

Chapter 4

The Economy and Employment



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 London has a vital role to play in the regional, national and international economies. The economic complexities of London make it difficult to define a purely local economy. The prospects for employment in the Borough are increasingly dependent on factors operating at a European or global level about which the Council can do little. But where opportunities do exist for improvement it is important that Council policies allow the most to be made of them.
- 1.2 The policies of this Chapter are based upon a goal of strengthening the economy of the Borough, through the retention of existing employment and the attraction of new investment, for the benefit of local residents and businesses.
- 1.3 This Chapter develops a strategy for the development of employment uses within the Borough, which for the purposes of this Plan are defined as those uses falling within classes B1 to B8 of the 1987 Use Classes Order, (see the Glossary). While it is recognised that other land uses such as tourism, shopping, arts and entertainment are employment generating developments, provision for these is made elsewhere in the Plan.

2. LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

EMPLOYMENT CHANGES

- 2.1 Total employment declined in the Borough in the early 1980s but started to grow steadily from the mid 1980s, rising by 28% between 1984-1989 to reach a total of 104, 000. The highest percentage growth was in women's employment and part-time employment, and these trends are projected to continue into the next century. Forecasts (for LPAC) indicated that the total employment will rise further, reaching 190,000 (or a rise of 61%) by 2001.
- 2.2 Fundamental shifts in the structure of employment in the Borough have taken place in the last ten years, characterised by the

changing balance between the manufacturing commercial/service sector.

- 2.3 Tower Hamlets' economy has not experienced the marked decline in manufacturing employment taking place in London overall. While the number of people employed in manufacturing has fallen by 15% (or 3,206) between 1987-1989, this compares with a London-wide decline of 35%; indeed the period from 1984-1987 saw an overall rise in manufacturing employment in the Borough.
- 2.4 An examination of individual sub-sectors reveals a period of employment growth in mechanical and electronic engineering, and sustained growth in the print industry after an initial period of job loss in the early 1980s. Even in sub-sectors such as clothing, which have experienced persistent decline, the rate of job loss has reduced.
- 2.5 The Borough has seen a rapid rise in the number of office-based jobs, particularly in banking and finance. This has been reflected in land use patterns, with the Borough now having two centres of business growth: the City fringe locations in Bethnal Green, Stepney and Wapping and the Isle of Dogs, centred upon Canary Wharf.
- 2.6 The development boom of the mid to late 1980s has produced a surplus of office space in the Borough. In 1986, the Borough contained 8,137,780 sq. ft. of office floorspace, mainly on the City fringe. By September 1991 additional 4.6 million sq.ft floorspace had been completed in the Isle of Dogs, with an estimated 250,000 sq.ft. completed on the City fringe. LPAC's Central London Capacity Study estimates that even with a high economic growth scenario, the current office pipeline for London (excluding applications) provides 8.7 years' supply (with average economic growth it provides 11.5 years' supply) and concludes that there is a substantial excess of supply over demand.
- 2.7 Changes to planning legislation have limited the Council's ability to respond to these changes. The deregulation of planning controls (through the 1987 Use Classes Order and 1988 General Development Order)

means that the Council has less control over changes of use from one type of employment to another, and therefore less influence on the local economy. In particular the introduction of the B1 Use Class has limited control over changes from industrial uses in a building to office use.

CHALLENGES AND TRENDS

Employment Trends

- 2.8 Projections of employment produced by LPAC present a picture of overall employment growth for London up to 2001, two thirds of this taking place in three boroughs: Tower Hamlets, the City of London and the City of Westminster.
- 2.9 Service sector employment which provides the majority of job opportunities in Tower Hamlets is projected to grow, particularly jobs in banking, finance, the professions, leisure and tourism, and in shops. Development in Docklands, and in particular the Isle of Dogs, will account for much of this growth.
- 2.10 The total number of jobs available in manufacturing as a whole is likely to continue to decline, particularly those for the unskilled and semi-skilled. However, employment growth is likely to continue in those manufacturing industries for which London remains a competitive location or which support the service industries such as the cultural industries, print industry or office suppliers, and modern floorspace will be needed to meet this growth.

Environmental Concerns

- 2.11 Environmental concerns are set to play an increasing role in business decisions. Businesses now face legal requirements covering the technologies they use and the disposal of waste. Other environmental concerns such as energy efficiency, pollution control and conservation will create new demands on businesses and land uses.

International Competition

- 2.12 The establishment of the Single European Market (removing trade barriers and

extending the free movement of labour), the disciplines imposed by the European Exchange Rate Mechanism and competition from the developing world are likely to lead to the restructuring of organisations, a move towards higher value-added products and services, and new skill demands. This will affect both industrial and commercial businesses.

Technology

- 2.13 The growth and spread of information and communications technology is set to continue throughout the 1990s, giving rise to the reorganisation of work and affecting overall employment levels and skill demands.
- 2.14 These new demands and changes to existing employment practices bring with them changes to jobs. The trends established during the 1980s are likely to continue into the 1990s. These are for greater employment flexibility in working hours, allocation of staff tasks, location of work; types of employment contract, and a requirement for an increased quality and breadth of skills held by employees.

Labour Force

- 2.15 The precise level of economic and employment growth in both London and Tower Hamlets will depend largely upon the retention of their economic competitiveness, which is closely linked to the labour force. Three factors are important here:
- * age of the population;
 - * economic activity rates;
 - * skill levels and qualifications.

Working Age Population

- 2.16 The population of working age rose by 14% (from 95,500) between 1981-1991 and is projected to increase by a further 16% by the year 2001 to 127,000. Structural changes in the London labour force indicate a fall in the number of young people (16-19 year olds) entering the labour force. By contrast projections for Tower Hamlets indicate growth amongst this age group, particularly amongst black and ethnic minorities.

