

### Policy EC1: Sustainable Economic Prosperity and Investment

The Council will support economic development proposals, growth in high-skilled jobs, and tourism that contributes towards the delivery of economic prosperity in the district. Sustainable economic development will be achieved by:

- a) Ensuring that major economic development proposals, including those strategic employment allocations identified at Policy SS5 (Strategic Employment Allocations) demonstrate how they will contribute to addressing identified local skills shortages and support local employment, skills and education;
- b) Supporting proposals for new employment premises/floorspace or the redevelopment, conversion, upgrading, intensification or reconfiguration of employment premises or floorspace on existing business sites, where this will lead to an improvement of employment provision, jobs and/or assist to meet the needs of modern business standards;
- c) Ensuring that economic development is well-designed, suitable for incorporating a range of unit sizes and flexible in terms of its operation and use;
- d) Ensuring that major economic development proposals, including those strategic employment allocations identified at Policy SS6 (Strategic Employment Allocations) deliver environmental and climate change policy requirements. This will include a positive approach to a Net Zero Wealden, opportunities to deliver sustainably constructed business premises that operate efficiently, as well as providing for sustainable modes of travel wherever possible;
- e) Supporting the creation of a safe, attractive, accessible and high-quality environment, taking opportunities to improve connectivity within settlements through cycle/pedestrian infrastructure improvements;
- f) Providing the appropriate infrastructure to support business growth and particularly seek to include EV charging points and support digital infrastructure improvements, including fibre broadband and 5G;
- g) Taking a positive approach to the formation of small start-up businesses, as well as supporting new ways of working following the Covid-19 pandemic, such as homeworking; and
- h) Delivering tourism facilities and visitor accommodation that enhances the attractiveness of the district and contributes to Wealden remaining a high-quality destination to stay and visit.

#### Question 72

#### Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy EC1 Sustainable Economic Prosperity and Investment?
- b Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- c Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

#### Notes and Comment

## Policy EC2: Existing Strategic Employment Sites

- 1 Existing strategic employment sites, premises and floorspace will be safeguarded against loss to other non-employment uses. The loss of employment uses on strategic employment sites will need to be justified and comply with the requirements of Policy EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Uses of this Local Plan.
- 2 To maintain and assist in meeting the employment needs of the district during the plan period, the Council will safeguard and restrict uses at the following existing strategic employment sites to use classes E(g)<sup>192</sup>, B2 and B8. The boundaries for these sites are shown on the Policies Map.

Table 14

Strategic Employment Sites
Ashdown Business Park, Michael Way, Maresfield
Bellbrook Industrial Estate, Bell Lane, Uckfield
Chaucer Business Park, Dittons Road, Polegate
Diplocks Way Industrial Estate, Diplocks Way, Hailsham
Durgates Industrial Estate, Durgates, Wadhurst
Farningham Road Industrial Estate, Farningham Road, Crowborough
Ghyll Road Industrial Estate, Heathfield
Hackhurst Lane Industrial Estate, Lower Dicker
Lexden Lodge Industrial Estate, Crowborough Hill, Jarvis Brook, Crowborough
Milbrook Industrial Estate, Sybron Way, Crowborough
Mountney Bridge Business Park, Eastbourne Road, Westham
Park Lane Industrial Estate, Park Road, Crowborough
Ridgewood Industrial Park, New Road, Ridgewood, Uckfield
Squires Farm Industrial Estate, Easons Green, Framfield
Station Road Industrial Estate, Station Road, Forest Row
Station Road Industrial Estate, Station Road, Hailsham
Station Road Industrial Estate, Browning Road, Heathfield
Swallow Business Park, Diamond Drive, Lower Dicker
Wadhurst Business Park, Faircrouch Lane, Wadhurst

### Intensification

- 3 Proposals for the intensification of employment uses (i.e. E(g), B2 and B8) within the boundary of these Strategic Employment Sites, as shown in the Policies Map, will be supported providing it is in accordance with other development plan policies.

### Redevelopment

- 4 Proposals for the redevelopment of a site/building/premises for an employment use (i.e. E(g), B2 and B8) within Strategic Employment Sites will be supported where it does not result in the overall loss of employment floorspace, or where the loss leads to an improvement of employment provision, jobs and/or assist to meet the needs of modern business standards.
- 5 Proposals for alternative non-employment uses (including sui generis uses) will only be supported where it meets the requirements of Policy EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic and Tourism Uses of this Local Plan, and the alternative use supports the integrity and function of the employment site.

### Trade Counters

- 6 Trade counters in strategic employment sites will only be supported where they are clearly subsidiary and a 'de-minimis' feature of the primary use of the unit, where only a small quantum of trade counter use is proposed and where there is no adverse effect on the employment and / or neighbouring area, as a consequence of the trade counter.

