POLICY HS.2: SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

THE COUNCIL WILL PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE BOROUGH, AND WILL REQUIRE DEVELOPMENT TO HAVE REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

Justification

3.91 The Council’s UDP strategy sets out the Council’s broad aims, objectives and targets for achieving sustainable development (see tables 1.1 & 1.2). The Council recognises the importance of promoting sustainable patterns of development. Housing development can provide opportunities to achieve more sustainable urban environments (see policy ST.1).

3.92 The need for additional new dwellings over the plan period will put increasing pressure on urban areas to meet the demand for housing as the PPG3 (March 2000) target is for 60% of new housing to be built on previously developed land by 2008. It will become increasingly more important to ensure that sustainable development principles are used in housing developments, to limit the impact that increased housing densities will have on the environment. This policy is consistent with PPG3 (March 2000) which promotes sustainable residential environments.

3.93 Sustainability covers a large range of issues such as energy efficiency, water conservation, land use, transport, pollution, materials, and waste management. The Council’s SPG on Sustainable Development gives guidance on the type of features to be considered. Other policies in the plan that provide relevant advice include BE.25, PE.12 and PE.13.

3.94 Larger housing development sites (those over 15 units) should in particular include sustainability features as economies gained from combining sustainable heating, power or water systems for example, can make these features more viable when provided on a larger site.

EMPLOYMENT

POLICY E.1: GENERAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY

DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO MEET THE UDP EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY WHICH IS DIRECTED AT INCREASING AND IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT FLOORSPACE ACROSS THE BOROUGH IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

(i) ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR CLASS B1, B2 AND B8 USES, AS IDENTIFIED IN SCHEDULE 1.

(ii) REDEVELOPMENT OF VACANT AND UNDERUSED EXISTING EMPLOYMENT LAND AND FLOORSPACE FOR CLASS B1, B2 AND B8 USES.

(iii) RETENTION OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT LAND AND FLOORSPACE.
3.95 The quality of life in the Borough is very dependent on the health of the local economy and its ability to provide at least a proportion of the Borough’s residents with good quality jobs. The Council’s concern to help build a more sustainable way of life for the local community also requires that it take steps to reduce the need for local people to travel long distances to work. The Borough’s Economic Development Strategy includes the following aims:

▲ To facilitate an increase in the number of jobs in the Borough
▲ To facilitate employment growth in those sectors in which Merton currently has a comparative advantage;
▲ To facilitate improvements in the quality of jobs in the Borough by increasing the representation of high value-adding businesses within Merton;
▲ To promote a diverse range of business sectors in Merton in order to “insure” against macro-economic change and to ensure a lasting and stable level of economic activity;

3.96 By means of the judicious application of its land use planning and development control powers, the Council is seeking to contribute significantly to the achievement of these aims and to the regeneration of the local economy.

3.97 A wide range of developments can create employment opportunities. Some developments can accommodate particularly important types of employment, for example jobs which provide relatively high wages or where training and education opportunities are offered. These developments can all contribute to improving the range and quality of employment for Borough residents and workers. Developments which bring these types of benefit, in particular for Borough residents, are supported, provided that they do not conflict with other Plan policies. Safeguarding physical opportunities for developments which can accommodate such employment opportunities may also reduce the need for commuting, which can result in environmental benefits to the Borough generally, contributing to sustainable development aims. The Council’s economic development promotion activities as set out in the Economic Development Strategy will help to realise the local employment potential represented by these physical development opportunities.

3.98 The number of full time equivalent jobs in Merton continues to fall steadily and, given the shortage of land available for employment activities, it is important to maximise the potential of existing employment land and premises for a range of new employment uses. There is a particular need in Merton to ensure that sites exist for industrial firms seeking purpose-designed premises for their own use. Appropriate locations for such development are identified in the Plan. The Government recognises the Wandle Valley as an area for regeneration. The Council is working in partnership with other organisations to promote economic regeneration in this area in particular.
POLICY E.2: ACCESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO ENSURE THAT NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENTS PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THAT ACCESS TO AND WITHIN EXISTING BUSINESS PREMISES IS IMPROVED WHERE IT IS INADEQUATE.

