Delivering a Thriving Economy

4.8.1 This policy aims to deliver new premises for employment across the city to support its continuing economic growth and competitiveness. The policy meets objectives 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8 of the Core Strategy and responds to issues 5, 6, 7 and 12.

Context

4.8.2 Bristol's economy has performed well since the mid-1990s with output and productivity growth outperforming national levels. A major strength is Bristol's wide and varied economic base including aerospace, engineering, information and communications technology, electronics, financial and legal services, creative and media industries and environmental technologies and services. Bristol has a highly qualified resident workforce – 34.5% of working age people hold a degree or equivalent compared with the national average of 29%. However, persistent and multiple socio-economic deprivation is still found in parts of the city, especially in relation to worklessness and low skills.

4.8.3 Economic activity in Bristol operates within a wider West of England context. Rapid jobs growth between 1996 and 2006 associated with new business parks has made the north fringe in South Gloucestershire one of the largest employment areas in the sub-region. Also within South Gloucestershire, Airbus at Filton and Rolls Royce at Patchway are very significant employers in the regionally important aerospace and advanced engineering industries.

4.8.4 Approximately 45% of the total number of people employed in the sub-region work within the Bristol City Council area. The city centre is of particular importance to the economy. As the region's office capital it is a nationally important location for banking, insurance and professional services. The growing creative industries, media and environmental services sectors are well represented, along with significant public sector employers such as the NHS, universities and government agencies.

4.8.5 Beyond the city centre, Bristol has significant economic strengths in its 1,150 hectares of Principal Industrial and Warehousing Areas. They contain a wide variety of businesses. The Employment Land Study found these areas to be generally functioning well as evidenced by high occupancy and recent investment in new buildings.

4.8.6 Particularly important industrial locations are found to the east of the city centre in the areas of St Philip's Marsh (south of the Feeder Canal), Lawrence Hill, Netham and St Anne's. They contain thriving distribution and production activities which support the city centre office economy as well as significant waste management and recycling operations. At over 650 hectares, Avonmouth is the city's largest industrial location. Activities associated with the Bristol Port, logistics and distribution, manufacturing industry, energy production and waste management are particular strengths there.

4.8.7 Locally important employment opportunities are also provided across the city. These are those individual businesses or groups of premises of varying types, sizes and quality which help to provide jobs close to people's homes and strength and diversity to the local economy. Examples include offices, industrial buildings and small workshops or workspaces.

4.8.8 The Employment Land Study has identified key economic sectors with potential to grow in Bristol. These are: aerospace and advanced engineering; banking and insurance; professional services; creative industries; environmental technologies; information and communications technology; public administration; and wholesale and distribution. An important issue therefore is to provide for their spatial requirements. Supporting the strength of the city centre economy, especially the office market, and addressing the shortage of supply in industrial land evident in all areas of the city outside of Avonmouth are two further important challenges.

4.8.9 Addressing barriers to employment due to low skills, limited childcare and lack of work experience is also regarded as a key citywide issue. For example, a quarter of Bristol's super output areas are in the worst 10% nationally for education, skills and training deprivation with particular concentrations in South Bristol wards. Similarly, meeting regeneration aspirations is a priority, in particular addressing areas of persistent unemployment and socio-economic deprivation especially in South Bristol, the Inner East and the Northern Arc.

Policy BCS8

The economic performance of the city will be strengthened by providing a sufficient and flexible supply of employment land, addressing barriers to employment and promoting the city as a place to invest.

New employment land will be provided in the period 2006-2026. This will include:

- **Up to 236,000m² of net additional office floorspace:**
  - **Around 150,000m² in the city centre;**
  - **Around 60,000m² in South Bristol;**
  - **Around 26,000m² focused on town, district and local centres in the rest of Bristol.**
- **Up to 10 hectares of additional industrial and warehousing land focused on the major regeneration areas in South Bristol.**

Principal Industrial and Warehousing Areas will be identified and retained for industrial and warehousing uses. Employment land outside of these areas will be retained where it makes a valuable contribution to the economy and employment opportunities. New employment floorspace suitable for smaller businesses will be encouraged as part of mixed-use development.

Explanation

4.8.10 "Employment land" in the policy wording refers to sites, premises and floorspace which are used, were last used or are allocated for employment uses. Employment uses are generally those activities falling within Use Classes B1-B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). The "industrial and warehousing uses" appropriate on the city's Principal Industrial and Warehousing Areas will be those falling within Use Classes B1(b), B1(c), B2, B8 and sui generis uses of a similar nature. All other uses will only be acceptable where they are ancillary to the main industrial and/or warehousing use. In some cases it may be necessary to use conditions to limit permitted development rights for changes of use when granting permission for industrial premises to ensure that premises remain available for industrial purposes. "Office floorspace" refers to Use Class B1(a).

Providing New Employment Land

4.8.11 The council's strategy is to ensure that sufficient new employment land is provided to meet the future needs of the economy. Analysing economic forecasts, recent trends in the take-up of employment land, evidence from local commercial property agents and local policy aspirations, the Employment Land Study quantified the amount of office floorspace and industrial and warehousing land required by the city in the period 2006 to 2026.

New Office Floorspace

4.8.12 Bristol has a large pipeline stock of office development with around 290,000m² net additional office floorspace identified at the start of the plan period. A further 236,000m² net additional floorspace is proposed in order to deliver the 524,000 m² total potential requirement recommended by the Employment Land Study. The city centre is the main locational focus for this new floorspace as it will build on its existing strengths as the region's office capital and as a sustainable, accessible location for high-density employment. It will also enable the expansion of some of the key economic sectors of professional services, finance and banking, information and communications technology and public administration. To support its regeneration, about 60,000m² of the net additional floorspace requirement is focused on South Bristol. The remaining 26,000m² is focused on Town, District and Local Centres in the rest of Bristol. The council will keep the supply of office development under review over the plan period, particularly in relation to the economy's recovery from recession.

