

# Somewhere to Work and Shop

**204** The health of the local economy is a key issue for the Borough. Bracknell Forest is home to many multi-national companies and, equally important, to hundreds of smaller businesses which help to drive a strong regional economy. Past economic success needs to be built on sustainably to ensure that the needs of employers can be met locally.

**205** The Bracknell Forest employer portfolio is impressive, comprising many household names. While predominantly from the financial and ICT sectors, there is also important representation from the research and pharmaceutical sectors. Through the Core Strategy, existing occupiers will be supported in their efforts to realise real growth, provided impacts arising from development can be successfully controlled. New large floorspace occupiers will be directed to the major employment areas including Bracknell town centre.

## Location of Employment Development

**206** Bracknell Forest not only has the advantage of being home to successful businesses, large and small, it has planned for accommodating these businesses. Distinct defined employment areas and Bracknell town centre, supported by good road and rail links, provide excellent locations for doing business both with other local businesses and with businesses in the region, nationally and internationally.

**207** The Employment Potential Study 2005/2006<sup>14</sup> concluded that defined employment areas provide more opportunity for growth and should be supported through Council policies and schemes. The Council will therefore direct most new or redevelopment for employment uses to these areas and will also look to support a variety of businesses in these areas.

**208** There are other major employment areas outside of settlements which also play an important role in providing accommodation for employers:

- i) Major Employment Sites outside defined settlements;
- ii) Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt.

## Major Employment Sites Outside Defined Settlements

**209** The Crowthorne Business Estate is located on the edge of Crowthorne in a contained area which once formed part of the Transport and Road Research Laboratory site. This site continues to be home to the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) and several other smaller businesses in a business incubator building specially set up to help smaller businesses find affordable and flexible space.

**210** Broadmoor Hospital is also a major employer in the area. Whilst the operations on the site are limited to those that support the prime hospital function, these are spread throughout an edge of settlement site.

**211** Both employment sites are identified on the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan Proposals Map. The Council supports appropriate redevelopment and limiting infilling at both of these sites; however, expansion of these employment sites is not supported due to their countryside location. In the case of the Crowthorne Business Estate, this site also performs a key role as a strategically important gap between Bracknell and Crowthorne.

## Major Developed Site in the Green Belt

**212** Syngenta is a large employer in the Borough and runs a significant research centre in the north of the Parish of Warfield. This site is identified on the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan Proposals Map. The Council supports appropriate redevelopment and limited infilling at this site.

## Small Businesses

**213** Small business units (500m<sup>2</sup> or less Gross External Area (GEA)) and non-office floorspace such as industry and warehousing perform a vital role in providing a range of types of jobs and accommodation for a variety of users. Sites for these smaller businesses are under pressure for redevelopment for higher-value office and residential uses. The Council will apply policies that safeguard this type of floorspace to maintain the diversity of the local economy.



**214** Employment-generating development is defined as uses within use classes B1, B2 and B8, together with any sui generis uses that share a significant number of characteristics with those uses. Retail development does not fall within the scope of this policy.

### **Policy CS19: Location of Employment Development**

**215** Employment-generating development will be permitted in Bracknell town centre and the Borough's defined employment areas. The new major locations for growth will also be appropriate for employment-generating development as part of a mix of uses.

**216** In other locations within settlements, new employment-generating development will only be acceptable if there is a net increase of 500m<sup>2</sup> GEA or less and it does not give rise to unacceptable impacts.

**217** Change of use, redevelopment and limited infilling will be permitted in the Major Employment Sites outside defined settlements. Redevelopment and limited infilling will be permitted in Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt.

**218** Small business units (500m<sup>2</sup> or less GEA) and non-office employment uses (of any size) will be protected. Planning permission for loss of such premises or uses will only be granted if the proposal does not conflict with other elements of this Strategy.

### **Implementation**

**219** This policy will be implemented through:

- Subsequent policies and guidance in further Local Development Documents;
- The determination and monitoring of planning applications and appeals.

### **New Development in Employment Areas**

**220** The Council's Employment Potential Study 2005/2006 indicates that there is approximately a 15-year supply of land available to meet expected business demand. Demand to meet the period up to 2026 for the Core Strategy will primarily be met through intensification of employment uses in Bracknell town centre and the existing defined employment areas. Employment uses will also be appropriate as part of new mixed use development in the new major locations for growth areas identified in this Strategy.

