

Matter 16 – Design, Heritage and the Rural Economy (Policies QD01-QD03, QD06-QD07, SP33-SP34, HE01-HE05, HO19 and E15-E19)

Issue 3 – The Rural Economy – Policies HO19 and E15-E19

Q3. What is the justification for requiring development proposals for economic development to be located in “sustainable locations” in Policy E15? How will decision-makers, developers and local communities determine what constitutes a sustainable location? Is the policy effective?

A strategic priority of the plan is to create additional employment opportunities and to strengthen and diversify the local economy. The plan allocates land for employment uses and protects land and premises for continued and future employment uses (Policy SP02); as well as seeking to retain existing employment sites (Policy E01).

Policy E15 allows new build economic development in the rural areas. This approach could undermine bringing forward allocated employment land and result in the loss of existing employment sites, contrary to the strategic aims of the plan.

Thanet is a small district. The rural area is very close to the urban area and allocated sites. The prosperity of residents, and villages and settlements in the rural area could be supported through job creation in the nearby urban areas and allocations.

Outside the urban area most of the land is best and most versatile agricultural land and is intensively farmed, supporting a strong rural economy.

Many of the plan’s allocations will result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. This policy would facilitate yet further loss of this irreplaceable land, which is needed to help feed existing and future generations.