding principles P9 and P12

6.4 Employment land

Introduction

- 6.4.1 The identified need for employment land set out in policy S4 will be met from a variety of sources, including site allocations set out in policies E1, E2 and E3.

Rotherwas Industrial Estate

- 6.4.2 The Estate covers an area of some 123 hectares and is home to over 125 companies. Constraints on development include flooding, access, archaeology, contamination and biodiversity. A Management Plan incorporating supplementary planning guidance has been prepared to address these matters and others including design requirements for new developments. It is clear that access improvements and flood alleviation measures in particular will need to be undertaken before all allocated land can be released for development. An important part of the access improvements being proposed is the Rotherwas Access Road, a scheme included in the Local Transport Plan and for which land is safeguarded by this Plan (policy T10). Land is also safeguarded for rail freight (policy T4), together with a proposal to provide a cycle route between the Estate and Bartonsham, including river crossing (policy T7). To overcome the flooding situation on the Estate a flood defence strategy is being drawn up with the Environment Agency. This includes the creation of compensatory flood storage ponds and earth bunds around the Estate. Sites that fall within the flood plain will remain undeveloped until such time as the flood defence strategy has been fully implemented.
- 6.4.3 Notwithstanding these proposals, the overall effect of the constraints and of the time they will take to address is to limit the amount of employment land that can realistically be expected to come forward at Rotherwas within the Plan period. Some 5 hectares have been developed between 1996 and 2000, and this Plan identifies other sites totalling 14.3 hectares, listed in the following policy. These provide a wide range of opportunities in terms of both size and B1, B2 and B8 uses, and are expected to become available for development within the Plan period. Planning permission for road access to the largest site, land north of Holme Lacy Road, was granted in 2001.
- 6.4.4 Development of the areas listed in policy E1 will be subject to the other policies of this Plan notably those in the Development Requirements chapter, and will in particular be dependent on the drawing up of travel plans and other measures to limit growth in road traffic, such as road freight. Policy E8 below supplements these policies by setting more detailed requirements for employment development. Within the Estate, attention is drawn to the need for individual developments to include suitable landscaping and tree planting proposals incorporating amenity open areas wherever possible, and to respect existing amenity open spaces.
- 6.4.5 The remaining land on the Estate forming the balance of the Local Plan allocation is safeguarded under policy E5 for longer term development for Part B employment purposes. This restriction on development may be reviewed in the light of progress in meeting the constraints posed. The long-term development of the Estate will be confined to the existing boundaries as shown on the proposals map in order to protect open countryside and visual amenity. This is a particular concern to the north where any development towards the River Wye will be visually intrusive to residential areas of Hereford, north of the Wye. Landscaping acting as screening will be established on the Estate's northern and eastern boundaries as development proceeds.

E1 Rotherwas Industrial Estate

The release of land at the Rotherwas Industrial Estate will be linked to the resolution of acknowledged site development constraints. These constraints restrict development opportunities to the following sites, whose suitability for Part B employment purposes within the Plan period is confirmed:

Site	Area (ha)	Use Class
Twyford Road North	3.5	B1, B2, B8
Twyford Road South	0.7	B1, B2, B8
Land north of Netherwood Road - Site A	0.3	B1, B2, B8
Land north of Netherwood Road - Site B	0.4	B1, B2, B8

Land south of Netherwood Road - Site C	0.3	B1, B2, B8
Land west of Coldnose Road	0.6	B1, B2, B8
Land east of Coldnose Road	1.8	B1, B2, B8
Land north of Holme Lacy Road	4.2	B1, B2, B8
Land west of Fir Tree Lane	0.6	B1, B2, B8
Land off Campwood Road	1.3	B1, B2, B8
Land at Ramsden Road	0.6	B1, B2, B8
TOTAL	14.3	

The restriction on development which applies to other land on the Estate will be reviewed in the light of progress in overcoming the constraints. In the interim, this land will be safeguarded for longer term development, and is included for this purpose within policy E5.

