

## Section 9: Commercial and Local Employment

### Supporting commercial businesses and expansions

#### Purpose

- 9.1 This policy seeks to encourage a thriving, sustainable parish economy, by encouraging commercial activities within the parish.

#### Justification

- 9.2 Historically, farming has been the key driver behind the prosperity of the parish. But in line with experiences across the British countryside, employment opportunities in the agricultural sector have reduced. Cold Ash parish has seen a steady growth in population with a substantial number of residents working outside the parish commuting to the local towns of Newbury, Thatcham and Reading, and further afield to Basingstoke, Swindon and London.
- 9.3 Cold Ash village has retained a post-office, general-purpose grocery shop, and two pubs. The main commercial area in the parish is the Red Shute industrial estate, in the northern part of the parish. Larger-scale commercial activity should continue to be focussed on this site, although sustainable growth, for instance through the conversion of existing vacant or underused buildings, which are 'suitably located' and of appropriate scale, form and high-quality design, and which adhere in total to the policies set out in this plan, will be supported; 'suitably located' means where they do not adversely affect the locality and the amenities of residents.
- 9.4 Supporting proposals for local employment opportunities will not only provide greater prospects for local people to access local jobs but will ensure that these are sustainable in terms of the patterns of commuting that they generate.

#### **POLICY CAP15: SUPPORTING COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES, EXISTING AND EXPANSIONS**

**Proposals for new or expanded commercial, business and service activity (Classes B2, B8 and E(g)) will be supported at the Red Shute industrial estate or where they bring redundant or vacant land based rural operations back into use, subject to the following criteria:**

- a. the proposal, including any associated premises, would not have unacceptable harmful impacts on the local environment;**
- b. the proposal would not have unacceptable harmful impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential, through excessive noise, smell, lighting, vibration or other emissions or pollution; and**
- c. the proposal would not have unacceptable adverse impacts upon the local road network.**



## Supporting SMEs, flexible start-ups, and homeworking

### Purpose

- 9.5 This policy recognises the growing contribution of home-based and smaller businesses to the parish and seeks to encourage opportunities for them. This would provide a greater incentive and opportunity for local people to work locally.
- 9.6 Homeworking is defined as a person who is working from their house, apartment, or place of residence, rather than working from the office.

### Justification

- 9.7 Cold Ash has a well-qualified workforce, but with most people working outside the parish, the supply of higher value job opportunities in the parish is limited. This suggests a need to consider attracting specialist companies to relocate to the parish (as supported in our in Policy CAP15) and/or encouraging new start-ups.
- 9.8 To provide flexible start-up space, it is necessary to encourage appropriate buildings that can be rented out at sufficiently low rents to attract their use by business start-ups and existing home workers. A potential source of such space in Cold Ash Parish is vacant farm and rural buildings.
- 9.9 As homeworking becomes more possible, this can be encouraged by supporting the creation of spaces for uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity, for instance home office spaces.

### **POLICY CAP16: SUPPORTING SMES, FLEXIBLE START-UPS AND HOMEWORKING**

- 1. Proposals to provide working spaces that encourage homeworking and creative small industries, for instance through incubator/start-up business space on flexible terms, will be supported through:**
  - a. The provision of new buildings or conversion of existing buildings, including redundant farm and rural buildings; and**
  - b. enabling extensions and small new garden buildings to facilitate homeworking, within Use Class (E(g)(i));**
- 2. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals must:**
  - a. respect the surrounding rural landscape and not compromise or reduce the amenities of neighbouring residents and other users and its setting in regard to size, light pollution, noise, dirt, smells or smoke, air pollution, or loss of wildlife habitat; and**
  - b. not have any unacceptable impact on the local road network; and**
  - c. work in harmony with agriculture and other land-based activities and rural recreational activities and**
  - d. be accompanied by appropriate protected species and habitat surveys, avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and seek to achieve a net gain through enhancements; and**
  - e. seek, where possible, to sustain any historic, architectural or archaeological interest the building may have either individually or through association with one or more heritage assets, unless unavoidable harm is justified on the basis of the public benefits, including the enabling of the building's optimum viable future use.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 6; Adopted Core Strategy: CS9; Local Plan Review: SP20; NPPF: 80, 83, 84