Justification

3.99 There is considerable evidence that people with disabilities are disadvantaged when seeking employment and there is a need to ensure that in Merton the stock of business premises is improved in ways that reduce these difficulties. Detailed design guidelines for the access of people with disabilities are contained in the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance Note, ‘Designing for People with Disabilities’ and ‘Highway and Parking Standards’.

POLICY E.3: LAND USES IN INDUSTRIAL AREAS

WITHIN THE INDUSTRIAL AREAS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP ONLY THE FOLLOWING WILL BE PERMITTED:

(i) GENERAL INDUSTRIAL USES (CLASS B2)
(ii) USES FOR STORAGE OR DISTRIBUTION (CLASS B8)
(iii) USES INVOLVING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTS OR PROCESSES OR ANY INDUSTRIAL PROCESS, PROVIDED SUCH USES DO NOT IMPEDE EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF NEIGHBOURING BUSINESSES.
(iv) EXPANSION OF ESTABLISHED OFFICE USE, WHERE THE IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING FIRMS CAN BE MITIGATED THROUGH CONDITIONS.

PROPOSALS FOR GENERAL INDUSTRIAL, STORAGE OR DISTRIBUTION (CLASSES B2 AND B8) ARE EXPECTED TO LOCATE IN THE INDUSTRIAL AREAS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

Justification

3.100 Strategic Planning Guidance indicates that Boroughs should identify well located good quality sites for general industry (B2) in London where such firms continue to be centred or wish to be located. Improved access and environmental quality is also called for to assist these firms. Strategic Guidance identifies Preferred Industrial Locations which are especially suited to general industry. Three areas in Merton are shown with these designations. The areas shown on the Proposals Map show the main concentrations of industrial firms in the Borough, together with the recently developed Wandle Valley North area.

3.101 The introduction of the 1987 Use Classes Order and General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) in 1988 have created increased flexibility for changes of use between industry and offices. This flexibility is intended to reflect changes in the demand for premises which are adaptable for modern manufacturing, research and related activities. However, this flexibility of change of use has meant that manufacturing firms have faced
severe competition for space from office uses in traditional industrial areas. This has led to the emigration of numbers of manufacturing businesses and to the location of high density office floorspace with its attendant traffic generation problems in inappropriate areas. A number of Industrial Areas are therefore identified for general industrial use to provide a safeguarded strategic land resource where these activities can locate in modern purpose-built premises away from residential areas and without competition from or conflict with other land uses. Matters of layout and design for those undertaking either business, industrial or warehousing developments are covered in the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance Note on Business, Industrial and Warehousing Uses.

3.102 To ensure that such areas are available for industrial use, offices (B1a) uses are not considered to be acceptable in these Areas and it is considered that there are many other areas where such developments are more appropriately located and where demand could be satisfied. In addition, if permitted in these Industrial Areas, office uses would tend to squeeze out industrial firms from the Industrial Areas because of the “hope value” associated with such development. It should however be recognised that storage and general industrial units within these areas could change use to B1 business use without planning permission under the General Permitted Development Order. In practice, the extent of such changes is expected to be limited as often conversions would require planning permission because of the physical changes they would require. Furthermore, in practice, premises in these areas are likely to be suitably designed for light industrial purposes and to be less suitable for office use. Nevertheless, in some situations it may be appropriate to impose conditions to remove the permitted development rights that allow movement between B1, B2 and B8 in order to reflect the spirit of the Policy. Moreover, the Council will expect that where existing buildings in non-conforming use (e.g. retail warehousing) reach the end of their natural lives, any redevelopment proposals will be for uses permitted under this Policy.

3.103 The Industrial Areas are areas in which major new general industrial development is expected to take place and, when sites or premises in these areas become available, the preferred use will be industrial. Firms in these areas will be encouraged to expand and modernise their operations. Where large speculative developments are proposed, a range of unit sizes should be provided to reflect the range of industrial needs.

3.104 The designation of these Industrial Areas will assist the Council in encouraging existing industrial firms outside these areas to relocate within them as development opportunities occur. They represent appropriate locations for new industrial developments to locate away from residential areas.

3.105 This policy is supported by the Strategic Guidance for London Planning Authorities (RPG 3) which states that Local Authorities should seek to redress the trend whereby London’s share of high value-adding manufacturing employment has fallen in recent years.