Economic Activity Rates

- 2.17 The economically active population is forecast to rise from 77,900 in 1989 to 86,100 in 2001. Men's economic activity rates are expected to remain little changed with increases in women's activity rates accounting for most of the increase in the labour force in the 1990s, especially those in the 25-44 age group entering or returning to the labour market. Women's activity rates have traditionally been lower in Tower Hamlets than the London average, this is forecast to continue unless specific initiatives are taken to encourage their participation.

Unemployed People

- 2.18 Throughout the 1980s Tower Hamlets has had one of the highest rates of unemployment in London, despite the expansion of employment opportunities in the Borough. Unemployment rates are not evenly spread either geographically or amongst the population. Unemployment is particularly high in the wards adjoining the City Fringe and in Poplar and amongst ethnic minorities, unskilled or semi-skilled manual workers, people with disabilities and older workers (40-50 year olds).

Skill Levels

- 2.19 A high proportion of Tower Hamlets residents are skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers. In spite of a relatively good performance of some manufacturing sectors, a large proportion of the workforce remains in traditional employment fields which are now in decline. The mismatch between the skills held by local residents and those needed for the jobs available, has led to difficulties for local people in competing with inward commuting professionals.

CONCLUSION

- 2.20 Given the low rate of growth in the size of the Borough's workforce relative to the labour demand and the skill levels of those available for work, employers will face continued recruitment problems unless specific measures are taken to overcome the barriers

to employment faced by local residents. The need to link the prospects for the local economy and growth sectors to training programmes to develop a skilled labour force will be the priority for both the Borough and employees into the 1990s.

3. STRATEGIC POLICIES

ST13 TO FACILITATE THE EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY BY ENCOURAGING A WIDE RANGE OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AT SUITABLE LOCATIONS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF A SKILLED LOCAL LABOUR FORCE.

ST14 TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER MEASURES WHICH PROMOTE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE AND THE LONDON JOB MARKET.

ST15 TO PROMOTE AND MAINTAIN HIGH QUALITY WORK ENVIRONMENTS IN ORDER TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT AND MAINTAIN THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

ST16 TO SEEK TO ENSURE THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS ACCOMPANIED BY THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT.

ST17 TO SEEK TO ENSURE THAT LAND USE AND TRANSPORT POLICIES AND INVESTMENT ARE CO-ORDINATED.

JUSTIFICATION

- 3.1 Government **Guidance** requires that London Boroughs foster economic growth and regeneration through policies which accommodate changing demands for all types of economic activity. It recommends that Boroughs should make every effort to accommodate development associated with the growth of the financial sector, within their broader planning objectives, and reflect the changing needs of industry and the current and future demand for such development.

- 3.2 LPAC's **Advice** calls for the promotion of and support for London's international and

national roles and the maintenance of the diversity and robustness of the London economy. The main components of its economic development strategy include: the expansion of large scale business uses in a core zone of Central London (which includes the City Fringe in Tower Hamlets) and West Docklands (the Isle of Dogs centred on Canary Wharf); encouraging manufacturing firms to modernise, expand and relocate by providing good quality accessible sites; and sustaining the starting up and development of smaller scale businesses.

- 3.3 SERPLAN calls upon London Boroughs to make provision for development involving employment growth where it can be welcomed and sustained.
- 3.4 Government Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG12 (Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance) requires local planning authorities to consider the relationship of planning policies and proposals to the social needs and problems of their areas. High unemployment linked in part to a skills gap has been identified in Tower Hamlets as a key problem, and Guidance requires that London Boroughs take account of such skills mismatches in the development of their policies for land use and development.
- 3.5 LPAC's **Advice** has as one of its objectives the need to ensure that the benefits of economic prosperity are shared by all Londoners, particularly those with difficulties gaining access to jobs.
- 3.6 SERPLAN recognises that the biggest single opportunity in the South East is that presented by the under-used labour resources to be found in the inner parts of the larger cities, especially London and that training is a critical element of economic strategies.

Work Environment

- 3.7 The Government in the Environment White Paper, "This Common Inheritance: Britain's Environment Strategy" (Sept 1990) recognises that a good environment and a strong economy are dependent upon each other and that:

"Increasingly firms place a premium on a good local environment and well designed accommodation when they come to make their investment and relocation decisions."

- 3.8 The Government also recognises that well designed commercial and industrial developments can help to increase job satisfaction and the value of property. It sponsors design awards to achieve this, such as the Art for Architecture award and through the Arts Council: the Percent for Art scheme (see Chapter 2: The Environment).
- 3.9 Government **Guidance** acknowledges that "in many areas a mix of residential, business and other uses contribute to the character, vitality and diversity of local communities."
- 3.10 LPAC's **Advice** regards mixed use development as essential to provide vitality and variety in Central London and Policy E22 advises that all major business development schemes should be mixed use.
- 3.11 LPAC's **Advice** sees as one of the objectives for London Boroughs the need to: "promote as a pre-requisite to economic growth and regeneration, a higher quality urban environment in and around the older industrial and commercial areas throughout London."
- 3.12 SERPLAN advises that London Boroughs maintain and enhance the quality of the physical and business environments, and the range of arts, cultural, entertainment and tourist attractions in London."

Environmental Quality

- 3.13 Government **Guidance** requires that London Boroughs give a high priority to the environment. London Boroughs are required to: "foster economic growth and development while taking careful account of the impact on the environment and on transport.
- 3.14 SERPLAN advises that London Boroughs: "have regard to the environmental costs and benefits in considering the location, and planning, of development."

