

SG Safeguarding 5: Safeguarding employment land

We will only approve development for non-employment uses on existing employment sites, whether they are allocated or unallocated, and whether it is greenfield or brownfield land, subject to other policies, if:

- 1) there is a constraint on the site whereby there is no reasonable prospect of it ever becoming marketable for employment development; OR**
- 2) the site is poorly located for employment uses and an alternative land use would benefit the surrounding area and community.**

In either of these cases the applicant must also demonstrate that the non-employment use:

- a) will not prejudice the strategic employment land requirement; AND**
- b) would be compatible with neighbouring employment uses; AND**
- c) will respect the character and amenity of the surrounding area and is landscaped accordingly.**

We will not approve development for non-employment uses on specific sites, which have been identified on the proposals map and in the supporting settlement statements.

Reasoned Justification

The aim of this policy is to ensure allocated employment sites, shown on the proposal maps, are developed for suitable employment purposes and also to protect these sites from non-employment development. Where employment use already exists, we also intend to ensure that the employment use remains on these sites and that they too are protected from non-employment development. There may be instances where employment use is no longer suitable for the site, but in those cases the proposed use of the site must be compatible with neighbouring land uses, including business and industrial activity that remains in the vicinity.

Existing well-located and successful business sites have been identified in the settlement statements. Review of the use of these sites should only be undertaken as part of a local development plan review.

In accordance with the structure plan, the local development plan should maintain a marketable supply of land for employment uses. Maintaining a marketable supply of employment land in line with the strategic employment land requirement is one of the key factors in sustaining a vibrant, effective and sustainable economy for Aberdeenshire. There is also a requirement to maintain 20 hectares of land for high-quality businesses or company headquarters, and this is identified within the allocations in the settlement statements at Thainstone and Elsick.

If a change is to be accepted, the land must have been marketed over an agreed and robust period with no interest received, e.g. at an open market valuation for a period of no less than 6 months; or it must be clearly

demonstrated that the site is poorly located, and that its loss cannot prejudice the strategic employment land requirement, as required by the Structure Plan.

Aberdeenshire Council will adopt a proactive approach to encouraging the reuse of buildings and previously developed land, particularly in the regeneration areas, making use of land assembly and compulsory purchase powers to enable redevelopment opportunities.

Some employment uses will not be suitable on any allocated employment land. Attention must therefore be given to ensure that proposed employment uses are compatible with neighbouring land uses. Conversely, care must be taken that proposals for neighbouring uses are appropriate and unlikely to impose operational constraints on existing businesses, for example, through the need for noise abatement.