3.106 There are a number of established/authorised uses within the Industrial Areas which existed there long before the policies which restricted land use to B2 and B8 but which are no longer in accordance with current land use policies for the land on which they are located. These uses tend to be B1 Offices, retail warehouses and second-hand car sales
premises which can cause operational and other difficulties for the conforming industrial and warehousing uses. There is frequently pressure to expand the floorspace of those non-conforming developments which have established use rights. The Council has found it difficult to resist these pressures where they have come from existing occupiers of non-industrial premises such as office blocks and where the growth of these uses has been incremental.

3.107 By ensuring that any expansion of any existing B1 uses is subject to conditions, the policy will assist the Council in suppressing hope values and in reserving land at relatively low prices for the kinds of manufacturing investment which will strengthen the local economy. It will also enable the Council to ensure that the developer adequately mitigates any negative impact of the expansion on neighbouring any B2 and B8 businesses. It is not intended that this policy should remove rights under the 1995 General Permitted Development Order.

**POLICY E.4: STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE INDUSTRIAL AREAS**

WITHIN THE GENERAL INDUSTRIAL AREAS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP PLANNING PERMISSION FOR STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED WHERE:

(i) VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THE SITE IS SATISFACTORY;

(ii) DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AVAILABILITY OF LAND AND PREMISES IN THE BOROUGH FOR GENERAL INDUSTRY OR WHERE THERE IS NO IDENTIFIED SHORTAGE OF GENERAL INDUSTRIAL ACCOMMODATION.

**Justification**

3.108 As the demand for space within the Industrial Areas intensifies General Industrial uses are tending to lose out to competition from Warehousing. The discrepancy between the rentals that B8 users can afford and those that B2 can afford varies according to the state of the wider economy and is greater at times when sterling is strong and when interest rates are high. Moreover recent research suggests that developers/investors in new property tend to consider manufacturers less desirable tenants than “clean” warehouses because their occupation would cause more rapid depreciation of the building. Recent examples of manufacturing firms being refused tenancies in newly built B2/B8 premises in Merton, have recently come to the Council’s attention.

3.109 This tendency is of concern to the Council because it wishes to ensure that its limited industrial land resources remain accessible to manufacturing businesses which are known to generate both greater numbers of jobs and higher quality jobs (in terms of their salaries) than storage and distribution firms.

3.110 Planning applications for storage and distribution facilities for named occupants will be considered on their merits, but the Council’s intention is - notwithstanding GPDO rights - to minimise the likelihood of a landlord refusing to let speculative floorspace in these areas to a B2 user because the landlord is hoping that a B8 tenant may materialise.
3.111 Although the design of developments for both B8 and B2 use will help to ensure a potential supply of premises for manufacturing, and design guidelines will be prepared to ensure appropriate development for flexible use, it is nevertheless considered important, in new speculative developments, to limit the proportion of industrial space that can be let to distribution and storage uses.

3.112 It is proposed that developments in the proposed Burlington Road, Beverley Way and Bushey Road Industrial Areas should be excluded from this restriction because its location close to the A3 makes it a particularly appropriate location for warehousing and distribution businesses, and the Council would wish to direct such uses to that area rather than to the other designated Industrial Areas within the Borough.

POLICY E.5: DENSITY OF OCCUPATION WITHIN THE INDUSTRIAL AREAS

WITHIN THE WILLOW LANE AND MORDEN INDUSTRIAL AREAS PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL RESULT IN A DENSITY EXCEEDING 10 SEPARATELY OCCUPIABLE BUSINESS UNITS PER HECTARE ON THAT SITE

Justification

3.113 As demand for industrial space has increased relative to the fixed amount of land available within the Industrial Areas, pressure has grown for redevelopment within them to greater and greater physical densities. Where this pressure has led to higher site coverage and higher plot ratios this can be seen as a welcome increase in the efficiency of land use and the trend helps to complement policies aimed at reducing the use of private vehicles for travel to work since it leaves less space for parking.

3.114 However, in certain of the Industrial Areas it has led to an increase in the density of separate business premises and in the density of separate businesses. Over the past 20 years this process has led to a fall in the average size of businesses in the Industrial Areas which is greater than that experienced in the national community of industrial firms. For example, in the past ten years, the average density of business occupation within the Willow Lane Industrial Area has increased from 2.9 businesses per hectare to 3.6 per hectare. This is of concern to the Council in as much as small businesses tend to provide poorer quality and less secure employment than larger firms. In areas like Willow Lane the trend towards more and more and smaller and smaller businesses is also putting greater strain on the infrastructure and is making the area less attractive to the medium sized businesses that the Council would like to attract and retain because of the level of their investment and training expenditure as well as for the quality of their jobs.

