

4.11 SAFEGUARDING RAIL-BASED INDUSTRY AT THEALE (ECON. 7)

4.11.1 The rail site at Wigmore Lane, Theale, is defined to include that area served by the rail link, i.e. the cement works, the coated stone treatment and distribution plant and the oil depot. These uses were permitted by the Secretary of State for the purpose of transferring goods from rail to road. It is this special use which needs to be protected due to the shortage of appropriate sites for such facilities across West Berkshire. The builders yard, house and paddock to the south of Wigmore Lane has now been included within this policy so as to provide a further opportunity for rail-served development. Any development of this site should be subject to satisfactory road access, this access should be contained within the existing rail site and not from outside.

4.11.2 Part of the site has been identified under the Berkshire Waste Local Plan as a preferred area for road to rail transfer operations, plus major recycling facilities which could include difficult and metal wastes. It is considered that these uses conform to the road to rail transfer designation, given the opportunity to transport such wastes, by rail from the site. Care must also be taken to ensure that mitigation measures are employed to limit impacts such as noise, dust and smell from waste transfer activities.

4.11.3 Policy T8 in the Structure Plan encourages road to rail transfer sites, subject to environmental and transport considerations. Any extension to the area designated under policy ECON.7 would therefore be subject to the following factors: (a) a demonstrated need for expansion of the rail-based industries; (b) the scale and intensity of the proposed development and its wider environmental impact; (c) its impact upon the existing residential properties which are in proximity, in particular, in terms of noise, traffic and visual intrusion; (d) the scale and nature of environmental and landscape improvements; (e) the provision of satisfactory access.

POLICY ECON.7 The rail site at Theale should be reserved solely for those industries which require and need a permanent and proven rail link coupled with access to the primary road network.