### **Ancillary Business Services**

**221** Ancillary business services are those uses that assist and support the business function of the area, and may include a crèche, health club, sandwich shop, pub, business hotel or other similar uses, but not housing.

**222** Such uses are important to sustain and enhance the local economy, being both employment generators in their own right and also providing support services to other businesses; for instance, a place for workers to buy lunch. Provision of these uses can aid sustainability by reducing the need to travel outside the employment areas to gain access to services. However, if the uses were of such a scale that they attracted customers into the area and acted as a destination in their own right, the location would be unsustainable. Therefore, the Council will encourage the provision of support services while ensuring that those services are appropriate in scale to their location.



## Policy CS20: New Development in Employment Areas

**223** Development proposals for business, industry, distribution and storage uses will be permitted within the defined and major employment areas.

**224** Development within defined and major employment areas for non-employment use will only be permitted after a supportive examination of the relevant circumstances, including:

- the supply (amount, type, quality and use) of employment land and premises; and
- provision of and need for the proposed use; and
- the relative suitability of the site for employment and for the alternative use; and
- the location of the site and its relationship to other uses.

**225** Planning applications for large employment developments (involving a net increase of at least 2,500m<sup>2</sup> GEA) will also be required to be accompanied by an Employment Impact Statement demonstrating:

- the need for the development; and
- a sequential approach to location; and
- how it is appropriate to its location; and
- the number and type of jobs likely to be created, and how they are to be sourced and what the wider impacts of doing so would be; and
- the mitigation that will be required to address any unacceptable adverse impacts.

**226** Ancillary services which:

- i. are small in scale (100m<sup>2</sup> or less GEA); and
- ii. support the primary business function of the employment area; and,
- iii. cumulatively do not compromise the integrity of the prime business functions of the employment area

will be permitted in appropriate locations within defined and major employment areas.

## Implementation

**227** This policy will be implemented through:

- Subsequent policies and guidance in further Local Development Documents;
- The determination and monitoring of planning applications and appeals.

## Retail

**228** Bracknell Forest is part of a complex network of retail centres with overlapping catchments, each with a different role and function. Within this context, Bracknell town centre is the largest and most accessible centre in the Borough and will continue to be the Borough's main retail centre, with uses appropriate to its role. Other centres have different roles and will accordingly have a different retail offer. The specific allocation of centres in subsequent Development Plan Documents will allow further definition of their future role.

## Network of Identified Retail Centres

### Bracknell Town Centre

**229** Bracknell town centre will contain the main comparison shopping offer in the Borough, and will be a focus for a range of retail and complementary uses.

**230** The Peel Centre retail warehouse park is a part of Bracknell town centre and links between the warehouse park and the rest of the town will be improved. The Peel Centre is the main location for retail warehousing in the Borough and has significant scope for intensification. Any retail warehousing development during the plan period will be expected to be located on or adjacent to this park.

### Larger Centres

**231** Crowthorne and Sandhurst (West of Swan Lane) centres will contain comparison shopping of a scale appropriate to their role as small town centres, and convenience shopping to serve their local area.



### Smaller Centres

**232** Other, smaller centres will fulfil a district or neighbourhood role, providing for day-to-day needs. To ensure that development is consistent with their scale and function, expansion of their comparison shopping offer by more than 500m<sup>2</sup> will be resisted.

**233** Smaller centres (Village and neighbourhood centres and local parades) will be specifically defined in a subsequent Development Plan Document and are listed below:

#### Village and neighbourhood centres:

Terrace Road South, Binfield  
Bullbrook  
Crown Wood  
Easthampstead  
Great Hollands  
Hanworth  
Harmans Water  
Priestwood  
Wildridings  
Whitegrove  
Forest Park  
Martins Heron  
Birch Hill

#### Local parades:

Station Parade, Dukes Ride, Crowthorne  
Yorktown Road, College Town, Sandhurst  
Yorktown Road (East of Swan Lane), Sandhurst  
Old Mills Parade, High Street, Sandhurst  
Yeovil Road, Sandhurst  
Fernbank Road, Ascot  
New Road, Ascot  
Warren Row, Ascot

### Retail Development

#### Need

**234** When determining planning applications for retail development, the Council will take into consideration the need for retail growth in the Borough. Such consideration would include whether, relatively, there is an over-provision for growth in the larger centres, or a requirement for investment to strengthen or regenerate smaller centres or whether an existing, or new, centre should take on an additional role or function.

