BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

Introduction

The provision of services and employment are critical issues in any town or village. The economy is one of the three key factors in the NPPF behind the idea of a sustainable place.

Our study of population and local employment shows that the balance between housing and local employment policy in the Caterham, Whyteleafe and Chaldon area has been deteriorating for more than 20 years, with significant loss of commercial sites in favour of housing. The ratio between local vs external jobs is amongst the lowest in Surrey and similar places. This imbalance needs to be corrected to encourage start-ups, high value-added business operating in modern technologies and where a skilled and motivated population can be rewarded. (Data to support this is in Business Appendix Ref A).

To attract business we need to create space for enterprise in the different town and village centres, together with other suitable locations around the area. Places with good communications facilities - whether for traditional transport and access, or providing modern digital communications - would be ideal. Our work has been aimed at identifying issues and putting forward ideas to recover the right balance.

We already have many skilled people who have come to the area over the last 20 years. But we need more of them to be able to work locally.

Policies are proposed to support the retention and expansion of local business in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Elements to support regeneration of local business:

a. Support local businesses and encourage others to come.

b. Create links and co-operate with all business, large or small.

c. Encourage businesses and social enterprise that benefit the community and provide additional local employment.


The CR3 Neighbourhood Plan has called for TDC to introduce Article 4 directives, based on this imbalance. These are additional planning controls which remove ‘permitted development’ rights over certain alterations.

While population increased, locally based jobs fell. Recent figures over the last 6 years show 577 fewer local jobs, at a time when the population rose by 2,216 people. (Ref: Local population and job info via ONS data, published October 2016). This pattern is not seen in nearby places such as Reigate, Leatherhead, Epsom or Sevenoaks. This demonstrates an increasing imbalance in CR3 and is not sustainable. Tandridge’s overall figures are shown in the attached chart too, showing a lower population growth in percentage terms but a higher local employment trend. In other words the population growth is in CR3 as are the local job losses.
Earlier reductions in employment space are estimated to have removed a further 1,000 local jobs in detailed evidence provided in the Business Appendix ref B. Our residents’ survey strongly supported strengthening of local business and jobs. (92%)

Our overall goal to support regeneration of local business and the supporting infrastructure is in alignment with those expressed in Coast to Capital’s Strategic Economic Plan published in 2014. All 17 local authorities within their area, including Tandridge District Council, endorsed Coast to Capital’s plan. Coast to Capital is the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with responsibility for overall economic development as a partnership between public and private sector and with access to significant government funding to assist that goal.

Our strategy is also in line with the Government’s aim to rebalance the UK economy; encourage new businesses in 21st century sectors; provide funding for startups and opportunities for regional growth. This policy has been reinforced in Government policy statements post BREXIT.

**Business & Employment Policies**

Employment is a critical factor in creating a sustainable place. It can be generated both through private industry and public service sector and in the context of employment are both equally supported.

Businesses either provide employment which encourages people to live nearby, or clusters of people attract businesses to provide services and set up enterprises locally. Get the balance right and you have a vibrant place. Get it wrong and you end up with a downward spiral. Our local evidence is that the balance has been wrong for more than 20 years, with priority given to housing. We need to address this by encouraging start-ups; high value-added businesses operating in smart technologies would reward a skilled and motivated population. To attract this work we need to maintain better working site spaces and up to date buildings for enterprise, whether in Town Centres, or in local areas with good communication facilities - linked by traditional transport and access to modern digital communications.

Public Services not only provide the necessary amenities required to maintain a vibrant sustainable society but also offer employment to many professional and workplace staff, often largely recruited locally.

Local jobs are required at sustainable levels in the same general areas. CR3 is both the home for one third of Tandridge’s population and for those employed overall. However the ratio between local jobs and out commuting has dropped by over 10% in just 6 years. It is not sustainable, is significantly worse than elsewhere in Tandridge and other neighbouring towns.

The NP’s intention is to improve the economy of CR3. The NP will work to support local businesses, creating links to and co-operation with all business ventures, whether large or small. We wish to encourage new businesses and social enterprises that benefit the community.

The CR3 plan seeks to regenerate local employment capability, which has declined over the last 20 years through the closure of 50 hectares of employment space. This space has largely been converted to residential property. The CR3 forum believes that any further reduction in the number of employment sites, without alternative business spaces being identified and provided, would be detrimental to the economic health of the area. Empty town centres during the day are not conducive to vibrancy, retail, or the service elements of the local economy. It stresses car parking, travel facilities and indeed has other consequences such as infrastructure needs like storm water and groundwater management. Other parts of this Neighbourhood Plan cover
the different aspects of creating an integrated plan for the area and of course are interlinked.

Some potential sites are identified for business hubs, flexible office resources, live work units and a Technology and Business park. Contaminated land is identified as well as a listed building with commercial use in Green Belt. Spaces in Town Centres also need to provide for mixed use, to retain critical mass as retail and residential alone will not sustain them.

The Residents’ Questionnaire was overwhelmingly supportive of these types of strategic approach for business and the CR3 economy.

We strongly supported the local business partnership’s proposals to create a Business Improvement District, (BID) from 1st April 2017, funded by a small levy on local business, approved by a business ratepayers referendum and run by a company set up for the purpose - the BID Company.

We also strongly support the Caterham Town Design Statement, which seeks to enhance our present facilities and public spaces in mixed use centres. This document was released on March 16th 2017 and provides community level issues and ideas. This is in the same timeframe as Tandridge’s Masterplan proposals for town centre redevelopment in Hill and Valley, which broadly we support.