## Notes and Comment

### Question 73

#### Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy EC2 Existing Strategic Employment Sites?
- b Do you agree with the list of existing strategic employment sites defined in this policy? Are there any missing, or are there any others that should be included?
- c Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- d Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

## Policy EC3: Retention and / or Loss of Non-Strategic Employment Sites, Premises or Floorspace

### Non-Strategic Employment Sites

- 1 Existing employment sites, premises, buildings and floorspace currently used for employment purposes (use classes E(g), B2 and B8) will be protected against loss to non-employment uses.
- 2 Where planning permission is required, proposals that will result in the loss of employment use will only be permitted where:
  - a) There are no strong economic reasons to retain the site, premises or floorspace;
  - b) The proposal would result in economic benefits including generating an equivalent number of, or an increase in jobs;
  - c) The site is not appropriate for the continuation of its present use, or any other employment use, due to a significant detriment to the environment or amenity of the area;
  - d) The new proposal would not be detrimental to the function or operation of the wider site; and
  - e) Sufficient parking is provided.
- 3 Proposals for the loss of a business use under use classes E(g), B2 and B8 that will not generate an alternative employment use will be considered in accordance with Policy EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Uses.

### Question 74

#### Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy EC3 Retention and/or Loss of Non-Strategic Employment Sites, Premises or Floorspace?
- b Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- c Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

## Notes and Comment

## Policy EC4: Rural Economy

### Part 1: Economic development uses outside of development boundaries

- 1 Proposals for economic development outside development boundaries, as defined on the Policies Map, will be supported where:
  - a) The rural location for the business is justified to sustain, expand or enhance the rural economy;
  - b) It enhances local employment opportunities;
  - c) The location is considered sustainable in terms of accessibility;
  - d) The proposal delivers new EV charging points at the premises;
  - e) The proposal would not prejudice existing uses or require further rural buildings to facilitate the existing use;
  - f) The proposal is of a scale that is consistent with the proposed use and its rural character and location; and
  - g) The proposal would not generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for the rural roads affected by the proposal and the site's existing vehicular access is suitable or can be made suitable for the proposed use.

### Part 2: Conversion, re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings for business use

- 2 Proposals will only be supported outside of development boundaries where:
  - a) The building is structurally sound and of a permanent and substantial construction capable of conversion without significant new build, extension or alteration;
  - b) The proposal makes an efficient and viable use of a redundant or disused building, including the optimal viable use of a heritage asset where applicable;
  - c) There is no impact on local amenity, landscape character or heritage assets;
  - d) There is an enhancement to the immediate setting; and
  - e) The curtilage of the building is restricted to facilitate the requirements of the employment use only.

### Part 3: Agricultural, forestry, horticultural and other rural based land development

- 3 Where a proposal for agricultural, forestry, horticultural and other rural based land use cannot be accommodated within an existing building, proposals will only be supported where:
  - a) There is a justified business case that demonstrates that development is necessary at the scale proposed to sustain and meet the reasonable needs of the existing rural use;
  - b) Previously developed land is considered in the first instance for the new building;
  - c) The siting, design and external appearance of the development is designed to meet the needs of the rural business, respecting local rural distinctiveness, traditional farmstead groupings and is appropriately located to existing buildings;
  - d) The design and location of the building relates well to the intended rural use and reflects the functional need of the rural use; and
  - e) The development does not have an intrusive impact on the wider landscape it sits within, particularly where a new building is sited within or adjoining designated landscapes.
- 4 Proposals that are for the purpose of assisting farms to modernise and/or adapt to funding changes or climate change will be supported in principle subject to other policies within this local plan.

### Question 75

#### Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy EC4 Rural Economy?
- b Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- c Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

## Notes and Comments

## Policy EC5: Equestrian Development

- 1 Proposals for equestrian facilities, including any ancillary buildings or structures, will be supported provided that the following criteria is met:
  - a) the proposal is not sited in a particularly prominent or isolated location where new development of this nature would be considered inappropriate to its rural setting;
  - b) it can be demonstrated that the re-use of existing buildings on sites for equestrian use are inappropriate before new or replacement buildings are considered;
  - c) if new buildings/facilities are required, that they are of an appropriate scale to their landscape setting and, where feasible, closely related to existing buildings;
  - d) the design of the development incorporates a drainage system that provides for the suitable disposal of foul and surface water drainage, including animal waste;
  - e) sufficient grazing land for horses is available;
  - f) the proposal should, where possible, be well related to the existing bridleway network;
  - g) that any outdoor lighting/floodlighting is designed to avoid a detrimental impact on visual or residential amenity, wildlife or highway safety, but allows the safe operation of activities on site;
  - h) car parking requirements can be accommodated satisfactorily within the immediate surrounds of the buildings, or where this is not suitable due to highway safety concerns, an alternative solution is agreed; and
  - i) the proposal does not generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for the rural roads affected by the proposal or require improvements or alterations to these roads, which would be detrimental to the rural character of the area.
- 2 Where the above requirements are met, the Council may also find it appropriate to consider the following restrictions through planning conditions:
  - a) the removal of permitted development rights for fencing, hardstanding and external storage, where it is considered that there is the need to control potential adverse landscape impacts which can arise from the poor management of the site or the excessive sub-division of the land.