#### Community Function

**235** Many retail uses are hubs of the community. They are important for community cohesion and have a valuable role to play in social inclusion. Units that perform an important community role including post offices, convenience stores, chemists and pubs will be protected. Planning applications involving their loss by redevelopment or change of use will not be allowed unless exceptional circumstances have been proven and an equivalent or better replacement facility has been secured.

#### Accessibility

**236** The retail centres in the Borough are mostly located in town centres where a wide range of services and facilities are available and allow multi-purpose journeys. By directing retail development to the centres in the Borough, which are relatively well served by a choice of means of transport (such as, walking, cycling, public transport and the car), traffic and transport impacts will be minimised.



## Policy CS21: Retail Development in Town Centres

**237** Retail development will be directed to the identified Town Centres. The scale and nature of the retail uses will be consistent with the role and function of the centre.

**238** Retail development will demonstrate that:

- it is appropriate in scale and function to its location; and,
- the development will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the viability and vitality of any other town centre whether inside or outside the Borough, either alone or cumulatively with other proposals and recent developments; and
- the development is accessible by a choice of means of transport and will not result in congestion; and
- there would be no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts caused by the development and/or its subsequent operation.

**239** If no suitable, viable and available sites exist in the identified Town Centres, then sites on the edge of those centres will be considered. If no edge of centre sites are suitable, viable and available, out of centre sites will be considered in accordance with Policy CS22.

**240** Planning applications involving the loss by redevelopment or change of use of retail units that perform an important community role will only be allowed if they do not conflict with other elements of this strategy.

### Implementation

**241** This policy will be implemented through:

- Subsequent policies and guidance in further Local Development Documents;
- The determination and monitoring of planning applications and appeals.