Transport

- 3.15 The aim of the Government as expressed in PPG12 is that new development be guided to locations which reduce the need for car journeys and the distance driven; or which permit the use of more energy efficient public transport - without encouraging more or longer journeys - as an alternative to the private car.
- 3.16 Government **Guidance** requires that London Boroughs consider the impact of development proposals upon the transport network. It acknowledges that rail and underground are the main means of radial movement into Central London, and that the underground, buses, taxis and foot are the main means of travelling in the inner and central areas.
- 3.17 LPAC's **Advice** contains under its strategy for transportation in London, the objective of "co-ordination of housing, employment, shopping and other land use development decisions with the development of (its) transport strategy."
- 3.18 SERPLAN advises London Boroughs: to plan development so as to reduce the need for travel."

4. THE DETAILED POLICIES

PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

- EMP1 EMPLOYMENT GROWTH WILL BE ENCOURAGED THROUGH THE RE-USE OF VACANT LAND AND DERELICT BUILDINGS; BY THE RE-DEVELOPMENT AND UPGRADING OF SITES ALREADY IN EMPLOYMENT USES; AND THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT USES OF THOSE SITES SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AND LISTED IN THE SCHEDULES.**
- 4.1 In developing the local economy of Tower Hamlets the fullest possible use will be made of the opportunities for redevelopment and reuse of land in the Borough. The Council will

encourage, for example the reuse of land becoming surplus to the requirements public utilities in accordance with Strategic Policy ST52.

EMP2 ON SITES CURRENTLY, OR LAST USED, FOR EMPLOYMENT GENERATING USES, THE COUNCIL WILL OPPOSE DEVELOPMENT RESULTING IN A LOSS OF THOSE USES EXCEPT:

- 1. WHERE THE LOSS IS MADE GOOD BY REPLACEMENT WITH GOOD QUALITY BUILDINGS LIKELY TO GENERATE A REASONABLE DENSITY OF JOBS ON SUITABLY SITUATED LAND IN TOWER HAMLETS NOT ALREADY PROPOSED FOR EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE SCHEDULES;**
- 2. WHERE THE LOSS IS JUSTIFIED BY A PROPOSAL SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP;**
- 3. TO ELIMINATE SUCH USES FROM BUILDINGS WHICH ARE INCAPABLE OF MEETING OR BEING ADAPTED TO MEET ALL STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE AND FIRE AUTHORITY OR WHICH ARE INCAPABLE OF BEING PROVIDED WITH ACCESS FOR GOODS OR PEOPLE;**
- 4. TO ELIMINATE SUCH USES ON SITES WHERE SUCH USES (INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF THEIR TRAFFIC GENERATION AND MEANS OF ACCESS) CANNOT BE MADE COMPATIBLE WITH ADJOINING RESIDENTIAL USES. (NB BUSINESS CLASS USES ARE BY DEFINITION ACCEPTABLE IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS);**
- 5. IN THE CASE OF LISTED OR LOCALLY LISTED BUILDINGS WHERE THE EXISTING USE HARMS THE FABRIC OF THE BUILDING; OR**
- 6. WHERE THE LOSS IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING ANCILLARY EMPLOYEE FACILITIES;**
- 7. WHERE THE LOSS IS TO RESTORE THE BUILDING TO A PREVIOUS**

RESIDENTIAL USE;

- 8. WHERE NON B CLASS DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ARE LIKELY TO GENERATE EMPLOYMENT, SUCH USES BEING CONSIDERED AGAINST THE GAINS AFFORDED BY THE INDIVIDUAL SCHEME PARTICULARLY THOSE OFFERED TO THE LOCAL UNEMPLOYED AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL, OR**
- 9. WHERE THE SITE OR BUILDING REMAINS VACANT AFTER HAVING BEEN ACTIVELY MARKETED FOR A REASONABLE LENGTH OF TIME AT A VALUE PREVAILING IN THE AREA FOR EMPLOYMENT-GENERATING LAND USES.**

4.2 Depending upon the site, its locality and planning history, details of the active marketing carried out should be provided for up to four years or more in relation to any planning application being made or proposed. For guidance, the Council will expect developers wishing to utilise the new Criterion 9 of EMP2 to provide the following details of use and active marketing carried out:

- 1 The level of existing occupancy of the building - including the nature and type of activity carried out by existing tenants, the terms and conditions of their leases and the time left until end of tenure.
- 2 The history of occupation of the building over the last four or more years.
- 3 Details of the 'Marketing Campaign' carried out over the last four years - including method, time and duration.
- 4 Information in respect of 'interest' shown as a result of the marketing campaign, and any reasons given for not taking up space.
- 5 The standard of the accommodation offered - including floor space, services, fittings and associated facilities.
- 6 Details of rental levels of existing tenants

and possible changes over the last four years and the rent sought for future lettings.

- 7 A copy of the standard lease and details of lease heads of terms offered to prospective tenants.

EMP3 IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OR RE-DEVELOPMENT OF OUTMODED OR SURPLUS OFFICE FLOORSPACE TO NON B CLASS USES, THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE THE FOLLOWING MATTERS INTO ACCOUNT:

- 1 THE LENGTH OF TIME THAT SURPLUS OFFICE FLOORSPACE HAS BEEN VACANT. THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT THE APPLICANT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE SURPLUS OFFICE FLOORSPACE HAS BEEN ACTIVELY MARKETED AT VALUES PREVAILING IN THE AREA FOR INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL RE-USE OR REDEVELOPMENT;**
- 2 THE LEVEL OF VACANT OFFICE FLOORSPACE AND THE LEVEL OF UNIMPLEMENTED PLANNING PERMISSIONS FOR OFFICES IN THE SURROUNDING AREA;**
- 3 WHETHER THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD INVOLVE THE LOSS OF PREMISES BUILT TO A STANDARD WHICH PROVIDES ADEQUATE LOADING AND SERVICING FACILITIES FOR THE FULL RANGE OF B1 USES; AND**
- 4 WHETHER THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OTHER POLICIES AND PROPOSALS OF THIS PLAN, AND IN THE CASE OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, WHETHER THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY IS ADEQUATELY PROVIDED WITH SERVICES NEEDED BY RESIDENTS, INCLUDING OPEN SPACE, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES.**

4.3 With regard to EMP3.4, where adequate services are not provided in the immediate vicinity of such residential development the Council will consider the use of planning obligations. The intention of this is to ensure an overall acceptable level of development.

