

SECTION 3

Industry and Employment

3.0. EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1. The Report of Survey has drawn attention to a long history of high unemployment in the Plan Area partially due to limited employment opportunities and a restricted range of activities in addition to the implications of substantial housing growth unmatched by adequate levels of new industrial development.
- 3.1.2. This situation continues despite the positive action of the District Council, in conjunction with the Development Commission, in developing the Ashburton Industrial Estate for industrial purposes. Although the town serves as an important economic and employment centre for the surrounding rural hinterland, some 32% of the town's working population were thought to be travelling to work outside the town in 1971. Escalating fuel costs and diminishing public transport services may deter many residents from finding work outside the town in the future, thus further aggravating unemployment problems.
- 3.1.3. The present economic recession has exacerbated the situation in that firms in the town, particularly the larger companies, have reduced their workforces.
- 3.1.4. On the other hand, Ross-on-Wye has much in its favour in view of its strategic location adjoining the A40 Trunk Road and M50 Motorway which affords good communications with South Wales, the industrial Midlands, the South West and indeed to the London area via the M4. Additionally, the town's setting in the Wye Valley makes it an attractive location for living and working. Providing suitable land can be identified and brought forward for development with the necessary financial resources, Ross-on-Wye has more potential for attracting industrial development than almost any other settlement in Herefordshire.
- 3.1.5. In the short term, there would still seem to be a need for small units and there is also a growing need for appropriately located sites for warehousing, transport firms and other specialised trades. Currently, this latter need cannot be met as there is limited serviced industrial land and the Council are anxious to encourage maximum job creation which the above uses do not always generate.
- 3.1.6. Policy E1 contained in the Written Statement of the proposed new County Structure Plan 'ENCOURAGES ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE MAIN URBAN CENTRES IN THE NORTH-EAST OF THE COUNTY, IN THE URBAN CENTRES AND MARKET TOWNS OF THE CENTRAL COUNTY AREA ...' The market towns in the Central County Area includes Ross-on-Wye. The Sub-Area Policy SA 11.3 states that:-
- "TO ENSURE THAT ABOUT 4 HECTARES OF SERVICED LAND ARE PROVIDED AT ROSS-ON-WYE FOR INDUSTRIAL AND WAREHOUSING USES BETWEEN 1981 AND 1991. THE LOCATION AND AMOUNT OF THIS GROWTH WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE DISTRICT COUNCIL IN LOCAL PLANS HAVING REGARD TO THE ABOVE TOTAL."
- 3.1.7. Whilst the District Council are in agreement with the principles of this Policy, the investigations contained in the Local Plan Report of Survey, suggest that there is a greater need for land for industrial purposes during the Plan period. Therefore, the allocations in the two documents do not altogether agree.

- 3.1.8. On the basis of 15 to 20 workers per acre, the allocation proposed in Policy SA 11.3 is only likely to provide 150 to 200 new jobs.
- 3.1.9. As stated previously, the Council have already made positive efforts in conjunction with the Development Commission to combat the problems of employment. The Report of Survey contains projections which estimates that some 580 new jobs might be required during the Plan period. This projection was based on the need to:-
- a) match the probable population growth arising from the committed and proposed housing development,
 - b) provide additional employment prospects to reduce the need to seek work elsewhere,
 - c) cater for modest employment growth from the surrounding rural hinterland.
- 3.1.10. In addition it has been decided necessary to help reduce the high unemployment levels. With the unemployment rate in excess of 11% in June, 1981 - some 552 persons - it was considered in paragraph 3.5.24 Report of Survey, that jobs ought to be found for some 350-400 of those registered as unemployed.
- 3.1.11. Realising that approximately 35% of all new jobs required will be in manufacturing (paragraph 3.5.21 Report of Survey) then it can be expected that between 300-350 jobs will need to be accommodated on industrial land.

3.2. POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

Policy EMP 1 - "The Local Planning Authority will endeavour to ensure that there is sufficient industrial land to provide for the projected requirement of 300 to 350 new jobs by 1991."

Policy EMP 2 - "The District Council will actively encourage suitable industrial proposals which have prospects of providing at least 15 jobs per acre (about 40 jobs per hectare)."

- 3.2.1. In order to meet the employment target in Policy EMP 1, some 24 acres (9.7 hectares) of industrial land are required assuming an average development density of 15-20 jobs per acre. Deducting the estimated 8.6 acres (3.5 hectares) of industrial land currently available or likely to be available in the near future, some 15 acres (6 hectares) are required. Having carried out a search for potential industrial areas, it was concluded that the only appropriate location for this development was to the north of the existing industrial estate where good access could be afforded to the proposed Ross-on-Wye Relief Road (See Report of Survey paragraph 4.7.7).

Proposal EMP 3 - "ALLOCATE UP TO 15 ACRES (6 HECTARES) FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ON LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE ASHBURTON INDUSTRIAL ESTATE TO MEET THE PROJECTED GROWTH OVER THE PLAN PERIOD."

