4.6 Employment Areas

**Context**

4.6.1 There are two existing large-scale employment areas, Pinnacles and Templefields. The Harlow Local Plan contains a policy that aims to safeguarded land in existing general employment areas from development for other uses (policy ER6).

4.6.2 The Local Plan also encourages the regeneration, modernisation and intensification of existing employment sites, which can provide positive opportunities for improving the urban design qualities of places, encouraging new business to locate in Harlow and to raise employment densities.

Figure 4.40: Templefields structure provides active frontage onto the public realm whilst internalising the majority of servicing and car parking

Figure 4.41: West Place employment area within Templefields
Layout and Access

4.6.3 Employment areas should be well served by public transport with good pedestrian connections to residential areas to minimise car use.

4.6.4 New employment development should be structured as a network of connected streets with development fronting the street. Cycleways should be incorporated.

4.6.5 Parking levels should conform to current standards, as set out in the Adopted Vehicle Parking Standards (Harlow Local Plan policy T9).

4.6.6 Service yards and large parking areas should be internalised within the block of development to avoid these spaces fronting onto public routes and landscape areas. This follows Gibberd’s principle that buildings should be located so as to provide a series of ‘street pictures’ with untidy back areas kept out of public view.

4.6.7 Limited visitor and disabled parking may be provided on the street frontage but keeping building lines to no more than 15 metres from the highway will ensure that a good streetscene is maintained. Visitor parking should be incorporated into the landscape design with tree planting breaking up the visual impact of parked cars.

Figure 4.42: Templefields provides a grid like structure with entrances on to the public realm and servicing internalised
Design

4.6.8 New development and improvements to existing employment areas should aim to focus investment into areas that will significantly contribute to the quality of the workplace environment.

4.6.9 These include structuring employment areas around spine roads which are in the form of boulevards; designing landscaped areas which form focal points for workers and visitors; providing entrance forecourts for individual businesses and designing gateways to provide a strong entrance to and identity for the development. These measures will contribute to the external image and perception of the employment area.

4.6.10 Harlow has a number of physical assets, including areas of open space, natural woodlands and water which employees should be able to see from their workplaces and enjoy in their breaks. New development and improvements to existing employment areas should improve connections to the surrounding landscape and creating open, green vistas through the development to the surrounding landscape.

4.6.11 Building frontage should face the public realm, including open spaces and countryside surrounding the employment areas. This will reinforce the contrast between built form and the natural environment with a positive interface and create a better-overlooked environment.

Figure 4.43: Diagram of recommended employment area organisation
4.6.12 Whilst it is recognised that the opportunity for active frontages can be limited on large industrial or distribution buildings every effort must be made to avoid large areas of blank frontages adjacent to the public realm.

4.6.13 Building entrances should front onto streets and spaces and make a positive contribution to surveillance and legibility. Entrance areas may be recessed from main elevations in order to create generous covered entrance areas that will aid legibility and provide protection from the weather.

4.6.14 The position of reception areas and office space should be located to positively contribute to the surveillance of entrance areas and forecourts. Reception areas on corners overlooking entrance areas and forecourts contribute to the surveillance of those areas.

Figure 4.44: Edinburgh Way has the potential to become a higher quality Main Street providing access to business fronting onto the street

Figure 4.45: Corner glazing, entrance forecourts for visitors and entrances fronting onto the street all contribute to providing an active frontage and passive surveillance
### 4.6.15 Sustainable development is a key objective of the Harlow Local Plan.

### 4.6.16 Energy use should be minimised by maximising useful, and limiting excessive, solar gains; and by the use of highly efficient systems for space heating, hot water, ventilation (with heat recovery where suitable), and lighting; each with efficient control systems.

### 4.6.17 Where renewable energy installations are provided these should be integrated into the architectural and landscape design and not included as bolt on additions.

### 4.6.18 Materials specification should be made with reference to the Green Guide to Specification (or an equivalent). The use of ‘C’ rated specifications and below will be discouraged. Buildings should also seek to minimise the use of materials with high energy inputs, such as cement and concrete. Materials should be responsibly sourced, locally where this offers the best overall solution, and timber should be from sustainably managed resources. It will also be important to ensure that the materials used are robust, thus eliminating waste from premature replacement of components.