EMP4 PROPOSALS FOR THE EXPANSION OF EXISTING FIRMS, EITHER ON THEIR PRESENT SITE OR ELSEWHERE IN THE BOROUGH, WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THIS DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH OTHER POLICIES OR PROPOSALS IN THIS PLAN, PROVIDED THAT:

- 1. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT GIVE RISE TO UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF TRAFFIC, NOISE OR POLLUTION; AND**
- 2. THE LOCAL ROAD NETWORK CAN ACCOMMODATE THE ADDITIONAL ROAD TRAFFIC LIKELY TO BE GENERATED BY THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

EMP5 DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED IN THE VICINITY OF AN EXISTING INDUSTRIAL USE WHERE IT IS FELT TO BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THAT USE AND MAY GIVE RISE TO PRESSURE TO CURTAIL THE INDUSTRIAL USE.

4.4 Existing road and rail links to the City in the west and Newham in the east already provide good connections with the South East's major road network. The major new road and rail infrastructure proposed or under construction within or adjacent to the Borough, will considerably enhance the quality of these links and hence the attractiveness of Tower Hamlets as a location for industry and commerce. To accommodate the economic changes now affecting the Borough and to take advantage of these attractions, requires the identification of suitable sites for the expansion of industry and commerce.

4.5 In light of the persistence of high unemployment in the Borough, the Council aims to diversify the employment base of the Borough and to retain the existing

employment opportunities. For this reason the Council proposes that its broad framework for employment will continue to protect floorspace and land suitable for employment generating uses and implement policies which support the continuation and expansion of local firms.

4.6 It is recognised that employment patterns and business activities are in a constant process of evolution and adjustment. Planning policies need to be flexible in order to adapt to economic change. In support of the objectives of achieving sustainable development, the reuse and redevelopment of existing buildings and sites will be encouraged in order to provide for the modern needs of industry and commerce.

4.7 Changes to the nature of employment also affect the relationship between floorspace and workers. Often it is possible to increase the density of employment without necessarily requiring more space, through the promotion of high value-added employment uses for example. There may be cases where a development accords with Policy EMP2 and takes account of Planning Standard No.1 Plot Ratio. If these schemes can be designed in such a way that a reasonable density of jobs is provided, without requiring the whole of a former employment site, consideration may be given to the development of the rest of the site for alternative uses, such as residential accommodation. In such cases the proposals should comply with the other policies of this Plan.

4.8 As the economy of the Borough has evolved, the service sector has come to play a growing role in providing employment opportunities in the Borough. It is recognised that other uses than those falling within the broad Class B of the 1987 Use Classes Order can make a significant contribution to employment. For example, the major employers in the Borough include the Higher Education Institutions such as Queen Mary and Westfield College and the Guildhall University, and providers of health care, such as the Royal London Hospital Trust. When considering applications for such development account will be taken

of the likely employment benefits arising from the development.

- 4.9 In the last decade both London and Tower Hamlets have seen significant investment in modern office accommodation. Whilst much modern high quality stock is now available (particularly in the Isle of Dogs), there is also a legacy of poorer quality, outmoded existing space. Thus, the Council will promote improvements to the quality of the existing stock through redevelopment or refurbishment, rather than increases to the quantity of office accommodation.
- 4.10 Office premises that are built for speculative purposes and which remain unlet or vacant pending decisions about their future use, contribute little to expanding the employment opportunities of local residents, or to developing the attraction of the Borough as a place to live, work or visit. The Council wishes to see such buildings brought into productive use and will welcome innovative proposals for alternative uses where this would not undermine the other planning objectives of this Plan, particularly those policies aimed at maintaining and further developing a balance of employment opportunities in Tower Hamlets.
- 4.11 Continuing changes in methods of production by some industries, such as the need for 24 hour working or the use of container lorries, can be incompatible with sensitive uses such as housing, schools or hospitals. However, such industries have a valuable role to play in both the local and metropolitan economy. The Council recognises the need to retain existing employment uses wherever feasible. Consequently the Council, in assessing planning applications within the vicinity of an existing industrial occupier, will consider whether the particular proposal is likely to be incompatible with the existing industrial activities. The juxtaposition of incompatible uses can cause problems for existing occupiers; this may be the case particularly where residential accommodation is proposed.

ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

- 4.12 The role of Building Regulations in securing access for people with disabilities is in Part M of 1991 Building Regulations. This document extends the current requirements of access of disabled people to domestic buildings by ensuring that guidance extends to non-domestic buildings. Access for disabled people to all buildings should be both safe and convenient. The provision for access and facilities in new and altered buildings is for the benefit of those who are visitors as well as for those who use it as their place of work. In addition to this, such benefits for people with disabilities will also benefit those with pushchairs, prams etc.

EMP6 WHEN CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT USES, ACCOUNT WILL BE TAKEN OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROPOSED USE WILL MEET THE NEEDS OF LOCAL PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THE UNEMPLOYED.