Proposal EMP 4 - "THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL PREPARE A DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR THE PROPOSED NEW INDUSTRIAL AREA TO THE NORTH OF THE ASHBURTON INDUSTRIAL ESTATE."

- 3.2.2. In view of the local transport firms and other concerns allied to transport who have experienced difficulties in finding suitable sites, there is considered to be a justification for allocating some land specifically to meet their needs. In addition, there have been enquiries from developers in respect of land for warehousing and whilst the District Council do not intend undermining the objective of maximum job creation this need should also be fulfilled.
- 3.2.3. It is not possible to quantify the amount of land for those particular uses but it is thought that an area of about 5 acres (2.02 hectares) might be sufficient but may need to be reviewed in accordance with demand.

Proposal EMP 5 - "AN ADDITIONAL 5 ACRES (2.02 HECTARES) SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR WAREHOUSING AND TRANSPORT FIRMS. THIS DEVELOPMENT SHOULD GENERALLY BE CONTAINED IN THE WESTERN SECTOR OF THE PROPOSED ESTATE."

- 3.2.4. Surface water drainage problems have previously been identified by the District Council in this area and engineering consultants were engaged to advise on possible development. The recommended solution to these problems was to allocate an area for surface water storage during peak flows. Much of this land would also be available as an amenity area of open space when not in use for the storage of surface water.

Proposal EMP 6 - "APPROXIMATELY 5 ACRES (2.02 HECTARES) OF LAND IN THE CENTRE AND LOW LYING PART OF THE PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL AREA WILL BE ALLOCATED FOR SURFACE WATER STORAGE/OPEN SPACE."

- 3.2.5. Generally, new industrial development will be directed to existing or proposed industrial areas however, there are occasionally, opportunities for compatible industrial uses in existing housing areas or where existing firms might prefer to expand in situ to avoid the additional costs of relocation. This policy is generally in accordance with Policies E12 to E14 in the Written Statement of the proposed new Structure Plan. The primary consideration will be to protect the amenities of the local inhabitants and therefore there will be a presumption against new uses other than in Class III of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1972 which means a light industrial building ' (not being a special industrial building) in which the processes carried on or the machinery installed are such as could be carried on or installed in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.'

Policy EMP 7 - "The introduction of new light industrial uses, replacement or expansion of existing industrial uses in residential areas will only be permitted where such uses will not cause adverse traffic conditions or undesirable environmental problems."

Policy EMP 8 - "The ratio of buildings to the site area for new industrial and warehousing development should not generally exceed 45% (excluding industrial estate roads)."

- 3.2.6. In order to ensure adequate areas are provided for landscaping, car parking, on-site vehicular manoeuvring, loading and unloading, the maximum area of a site to be covered by a building should not generally exceed 45%.

Policy EMP 9 - "Careful attention to the siting, layout and design of industrial and warehousing buildings will be required in all cases."

3.2.7. Industrial and other development must be carefully controlled in order to protect the environment and amenities of the industrial areas and the town generally. The recent development on the Ashburton Industrial Estate has been carried out to a good standard and it is the Local Planning Authority's view that future development should proceed in the same way. Indeed, careful control of the visual environment will be a positive advertisement to prospective industrialists and developers.

Policy EMP 10 - "On-site manoeuvring, loading and unloading facilities will be to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the County Highway Authority and on-site car parking provision will be in accordance with the District Council's approved standards (see Appendix III)."

3.2.8. This policy is necessary in the interests of highway safety and the free flow of traffic on the industrial estate distributor roads.

Policy EMP 11 - "In considering proposals for new development, outside storage will generally be resisted unless contained within compounds or adequately screened with planting or other satisfactory means of enclosure."

3.2.9. This policy is intended as a further safeguard to the appearance of the estate and the general environment of the town.

Policy EMP 12 - "Landscaping schemes will be required as an integral part of all new industrial, warehousing and other development on the proposed estate."

3.2.10 Landscaping forms an important element in the overall appearance of good industrial development and it is important that landscaping schemes should be formulated and implemented at the outset of development. Individual developers will be expected to provide landscaping within their own sites. In order to achieve some continuity in appearance the District Council would be pleased to give guidance to individual developers in any landscaping schemes.

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* Policies are indicated in italics and underlined whilst PROPOSALS
* are shown in BLOCK CAPITALS and are again underlined.
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3.2.11 It has been calculated that up to 20 acres (8 hectares) of land is likely to be required for further future industrial development, warehousing and transport depots up to 1991. However, it is becoming increasingly more apparent as time proceeds that whilst it is desirable to allocate up to 20 acres (8 hectares) on land north of Ashburton Industrial Estate to accommodate the required industrial growth needed for the town up to 1991, due to the land's physical constraints and consequent problems regarding infrastructure provision, it is thought unlikely that more than 10 acres (4 hectares) will be serviced and subsequently developed by the end of the Plan period unless a fairly large company/developer can be attracted to Ross-on-Wye.