3.115 This policy will also help to reinforce the Council’s general business location strategy of directing larger firms to the Industrial Areas and leaving the smaller scattered employment sites for smaller firms.

POLICY E.6: LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND OUTSIDE THE DESIGNATED INDUSTRIAL AREAS

OUTSIDE THE INDUSTRIAL AREAS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, DEVELOPMENT WHICH RESULTS IN THE LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND WILL BE ACCEPTABLE ONLY UNDER THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:
(i) If the land is in a predominantly residential area and the development proposed will provide a local community or cultural facility.

(ii) If the land is in a predominantly residential area, residential use will be permitted provided that:
the size, configuration, access arrangements or other characteristics of the site make it unsuitable and financially unviable for any employment or community use as confirmed by full and proper marketing of the site for 5 years for employment or community purposes.

Compensatory measures comprising employment benefits locally may be sought for the loss of employment land. Such measures will be sought through planning obligations.

Justification

3.116 Employment land for the purpose of this Policy is land or premises in the B Use Class (B1-B8) and the Council will favourably consider a wide range of business activities on these sites. Where there is no realistic prospect of an employment use on the site the Council will seek to ensure that it does not remain vacant and will consider other uses. Merton is seeking to balance employment and housing provision and in addition to the main Industrial Areas designated on the UDP Proposals Map there are a large number of smaller scattered employment sites which accommodate a significant number of local jobs and businesses. This Policy is therefore contributing to the economic regeneration of Merton by encouraging the recycling of old employment sites for use by new employment activities. The aims of Policy E.6 are consistent with sustainable development objectives in that these employment sites are generally located within or close to residential areas enabling people to live near their work and reducing the need to travel in accordance with policy in PPG13. Merton is also a Borough where there is pressure from residential and retail uses to locate on employment land and where there is a shortage of sites available for new business development. The loss of these smaller sites can be significant since there are over 6000 businesses in Merton with less than 10 employees. In one 5km2 area of Mitcham a recent Council survey has identified 1,600 jobs and 140 businesses on such sites.

3.117 Merton is seeking to maximise the economic contribution of these employment sites which cumulatively provide significant levels of employment. Many, but not all, of these smaller employment sites lie in the London Wandle Valley where the London Wandle Valley Partnership is promoting a range of initiatives to assist the economic regeneration of the area. Regeneration of the London Wandle Valley area forms a part of the Government’s strategy for the regeneration of London (see Fig 1.2). One of the key objectives of the Partnership is to prevent the loss of local employment, particularly in manufacturing and other business activities. This policy is one way in which Merton is attempting to achieve its wider regeneration aims. The Council will encourage the development of a wide range of business activities on these sites taking account of their character and potential, including small offices, studios, laboratories and light industrial units. B1 uses are by definition compatible with residential areas and can provide employment without compromising the quality of their surrounding environment. The Council has carefully monitored the operation of this policy to ensure that it contributes to the economic regeneration of the Borough and evidence from the operation of the policy supports the view that it has had a beneficial impact and that it has ensured that the employment implications of developments have been properly taken into account in the planning process. The Council will continue to review it as appropriate to ensure that it meets these objectives.
3.118 The Council is aware however that in some cases the existence of an employment use within a residential area can cause deterioration of the local residential environment, and exceptions to the objective of retaining existing employment uses and existing jobs will be considered. Where an existing employment use of a site within a predominantly residential area is causing detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit, the Council will seek to encourage the improvement, modernisation, diminution, relocation or cessation of that operation in order to overcome the nuisance caused to residential neighbours (see Policy E.8). Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Pollution, the Health and Safety Executive and the Council’s Environmental Health Division all have recently enhanced powers to secure improved environmental performance from businesses. However, even where the Council may support the cessation of a particular business operation for environmental reasons, there may be many alternative employment uses which are capable of operating on that land, either in the existing buildings or in new buildings on the site, without causing detriment to the amenity of residential neighbours. The Council wishes to safeguard such sites for modern, clean, high technology businesses. Proposals to redevelop or convert employment sites for housing would normally be unacceptable both because they are likely to raise the price of such sites beyond the means of business investors and because the Plan makes adequate provision of land for residential development elsewhere.