Moreton on Lugg depot, Moreton on Lugg

- 6.4.6 The potential for employment purposes of this site, a former MoD depot, was confirmed in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan. The site is located adjacent to the A49 and to the Hereford-Crewe railway line (with rail connection in situ), and comprises previously developed land and buildings, wooded and open land. The established use for storage has been recognised through a Certificate of Lawfulness for a Proposed Use or Development (CLOPUD) issued in 1996. Part of the depot has subsequently been developed for B8 purposes. A development brief was published in 1999 following adoption of the Local Plan and will be reviewed to reflect UDP policy.
- 6.4.7 The site comprises a range of depot and office buildings, open storage areas and parkland, and falls into three sectors. The boundaries of the site and of the three sectors are shown on the proposals map. The central and southern sectors extend to 29.1 hectares, excluding areas of land safeguarded for their biodiversity and landscape value but including parkland and other open areas. Within these sectors there are opportunities for the redevelopment or reuse of existing buildings and open areas for storage purposes, reflecting the CLOPUD, along with scope for B1 uses. Proposals for other employment purposes or for the development for employment purposes of other areas of open land should not unduly erode parkland areas which contribute to the landscape setting of the site, prejudice the future development of the site as a whole, or impact on residential amenity. Specific protection is afforded to the Wellington Marsh Special Wildlife Site under policy NC4, and to Long Coppice, an area of ancient woodland safeguarded under the following policy. These areas will be retained and managed for their biodiversity, ecological, landscaping and amenity value.
- 6.4.8 In the northern sector, the Local Plan recognised the lawful use of existing buildings and land for B8 purposes and confirmed that B1 uses would also be permitted. In addition, the bulk of the northern sector was identified as a Preferred Area for mineral extraction in the Minerals Local Plan. Redevelopment proposals in this area for B1 and B8 purposes should not exceed the overall footprint of the acknowledged B8 use, in the order of 1.95 hectares, and should recognise both the need to respect the safeguarded mineral deposit and the adjacent Special Wildlife Site to the south. Once extraction has occurred and the industrial units removed as part of this process the CLOPUD will cease. The future use of the northern section of this site will be subject to further more detailed consideration and this will be dealt with through a review of this Plan.
- 6.4.9 Proposals for reuse of existing buildings and storage areas, or for redevelopment should be accessed in the first instance through the site via the existing site access to the A49.
- 6.4.10 Proposals for reuse and redevelopment should seek to make use of the existing rail connection for rail freight purposes, safeguarded under policy T4. The scope for rail freight at the site has been assessed by the Herefordshire Rail Study and the Local Transport Plan acknowledges the potential for an inter-modal rail/road depot. The proposals of this Plan to

safeguard rail connections and to encourage potential developers to include rail facilities take this forward.

- 6.4.11 Schemes should pay attention to the landscape setting of the site. Development proposals should include comprehensive landscaping, serving to retain and enhance the existing parkland setting and restricting views into the site through peripheral planting. Land outside the site boundary including the rail access into the site is regarded as open countryside and therefore is protected from any future development. The Environment Agency advise that parts of the northern and southern areas of the allocated site are subject to flooding. In line with PPS25, a developer should undertake a flood risk assessment and submit this with any future planning application for the site. This assessment should define the developable area and demonstrate measures to protect the development from flooding. In addition, development of this site is constrained by the capacity of the public sewerage system pumping station and waste water treatment works. Should the site be developed prior to Welsh Water undertaking the works developers may be required to fund essential improvements. Extensive off-site extensions and upgrading of the water supply network are required.

E2 Moreton on Lugg depot, Moreton on Lugg

The suitability of land at Moreton on Lugg depot for Part B employment purposes within the Plan period is confirmed as follows:

- 1. central and southern sectors: the reuse or redevelopment of existing buildings and storage areas for B1 and B8 purposes. Proposals for other employment uses or on other areas of open land should not unduly erode areas of landscape value, prejudice the future development of the site as a whole or adversely impact on residential amenity;**
- 2. northern sector: the reuse of existing buildings for B1 and B8 uses. Redevelopment proposals for these uses should not exceed the current area occupied by lawful storage uses and not prejudice the future use of this mineral site; and**
- 3. railway land to the east outside the site boundary is regarded as open countryside and will be protected from development.**

In all cases proposals should be accompanied by a full flood risk assessment as required in PPS25 and should also include suitable landscaping and measures for improving access by employees by alternative means of transport including travel plans. Proposals which make use of the existing rail connection for rail freight purposes will be encouraged. Land at Long Coppice is safeguarded from development for landscape purposes, and other policies apply in respect of safeguarding land for biodiversity, rail freight and mineral extraction purposes.

Other employment land allocations

- 6.4.12 In addition to Rotherwas and Moreton on Lugg depot, the following additional sites are proposed for employment development.

(a) Legion Way, Hereford

- 6.4.13 This site has the benefit of an estate road with access from College Road and is available for a range of employment uses, including uses in Classes B1, B2 and B8.

(b) Leominster Enterprise Park

- 6.4.14 This proposal formed a major allocation within the Leominster District Local Plan. In total, the Local Plan allocated or safeguarded 16.6 hectares of land as an extension to the existing

Leominster Industrial Estate. These proposals are confirmed. Important considerations are the need to protect the amenity of the adjacent cemetery and for a traffic circulation pattern which is logical, pays regard to existing roads and can be flexible in terms of the areas of land made available for employment uses.

- 6.4.15 A development brief dealing with detailed design requirements, including landscaping and tree planting, was published in 1999. The proposal included the construction of an access road skirting and defining the southern and eastern boundaries of the allocation. Work commenced in 2001 on construction of access roads and balancing ponds for the proposal. The road which defines the southern and eastern perimeters of the site continues to be safeguarded by policy T10. The remainder of the scheme includes a new crossing of the railway link to the A49, which was completed in 2004.