- 4.13 Tower Hamlets has seen a rapid increase in employment since the early 1980's. Despite this growth, unemployment levels in the Borough have remained persistently above the Greater and Inner London averages. One reason for this is the gap between the skills held by the unemployed and those needed for jobs. The occupational structure of Tower Hamlets' residents is heavily biased towards lower income skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual work, with a high proportion working in manufacturing industries. In contrast, forecasts of employment change in London and Tower Hamlets indicate that labour demand will be greatest in managerial, professional, technical and clerical occupations. If local people are to gain access to existing and future employment opportunities in the Borough they will need to develop and refine their skills.
- 4.14 Younger people of working age generally demonstrate a greater skill match to those employer skill requirements coming on stream, but this flexibility needs to be extended to all age groups within the local

- communities. Demographic trends suggest that employers will increasingly have to look for staff among groups such as women who have taken time out of paid employment, the unemployed, the middle aged and ethnic minorities. Many of these individuals may need some form of training. Equally, employment trends indicate that existing employees will need training to ensure that their knowledge and skills do not become obsolete.
- 4.15 There are strong environmental reasons why the skills of local people need to be developed. Employers recruiting from the periphery of London bring additional costs to the environment from people commuting into the Borough leading to air and noise pollution.
- 4.16 Given the skills profile of the Borough, the Council wishes to encourage the provision and support for training schemes and facilities aimed at widening access to jobs, particularly for those who make up a disproportionate number of the unemployed (eg ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and the unskilled). Planning obligations concerning such facilities may be sought where the need for them arises from employment-generating developments.
- 4.17 Learning throughout working life is becoming increasingly necessary because of the pace of change and the demand for an increasingly skilled and flexible workforce. A significant amount and variety of training is made available in the Borough through the education services and the private and voluntary sector.
- 4.18 Many of Tower Hamlets' residents have a particular combination of training needs over and above those faced by residents in other parts of London. Skills' surveys conducted in the Borough and discussions with training providers, have established that there are a number of barriers which prevent local residents from taking advantage of the training opportunities available in the Borough. These include low levels of English Language fluency, basic education skills and, in the case of women in particular, childcare responsibilities.
- 4.19 A substantial proportion of Borough residents have a low level of 'training readiness' in that local residents' skill levels often fall below those needed for most vocational courses provided in the Borough. Training providers have indicated that where training is offered in Tower Hamlets, very often a basic skills package needs to be either integrated into the training to allow all trainees to benefit, or provided as a stand alone course prior to other training.
- 4.20 The Council, working in partnership, has a variety of innovative programmes in place to tackle the skill and training needs of the local population. The Council works with the private sector through initiatives such as the Education Business Partnership and the East London Compact, to enable school leavers to prepare for the workplace. The Council has facilitated the development of Local Access Centres and Estate Based Training, bringing training opportunities to people on their doorstep. The Council is also keen to develop customised training opportunities, together with local employment contracts in partnership with local businesses. These should be geared to the particular training needs of the participating businesses in order to ensure that local people benefit from the changes taking place in the local economy.
- 4.21 The Council's strategy (prepared jointly with LETEC) aims to encourage and support the utilisation of existing training facilities. Where there is a known occupier of the development, the Council will seek to negotiate (through the use of planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act), funding to develop either customised training packages or funding for local training initiatives, and will seek support for local employment contracts. Where there is no known occupier for a development, the Council will seek, again through the use of negotiated agreements, funding for existing training initiatives in the Borough, particularly those which aim to raise the 'training readiness of local residents.'
- 4.22 The encouragement of workplace nurseries and after-school facilities is an essential part

of the Council's equal opportunities policy to ensure that parents and guardians have an equal chance to compete for and benefit from the employment opportunities existing and forecast for the Borough. Demographic trends suggest that employers will face growing recruitment difficulties. In order to retain and recruit skilled and experienced staff and compete successfully with other firms, employers will need to provide working facilities which are compatible with childcare responsibilities. For employers, the provision of such facilities either individually or in conjunction with others will become increasingly important.

- 4.23 The Council recognises that there is an optimum practical level for an employer to provide a workplace nursery. As a guideline, the development for employment uses generating 500 or more employees (10,000 sq. m. of floor space in the case of B1 uses, 20,000 sq. m. for other uses) are likely to need nursery facilities on site. The maximum size for any one facility should be 50 places and the minimum 20. In schemes where the provision of a purpose built facility is not feasible, the Council will seek participation in jointly funded schemes or contributions towards existing schemes.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

- EMP7 PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT OR CHANGE OF USE FOR USES WHICH PROVIDE A SERVICE TO EMPLOYEES AND/OR ENHANCE THE WORK ENVIRONMENT WILL BE ENCOURAGED WHERE THIS DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH OTHER POLICIES OR PROPOSALS IN THIS PLAN.**

- 4.24 In many of the older established industrial areas of the Borough, such as parts of the Lee Valley, the working environment is often unappealing and lacking in complementary amenities such as shops, cafes, childcare facilities, recreational facilities, open space or sitting out areas for local employees. The Council will encourage the provision of such

facilities where their provision is compatible with its other employment objectives and will not prejudice other policies in this Plan, in particular the policies in Chapter 7 'Shopping'.

SMALL BUSINESSES

- EMP8 SUBJECT TO THE OTHER POLICIES AND PROPOSALS OF THIS PLAN, THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW OR EXPANDING BUSINESSES WILL BE ENCOURAGED BY:**

1. ENCOURAGING WHERE APPROPRIATE THE PROVISION OF A RANGE OF UNIT SIZES, INCLUDING SMALL UNITS, WITHIN NEW INDUSTRIAL, WAREHOUSE OR BUSINESS SCHEMES (B1, B2, B8);
2. THE SUBDIVISION OF LARGER PREMISES WHERE THEY ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED IN THEIR PRESENT FORM;
3. ENCOURAGING AND IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE MANAGED WORKSPACE;
4. GIVING FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION TO THE TEMPORARY USE OF VACANT BUILDINGS BY SMALL BUSINESSES; AND
5. LOOKING FAVOURABLY, WHERE PERMISSION IS REQUIRED, ON APPLICATIONS FOR HOMEWORKING AND CRAFT WORKSHOP OR LIVE/WORK SCHEMES WITHIN NEW HOUSING SCHEMES PROVIDED THERE IS NO LOSS OF AMENITY TO NEARBY RESIDENTS THROUGH TRAFFIC GENERATION, SERVICING OR THE PROCESS INVOLVED.