3.119 Local community or cultural facilities can enhance the quality and character of predominantly residential areas and, by helping to create a finer mix of uses, they can contribute to the achievement of sustainability objectives and can reduce the need to travel. It is recognised that in certain situations residential uses on employment sites may improve the environment of residents. However, the unsuitability of the employment site and its lack of financial viability have to be demonstrated before the loss of employment land will be permitted.

3.120 In circumstances where a development is likely to result in a loss of employment floorspace or jobs, the Council may seek to ensure that compensatory improvements are made to the quality and quantity of the stock of business premises elsewhere in the locality and may seek to help those losing jobs as a result of the development to either find alternative employment or to become self employed. Moreover, in appropriate cases, the Council will enter into agreements under S.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as substituted by the 1991 Act, to secure action of this sort by the developer.

3.121 The relevance and therefore appropriateness of an obligation to a particular planning decision will always depend upon the circumstances of the individual application. However, the Council will only seek to negotiate a planning obligation in accordance with the tests of Circular 1/97, i.e. that the obligation should be necessary; relevant to land use planning; directly related to the proposed development; fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and reasonable in all other respects. The Policy is intended to deal with detailed development proposals that conflict with the wider strategic policies of the UDP to protect employment land and jobs but which could be made acceptable in strategic terms by means of an adequate and appropriate planning obligation.
POLICY E.7: LAND USES ON SITES OUTSIDE THE DESIGNATED INDUSTRIAL AREAS

THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES WHICH CAN OCCUPY LIGHT INDUSTRIAL, STUDIO LABORATORY AND SMALL OFFICE PREMISES TO LOCATE ON THE SMALLER SCATTERED EMPLOYMENT SITES OUTSIDE THE DESIGNATED INDUSTRIAL AREAS. OUTSIDE THE DESIGNATED INDUSTRIAL AREAS PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR GENERAL INDUSTRIAL AND STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION DEVELOPMENTS, AND OUTSIDE THE DESIGNATED TOWN CENTRES AND COLLIER’S WOOD TOWN CENTRE PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR LARGER OFFICE DEVELOPMENTS.

3.122 While there is a wide range of businesses which could be satisfactorily located on sites outside the town centres and the designated Industrial Areas, general industrial uses (B2) and warehousing uses (B8) are best located in the larger industrial areas where the infrastructure can be designed for their operational purposes and where their neighbours and the environment are less sensitive to their impact. However, where the proposed development site is located on a strategic route or a London distributor road (see fig 6.2) and the proposed development involves less than 200sqm of B2 or B8 floorspace the council may be prepared in principle to set aside the above policy. Office developments (B1c) providing more than approximately 200 m2 are also unsuitable on sites outside the town centres and Collier’s Wood Urban Centre, since they are likely to generate journeys to work on a scale which could harm local amenity. Outside the town centres, public transport facilities and services are unlikely to be sufficient to cope with the journeys to work generated by larger offices, and there is therefore a possibility that most of such journeys would be made by car, contrary to policies elsewhere in the Plan. At average employment densities for offices and light industrial premises respectively, an office development of 200 sq.m. could generate approximately 35 trips per day (17 jobs) while a 200 m2 light industrial development might only generate 12 trips (6 jobs). For this reason it is considered appropriate to place an upper limit on the size of office developments on sites outside the town centres.

3.123 All new employment developments will be expected to comply with the policies of the Built Environment Section and the approved Supplementary Planning Guidance for Business, Industrial and Warehousing uses.

3.124 The Council considers Policies E.6 and E.7 to be essential to its efforts to promote sustainable, mixed use neighbourhoods. However, in a very limited number of cases a fine mix of uses can lead to a deterioration of the local environment and exceptions to the objective of retaining existing businesses and jobs may be considered. Where an existing employment use of a site within a predominantly residential area has a documented history of causing detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit, the Council will seek to encourage the in-situ improvement, modernisation, diminution, relocation or cessation of that operation in order to overcome the nuisance caused to residential neighbours (see Policy E.8). The Environment Agency, the Health and Safety Executive and the Council’s Environmental Health Division all have enhanced powers to secure improved environmental performance from businesses. However, even where the Council may support the cessation of a particular business operation for environmental reasons, there will be many alternative employment uses which are capable of operating on that land, either in the existing buildings or in new buildings on the site, without causing detriment to the amenity of residential neighbours. The Council
wishes to safeguard such sites for modern, clean, high technology or similar businesses. Proposals to redevelop employment sites for housing would normally be unacceptable both because they are likely to raise the price of such sites beyond the means of business investors and because the Plan makes adequate provision of land for residential development elsewhere.