(c) Land north of railway viaduct, Ledbury

- 6.4.16 The Malvern Hills District Local Plan allocated a total of 12.2 hectares of land north of the railway viaduct for employment uses, envisaging that half the area would be developed pre 2001 with the remainder being reserved for the post 2001 period. In the event, no development has yet occurred. Release of the land is linked to major infrastructure investment, particularly in relation to roads. The land will be accessed by means of a northern extension to the Ledbury bypass, safeguarded by policy T10. A development brief will be prepared to indicate requirements as to layout, landscaping, connections to the road system and the role of public transport. The route of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal, which passes the southern boundary of the proposal, needs to be respected, as do views through the railway viaduct (a Grade II listed building).

(d) Land north and east of Lower Road Trading Estate, Ledbury

- 6.4.17 These allocations of 4 hectares within the Malvern Hills District Local Plan provide for the extension of the existing Estate. Planning permission was granted in 1998 for Part B employment development of the northern site. A new link road from the Ledbury bypass provides for an improved access to the Estate as a whole, including the proposed extensions, and this will enable existing access points from Lower Road to be closed to heavy goods traffic. This will relieve traffic problems created by industrial vehicles seeking to access the Estate through a residential area.

(e) Land south of Linton Trading Estate, Bromyard

- 6.4.18 This 5.2 hectare extension to the existing employment site at Linton Trading Estate is located on brownfield land. The majority of the extension area was formerly used for clay extraction and will be restored as part of the re-use of the land for employment. The site will be limited to Part B employment uses only. The extension area includes an existing gypsy site. It is intended that this use should be relocated southward to an area adjacent to the lane. Improvements to the road access to the Estate from the A44 will be required. The site is some 1km from Bromyard and measures will be required to be set out in travel plans to demonstrate how sustainable transport choices are to be promoted through improvements to walking, cycling and public transport facilities. Landscaping will form an important element to any scheme. Developers will need to liaise with the Environment Agency to ensure protection of both ground and surface water regimes. A development brief will be prepared to guide future development.

(f) Land north of petrol filling station, Overross, Ross-on-Wye

- 6.4.19 This 1.2 hectare site formed a proposal in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan and was brought forward in 1988 in conjunction with the Somerfield Distribution Depot and the Cattle Market development. Full planning permission was granted in 2000 for Part B employment uses.

(g) Gooses Foot Industrial Estate, Kingstone

6.4.20 This 2.1 hectare site formed a proposal in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan for Class B1 uses. Employment opportunities in the area are predominantly agricultural and the provision of this land was an attempt to help diversify the local economy. Kingstone is an identified main village within the UDP and there continues to be a need to encourage the progression of factory units. The Local Plan allocation, comprising an extension to the existing estate, is confirmed.

(h) Tram Inn, Allensmore

6.4.21 This South Herefordshire District Local Plan proposal is adjacent to other businesses and is suitable for redevelopment for light industrial purposes. The site which is 0.7 hectares in area may be liable to flooding and this should be reflected in scheme design to the requirements of the Environment Agency. In line with PPS25, developers should undertake a flood risk assessment and this should accompany any proposal which is submitted to the local planning authority.

(i) Land north of A40, Model Farm, Ross-on-Wye

6.4.22 The need for additional employment land at Ross-on-Wye was initially considered and discounted during the preparation of the South Herefordshire District Local Plan. The Inspector recommended that the need for additional land be reviewed through Plan formulation. Accordingly, a study has been undertaken as part of the process of preparing the UDP. This compares employment land supply with the land and premises requirements of indigenous firms, inward investment and start ups, and concludes that a site of 10 to 13 hectares capable of accommodating a range of requirements for Part B uses will be required within the Plan period.

6.4.23 This 10 hectare site to the south east of Ross-on-Wye has been identified at Model Farm to meet the need for employment land. The site is located at an important entrance to the town and consists of a farm and surrounding agricultural fields with a field buffer to the nearby residential area. The site is bounded by the A40 to the south, agricultural fields to the east and north and residential properties to the west. A high quality development for B1, B2 and B8 uses will be accommodated on the site. The site is located on the source protection zone of the Alton Court aquifer and the Environment Agency will need to be satisfied that any future developments include suitable pollution prevention measures in order to protect ground and surface waters. A pond is located on the site which will need to be carefully integrated within a scheme. Access to the site will be directly onto the A40. The developer of this site will be required to make a contribution to the design and geometry of the Overross roundabout to achieve at least nil detriment in traffic terms together with the creation of suitable pedestrian and cycle connections to encourage 'green traffic' movements between the site and the town centre. Further negotiations relating to these requirements will need to be undertaken between the Highway Agency and the Council. The land is open to long distance views, particularly from the east. A comprehensive landscaping scheme will form a key element of any proposal and will need to address this issue as well as include a landscape buffer between the site and residential properties to the west. The open land concerned is designated as subject to policy HBA9. A development brief will be prepared to guide development.

(k) Land east of Whitestone Business Park, Withington

6.4.24 This 2.9 hectare site has been included to provide for the extension of the Business Park adjacent to Withington, a main village. This allocation will form the final phase of employment development at this location. Access will be restricted to that provided from the Business Park to the west. A development brief will be prepared to guide development.