- 4.25 Small firms make a substantial and growing contribution to local employment. Studies have shown small firms playing a disproportionately large role in the creation of new jobs. The economy of Tower Hamlets is typified by small businesses, traditionally in sectors such as clothing but increasingly in areas such as the cultural industries (art, crafts, entertainment and media related

industries). The demand for small premises remains high, particularly low cost workshop accommodation. The supply however has been reduced through redevelopment. The Council is particularly concerned that rising land values and rents resulting from the pressure for commercial development may prevent new small enterprise thriving due to lack of suitable and affordable premises.

- 4.26 A newly established firm often requires flexible tenancy agreements over short periods of time, and is often unable to afford to fit out premises. The Council will, therefore, encourage the provision of managed workspaces offering small units on flexible occupancy terms with shared business services as a means of helping new firms to become established. As employment patterns and activities change then so do the premises requirements of individual firms. The demand immediately following the 'big bang' in the City for offices with large floor spaces is unlikely to be repeated during the lifetime of this Plan. In line with Policy DEV2 and ST3 (which seek to incorporate the principle of sustainable development, including the reuse of existing buildings and materials, into the development process), the Council will encourage the construction of buildings which are flexible, and structures which are capable of easy adaptation, thus making them attractive to a wide range of occupiers in order to maximise future reletting potential and preserve employment opportunities in Tower Hamlets.

Homeworking

- 4.27 Working from home can be an important means of earning a living for some people. Traditionally homeworking has been an established feature of the clothing industry in the Borough although changes to working practices have led to its decline. Advances in telecommunications have made it possible for functions such as word processing or computer related activities to be carried out from the home. Many small businesses or the self-employed start working from home in the initial stages of business development. The Council's planning policies are designed

to assist the job opportunities of local residents where the scale of the activity will not give rise to disturbance to neighbours caused by noise nuisance or by the delivery of goods. In the case of homeworking the Council will need to be satisfied that the scale of activity is such that it does not constitute a material change of use of a substantial part of a dwelling, which would be contrary to policy HSG14 which presumes against the loss of housing.

BUSINESS USE

EMP9 THE CENTRAL AREA ZONES INDICATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP ARE DESIGNATED AS AREAS OF BUSINESS GROWTH. FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION WILL NORMALLY BE GIVEN, ON INDIVIDUAL SITES, TO DEVELOPMENT FOR AND CHANGES OF USE TO, BUSINESS USES (USE CLASS B1) PROVIDED THAT: THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH OTHER POLICIES OR PROPOSALS IN THIS PLAN. THE INCORPORATION OF PUBLIC ART AND CRAFTWORK INTO THE DEVELOPMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY DEV 18, WILL BE ENCOURAGED.

EMP10 OUTSIDE OF THE CENTRAL AREA ZONES, DEVELOPMENT FOR (INCLUDING CHANGE OF USE TO), BUSINESS USES WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT COMPLIES WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. ENCOURAGEMENT IS GIVEN TO THE RETENTION OF PREMISES WHICH PROVIDE ADEQUATE LOADING AND SERVICING FACILITIES FOR THE FULL RANGE OF B1 USES.**
- 2. THE DEVELOPMENT COMPLIES WITH POLICIES EMP11 AND EMP12 IN THE CASE OF DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT AREAS;**
- 3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT GIVE RISE TO UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF TRAFFIC;**
- 4. IN THE CASE OF EMPLOYMENT INTENSIVE USES, THE DEVELOPMENT**

IS WELL SERVED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT;

5. THE LOCAL ROAD NETWORK CAN ACCOMMODATE THE ADDITIONAL ROAD TRAFFIC LIKELY TO BE GENERATED BY THE SERVICING OF THE DEVELOPMENT; AND
6. THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE OTHER POLICIES AND PROPOSALS OF THIS PLAN.

APPLICATIONS FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION MUST SHOW DETAILS OF PARKING, SERVICING AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE STORAGE AND COLLECTION OF REFUSE.

Office Development

- 4.28 Tower Hamlets has become an increasingly attractive location for office development especially to the west of the Borough adjoining the City and in Docklands. The Council is concerned that many of the jobs arising from these developments have been transfers from the rest of London or the South East and have not been open to local residents. Accordingly the Council will seek to maximise the employment opportunities arising from office development for Tower Hamlets' residents. Offices can provide a large number of jobs on a site in comparison with most other land uses. While not all of these jobs will be immediately open to the older, particularly male, unemployed who have tended to look towards industry for employment, offices do offer job and career opportunities particularly for school leavers, women and people with disabilities.
- 4.29 Policy EMP9 is designed to respond to the continued attraction of the Borough for office development accommodating the business and financial sector, in recognition of their importance to both the London and National economies. However LPAC in its Central London Capacity Study indicated substantial excess of office supply over demand in London. Thus it is the Council's intention to encourage the qualitative improvement of its existing office accommodation rather than a

further substantial net increase in stock.

- 4.30 Companies in Tower Hamlets operating in the business and financial sectors tend to be large enterprises, often company headquarters or part of major national or multinational companies employing substantial numbers of staff. Because of the scale and intensity of such office development, the number of extra people and vehicles attracted to an area can cause undue congestion and annoyance in surrounding streets and may overload local services of all kinds. Therefore, while encouraging the growth and regeneration of office space in the Borough the Council believes that this growth will be frustrated. Completed developments will stand empty, and new permissions will remain unimplemented, unless the demand for office development is planned and the potential brakes on economic growth, such as labour shortages, traffic congestion and lack of support services, are overcome.