POLICY E.8: BAD NEIGHBOUR DEVELOPMENT AND “GREEN” ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WITHIN THE SPECIAL INDUSTRIAL ZONES IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP ONLY YARD BASED OPERATIONS WILL BE PERMITTED. WITHIN THESE ZONES, DEVELOPMENT WHICH INVOLVES MORE THAN 20% OF THE SITE AREA OR WHICH EXCEEDS A PLOT RATIO OF 0.2 WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

Justification

3.125 There are many yard-based industries, such as car repairers, concrete crushers, scrap yards, skip hire yards etc. (some of which provide important economic and environmental services), which are more appropriately located within industrial areas, but which can also cause nuisance to other businesses within industrial areas. In order to facilitate the relocation of such firms away from sensitive business neighbours, the Plan provides for two Special Industrial Zones which are located within the Durnsford Road Industrial Area and the Garth Road Industrial Area. These Zones are identified on the Proposals Map. The Zones will make it possible for some existing yard users to be relocated and will provide sites for new businesses which need to operate from open yards to locate where their adverse environmental impact will be less harmful.

3.126 In the Council’s experience there are many recycling businesses, particularly those which handle bulky items such as abandoned cars and fridges, whose requirements for covered space do not amount to more than 20% of their overall floorspace requirements. The restrictions on site coverage and plot ratio within the Special Industrial Zones are intended to enable such activities to compete for land in these zones with developments and businesses which are able to make more intensive use, and therefore more profitable use of that land.

3.127 The Council will require details of precautionary measures designed to minimise nuisance to other nearby businesses and other uses in the vicinity of the Special Industrial Zone, to be submitted as part of any development proposals.

POLICY E.9: OVERCOMING ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

WHERE EXISTING FIRMS CREATE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES TO OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS IN-SITU AND, WHERE THIS IS NOT FEASIBLE AND WHERE APPROPRIATE THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE RELOCATION. THE COUNCIL WILL CONSIDER PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO FIRMS IN OVERCOMING ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN THESE WAYS.
Where existing firms do cause environmental problems, the Council will seek to resolve these problems by a range of measures, including grant aid from various sources, enforcement of environmental health regulations and other powers. Where, however, relocation is essential, the Council will assist such firms to relocate to more appropriate sites.

POLICY E.10: HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

Developments for the purposes of storing or manufacturing hazardous substances above the levels specified in the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations (Schedule 1) will not be permitted except where it can be demonstrated that such development will not materially harm or put at risk the health, safety or amenity of local people or the environment.

Any new development proposed within an established consultation distance from existing premises that are known to involve the storing or manufacturing of hazardous substances above the levels specified in the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations (Schedule 1) will be permitted provided:

(i) it can be demonstrated that the health or safety of the occupiers of the new development are not materially harmed or put at risk, and

(ii) that the proposal would not prejudice effective operation at the existing premises.

There are some industrial activities which require particular care in their location. It is considered that in a heavily built-up, largely residential borough like Merton, development proposals involving hazardous substances above the level specified in the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 1992 (Schedule 1) which establish controlled quantities for the purposes of consent under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1992, will not be acceptable. The Council will work closely with the Health and Safety Executive where developments involving potential risks are concerned. The Council will monitor and where necessary seek to relocate any firms using hazardous substances in residential areas to more appropriate locations. In considering planning applications the Council will also have regard to Part I, Schedule B processes within the scope of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

POLICY E.11: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS FROM EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

To achieve environmental benefits, employment developments will be expected to be of high quality and layout:

All new industrial, warehousing, office and live/work units outside conservation areas and above a threshold of 1,000 sqm will be expected to incorporate renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of predicted energy requirements. The following will be sought through negotiations:

(i) travel plans, where the proposal will have significant travel implications.
(ii) THE PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES TO FACILITATE THE SEPARATION AND RECYCLING OF WASTE MATERIALS.