E3 Other employment land allocations

The following sites are allocated for Part B employment uses throughout the County during the Plan period:

Site	Area (ha)	Use Class
Legion Way, Hereford	2.6	B1, B2, B8
Leominster Enterprise Park	16.6	B1, B2, B8
Land north of railway viaduct, Ledbury	12.2	B1, B2, B8
Land north and east of Lower Road Trading Estate, Ledbury	4.0	B1, B2, B8
land south of Linton Trading Estate, Bromyard	5.2	B1, B2, B8
Land north of petrol filling station, Overross, Ross-on-Wye	1.2	B1, B2, B8
Gooses Foot Industrial Estate, Kingstone	2.1	B1
Tram Inn, Allensmore	0.7	B1
Land north of A40, Model Farm, Ross-on-Wye	10.0	B1, B2, B8
Land east of Whitestone Business Park, Withington	2.9	B1, B2, B8
TOTAL	57.5	

Safeguarding employment land and buildings

- 6.4.25 It is important that both the existing and proposed supply of land and buildings for employment uses is protected for such purposes if the Plan is to successfully maintain and enhance employment opportunities throughout the County. Employment land and premises will be reserved for uses within Part B of the Use Classes Order, or on appropriate sites, other acceptable sui generis employment uses which would be otherwise be difficult to locate, such as motor car display and sales, tool hire depots, builders merchants and recycling facilities. The loss of employment land and premises to non-employment uses such as retail or housing will generally be resisted. The Plan makes suitable provision for these uses elsewhere, either through allocation or policy, so that the use of employment land for these purposes is unnecessary.
- 6.4.26 It is particularly important to avoid the introduction of Part A retail uses within established employment areas and industrial estates. The primary role of these areas is to cater for the land requirements of Part B employment uses. It is vital to maintain the type of business environment which will attract the necessary private sector investment, and retail development may have the effect of limiting the types of industrial development that would subsequently proceed. Retail uses will only be acceptable where they are ancillary to a principal employment-related use.
- 6.4.27 Cases occasionally arise where a business does not conform with the predominant land use, such as established industrial operations within residential areas, or otherwise creates environmental, traffic or amenity conflicts. The benefits to be gained from the removal of such businesses will need to be balanced against the wider advantages of retaining the site or premises in employment use. This will be a particular concern in rural settlements where the retention of local employment opportunities is a key element in rural regeneration. Mitigating measures such as sound insulation or revised access arrangements might enable a site's retention rather than change to a non-employment use. Where this can be shown not to be possible and redevelopment or change of use is accepted, every effort should be made to find a satisfactory site for the relocation of any existing businesses. The re-use of rural buildings for employment uses will be encouraged where appropriate before seeking an alternative such as housing. Plan policies HBA12 and HBA13 set out the approach to be taken, and supplementary planning guidance has been prepared to provide more details.
- 6.4.28 The principal established and proposed employment areas within Hereford and the market towns together with several established employment sites within the County's open countryside which are not linked to existing settlements, are shown on the proposals maps. These are: Shobdon and Madley Airfields and Hergest Camp. These sites represent an

employment resource and will be safeguarded accordingly for this purpose. However, expansion of these existing estates beyond their present boundaries would be undesirable, having regard to their rural location, lack of association with settlements, and the aim of reducing the need to travel. This policy also applies to a wide variety of other employment sites of local value within the County, both in urban and rural areas. The expansion of existing firms on land in the rural areas designated as safeguarding employment land will be considered under policy E6.

E5 Safeguarding employment land and buildings

Proposals which would result in the loss of existing, permitted or proposed employment land and buildings to non-employment uses will only be permitted where:

- 1. there would be substantial benefits to residential or other amenity in allowing alternative forms of development, and the site or premises concerned can be shown to be unsuitable for other employment uses, including consideration of mitigation measures. Where such proposals are permitted, an alternative site should be found for the relocation of any existing businesses; or**
- 2. in the case of proposals incorporating elements of retail use, this is restricted to a minor or incidental activity associated with an otherwise acceptable Part B or other employment generating use.**

6.5 Other employment policies

Expansion of existing businesses

- 6.5.1 The growth and expansion of existing businesses often leads to demands for physical development. One of the key objectives of the Herefordshire Partnership's Economic Development Strategy is to encourage sustainable indigenous business growth, and the UDP has a role in supporting this objective and the many actions linked to it. The 1999 Industrial Land Needs survey confirms the intention of many Herefordshire businesses to expand within the Plan period, generally by further development of their own premises. Overall, it is important that expansion proposals do not lead to over intensive development of a site or premises, and that adverse consequences through for instance environmental impact, loss of countryside or traffic generation are avoided. The policy framework for the assessment of such proposals is set by other policies of this Plan, particularly in the Development Requirements and Natural and Historic Heritage chapters, together with the following policy. It may be the case that the expansion needs of a growing business may be best met through relocation rather than through continued occupancy of an increasingly restricted or cramped site, and in this event the Council will assist this process wherever possible.

E6 Expansion of existing businesses

The extension or expansion of existing businesses will be permitted providing that the proposal can be satisfactorily accommodated within the existing site or that suitable land for the purpose is otherwise available and that the proposal is of a scale and character appropriate to the locality in accordance with policy E8.