**Policy BE01 - To provide employment opportunities to meet local needs**

**Aim:**
To stop the loss of local employment.
To rebalance the local employment economy.
To encourage the increase in the number of local employment opportunities in the future.

**Justification:**
The NPPF supports the requirement for a sustainable economy.
Residents have strongly indicated that they would prefer to work locally.
To reduce the level of commuting necessary to obtain high value employment.

**Policy BE01 - Employment Floor Space**

There will be a presumption in favour of employment generating development which helps to rebalance/increase the level of available employment opportunities. Proposals that would result in an overall loss of commercial floor-space shall be resisted, unless it can be shown that alternative sites are available to maintain the supply, rather than simple population growth without local employment.

**Policy BE02 - Support for small and start-up businesses**

**Aim:**
The Neighbourhood Plan believes that support for small and startup business fits well into the existing local economy and social fabric and can provide the
best strategy for increasing local employment within an existing and growing skills base.

Justification: Surveys and data indicate and existing skills base and recent improvements in broadband provision support these opportunities which have direct synergy with the aim of generating more local employment in CR3 area and a more sustainable local economy. Recent statistics (Oct 2016 in Business Appendix Ref A) demonstrate a positive growth rate in these kinds of businesses has already begun. We need to maintain and expand on this.

Policy BE02 - Start-up/Small Business

Proposals for start-up / small-scale commercial development are supported. Proposals for businesses and other enterprises that meet the needs of the community will be supported provided that they would:

- Not involve the overall loss of residential dwellings.
- Contribute to the character and vitality of the local area.
- Be well integrated with and complementary to existing clusters of activity within CR3.
- Protect residential amenity.
- Not impact adversely upon road safety or access.
- Broadband provision will support these opportunities which have direct synergy with the aim of generating more local employment in CR3 area and a more sustainable local economy.

Policy BE03 - Development of a new Enterprise Park

Aim: To rebalance the local economy into a local sustainable economy which provides work opportunities for its residents at a local level.

Justification: The NPPF requires all planning decisions and policies to support a sustainable economy.

Losses in local employment over the past decade have caused the overall CR3 economy to become un-balanced and in fact this situation has occurred gradually over the last 20 years. The trend must be reversed.

Surveys and consultations all indicate a need for more local employment particularly for those leaving full time education but with less reliance on commuting to provide high value employment.
Policy BE03 - Enterprise/Business Park

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the establishment of a business and science park. The overriding policy will be that such development is sustainable, blends with the character of the area and provides local employment.

Such a site should provide for the needs of new businesses and must be well served by a road, rail and digital communications infrastructure, whether fixed or mobile.

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks proposals for such capabilities and smaller focused start up facilities. The Neighbourhood Plan supports:

- Expansion and inwards movement to CR3 of Science, Technology, Education, Engineering, Design and other high growth, knowledge based and high value businesses.
- Self-sufficiency in the provision of adequate parking.
- The Neighbourhood Plan supports the preferred use of brownfield and contaminated sites and will view positively remedial works as a net gain to the economy and community when appraising a development application.
- Integration into local utilities services such as power, gas, communications and water in a sustainable way.

Policy BE04 and BE05 - Caterham Valley Town Centre and other CR3 NP centres

Aim: To improve and sustain the retail provision within the CR3 area are both in the town centres and in the neighbourhood centres.

Justification: Sustainability under the NPPF and Local Plans.

Response to comments and concerns raised by local residents.

Policy BE04 - Caterham Valley Town Centre

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the continual regeneration of Caterham Valley Town Centre as shown on the associated map in the NP.

The Neighbourhood Plan requires all new development applications comply with the following:

1. Provide a balance of retail (A1, A2, A3), Commercial (B1), Leisure & Community facilities (D2) and Residential (C3) with no excessive preponderance of any one use class.

2. Residential use above first floor level will be acceptable. First floor uses should be retail or commercial.
3 High-quality design and use of high-quality materials are required.

4 Designs should avoid purely flat facades which fail to contribute to the character of the town and the public realm.

5 Creation of good public realm space in and around new developments and integrating with existing buildings/spaces, co-ordinating with key features of the town centre.

6 Building heights along road frontages should not exceed 3.0-3.5 storeys and should have some variation. The building heights can step up away from the road frontage providing that the heights remain below a 45 degree line taken from the top of the road frontage facade.

7 Arcaded development will be acceptable.

8 Car parking should be provided, preferably below ground and should not be less than one car space per dwelling and sufficient to serve commercial needs.

9 Proposals which follow guidelines within published and agreed Design Statemens and/ or Masterplans for Caterham will be supported.

Policy BE05 - Other CR3 Centres

The contribution that other neighbourhood centres make to the quality and character of the CR3 area are valued. Proposals shall be supported where they meet local needs and improve accessibility and parking through future development. (A list of small shopping parades in CR3 is available) In particular:

1 Support the development of retail and other commercial and community/ social uses of an appropriate type and scale.

2 Positive consideration will be given to applications that will improve the quality of shop fronts and signage in these areas.

3 Applications which improve on the net level of commuter and public parking will be supported and encouraged. Any net loss of parking will not be acceptable.

4 Encourage the development of central community space within the CR3 area.

Technology & Business Parks and other new employment spaces

Of these the most likely are Commercial category CR3 space at Kenley Airfield, Caterham Valley Masterplan/Town Design Statement area and an A22 location.

Development in Whyteleafe will depend on the scope of other sites now under development but could include a flexible user business centre.