

## **Matter 5 - Are the policies to manage and promote the Local Economy and Employment Areas and Allocations sound?**

The Plan proposes most of the additional housing should be allocated in the gap between East Grinstead, Felbridge and Crawley Down but no additional employment space.

The Council under its Settlement Hierarchy seeks to distribute new housing proportionately amongst the district's settlements but does not seek to do the same for employment space. This allows the balance between housing provision and maintaining an adequate supply to be undermined.

The Council states that it does not monitor the amount of employment space yet seeks to allocate it between settlements. **This means that the proposed allocations are not evidence based.**

Notwithstanding the lack of settlement specific evidence available from the Council, it is clear that in recent years employment opportunities in and around East Grinstead have declined. There have been a large number of office buildings that have been converted to flats under the permitted development rules and there has been no significant delivery of new employment space. The last new space to be delivered was the extension of the Birches Industrial area, allocated under the 2004 Local Plan, which generated very few additional jobs the land was used for a depository storage.

Neither proposed site SA19 or SA20 are mixed use and so will add new workers without adding new employment opportunities in the immediate area of East Grinstead. Whilst this is consistent with the purpose of the Site allocations DPD to allocate the additional homes to meet Crawley's unmet need it further undermines the balance between homes and job and confirms that the residents of sites SA19/SA20 would have to out commute to find employment.

It is noted that when the Council last sought to allocate the gap between Felbridge, Crawley Down and East Grinstead a mixed use site was proposed under the East Grinstead Area Action Plan, with the stated intent of avoiding this specific problem.

Planning for workers to be housed in one locality in the knowledge that they will be obliged to commute at least as far as Crawley by car is against the NPPF and NPPG.

The policy is not positively prepared, it is not justified and is contrary to national policy.

By removing sites SA19/SA20 and replacing them with provision in Mid Sussex but immediately adjacent to Crawley it would avoid creating this further imbalance.