

Planning Advice Note: Havering is 'open for business' - proposals for business and employment uses within industrial areas

Purpose:

This advice note sets out the Council's approach to proposals for business and employment uses (non-industrial) within the Borough's designated industrial areas.

The good practice guidance establishes a more flexible approach than is currently set out in Havering's adopted planning policies in recognition of the Council's commitment to supporting business growth and developing a strong and prosperous economy which provides employment opportunities for our residents and the right climate for businesses to invest.

It is intended that this note will provide helpful advice to businesses and developers by setting out the considerations that will be taken into account by the Council when providing pre-application advice and considering planning applications for business uses within the Borough's Industrial Areas. The advice note will be considered alongside adopted planning policies set out in the Havering's Local Development Framework and the London Plan which remain the primary policy context.

Background:

Supporting business growth and being a 'business friendly' borough is a key priority for the Council. Havering's 'Living Ambitions' strategy (set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-2014) demonstrates the Council's commitment to the business community through its goal for Towns and Communities; to provide economic, social and cultural opportunities in thriving towns and villages. The Strategy recognises that a strong business community is a prerequisite to creating new jobs and achieving a better quality of life for Havering residents.

The recent Business Growth Programme approved in Havering (March 2013) actively seeks to grow the business base and create jobs by promoting investment in Havering, encouraging existing businesses to grow and transforming customer services for the business community. The Council's on-going commitment to business and economic growth firmly reflects the priority of central government to build a strong, competitive economy in particular their intention for the planning system to do everything it can to support economic growth. Other Havering initiatives such as business to business networks, the Leader's Networking Event, shop front improvement schemes and the Love Romford Campaign all evidence how important the growth of the business economy is.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 places significant weight on the need to support economic growth through the planning system which should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. To help achieve economic growth the NPPF expects

local planning authorities to plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.

The Mayor's London Plan (2011) seeks to ensure that London remains an attractive place to do business and has a strong and diverse economy. Specific policy relating to the control of uses within designated industrial areas is set out in the London Plan and Havering's Local Development Framework (2008). Further details of relevant policies are set out in Annex 1.

Planning guidance:

This section sets out a number of considerations that will be taken into account by the Council when considering a planning application for a business use within a designated industrial area (The Borough's designated industrial areas are set out in Annex 2). In some cases, clearly outlined below the applicant will be expected to provide supplementary evidence in support of their application. The considerations set out below will be taken into account in addition to the policies referred to above and set out in Annex 1. The policies in the Local Development Framework and the London Plan will remain the primary planning policy context for the consideration of planning applications and will carry greater weight in the formal planning decision making process.

This guidance applies to applications for new development and change of use under 2,500sqm.

1. *The proposed development will be expected to make a positive contribution to the local economy and provide local employment opportunities.*

Type of evidence required

Applicants should clearly demonstrate:

- The number of jobs created by the proposal and their status (i.e. Full-time/ part-time, permanent/temporary) and where employees will come from
- The training opportunities available to employees
- A commitment to employing Havering residents

The Council is particularly keen to encourage apprenticeships for local residents together with a commitment to demonstrating the outcomes achieved. This would be secured through a Section 106 legal agreement.

2. *There should be clear demonstration and evidence of vacancy*

Type of evidence required

Applicants should provide evidence in support of their planning application to demonstrate that the site has been vacant and actively marketed within the local property market for B1 (b+c), B2 and B8 uses for a period of 12 months (A description of the B uses is set out in Annex 3)

Applicants should provide documentation which demonstrates:

- The appointment of a property consultant/ estate agent to handle the marketing of the site

- Where and how the site has been marketed
- That the price and terms of the sale/lease are reasonable in comparison to others that have been marketed locally during the 12 months.
- An indication of the type of interest that has been expressed in the site / premises whilst marketing was taking place

3. The planning application must be for a known and specified end user and the permission will be granted personally to the applicant only through the use of appropriate conditions.

4. Secondary Employment Areas (SEAs) are more appropriate locations than Strategic Industrial Locations (SILs) for non-industrial employment uses.

Type of evidence required

- The Council recognise the importance of industrial uses and their value to the local economy and the services that they offer to our residents. In line with the approach in the London Plan, the Council considers Strategic Industrial Locations are London's main reservoirs of industrial and related capacity, applicants should therefore demonstrate that they have considered sites within the Boroughs SEAs before they consider sites within the Borough's strategic Industrial Locations (SIL).
- The Council is committed to ensuring that the Borough's town centres are vital and viable and therefore in line with the NPPF and regional and local policy applicants will need to demonstrate that they have followed the sequential approach for town centre uses. Main town centre uses are defined in the NPPF as retail, leisure, entertainment facilities, offices and arts, culture and tourism development.

5. The proposal should not result in an unacceptable impact on amenity, parking or highway or the operation and viability of the wider industrial area.

Applicants would need to consider the existing industrial uses in the areas and the impact of these on their proposed development scheme particularly in relation to noise, dust, traffic movements and other environmental considerations. This will also be a consideration where the proposal would be in close proximity to residential uses (for example, if the proposed activity adjoins a residential area). Applicants should not assume that the Council would seek to improve environmental conditions for new occupiers, if that would result in the loss of existing industrial uses.

Implementation:

In the light of the Council's commitment to demonstrating that Havering is 'open for business', potential applicants are strongly advised to discuss their proposals with planning officers before preparing their planning application. This will enable officers to better understand the proposal and to provide positive and constructive advice on how the issues identified above may be addressed to secure a beneficial outcome.

ANNEX 1 – Current Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
[Click here to view the National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#)
- The London Plan 2011
[Click here to view the London Plan](#)

Policies of particular relevance:

- Policy 2.7: Outer London Economy
 - Policy 2.17: Strategic Industrial Locations
 - Policy 4.1 Developing London's Economy
 - Policy 4.4: Managing Industrial Land and Premises
- Land for Industry and Transport Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 2012
[Click here to view the Land for Industry and Transport SPG](#)
 - Havering Local Development Framework 2008
[Click here to view Havering's Local Development Framework \(LDF\)](#)

Policies of particular relevance:

Policy CP3: Places to work

Policy DC9: Strategic Industrial Locations

Policy DC10: Secondary Employment Areas

ANNEX 2 – Designated Industrial Areas

Designated industrial areas comprise of Secondary Employment Areas and Strategic Industrial Locations, which are set out in the London Plan 2011 and Havering's Local Plan.

Secondary Employment Areas (SEA) (referred to as Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS) in the London Plan)

- Crow Lane, Romford (three sites)
- Harold Wood Industrial Estate
- Hillman Close (Stafford Industrial Estate)
- Lyon Road, Romford
- The Seedbed Centre, Romford

Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL)

- Rainham Employment Area
- Harold Hill Industrial Estate
- King George Close Estate

ANNEX 3 – B use classes

B1 Business

- (a) Offices (not within A2).
- (b) Research & Development, studios, laboratories, high-tech.
- (c) Light industry appropriate in a residential area.

B2 General Industrial - (other than classified in B1)

B8 Storage or distribution - Wholesale warehouse, distribution centres, repositories (including open air storage)