New Industrial Land

4.8.13 The Employment Land Study recommended that 24.5 hectares of additional industrial land should be provided in areas of the city other than Avonmouth in the period 2006-26. Although the analysis of growth-based forecasts and floorspace in the development pipeline indicated there was adequate land to meet requirements in total, the 24.5 hectare recommendation was intended to meet both pent-up and future demand, provide some flexibility and choice to the industrial market and address the shortage of industrial land available in the areas of the city outside Avonmouth and Severnside.

4.8.14 The Employment Land Study also indicated that the built-up nature of Bristol and factors such as Green Belt, flood risk and open space means that the ability to allocate new industrial and warehousing land within the city is extremely limited. Due to these challenges, and having regard to its overall objectives, the Core Strategy does not propose to deliver all of the 24.5

hectare recommendation. However, it is considered that up to 10 hectares may be deliverable in South Bristol associated with the major regeneration areas identified on the South Bristol Key Diagram (Diagram 4.1.1) including the area around the existing Nover's Hill / Vale Lane industrial and warehousing area which was highlighted in the Employment Land Study. The potential at those broad locations will be explored through the Site Allocations & Development Management DPD.

4.8.15 The Core Strategy also promotes the retention and renewal of approximately 1,150 hectares of existing industrial and warehousing areas. Whilst this will not deliver new industrial land, development proposals which intensify and recycle land and premises in identified Principal Industrial and Warehousing Areas are expected to make a contribution to providing new industrial and warehousing floorspace.

4.8.16 In consultation with neighbouring authorities in the West of England Partnership, the council will keep the supply of industrial and warehousing land and premises under review over the plan period, particularly in relation to the impact of the recession and future economic recovery.

Retaining Employment Land

4.8.17 Retaining valuable employment land is an important part of the council's strategy. It helps to maintain the city's diverse economic base by ensuring a wide variety of business spaces of different types, sizes, quality and cost. The built-up nature of the city means that it is very difficult to physically replace employment sites which are re-developed for alternative uses. Employment land provides continued enterprise and employment opportunities across the city, especially for business start-ups and in those parts of Bristol experiencing persistently high levels of socio-economic deprivation. The approach can help to provide employment close to where people live and so helps reduce the need to travel, especially by car. The city's Principal Industrial and Warehousing Areas represent Bristol's essential core provision of industrial and warehousing land. Retaining these strategically important areas will help the city meet the latent and future demand for industrial and warehousing development.

Policy Delivery

The Site Allocations & Development Management DPD will identify the Principal Industrial and Warehousing Areas to be retained for industrial and warehousing uses. They will be identified based on the recommendations and criteria of the Employment Land Study and other relevant site-specific evidence.

The Bristol Central Area Action Plan will also identify and safeguard employment land.

The approach to valuable employment land outside of the Principal Industrial and Warehousing Areas will be set out in a criteria-based policy in the Site Allocations & Development Management DPD.

Barriers to employment

Policy BCS11 will secure agreements and contributions from developers which address barriers to employment, including construction-related jobs and apprenticeships, skills training and providing affordable workspace provision.

SPD4 "Achieving Positive Planning Through the Use of Planning Obligations" (October 2005) and SPD6 "Economic Contributions from New Development" (October 2005) will be revised and updated to supplement Policy BCS11.

Working with partners including the South West Regional Development Agency, the council will also utilise investment from the European Development Fund's Urban Enterprise Strategic Investment Framework (2007-2013) to help stimulate enterprise and strengthen start-ups, micro and small and medium sized enterprises in Bristol's most deprived communities.

Working with partners such as Job Centre Plus, the Skills Funding Agency and Young People's Learning Agency and local community-based agencies, the council will continue to focus its efforts on supporting unemployed people in deprived areas in taking the next step into employment, education or training. This includes helping people benefit from the employment opportunities offered by new developments.

Promoting the city as a place to invest

The council will work with key partners to provide a comprehensive support and information service to attract investors to locate to the city, including through investinbristol.com and promoting key sectors. The council is a member of Low Carbon South West, which now incorporates the Bristol Environmental Technologies Sector project set up in 2006 to support the growth of a vibrant environmental technologies and services sector in the Bristol City Region.

The quality of existing employment land will be enhanced by the council working with landowners and occupiers on initiatives such as Business Improvement Districts.

The Connecting Bristol initiative aims to ensure the early delivery of Next Generation broadband access across the city to enhance business competitiveness and digital inclusion.

The council's strategy for Avonmouth is set out in Policy BCS4.

Implementation of the economic elements of Policy BCS1, Policy BCS2 and Policy BCS3 will also help to deliver this policy.

Targets	Indicators
Provide new employment land and premises: 1) Up to 236,000m² net additional office floorspace: a) Around 150,000m² net additional office floorspace in the city centre b) Around 60,000m² net additional office floorspace in South Bristol c) Around 26,000m² net additional office floorspace in town, district and local centres in the rest of Bristol 2) Up to 10 hectares of additional industrial and warehousing land	Total annual amount of net additional B1a office floorspace (calculated as new floorspace completions, minus demolitions, plus any gains or losses through change of use) (Indicator for Targets a-c)
Ensure early availability of Next Generation broadband access