

LOCAL ECONOMY

Local employment is found in:

- services such as the primary schools, Corinthian Sports Club, golf club and The Rising Sun
- small scale businesses, including Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and a number of stables and kennels, and many others within small units at current and former farms
- agriculture
- tourist accommodation - Brands Hatch Place Hotel and The Rising Sun
- and businesses based at home.

Such businesses employ local residents, whilst others commute in, mostly reliant on private cars. Access to premises by car or commercial vehicle is constrained by the lanes which serve the Parish.

Business Sites

Fawkham Parish has **four principal clusters of business units** located at current and former farms, involving the conversion of rural buildings and purpose built structures. They range in size from nine to 29 units, **with 68 in units in total** across these sites, which are shown in Maps 5 – 8:

- Speedgate Farm units
- Fawkham Business Park
- Kentdown Mushroom Farm units
- Grove Farm units

A **Business Survey** we carried out in 2022 identified most local businesses felt their current premises will suit their future needs, whilst others were improving their premises; none is looking to move away from Fawkham Parish.

There is **strong demand** within the District and the Parish for commercial premises and Sevenoaks Economic Needs Study, 2022 recommends commercial land and premises should be retained unless demonstrated that the use is no longer feasible or viable.

The presence of businesses is important to the sustainability of Fawkham Parish and a number of businesses have long term associations with it. Businesses **provide local employment opportunities** and we are keen that Fawkham retains a thriving local economy rather than becoming a dormitory area.

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We have prepared the following policy that would be applied by Sevenoaks Council whenever a planning application comes in on one of the four business sites to make sure their decision conforms with the Neighbourhood Plan and so ultimately reflects what people in Fawkham think is important and needed.

Policy FNP10: Business Development

1. Sites used for business purposes, as defined on Maps 5 – 8, will be retained in business use unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use for business purposes during the Plan period.

2. Existing business sites may be regenerated through redevelopment or the limited extension of an existing building provided:

a) the redevelopment or extension would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt

b) the extension would be proportional and subservient to the original building

c) development, including advertising and lighting, would be integrated sensitively into its context respecting the landscape character of the area and, where applicable, the character and heritage of any existing building

d) the amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers or the tranquillity of the countryside would not be significantly adversely affected

e) development would not generate a type or amount of traffic that would be inappropriate to the rural lane network that serves the site and should exploit any opportunity to make the site more sustainable and

f) sufficient on-site car and cycle parking would be provided for visitors, staff and delivery vehicles.

3. Priority will be given to business uses, or tourist facilities, in the conversion of buildings.

Let us know if you agree or disagree with this policy, or have suggestions as to how it should be changed, and why, via the questionnaire (Question 13).