Access

- 4.31 The Council's policy seeks to direct office development away from areas which it considers disadvantageous in terms of traffic and environmental grounds or where it might endanger more suitable land uses.
- 4.32 Traffic congestion can impair economic prosperity and development, and detracts from the quality of life. Tower Hamlets already suffers from severe traffic congestion due to its location as an inner London borough on two very congested main traffic routes into London. The Council will ensure that new development does not add to this problem, by guiding development that attracts trips (for example, office employment) to public transport focal points. The Council considers that the public transport interchanges located within the Central Area Zones defined on the Proposals Map, are the only places where the volume and variety of transport services are sufficient to outweigh the attractiveness of car journeys. Accessibility to other parts of the Borough is not considered to be sufficiently attractive to office workers to prevent large

scale car commuting and the consequent congestion and parking problems.

Environmental Quality

- 4.33 Increasingly, high quality developments are defined not only in terms of the space available and building services, but also by the attractiveness of their surroundings and staff related factors such as access to services and amenities. Developers and business people are increasingly regarding the provision of such facilities as valuable assets when looking at competing potential locations for investment.
- 4.34 Large areas of office development can lead to a loss of population, character and local services. This is detrimental to local residents and workers, and can result in the area becoming lifeless and unoccupied in the evenings and at weekends. The Council will normally require that large office schemes be part of a mixed use scheme in accordance with Policy CAZ3 to ensure that the existing vitality and variety of Tower Hamlets is retained. The Council will enter into planning obligation agreements to secure an appropriate balance of uses where necessary.

Other Business Uses

- 4.35 Government Guidance requires London Boroughs to make reasonable provision for business development in their areas. The Council believes that sufficient provision has been made for the expansion of the financial and business sector in those areas covered by policy EMP9, essentially areas to the west of the Borough and in Docklands.
- 4.36 The Council will take advantage of the flexibility introduced by the 1987 Use Classes Order and normally will permit floorspace for business uses. However, the Council is concerned to ensure that the established industrial centres of the Borough, including those areas where, historically, the Council has promoted a policy of Industrial Improvement through the declaration of Industrial Improvement Areas under the 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act are not placed under undue pressure for conversion to office uses.

The Council will seek to retain the B1 buildings and sites outside the main industrial area, which are best suited for industrial uses, so as to complement the many buildings and sites in the Borough identified for office uses and thus to provide for growth in those uses which will broaden the economic base of the Borough.

- 4.37 Taken together these policies provide a sound basis for controlled business use expansion in the Borough. They allow it to occur where it is not at the expense of other important activities and where it will not add to congestion. At the same time the Policies will ensure that within the Borough a range of accommodation is maintained and provided which is capable of delivering a balance of employment opportunities for local residents.

INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT AREAS

EMP11 THE FOLLOWING AREAS, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, ARE DESIGNATED AS INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT AREAS;

- 1 LIMEHOUSE CUT,**
- 2 LOWER LEE VALLEY, AND**
- 3 LEAMOUTH**

THE COUNCIL WILL NORMALLY PERMIT DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE FOR THE RETENTION, EXPANSION AND GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT PROVIDED BY GENERAL INDUSTRIAL AND WAREHOUSING USES (B2 AND B8) PROVIDED THAT:

- 1. THE DEVELOPMENT IS DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THESE USES (PARTICULARLY LOADING BAYS, GOODS LIFTS, OPERATIONAL PARKING AREAS, DOOR/CORRIDOR WIDTHS AND FLOOR TO CEILING HEIGHTS);**
- 2. THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE OTHER POLICIES OR PROPOSALS OF THIS PLAN;**
- 3. THE USE WILL NOT CAUSE SERIOUS NUISANCE BY WAY OF TRAFFIC GENERATION, NOISE, VIBRATION OR**

POLLUTION (SEE ALSO PLANNING STANDARD ON NOISE) TO ADJOINING USES OR THE SURROUNDING AREA; AND

- 4. IN INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT AREAS THE COUNCIL WILL NORMALLY RESIST NEW ENVIRONMENTALLY INTRUSIVE USES OR USES HAVING A LOW EMPLOYMENT DENSITY SUCH AS WASTE TRANSFER STATIONS, OPEN STORAGE YARDS, SCRAP YARDS AND HAULAGE DEPOTS. SUCH USES MAY BE CONSIDERED WHERE THE SITE IS UNDERUSED AND THERE IS NO REASONABLE PROSPECT OF OTHER USES BEING VIABLE AND WHERE DETRIMENT TO NOISE AND AMENITY IS MINIMISED.**

EMP12 WITHIN THE INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT AREAS AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, DEVELOPMENT FOR BUSINESS USE (B1) WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE PROPOSAL:

- 1. IS DESIGNED PRINCIPALLY TO BE SUITABLE FOR INDUSTRIAL USES, OR FORMS PART OF A MIXED USE SCHEME FOR INDUSTRIAL USES; AND**
- 2. DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH PROPOSALS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AND LISTED IN SCHEDULES.**

EMP13 WITHIN THE INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT AREAS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED ONLY WHERE THE LOSS OF INDUSTRIAL LAND IS JUSTIFIED, SUBJECT TO THE OTHER POLICIES IN THE PLAN.