### Question 76

#### Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy EC5 Equestrian Development?
- b Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- c Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

## Notes and Comments

## Policy EC6: Tourism Facilities and Attractions

### Provision of New, Improved, Upgraded or Extended Tourism Facilities and Attractions

- 1 The Council supports new development to advance the visitor economy for both tourism, leisure and business purposes where a proposal demonstrates that it:
  - a) is of an appropriate scale, nature and appearance, relating well to its surroundings;
  - b) is located within the development boundary, as defined on the Policies Map, and is easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport, including walking and cycling;
  - c) assists in town / village regeneration, contributing to the local economy;
  - d) benefits both existing residents and visitors;
- e) provides for high quality and sustainable tourism facilities on a year-round basis; and
- f) contributes to the retention and enhancement of existing facilities.
- 2 Proposals for tourism facilities and attractions in the countryside will only be supported where:
  - a) it relates to an existing tourism facility or attraction that is seeking to expand and is of a scale, form and design suitable to its location; or
  - b) where sustainable settlements would not be suitable for the scale and nature of the facility or attraction, for example where an existing attraction relies on a geographically fixed resource; or
  - c) where there will be an overriding benefit for locating away from a sustainable settlement and the proposal can be accessed by public transport. An overriding benefit could relate to the economy, community or environment.
- 3 Proposals for tourism facilities and attractions outside development boundaries, as defined on the Policies Map, will require a robust case to be made as part of its business plan and will also need to meet the criteria under Part 1 of Policy EC4: Rural Economy of this Local Plan.

### Protection of Existing Tourism Uses

- 4 Development resulting in the loss of tourism facilities and attractions to alternative uses will need to be considered in line with Policy EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism uses.

### Question 77

#### Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy EC6 Tourism Facilities and Attractions?
- b Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- c Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

## Notes and Comments

## Policy EC7: Visitor Accommodation

- 1 The Council supports new development for visitor accommodation in both attracting visitors to the district and supporting local jobs within Wealden. The Council will seek to retain and provide a broad range of visitor accommodation.
- 2 Development proposals for new visitor accommodation, including extensions and improvements to existing accommodation, will be supported where proposals can satisfy the following criteria:
  - a) it increases the range and/or quality of visitor accommodation;
  - b) in the case of new serviced tourist accommodation, the proposal is located within the development boundary of a sustainable settlement (as defined in the settlement hierarchy) and is easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport, including walking, wheeling and cycling;
  - c) in the case of non-serviced tourist accommodation, this will be supported across the district (subject to other policies in this Local Plan) where the proposal seeks to improve the provision of sustainable transport options to the site to ensure that the site is accessible from a sustainable settlement;
  - d) opportunities are taken to use existing buildings on site where possible. Where new buildings are essential, they must be designed sensitively and to a high standard;
  - e) the proposed development has no significant adverse impact on the landscape, ecological and historic characteristics of the site;
  - f) the proposed development is of an appropriate scale to its immediate surroundings and would not detrimentally impact the character of the area;
  - g) there would be no harm on highway safety or a severe impact on the immediate highway network;
  - h) the car parking requirements for the proposal can be accommodated satisfactorily within the immediate surrounds of the buildings, or where this is not suitable due to highway safety concerns, an alternative solution is agreed.
- 3 Where planning permission is granted for caravan and camping sites, it will normally be subject to a planning condition restricting the use to holiday/leisure accommodation only and the site may also be subject to a seasonal occupancy condition in limited circumstances.

### Retention of Visitor Accommodation

- 4 Development resulting in the loss of sites or premises used, or last in (lawful) use, as visitor accommodation<sup>193</sup> to alternative uses will need to be considered in line with Policy EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism uses.

### Question 78

#### Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy EC7 Visitor Accommodation?
- b Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- c Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

## Notes and Comments

## Policy EC8: The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Use and Commercial Community Facilities

- 1 In accordance with policies set out in this Local Plan, proposals that involve the loss or deterioration of sites/premises in a tourism or economic use\*, including those sites that were last in such a (lawful) use, as well as commercial community facilities\*\* must demonstrate that the site is genuinely redundant and there is no reasonable prospect of a continued use, as well as being supported by the following:
  - a) evidence of an active and effective marketing campaign that will be expected to cover a period, normally of 18 months, with written confirmation from a specialist commercial agent(s) that clearly indicates a lack of demand for the existing use (or an alternative use where this applicable). This marketing process would also need to demonstrate that the site/premises has remained unlet or for sale for the 18-month period, despite genuine and sustained attempts to let or sell on reasonable terms; and
  - b) evidence that demonstrates that the site/premises is not or is unable to be financially viable for its current use (or last lawful use), including alternative uses where applicable.
- 2 Proposals that would result in the loss of facilities or features that may undermine the viability of the existing commercial community facility, tourism use, or economic use would normally be refused planning permission unless there are exceptional circumstances for such a proposal to proceed and this meets all other policy provisions in this Local Plan.
- 3 Where the review of submitted information by an independent consultant is considered necessary, the applicant will be required to cover such costs as part of the planning application process.

### Question 79

#### Consultation Questions

- a Do you agree with draft Policy EC8 The Retention of Sites in Economic or Tourism Use and Commercial Community Facilities?
- b Should we change anything? If so, what should we change and why?
- c Have we missed anything? If so, what have we missed and how should it be included?

## Notes and Comments

Other Comments