

employment floorspace is proposed. Affordable workspace should constitute at least 10% of the proposed employment floorspace within major mixed-use schemes and commercial schemes and the workspace must remain affordable for a minimum of 15 years. Affordable workspace is considered to have a rent and service charge of less than 80% of comparable local market rates, however market rates will vary according to a range of factors such as location within the borough, the quality and type of stock. As part of a proposal, there will need to be an assessment of local evidence relating to the specific location of the proposal and its target market, with a focus on rents or charges which are accessible for early-stage businesses, and justifies the discount that is proposed.

- 19.50** A Workspace Management Plan will be required to set out the details of how the affordable workspace provision will meet the requirements of the policy. This will be

secured through a Section 106 Agreement in line with the guidance in the Council's Planning Obligations SPD.

Off-site provision of affordable workspace

- 19.51** New affordable workspace should normally be provided on-site. This is to ensure that the workspace is provided in a range of locations across the borough, including those higher value areas where certain occupiers may struggle to find suitable, affordable premises. Only in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated robustly that this is not appropriate or feasible to do so, the Council will consider whether there are alternative interventions that achieve equivalent or higher value and impact through an off-site contribution. This may be through a financial contribution towards existing and/or new similar facilities nearby that is considered to directly mitigate the impact of the development and therefore meet the tests for a Section 106 contribution.

Policy 26

Visitor Economy

- A. The Council will support the sustainable growth of the visitor economy for the benefit of the local area by:
1. supporting proposals which promote and enhance the borough's existing tourist attractions, including the unique, historic and cultural assets that are connected via the River Thames, such as The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Ham House and Hampton Court Palace;
 2. proposals that lead to increased visitors and tourists need to be of an appropriate scale for the size of the centre and will be assessed against the transport policies of this Plan;
 3. requiring accommodation and facilities to be accessible to all; either 10% of hotel bedrooms should be wheelchair accessible or 15% of new bedrooms to be accessible rooms as set out in London Plan Policy E10;
 4. enhancing the environment in areas leading to, within and around visitor destinations where appropriate;
 5. supporting the Cultural Quarters in Richmond and Twickenham and other existing clusters of cultural facilities and creative industries, particularly in town centres, and where ancillary facilities are proposed that are open for public use (such as restaurants, gyms and conference facilities).
- B. In relation to visitor accommodation:
1. proposals which result in the loss of bedspaces will be resisted;

2. proposals which increase the number of bedspaces will be supported subject to other Local Plan policies;
3. proposals will be supported which contribute towards providing a range of visitor accommodation, including small independent hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation, or short-term accommodation with stays not exceeding 90 days, subject to other Local Plan policies.

19.52 The Council recognises the value of the visitor economy both to the local and London economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on travel, particularly overseas visitors, and uncertainty has affected the sector. However in the short-term there has been growth in a stronger staycation market, with the Mayor's recovery plans including a 'Let's Do London' campaign in 2021. There could be a flexible approach to enable temporary uses in exceptional circumstances; however the protection of the existing stock of visitor accommodation is considered vital given the borough's rich visitor and cultural infrastructure. The Council's vision for our arts, libraries, parks and sport and fitness services set out in Culture Richmond 2021 – 2031 aims to support the growth of culture and creativity in the borough, while adapting to be resilient. A refreshed Visit Richmond Strategy to support local centres and the visitor economy was agreed to be undertaken by the Council in February 2022, including to invest in a new Visit Richmond marketing campaign.

19.53 The borough is a popular destination for visitors to traditional attractions such as the historic houses and gardens, the River Thames as well as the rugby-related attractions and associated facilities such as restaurants and shops. Parts of both Richmond and Twickenham town centres have existing cultural areas with clusters of existing uses, defined as Cultural Quarters in the theme 'Shaping and supporting our town and local centres' that can be a focus for improving the offer to visitors, bringing opportunities to stimulate vibrancy and viability and promote diversity, through linked trips and providing additional public uses (with access secured through a legal agreement) that form a destination as well as providing local job opportunities. The London Plan sets

out that the diversity of cultural infrastructure in all parts of London should be conserved, enhanced and promoted, in Policies E10 and HC5. The Council will expect the major attractions including Twickenham Stadium and the Stoop (Harlequins) to be developed in accordance with the Site Allocations set out in this plan.