(iii) ENVIRONMENTAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE WIDER EMPLOYMENT AREA.

(iv) THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES WHICH WILL ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR EMPLOYEES.

Justification

3.130 There is an increased public awareness and government recognition that environmental standards should be improved and that employment developments should contribute to enhancing the quality of the environment in the wider sense. Such improvements benefit both employers and employees and enhance the Borough's attractiveness as a business location. It is important to ensure that new development is located where public transport services are good, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance 13 (1994), and ensuring that new development is built in an energy efficient and environmentally sustainable way. Further guidance on these matters is set out in Environment Policies PE.1 to PE.13. Businesses need to adapt to new, more stringent environmental standards and to demonstrate their understanding of environmental concerns. Any planning obligations sought by the Council will be assessed in the light of relevant Circulars and Policy F.2.

3.131 A good environment is important, not only for employees, but as a stimulant for further investment. Factory rehabilitation, car park screening, improved servicing arrangements and tree planting, lighting and landscaping, particularly in the older industrial locations, will provide an incentive for further industrial and commercial development. The provision of public art schemes, management of areas of ecological importance and public open space improvements will also help to create a more attractive and more efficient industrial environment as well as helping to attract qualified labour at times when skills shortages hamper the prospects of local businesses. The Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes on Sustainable Development and Business, Industrial and Warehousing Uses gives guidance in detail on the expected environmental standards of new industrial and commercial buildings and on the layout and design of industrial sites.

3.132 In the light of its Agenda 21 objective of reducing local reliance on non-renewable energy sources, the Council is concerned to ensure that new industrial and commercial developments in the Borough are designed to utilise solar power as one means of minimising their dependence on non-renewable energy sources. By expecting the installation of renewable power generation equipment in larger developments, it is also anticipated that the Council will be helping to generate sufficient levels of demand to enable manufacturers of appropriate renewable energy equipment to exploit economies of scale in the production of such equipment. In turn this can be expected to reduce unit costs and contribute to a virtuous circle of falling prices and increasing demand. The Council will expect at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements of businesses occupying large new industrial and commercial developments to be capable of being met by means of on-site renewable energy generation. For the purpose of this policy the means of generating renewable energy include photovoltaic energy, solar-powered and geo-thermal water heating, energy crops and biomass, but not energy from domestic or industrial waste. Where incorporating renewable energy production equipment is shown (by the applicant) to make the development unviable, it would not be expected.
POLICY E.12: SMALL AND GROWING BUSINESSES

THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF STARTER PREMISES AND SERVICED WORK SPACE FOR NEW AND VERY SMALL BUSINESSES WHICH REQUIRE SMALL UNITS OF INDUSTRIAL, LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND STUDIO FLOORSPACE.

Justification

3.133 Particular attention will be given to the needs of small and newly established businesses as it is considered important that these businesses be given the opportunity to establish and expand in the Borough. Special encouragement will be given to the development of very small industrial units of under 93m² (1,000 sq ft) which are relatively uneconomic to construct. These have been developed at York Road, Wimbledon and are particularly appropriate in areas where conditions are less favourable for storage/distribution. Support for very small firms will not, however, be at the expense of medium sized industrial firms employing more than 40 or 50 employees, which also find it difficult to secure suitable accommodation in the Borough.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

POLICY C.1: LOCATION AND ACCESS OF FACILITIES

THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICE FACILITIES IN ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS, BY SEEKING TO NEGOTIATE PLANNING OBLIGATIONS FOR THE ALLOCATION OF SITES OR THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES IN APPROPRIATE REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES (SEE POLICY F.2).

Justification

3.134 The Council wishes to ensure that valuable opportunities to provide social service facilities for vulnerable people are not lost on sites which might otherwise be developed for less suitable uses. The opportunity to secure such facilities will be sought in appropriate cases by planning obligations with developers, in accordance with the provisions of government guidance. Such facilities could include:

(i) Accommodation designed or adapted to facilitate the provision of care.

(ii) Hostels.

(iii) Day centres.

(iv) Residential care facilities.

(v) Respite Care.

3.135 The opportunity to secure such facilities as part of mixed use developments which include a range of uses such as employment, leisure and community facilities will be sought. This in turn will contribute towards the development of sustainable neighbourhoods and balanced communities.