Other employment proposals within and around Hereford and the market towns

- 6.5.2 The bulk of the County's business, commercial and manufacturing activity will be focused on the existing and proposed employment areas within and around Hereford and the market towns. However, not all employment generating uses within Part B of the Use Classes Order need to be located within employment areas, and can offer a viable use for previously developed land and buildings within the urban area. For instance, proposals of an appropriate

scale and which do not adversely affect residential amenity can be acceptable in areas which are primarily residential. Where necessary, planning conditions or obligations will be used to safeguard residential amenity, for instance to ensure that any subsequent intensification of a use does not become unacceptable. A further instance is the provision of employment starter or nursery units associated with educational institutions; these provide a useful means of fostering links between colleges and business, helping in particular to foster the creative industries.

- 6.5.3 Development for Part B employment purposes within the settlement boundaries of Hereford and the market towns may offer opportunities for economic development. In exceptional circumstances previously developed land which lies outside but adjacent to the settlement boundary of Hereford and the market towns may be considered. In regard to new proposals, the design, scale and location will be particularly important, as will other Plan policies such as those dealing with Natural and Historic Heritage (chapter 9). Sites should be readily accessible to the local workforce and be served or capable of being served by good quality public transport, cycling and walking links with the urban area. Proposals for retail uses will be judged against the relevant policies in the Town Centres and Retail chapter of the Plan. Plan policy on office development is set out at policy E14 and policy TCR10, including application of the sequential approach to proposals which are likely to be major generators of travel.

E7 Other employment proposals within and around Hereford and the market towns

Proposals for employment generating uses within and around Hereford and the market towns will be permitted where:

- 1. there are no suitable sites or premises available within existing and proposed employment areas within the settlement;**
- 2. the proposal is of a scale and character appropriate to the settlement and locality in accordance with policy E8;**
- 3. within existing residential areas, the proposal is for a B1 Business use only.**

Wherever possible, proposals within the settlement boundary should make use of previously developed land and buildings in preference to greenfield land.

Employment proposals which are outside but adjacent to the settlement boundary for Hereford and the market towns may be considered where they are located on previously developed land and meet the above criteria. In particular, the proposal should demonstrate that there is no suitable alternative site within the settlement boundary.

Design standards for employment sites

- 6.5.4 In considering the development control criteria to be applied to employment development, it is appropriate to provide more detailed policy guidance to supplement that set out in the Development Requirements chapter of the Plan. This reflects the importance of ensuring that the environmental and amenity aspects of employment related development are properly assessed and controlled.
- 6.5.5 It is important that employment and allied development can fit into the surrounding pattern of land uses without detriment, with particular emphasis placed on ensuring that residential amenity is protected through a variety of means including landscaping, use of buffer zones, building siting and use, and design. The depth of any buffer will be determined through a development brief or negotiation, with a guide depth of 12m to be normally sought. Conditions may be imposed to ameliorate or reduce the impact of certain uses or processes, including restrictions on days and hours of operation, where this is justified in order to overcome potential problems or concerns for proposals adjacent to sensitive areas.

- 6.5.6 Development briefs will be prepared setting out detailed development guidance for particular employment sites. In all cases, suitable car parking and operational space for servicing and manoeuvring will be required in accordance with relevant Plan policies. The design of junctions and industrial estate access roads should be to the requirements of the highway authority.

E8 Design standards for employment sites

Proposals for employment purposes should provide for adequate infrastructure and the protection of the amenity of surrounding land uses particularly residential by:

- 1. limiting proposals for land adjacent to residential areas or other noise sensitive uses to B1 and B8 uses or other commercial uses where this would protect amenity, and imposing conditions as required to protect amenity;**
- 2. orientating buildings and operations away from residential or other sensitive areas, and limiting door and window opening in buildings facing such areas to a minimum;**
- 3. providing a buffer between buildings and land used for employment purposes and residential curtilages, such buffer to include landscaping, fencing, acoustic bunding, screen planting and noise attenuation measures as required and to exclude buildings and vehicle parking and manoeuvring;**
- 4. incorporating a landscaping scheme which respects existing site features, makes provision for amenity open space areas, includes perimeter screen planting, and integrates with other aspects of the development;**
- 5. ensuring that outdoor storage areas are kept to a minimum and where essential that they are properly designed and screened;**
- 6. providing appropriate environmental protection ensuring satisfactory means for the disposal of trade effluent and the storage of waste by-products and waste awaiting disposal;**
- 7. incorporate pedestrian and cycle links to residential areas and existing footpaths, together with access for public transport vehicles where appropriate and include measures for improving access by employees by alternative means of transport including travel plans; and**
- 8. not permitting proposals where the traffic generated is likely to cause serious nuisance to adjacent uses, adversely affect the effective use of land for employment uses, or lead to a significant increase in environmental disturbance caused by heavy goods vehicle movements on the local road network.**

Home based businesses

- 6.5.7 Developments in information technology and economic activity has resulted in more people choosing to work from home. This can range from the use of a single room in a family dwelling to small 'one-person' businesses operated from a garage or outbuildings. Where the character of the property remains residential then normally no planning permission is required. Planning permission will be required where the scale or intensity of the operation results in a material change of use. This could occur where the business use has expanded to such an extent that it generates visitors, traffic, noise or fumes in excess of that normally associated with a single dwelling. In general, working from home reduces the need to commute, however, this benefit could be offset by the need for the home business to receive deliveries or client visits. In considering any such applications, regard will be had to the scale of the business, the provision made for access and parking, and the effects that the operation has

upon surrounding properties. Particular regard will be paid to the number of trade and other vehicles, visitors and staff likely to be visiting the site on a regular basis.

