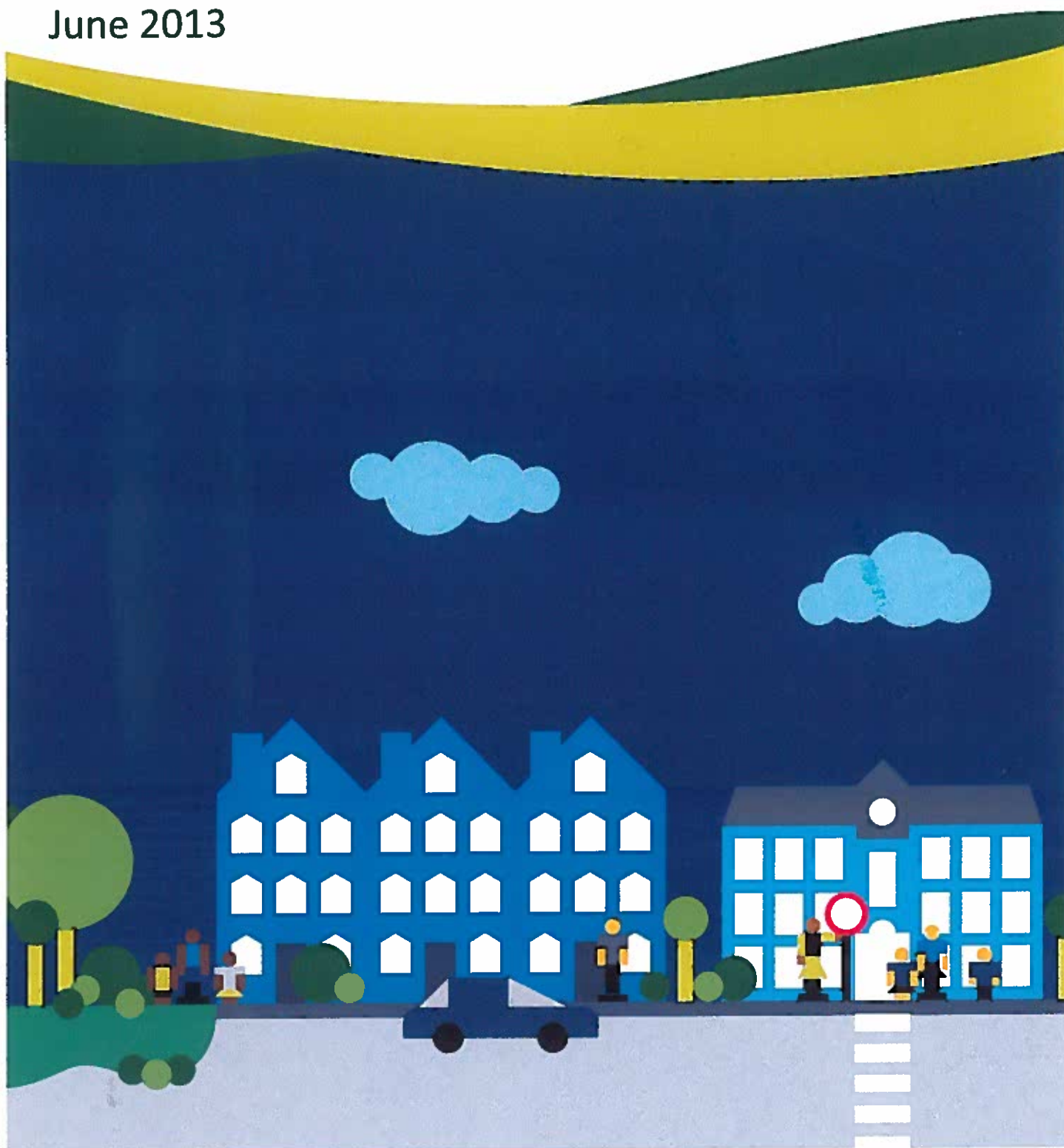


# Islington's Local Plan: Development Management Policies

June 2013



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### Policy DM5.4

#### Size and affordability of workspace

A. Within Employment Growth Areas and Town Centres, major development proposals for employment floorspace <sup>(13)</sup> must incorporate an appropriate amount of affordable workspace and/or workspace suitable for occupation by micro and small enterprises.

B. Within Employment Growth Areas and Town Centres, proposals for the redevelopment of existing low value workspace must incorporate an equivalent amount of affordable workspace and/or workspace suitable for occupation by micro and small enterprises, unless it can be demonstrated to the council's satisfaction that the site is no longer suitable for the provision of similar uses.

C. Where workspace is to be provided for small or micro enterprises, but is not within physically separate units, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the floorspace will meet the needs of small or micro enterprises through its design, management and/or potential lease terms.

D. Where affordable workspace is to be provided, evidence should be submitted demonstrating agreement to lease the workspace at a peppercorn rate for at least 10 years to a council-approved Workspace Provider.