### 4.6.19 The material arising from demolition and construction should be re-used on site where possible, and sent for recycling or disposal off site where not, thus reducing the direct effects of waste on the environment. Construction waste should be managed in line with the Site Waste Management Plan to be prepared by contractors. Site Waste Management Plans cover general practices on site, the reduction of waste, re-use and recycling and finally waste disposal.

### 4.6.20 All buildings should be designed and built to provide: adaptability to allow them to be extended without fundamental restructuring or rebuilding; and flexibility to allow for subdivision, or combining, to suit a wide range of users and to cater for the natural variations in sizes of these enterprises during their lifespan. Office (B1) buildings should be designed to have simple, clear, open planned space on a regular grid to allow the maximum flexibility of fitting out. General industrial and storage and distribution uses (B2 and B8) should be capable of adaptation by the insertion of mezzanines.

### 4.6.21 The use of energy and/or waste strategies specific to end users will be encouraged to minimise energy use and waste.

### 4.6.22 The design of all buildings should be based on achieving healthy buildings that minimise the risk of allergic reactions.

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**Principle DG17: Improvement of Existing Employment Areas**

The improvement and enhancement of existing employment areas will be encouraged. This includes improving:

- The buildings.
- The public realm surrounding the buildings.
- Connections to surrounding residential areas, open space and Neighbourhood Centres and Hatches.
- Interface between the employment areas and adjoining countryside.
Figure 4.46: Green Wedges separating different neighbourhoods and Green Fingers linking neighbourhoods to Green Wedges.
4.7 Strategic Open Space

4.7.1 Harlow was developed with a strong landscape-led approach. This has endowed the town with a generous amount of open space including extensive ‘Green Wedges’ and ‘Green Fingers’, bringing the countryside into the urban area.

4.7.2 Green Wedges are large areas of strategic open space based in part upon the valleys such as Todd Brook and Canons Brook which were retained in the original Harlow masterplan. Green Wedges are an enduring legacy from the Gibberd’s masterplan (see section 3) and help define one neighbourhood from another. Green Fingers are smaller, linear open spaces that connect to the Green Wedges. For the avoidance of doubt, the Proposals Map will contain the definitive position on the status of open space, and whether it is designated as a Green Wedge.

4.7.3 The existing open spaces within Harlow form a network: from larger, more informal and natural spaces as part of the Green Wedges, to playing fields and allotments, to smaller, more local spaces which are used for more defined roles, such as play areas and spaces described as “outdoor rooms” by Gibberd.

4.7.4 This section should be read in conjunction with the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Supplementary Planning Document which sets standards for the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities for schemes of ten or more dwellings and the Green Infrastructure Plan for the Harlow area which provides guidance on how the green areas should be protected, enhanced and, where appropriate, extended.
The pattern of any new development should evolve from the existing topography, natural assets and ecologic features.

Large developments, such as urban extensions should form a consistent and positive relationship with the town and will be required to take a landscape-led approach in order to provide proposals which evolve from the existing typology, natural assets and ecological features of Harlow.

Development adjacent to open countryside should provide a positive frontage and define a strong settlement edge.

To avoid open spaces being delivered on a fragmented, site by site basis, a strategic approach to the designation of new strategic open space location must be adopted.

The overall structure of proposed development form should establish a design which both contrasts landscape with building groups and welds them into a coherent whole. This follows Gibberd’s vision for the town. In practice this means that there should be a clear definition between the built up area and the open space (by maintaining compact development and densities at the edge of the built up area) whilst the built development should have a positive relationship with the open space (by fronting onto it and connecting into it).

Figure 4.47: (Left) Existing spatial organisation of neighbourhood and its strategic landscape. Whilst this brings the landscape into the centre of the neighbourhood, it leads to a more dispersed urban form and residual open space. (Right) Recommended spatial organisation of neighbourhood and its strategic landscape.