- 6.5.8 Any permission may be conditioned to a personal use for the business prescribed when it is considered that other operations within the same Use Class may or will not be appropriate in that situation or location.

E9 Home based businesses

Proposals to allow a small business to operate from home will be permitted where:

- 1. the business operation will not lead to adverse impact on residential amenity or the character of the area through its scale, nature of operation, access and parking provision, noise or traffic generated including visitors, staff and deliveries; and**
- 2. the appearance of the building is not materially altered and on the cessation of the business use it can revert to its previous use.**

Employment proposals within or adjacent to main villages

- 6.5.9 It is essential that a range of local employment opportunities are available within main villages to complement modest housing growth and the provision of social and community facilities. New employment opportunities of an appropriate scale can serve to strengthen villages, protect the open countryside, sustain local services and help in moving towards a better balance between jobs and housing, thus reducing the need to travel. The County's network of main villages as defined in policy H4 provides the focus for such employment provision, in line with the overall strategy of the Plan. Within these settlements, the development of new enterprises will be supported provided that they are appropriate in scale and character to the settlement, respect residential amenity, and are commensurate with local economic and employment requirements as indicated for instance by levels of unemployment or forecasts of future numbers of economically active. This latter requirement is intended to help promote and protect the sought after balance between employment and housing. The development of suitable sites of about one hectare for employment purposes in individual settlements is considered to represent an appropriate scale.
- 6.5.10 There may also be instances where the development of new employment land on the edge of settlements would be more acceptable from amenity, environmental and highway safety points of view than developing within settlements. In such cases a pre-requisite will be that there are no suitable sites within the settlement boundary. Such developments need to be carefully designed, particularly in relation to protecting the countryside and visual intrusion. Proposals should be clearly related to the settlement and not be seen as lying within open countryside. In particular, there should be good quality pedestrian links between the settlement and the proposed site.
- 6.5.11 In all cases, proposed employment uses must be compatible with their surroundings and adjoining uses, including residential; siting and design standards should be maintained, and any local environmental impact should be minimised. Landscaping schemes have a key role to play in reducing and softening any impact and, where possible, in bringing about environmental improvements to enhance the character of the area.

E10 Employment proposals within or adjacent to main villages

Proposals for employment generating uses within or adjacent to the main villages identified in policy H4 will be permitted providing that proposals are in keeping with the character of the settlement, and that the level of development can be clearly related to the employment needs of the local economy.

Proposals which are outside but adjacent to settlement boundaries should be closely related to the settlement concerned, including safe and convenient pedestrian access. They should demonstrate that there are no other suitable sites readily available within the settlement boundary for the development proposed. Wherever possible, proposals should make use of previously developed land and buildings in preference to greenfield land. All proposals should be in accordance with policy E8.

Employment in the smaller settlements and open countryside

- 6.5.12 Away from the network of main villages, there continues to be a need to provide for rural businesses. Proposals for such operations should be clearly related to an existing smaller settlement as defined by policy H6, and again be of a scale commensurate with local employment needs in order to help balance jobs and housing and reduce the need to travel. The limited capacity of many rural roads will need to be taken into account in assessing schemes. This policy also applies to identified established employment areas in the open countryside listed in paragraph 6.4.28 of the Plan.
- 6.5.13 In the open countryside, away from main villages and smaller settlements, employment generating uses will be limited to those which can be housed in existing rural buildings, which are necessary to meet the needs of agriculture, forestry and mineral working, or arise from farm diversification. More specific policy guidance dealing with farm diversification is set out below (policy E12), whilst policies HBA12 and HBA13 together with supplementary planning guidance deal with the re-use of rural buildings, encouraging employment uses and setting design requirements.

E11 Employment in the smaller settlements and open countryside

Proposals for rural businesses in the countryside should be of a scale consistent with their rural location and clearly related to the employment needs of the local economy. They should be located within or adjoining smaller settlements as defined by policy H6, or within the identified established employment areas in the open countryside; and cause no adverse impact upon the local environment, the road network or amenity. New development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there are no opportunities for the re-use or adaptation of existing buildings, and should be sited unobtrusively.

Within the open countryside, away from smaller settlements or the identified established employment areas, proposals for employment generating uses will be permitted where:

- 1. the development is required for the essential operation of agriculture, forestry or the winning of minerals; or**
- 2. the proposal is for a farm diversification project in accordance with policy E12; or**
- 3. the proposal provides for the re-use of a rural building in accordance with policies HBA12 and HBA13.**

In the open countryside large scale development for employment uses will not be permitted. All proposals should be in accordance with policy E8.