E. Where public education, community uses or social infrastructure (e.g. childcare or health facilities) is provided on-site this will be offset against the overall floorspace requirement for micro, small or affordable workspace.

F. In exceptional circumstances, where the proportion of small, micro or affordable workspace to be provided on site does not meet the council's expectation, and where it can be demonstrated that the on-site provision of such workspace is inappropriate or would have an unacceptable impact on the viability of a scheme, financial contributions will be sought to secure equivalent provision off-site, based on a cost per square metre of equivalent provision.

- 5.23** Employment studies have identified significant gaps in the borough's supply of workspaces, particularly for small service-based and light industrial businesses, niche sectors requiring flexible premises in key locations, and new/young businesses seeking affordable small offices, studios or workspace with favourable lease or license conditions. Research undertaken for the council suggests that, despite accounting for around 50% of potential demand for new employment floorspace, many SMEs and start-ups with the potential for financial self-sufficiency have particular needs that often cannot be met by market rent levels. In addition, *London Plan* Policy 4.1 identifies the need to ensure a good supply of workspaces in terms of type, size and cost.

13 Excluding developments where the majority of floorspace is in public education, community or social infrastructure uses, consistent with the Core Strategy.

## 5 Employment

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- 5.24** In response to this, the Core Strategy supports the provision of a range of suitable workspaces in terms of type, size and cost, including for small and micro enterprises, in order to support economic growth in a way that benefits local businesses, residents, knowledge industries and the wider London economy. It specifies a need for new development to provide small or affordable premises (including retail space) in order to address market failure in Islington's micro and small firm economy. Policy DM5.4 reinforces this by requiring major employment proposals to provide "an appropriate amount" of such floorspace, to ensure that new development contributes to broader objectives for the local economy.
- 5.25** Research prepared for the council in 2011<sup>(14)</sup> indicated that very large schemes of around 10,000m<sup>2</sup> could viably provide at least 5% of floorspace on an affordable basis<sup>(15)</sup>. This proportion should be used as guidance for all major proposals for employment floorspace. Where proposals would result in the redevelopment of existing workspace which is of a low value (by virtue of its existing use, size or location), the council will seek to secure equivalent provision following redevelopment. Where redevelopment would result in the loss of premises which are in viable use by local firms, the council will seek to ensure that appropriate replacement premises are provided for local firms. However, where the on-site provision of small, micro or affordable workspace is robustly demonstrated to present financial viability issues, a lower proportion of on-site provision and/or an equivalent financial contribution will be considered. Further guidance on financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.26** The Core Strategy also identifies a need to contribute towards the provision of childcare facilities where need can be demonstrated, in order to enable people with children to more easily participate in the local economy. The council's Community Infrastructure Levy will, once adopted, form the basis for seeking financial contributions from development towards the cost of childcare facilities. However, in certain circumstances, on-site provision of childcare facilities may be desirable. To incentivise this, Policy DM5.4 considers public education, community or social infrastructure uses to count towards the overall requirement for micro, small or affordable workspace, in recognition that such facilities are likely to contribute to the range of types of jobs provided within a development, particularly within office-led schemes. It may also be necessary and appropriate to address childcare needs through Section 106 planning obligations in some circumstances: refer to Policy DM9.1 (Infrastructure) and Policy DM9.2 (Planning obligations).
- 5.27** In applying Policy DM5.4, small/micro workspace will be considered to be workspace in the B Use Classes managed in 'units' of around 90m<sup>2</sup> or less, or shop (A use) units of 80m<sup>2</sup> or less (gross). Generally, the council will consider affordable workspace to be B1(c), B2 or B8 workspace, or managed workspace in the B1 Use Classes where rent and service charges, excluding business support services, are less than 80% of comparable market rates (although it is noted that, for some sectors and locations, much reduced rents may be needed to render them affordable to target occupiers).

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14 *Workspace Viability Report*, DVS, 2011.

15 Small units leased on a market basis would be likely to have a neutral impact on viability.

- 5.28** The design of workspace for small or micro enterprises will vary, depending on the end occupier or sector. In general; however, applicants should demonstrate that workspace for small/micro enterprises incorporates:
- a basic, but good quality fit-out, which incorporates servicing to all areas of workspace;
  - flexible internal arrangements that permit a number of different internal work areas to be accessed from shared spaces;
  - good standards of internal sound insulation;
  - a range of shared spaces and facilities, such as communal breakout space, kitchen areas, bike storage and goods lifts; and
  - external space reserved for loading/unloading.
- 5.29** The way in which workspace is managed and marketed is of critical importance for small and micro enterprises. Applicants will be required to demonstrate likely lease terms for target sectors, and where appropriate make provision for short-term, flexible 'all-in' or 'meanwhile' leases, and/or letting space on a per-desk rather than per-square-foot basis.
- 5.30** The council will maintain a list of approved Workspace Providers. Where affordable workspace is to be provided, confirmation from the Workspace Provider will be sought of agreement to manage the shell and core, to an agreed specification, on concessionary lease terms which will allow the space to be let to end users at economic rents.