- 4.38 The Council seeks to retain existing industrial firms and attract new ones to the Borough. Central to this aim, is the provision of good quality accommodation, especially for medium and larger firms which may otherwise leave the Borough. Of equal importance is that there should be a suitably qualified workforce available, and the Council supports the training of the Borough's population to this end. Much of the industrial

building stock in the Borough, because of its age, is unsuitable for modern industrial processes in terms of adapting to modern industrial production techniques or to service premises. In instances where premises are no longer suitable for contemporary industrial uses the Council will encourage their modernisation and work to maintain a range of accommodation which allows for the expansion and relocation of industrial firms.

- 4.39 The Council believes that these objectives can best be achieved by defining areas of established industrial land and buildings which in terms of physical dimensions, access, servicing and parking are suitable for industrial uses. Suitable sites are an increasingly scarce but important resource, thus their loss to other uses which because of their nature are able to locate more freely, will be resisted. By indicating areas where the retention and growth in industrial floorspace is to be a priority, the Council intends to restore business confidence, minimise speculation on the future use of industrial premises, stimulate further investment by firms in their premises and generate interest in the marketing of vacant sites for industrial uses. Within these areas uses falling within Class B1 may be permitted, however, such development will be expected to contain a significant amount of floorspace designed for industrial uses (floor loading, ceiling height, operational parking and loading etc) in order that the objectives of the area declaration are not prejudiced. Proposals for main use or headquarter-type office schemes will therefore be resisted; sufficient provision has been made for such uses under policy EMP 9.

- 4.40 While giving priority to industrial and warehousing uses within the Industrial Employment Areas other uses may be compatible. Proposals which meet the intention of Policy EMP7 will normally be favourably considered.

- 4.41 Some industries, because of the processes involved or traffic generated are incompatible with residential areas, therefore residential developments are likely to be only exceptionally appropriate within the Industrial

Employment Areas. The inclusion of such uses would reduce the available floorspace for industrial expansion and would be incompatible with the types of industrial processes which the area designation seeks to attract. If in exceptional circumstances residential development is considered appropriate within the Industrial Employment Area, the housing policies and other policies in this Plan will apply accordingly.

- 4.42 In Industrial Employment Areas appropriate conditions may be imposed or planning obligations entered into by agreement in order to maintain the integrity of this policy.

WHOLESALE, WAREHOUSES & REPOSITORIES

EMP14 PROPOSALS FOR WAREHOUSES (USE CLASS B8) WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED EXCEPT:

- 1. WHERE THIS WOULD LEAD TO THE LOSS OF GOOD QUALITY SITES CURRENTLY OR LAST IN USE FOR BUSINESS (B1) AND INDUSTRIAL (B2) USES, UNLESS IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT THE BUILDING HAS BEEN VACANT FOR A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME AND THE APPLICANT CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT THE SITE HAS BEEN ACTIVELY MARKETED AT VALUES PREVAILING IN THE AREA FOR INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL RE-USE OR REDEVELOPMENT;**
- 2. WHERE THE PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL OR TRAFFIC CONDITIONS; OR**
- 3. WHERE THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD CONFLICT WITH THE OTHER POLICIES OR PROPOSALS OF THIS PLAN.**

- 4.43 Warehousing uses generally employ fewer people than industry or office uses, consequently the Council will resist such developments where it would lead to the loss of floorspace or land suitable for uses capable of generating a higher employment density. However, the Council recognises that a

certain amount of warehousing in the Borough can be justified both because warehousing is often an integral support service to other employment activities, (such as manufacturing and retailing) and because particularly in smaller units, warehousing can employ as many people as do similar sized industrial units. The Council's warehousing policies are intended to allow developments which are likely to offer significant numbers of jobs, provided they do not undermine industrial or business expansion.

ENVIRONMENTALLY INTRUSIVE ACTIVITIES

EMP15 WHERE SITES GIVE RISE TO SEVERE NUISANCE THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY WILL USE ITS LAND USE PLANNING POWERS TO ACHIEVE APPROPRIATE ON-SITE IMPROVEMENTS.

- 4.44 The Council acknowledges the need to consult owners, occupiers and neighbours in relation to sites which give rise to serious nuisance on developments likely to cause pollution. It is desirable that this process includes a wide range of interested parties including the Environmental Health Department.

EMP16 IN CASES WHERE THERE IS NO SCOPE FOR SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCING THE NUISANCE CAUSED BY A PARTICULAR ACTIVITY THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO RELOCATE THE FIRM ON A MORE APPROPRIATE SITE.

EMP17 PLANNING PERMISSION FOR SPECIAL INDUSTRIAL USES (USE CLASSES B3-B7) WILL NOT NORMALLY BE GRANTED EXCEPT ON EXISTING SITES WHERE THE APPLICANT CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT THE PROPOSAL ACHIEVES SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS ON THE SITE AND IN THE SURROUNDING AREA. THE COUNCIL WILL CONSULT AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF THE APPROPRIATE POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY IN DETERMINING APPLICATIONS FOR THESE USES.

- 4.45 Most manufacturing and distributive industries can be accommodated within Tower Hamlets without damaging the local environment in any way. In many cases, commercial activity makes a positive contribution to the appearance and vitality of an area. Some uses, however, consistently give rise to complaints from nearby residents about noise, smell, smoke, on-street car and lorry parking, and many other kinds of nuisance.
- 4.46 Often these problems can be overcome by re-organising a firm on its existing site by improving access arrangements or by providing permanent buildings with adequate sound-proofing. The Council does not wish to force firms to leave the Borough if their problems can be overcome on their existing sites, and its policies reflect this preference.
- 4.47 In some cases, it is inevitable that a use will give rise to nuisance, either because it is unsuited to the site from which it operates, or because of the nature of the process being carried out. These uses, which include scrap yards and rag sorting, often use large sites capable of alternative uses at a higher employment density and causing fewer problems of nuisance. It is this Council's view that any further increase in such uses would be a misuse of valuable urban land.