Farm diversification

- 6.5.14 The need to protect existing jobs in the countryside and to help create the conditions to allow new sources of employment to emerge is increasingly important. The diversification of local farm-based economies into a wide range of non-agricultural business activities is an essential element in sustaining rural income and employment. Government policy is firmly supportive of farm diversification schemes for business purposes, where these are consistent in scale with their rural location, recognising that such schemes are increasingly essential to maintaining the viability of farm businesses. Rural enterprises, tourism projects and recreation activities can all contribute to the rural economy and help maintain the character and quality of the countryside and its landscape. At the same time, a balance has to be struck which recognises the need to protect the rural character of the area in terms of both the scale and type of uses that are proposed. Schemes should seek to re-use existing redundant farm buildings and developed areas in preference to new development or encroachment into the open countryside. Guidance on the provision of farm shops is given at policy TCR17.

E12 Farm diversification

Proposals enabling the diversification of farm businesses into other forms of income generation including non-agricultural activities will be permitted where:

- 1. the proposal is consistent in scale with its rural location, serving to retain the open character of the countryside; and**
- 2. use is made of existing buildings, in accordance with policies HBA12 and HBA13, and developed areas wherever possible, with any new development of a scale and design which is appropriate to its rural surroundings.**

Agricultural and forestry development

- 6.5.15 Agriculture and forestry generally enjoy significant permitted development rights. However these are subject to certain restrictions, and to a requirement on agricultural units of 5 hectares or more to apply for a determination as to whether 'prior approval' is required for details of proposed developments. The local planning authority may subsequently give notice that formal approval is required. These controls relate to new buildings, significant alterations or extensions, farm and forestry roads, excavation and waste deposits, and fish tanks. The relevant details vary but generally include siting, design and appearance. The objective of these controls is to enable the landscape impact of the development to be considered, as well as the need to protect sites of recognised historic or biodiversity value which are protected by other Plan policies. It is necessary to balance these factors against the operational needs of agricultural and forestry industries, recognising that necessary developments are often prominent in the rural landscape.

E13 Agricultural and forestry development

Proposals for agricultural and forestry development subject to planning controls including prior approval of details will be permitted where:

- 1. in the case of new buildings, development is sited with existing groups of buildings where practicable, having regard to the functional relationship with other buildings and services;**
- 2. where new buildings cannot be located with existing buildings, that such development is sited so as to be readily assimilated into the landscape, avoiding isolated or skyline locations and taking advantage of natural land form;**
- 3. adverse impacts on residential amenity and the environment are avoided; and**

4. proposals are well related to existing development and the landscape in terms of scale, design, colour and materials.

Conversions of large dwellings to employment uses

- 6.5.16 The strategy of the Plan is to locate uses that generate and attract many trips in and adjacent to existing town centres. Such employment and office uses are assessed under the sequential approach set out in the following chapter. As a consequence, the bulk of new development for office purposes and which attracts many people will be met within or in close proximity to Hereford city centre and the market towns.
- 6.5.17 However, there may be instances where new uses are sought to ensure the continued maintenance of larger dwellings. The aim is to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with the fabric, interior and setting of the buildings. Proposals for office or other employment uses will often be the most appropriate and will be supported where the original residential use is no longer practical, the potential nuisance arising from the proposal is minimal, and the building's character and appearance is maintained. All planning applications should be accompanied by a conservation plan, or in lesser cases a conservation statement, for the house and the whole of the historic park. Policy HBA12 will also be applied and regard had to other relevant policies of the Natural and Historic Heritage chapter.

E14 Conversions of large dwellings to employment uses

Proposals for the re-use of large dwellings for employment uses will be permitted where:

- 1. the original use is no longer practical;**
- 2. the preservation or enhancement of the building and its setting would be secured; and**
- 3. the proposal would not adversely affect neighbouring uses or the character and amenity of the area.**

Such proposals should include measures for improving access by employees by alternative means of transport including travel plans.

Protection of greenfield land

- 6.5.18 The planning system has long afforded protection to the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is land within grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system, which can be used for the widest range of farming uses and is the most productive and flexible. Government policy in PPS7 sets the protection of this resource within the overall context of sustainable development. Greenfield land, including best and most versatile agricultural land, should not be developed before opportunities have been assessed for accommodating development on previously developed land and on land within the boundaries of urban areas. Where some loss of greenfield land to development is unavoidable, land of poorer agricultural quality will be used before land of higher quality, providing that other sustainability considerations do not suggest otherwise. Such considerations include those identified in the Strategy chapter of this Plan, such as biodiversity, features of geological interest, landscape character, accessibility, and the protection of natural resources (including soil quality). These considerations may be recognised by a statutory designation. The balance of sustainability factors will be carefully weighed, having regard to competent advice from relevant agencies, in reaching decisions involving loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

- 6.5.19 Other agricultural factors may also be relevant in considering the effects of development proposals on local agriculture and farm viability, in addition to the direct loss of agricultural land and its quality. The initial loss may be likely to have implications for further losses in the future. Other considerations include: the location of development in relation to farms; farm size and structure, including any severance effects; and the impact on existing or proposed capital investments.
- 6.5.20 There is a continuing need to protect the countryside for its own sake (including land in the lower agricultural grades) and this is taken forward by other policies of the Plan. In addition, policy DR11 seeks to protect soil quality as a requirement on all developments.