19.54 The Council will encourage the provision of accommodation to enable visitors to stay longer and spend more. Major new hotel development will be expected to be located within town centres in the first instance as in Policy 18 Development in Centres, which also sets out guidance on the appropriate location and scale of hotel development. London Plan Policy E10 seeks an additional 58,000 bedrooms of serviced accommodation by 2041, with boroughs in outer London expected to plan proactively for new accommodation and the London-wide evidence base reflects boroughs take a share of the London supply projection. The GLA published a Technical Note in 2022⁽⁵⁾ which updates hotel accommodation projections. It was recognised that although forecasting was difficult, it was nevertheless expected that tourism would return to its pre-crisis levels by the middle of the decade. Therefore, proposals which increase the number of bedspaces will be supported, subject to other Local Plan policies, where they contribute to meeting the London Plan target.

19.55 The London Plan also requires visitor infrastructure to contribute to improving the availability of accessible serviced accommodation, as vital to ensure that as many visitors as possible can stay in London and experience its visitor attractions and business offer. London Plan Policy E10 has a policy requirement which allows developers to select between two options based on which

best fits the scale of development proposed. These requirements aim to recognise the need not only for standard wheelchair accessible rooms, but also rooms suitable for people with ambulant mobility impairments or older people who could benefit from additional access features, as well as rooms suitable for people who require assistance or who require a carer.

19.56 In determining applications for hotel development the Council will be mindful of the impact of the development on amenity, living conditions, parking, servicing and transport. It will be taken into account whether any ancillary facilities within the hotel, such as a gym, are open for public use.

19.57 The Council will work with its partners to promote the borough as a tourist destination. It is also recognised that major events held within the borough attract very large numbers

of people, and the Council will continue to work with partners, including public transport operators and event organisers, to promote sustainable travel choices and minimise disruption to residents and local businesses where possible.

19.58 In addition, proposals will be assessed in the context of maximising housing delivery, including affordable housing. In existing residential areas, there will need to be consideration whether a proposal for visitor accommodation would compromise capacity to meet the need for conventional dwellings. As set out under Policy 14 Loss of Housing, short-term holiday rented accommodation can be beneficial in providing for short-stays in sustainable locations, such as town centres and areas better served by public transport, however using for more than 90 days a year will be resisted where there is a detrimental impact on the existing housing stock.

Policy 27

Telecommunications and Digital Infrastructure (Strategic Policy)

A. The Council will promote the enhanced connectivity of the borough through supporting infrastructure for high speed broadband and telecommunications including next generation technology such as 5G and full fibre broadband connections. New development is expected to provide for full fibre and mobile connectivity in accordance with London Plan Policy SI 6 part A.

B. Applications for telecommunications development (including for prior approval under Part 16 of the General Permitted Development Order, or any other such future Order) will be considered in accordance with national policy and guidance and the following:

1. The applicant will need to submit evidence to demonstrate that all options for sharing of existing equipment, including with other operators, and erecting masts on existing tall buildings or structures, have been fully explored before considering the erection of new structures or facilities.
2. Visual impacts of telecommunications proposals should be minimised, including in line with Policy 28 'Local Character and Design Quality (Strategic Policy)', particularly on roof tops.
3. The applicant has demonstrated that the development will operate within the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection Guidelines for public exposure.

19.59 National policy sets out guidance on the provision of high quality communications infrastructure, which is essential for sustainable economic growth. Modern telecommunications systems are an essential component in today's economy. Digital

technology has the ability to transform how businesses operate with flexible working and more web communication expected to continue their popularity particularly due to the increase in home working.