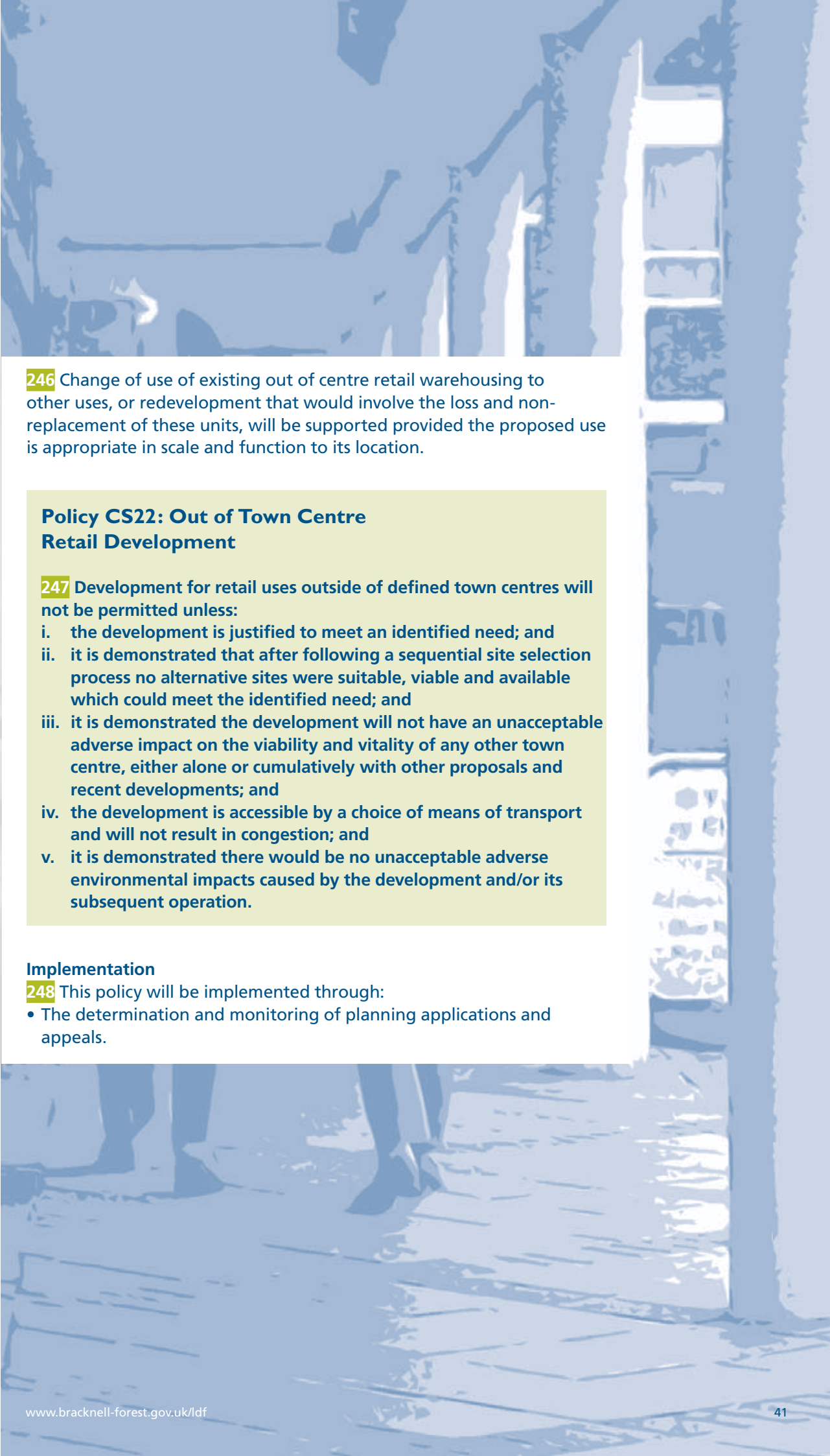
## Out of Centre Locations

**242** National policies and guidance<sup>15</sup> promote healthy and vibrant town centres whilst discouraging out of centre locations for retail development. Out of centre locations can cause unsustainable shopping patterns and also adversely affect the health and success of town centres.

**243** Bracknell is fortunate to have a retail warehouse park as part of its defined town centre. This is a unique asset and as such represents an opportunity for any further retail warehouse development to be sustainably located in a town centre location. Any such development will therefore be expected to locate on or adjacent to this park.

**244** Out of centre retail development will generally be inappropriate in the Borough. Retail studies have given an indication of the level of development which might need to be accommodated during the period to 2016. The Bracknell town centre regeneration scheme puts this into practice and allocates development sites. Additional retail capacity studies will be undertaken for the period beyond 2016 focusing on the allocation of retail sites within existing centres. Retail development elsewhere will therefore be constrained.

**245** Out of centre retail development will be required to demonstrate the quantitative and qualitative need for the development and to follow a sequential approach to location of the development. This means that sites or buildings that are suitable, viable and available in Bracknell town centre will be given first preference, followed by sites or buildings on the edge of that centre, then sites or buildings in other centres. Planning permission for retail development in out of centre locations will only be granted if no sequentially preferable sites are suitable, viable and available, and only then if the development is appropriate in scale and function to its proposed location and has no unacceptable adverse impact on other centres, whether inside or outside the Borough.



**246** Change of use of existing out of centre retail warehousing to other uses, or redevelopment that would involve the loss and non-replacement of these units, will be supported provided the proposed use is appropriate in scale and function to its location.

### **Policy CS22: Out of Town Centre Retail Development**

**247** Development for retail uses outside of defined town centres will not be permitted unless:

- i. the development is justified to meet an identified need; and
- ii. it is demonstrated that after following a sequential site selection process no alternative sites were suitable, viable and available which could meet the identified need; and
- iii. it is demonstrated the development will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the viability and vitality of any other town centre, either alone or cumulatively with other proposals and recent developments; and
- iv. the development is accessible by a choice of means of transport and will not result in congestion; and
- v. it is demonstrated there would be no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts caused by the development and/or its subsequent operation.

#### **Implementation**

**248** This policy will be implemented through:

- The determination and monitoring of planning applications and appeals.