

5 Core Policies

The Rural Economy

Policy CS 10

Rural Economy

Proposals to diversify the rural economy will be encouraged, particularly where they are located in or adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Service Villages. Existing small and medium sized enterprises within the rural areas will be supported in order to provide local job opportunities and maintain the vitality of smaller rural settlements. Proposals seeking the loss of such existing sites and premises must demonstrate that the proposal does not negatively impact upon the local economy, and the vitality and viability of the surrounding rural area.

Proposals for appropriate farm diversification will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will make a long-term contribution to sustaining the agricultural enterprise as a whole.

Explanation of the Policy

5.65 The Council will encourage the retention of small and medium sized businesses in the rural areas, along with the promotion of appropriate farm diversification in order to sustain the viability of some agricultural enterprises. The Council recognises changes in the agricultural industry over recent years. Rural West Berkshire plays an important role within the District's economy and therefore it is essential that the rural communities are supported. Many rural areas host a large number of small and medium sized enterprises which are vital to providing local job opportunities and a diverse economy. There is a continued need to protect and support the development of start-up businesses and adequate provision should be made for them throughout the District. National policy supports sustainable economic growth in rural areas. More detailed policies on the management of development contributing to the rural economy will be set out in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. These will include farm diversification and conversion and reuse of existing buildings in the countryside consistent with national policy.



5.66 In relation to this, the racehorse industry and tourism also make a vital contribution to the local economy, and the management of both these sectors is key to fostering economic growth without detriment to the environment.

Delivery and Monitoring

The policy will be delivered through the development management process and through subsequent policies set out in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. Working in partnership with the Local Strategic Partnership and continuing to build relationships with local businesses will all be key to policy delivery.

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The Council will regularly monitor and review the delivery of economic development across the District through planning commitments and completions. The AMR will assess various indicators including the total amount of additional employment floorspace, total amount of employment land available, and total amount of employment land lost to alternative uses.