

### **Policy 1.4 Employment Sites outside the Preferred Office Locations and Preferred Industrial Locations**

The policy is set out on pages 52 and 53 in appendix A of the report circulated on 22 November 2006.

#### **Commentary**

The Preferred Office Locations (Bankside and London Bridge) and Preferred Industrial Locations (Old Kent Road and South-East Bermondsey) provide concentrations of office and industrial uses and these are protected by policies 1.2 and 1.3 respectively. Outside the POLs and PILs there are also many scattered sites which currently accommodate business uses (Class B1, B2 and B8 uses, also referred to as “employment” uses). In areas with good public transport facilities, in town centres, and in the Central Activities Zone, business uses, particularly office and light industrial uses which are compatible with residential use, contribute to the existing mix of use and add to the vitality of these areas. They also provide a source of employment for local people and importantly frequently provide premises for small businesses. 95% of businesses in Southwark are small and medium sized enterprises and 83% are micro businesses employing less than 10 people. Such businesses help keep the economy local and are less vulnerable to macro-economic influences. It is important that there are sufficient premises available for such businesses.

Policy 1.4 seeks to retain business uses in certain areas. These areas are:

- The Central Activity Zone (CAZ)
- The Strategic Cultural Areas (SCAs)
- The Public Transport Accessibility Zones (PTAZs) – which are Peckham, Canada Water, Bermondsey Spa, the Walworth Road corridor and West Camberwell
- In locations where the application site has a frontage or direct access onto a main road (good access to the highway network is often a requirement for businesses)

There are also some business sites outside these areas. Many of these however comprise backland sites which are bounded by housing and have poor access to the highway network. These sites could be more effectively used for alternative uses, such as housing, and accordingly, there is no requirement to retain business uses on these sites.

Even on sites located in the four areas referred to above, the council recognises, that there may not always be demand for business uses. Criteria a, b and c, allow a change of use from business use, where an applicant can demonstrate that the site has been rigorously marketed for a business use over a two year period, and there is no demand. Criterion c allows a change of use within a town centre to an appropriate town centre use, such as a retail use or hotel.

In all locations, where the use of a site is intensified and development results in a net increase in floorspace, the additional floorspace can be use for appropriate residential or mixed uses.