

- 5.102 Agriculture is arguably one of the most important activities that shape the character of the wider countryside. It is obviously also central to local food production. It is therefore important that agricultural enterprises are able to function and be self-sustaining. Levels of agricultural activity in the Borough have declined in recent decades, with parts of the countryside showing signs of neglect and poor management. The policy is designed to assist agricultural enterprise and to achieve better management of the Borough's countryside, while avoiding significant unplanned development that would increase urbanisation and threaten the rural quality of these areas. In accordance with guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), decisions about development affecting agricultural land should also take account of the impacts on soils and the protection of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land.

Policy DM 18, Extension and replacement of non- residential buildings in the countryside

1. **The extension or replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside will be permitted, subject to the general development criteria and transport policies of this Local Plan and provided that:**
 - a. the existing building is in lawful use and is not subject to a temporary permission;
 - b. the extension or replacement building is for a non-residential use;
 - c. the extension or replacement building would not have an urbanising effect on the countryside in terms of its density, scale, massing, layout and height;
 - d. access, car parking, landscaping and services can be provided without having a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside;
 - e. so far as possible the property is sustainably located in terms of accessibility by means of transport other than the private car;
 - f. the extended building or its replacement would be located within the existing curtilage unless its relocation or extension would contribute to improving the character and quality of the local area;
 - g. in the case of a replacement building, the proposal also includes the demolition of the building to be replaced; and
 - h. the development would not by itself or cumulatively with other recently permitted schemes undermine the Council's strategy for the development of employment-related floorspace (see strategic policy S4).
2. **Where the proposal also involves a change of use of the building, criteria (a), (b) and (c) of policy DM 19 will apply. Notwithstanding this, where the proposal is for the development of town centre uses as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), criterion (b) of policy DM 19 will apply.**

- 5.103 The Borough contains many agricultural, commercial and recreational enterprises in the countryside. It is inevitable that these will have development needs. These must be balanced against the overall strategy to limit the urbanising effect of development on the countryside, and the need for such activities to be in accessible locations.

Policy DM 19, Change of use of buildings in the countryside

1. **The change of use of existing buildings in the countryside that are demonstrably unsuitable for continued use for their existing purpose will be permitted subject to the general development criteria**