



EC3 High quality employment areas and workspace

- A Development proposals for Class E business, B2 industrial and B8 storage or distribution uses and related Sui Generis uses must be of a high quality design with well-integrated and purpose built business space. They must demonstrate how the design-led approach has been used to improve the site's suitability for business activity having regard to the type and use of space. Development proposals must:
 - a. Optimise the use of land and maximise opportunities to increase job densities;
 - b. Make provision for an appropriate level of internal fit out beyond shell and core, including:
 - i. Connection-ready high speed broadband;
 - ii. Installation of mechanical and electrical services;
 - iii. Toilets and kitchenette;
 - iv. Internal surface finishing and blinds;
 - v. Basic fire and carbon monoxide detection; and
 - vi. Shopfronts and glazing, where appropriate.
 - c. Make provision for flexible workspace that can be adapted to the needs of different employment uses, particularly where there is not a specified end user;
 - d. Ensure the layout and design of development provides adequate operational space including for site access and servicing;
 - e. Improve the attractiveness and environmental quality of the site and employment area, including high quality public realm, where appropriate; and
 - f. Ensure a coherent and positive relationship with adjoining and neighbouring land uses and protect local amenity, with reference to other Local Plan policies.
- B Development proposals for new Class E(g), B2, B8 and similar Sui Generis uses over 2,500 square metres (gross external area) must include a reasonable proportion of flexible workspace or smaller units suitable for micro, small and medium sized enterprises.
- C Within the Forest Hill Cultural Quarter, Endwell Road LSIS and Ashby Mews non-designated employment site, development proposals for new self-contained live-work units will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that they will not adversely impact on the character, function and effectiveness of the Cultural Quarter and LSIS to accommodate commercial and industrial uses, and will not result in a net loss of industrial capacity. Development proposals for new live-work units outside of these locations will be refused.

Explanation

- 8.14 The redevelopment of industrial land and other employment sites is necessary to meet local needs for modern business space as well as to support site renewal and regeneration. Most of Lewisham's employment areas are located within or in close proximity to residential areas. New commercial development that is well-designed can not only improve the quality and viability of employment areas and premises but also the liveability of neighbourhoods. Commercial development proposals must therefore respond positively to the wider neighbourhood context by addressing matters such as local character, amenity, public realm and green infrastructure.
- 8.15 Development proposals must demonstrate how the design-led approach has been used to optimise and make more efficient use of land and commercial floorspace. This may include consideration of layout options to provide higher plot ratios and building designs to enable integration of smaller business units, co-working and incubator space, vertical stacking / multi-storey development, mezzanines and basement levels.
- 8.16 Flexibly specified buildings and workspaces should be provided wherever possible, particularly where there is not a specified end user for the development. These are essential to ensuring the long-term viability of employment land and premises. This is because they allow for the reconfiguration of internal space to suit a wide range of end users and support business retention by enabling existing occupiers to expand in situ. Flexible specifications could also include, for example, full height delivery doors, capacity to site additional delivery doors to enable subdivision of buildings, and reallocation of space.
- 8.17 Development proposals must make appropriate provision for full internal fit out of buildings and workspace. This should normally include plumbing/heating, installation of sanitary and kitchen facilities, finishes for floors, walls and ceilings, and where appropriate, shopfronts and glazing. New development must also provide for modern communications facilities, including power points and connection-ready high speed broadband. Proposals should provide sufficient details of interior fit out at the application stage.
- 8.18 Proposals limited to 'core' and 'shell' only specifications are not considered appropriate and will be strongly resisted. This requirement is necessary to ensure the attractiveness and marketability of units, particularly in promoting early take up of workspace and helping to prevent long-term vacancies. It is also vital to supporting micro, small and independent businesses which are unlikely to be in a position to absorb the initial overhead costs for fit out. The appropriate level of fit out will be considered on a site-by-site basis.
- 8.19 Site layout is especially important for commercial and industrial operators. The effective functioning of employment sites is dependent not only on fit for purpose buildings but also their associated operational land. Development proposals must therefore address matters such as vehicle access for loading and delivery, yard space, external storage, parking, site servicing

and customer interface. A well-designed layout is also essential to ensuring the protection of local amenity.

- 8.20 Large scale commercial development proposals must incorporate a range of business unit sizes. The 2,500 square metre (gross external area) benchmark is established by the London Plan and given effect through this policy⁷⁷. Lewisham's employment areas have very low vacancy rates which can make it difficult for businesses to find space to start up and grow. Provision for smaller units will help small business development particularly for Lewisham's creative, cultural and digital industries. More than 90 per cent of businesses in Lewisham are small businesses⁷⁸. What constitutes a reasonable proportion of flexible workspace or small units will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- 8.21 Development proposals for new live-work units (i.e. residential and employment uses in the same self-contained unit for semi-permanent or permanent occupation) will be refused, unless they are located within the Forest Hill Cultural Quarter, Endwell Road LSIS or Ashby Mews, Brockley. Monitoring indicates the loss of employment provision through consenting live-work accommodation, with development reverting to fully residential use over time. This policy helps to guard against such loss, recognising the need to protect industrial capacity. Exceptions will be made for live-work development in the Forest Hill Cultural Quarter, Endwell Road LSIS and Ashby

Mews, recognising that such provision has been successfully integrated into the area and contributes to its distinctiveness. In the case of mixed-use development including a commercial component, the employment floorspace must be demonstrably separate from other uses, including any residential elements, and dedicated solely to business uses.

⁷⁷ London Plan (2021) policy E2 (Providing suitable business space).

⁷⁸ Lewisham Local Economic Assessment (2018).