E15 Protection of greenfield land

Development of greenfield land, including the best and most versatile agricultural land (ALC grades 1, 2 and 3a) will not be permitted unless:

- 1. there is a lack of suitable development opportunities within the boundaries of existing urban areas or on previously developed sites; or**
- 2. where there is an established need for the development of agricultural land and there is a choice between land of different grades, poorer quality land is used in preference to that of higher quality except where other sustainability considerations suggest otherwise.**

Intensive livestock units

- 6.5.21 Intensive livestock units are those for the permanent indoor housing of pigs, poultry or cattle and also those for housing such livestock indoors for only part of the time if a slurry system is to be adopted. Such units can give rise to a wide variety of concerns and impacts, including noise, smell, insects and vermin, pollution of biodiversity features, watercourses and groundwater, traffic generation and impact on the landscape. Through careful design, siting and landscaping, and by good management, such impacts can be minimised. The following policy seeks to strike a balance between enabling an efficient and viable farm structure to be maintained whilst protecting amenity and the environment. It is important to recognise that not all adverse effects can be entirely prevented.
- 6.5.22 Permitted development rights under the General Permitted Development Order 1995 do not extend to buildings to be used for the accommodation of livestock, or to associated aspects such as slurry tanks or lagoons, when these are to be built within 400m of a 'protected building'. This latter term includes residential and other permanent buildings such as schools, hospitals and offices that are normally occupied by people. As is suggested by the removal of permitted development rights, the relationship to surrounding dwellings or other buildings normally occupied by people will normally be most important in considering planning applications for intensive livestock units. Units should be sited at least 400m from non agricultural dwellings or buildings; planning applications for units within 400m of a protected building will be carefully assessed. The closer a unit is to such 'protected buildings' the more likely it is to create a nuisance. Limiting the number of livestock can reduce impacts, as can paying attention to local topography and micro climates, and avoiding up wind locations.
- 6.5.23 Proposals should include details of the intended arrangements for the disposal of waste materials that if not properly controlled can lead to adverse impacts on local water quality and to nuisance to nearby occupiers. Planning conditions and agreements will be sought as necessary to govern this and other aspects of the operation, such as the timing of vehicle deliveries and collections, in order in particular to avoid significant harm to residential amenity and the environment. The landscape impact of units can be minimised by careful site selection, landscaping and choice of building colours. Finally, there is a risk that units may concentrate in a particular area leading to an unacceptable cumulative impact. Additional

livestock units in the locality which are likely to exacerbate existing adverse effects will be resisted.

- 6.5.24 In addition, and recognising the potential risk of nuisance, it is important to carefully assess applications for new protected buildings within 400m of established livestock units. Such consideration will include the possibility that pressure could arise in the future to curtail the agricultural activity.
- 6.5.25 Intensive livestock units for poultry are now covered by new legislation. For new poultry units above 40,000 birds and for substantial extensions to existing units, an IPPC permit must be obtained from the Environment Agency.

E16 Intensive livestock units

Proposals for intensive livestock units and associated structures and facilities for the storage and disposal of waste will be permitted provided that the siting, design and methods of operation proposed:

- 1. serve to protect the amenity of residential properties or other buildings normally occupied by people, or in the case of extensions can demonstrate a positive improvement in existing conditions;**
- 2. make adequate provision for the management and disposal of waste materials, liquids and litter which will not lead to pollution, particularly of surface and ground waters;**
- 3. serve to minimise landscape impact and incorporate suitable landscaping proposals; and**
- 4. are not contrary to the interests of highway safety and do not generate a significant increase in traffic volumes and HGV movements.**

Intensive livestock unit proposals will be considered both in terms of their individual impact and having regard to the cumulative effect of other existing and proposed units within the locality.

Proposals for residential or other protected buildings within 400m of established intensive livestock units will be subject to special consideration. Such proposals, which would as a consequence be subject to significant adverse environmental impact will not be permitted.

Military development

- 6.5.26 The Stirling Lines site at Credenhill, as shown as the proposals map, is acknowledged by the Council to be a facility of national importance. As a result of existing and longstanding military development, the site is atypical of the landscape types within which it sits. Consequently, the site specific landscape characteristics have been largely overridden and the opportunity for retaining and enhancing landscape character on the site through the use of policy LA2 is considered minimal.
- 6.5.27 Nothing in this policy is intended to support the development of the site for non-military purposes.

E17 Military development

The Stirling Lines site, as shown in the proposals map, is designated for military purposes. Development for such purposes and according with the principles set out in policy S2 will be supported.