

- Leatherhead is the most dynamic sub-area for office floorspace with a 10-year annual average floorspace take-up (new build plus vacant premises) of 6,840m² compared to 1,050m² in Dorking.
- Conversely Dorking is the more dynamic sub-area for industrial premises with a 10-year annual average floorspace take-up of 2,540m² compared to 1,540m² in Leatherhead.
- Occupier satisfaction levels with existing premises are high in both office and industrial / warehouse sectors
- The majority of office based businesses considering relocation would look first for an accessible location close to services whilst industrial floorspace occupiers would look towards industrial estates close to town centres for their expansion needs.

- 4.9. Given the above evidence of a small surplus of employment land at the end of the Plan period, one of the options that the Council consulted upon in its Issues and Options paper for the emerging Local Plan was whether or not respondents would support the reallocation of a modest amount of safeguarded commercial and retail land for additional housing. This option was supported by 70% of respondents. In putting forward that option the Council recognised the continuing importance of safeguarding employment land whilst demonstrating flexibility to meet changing commercial needs over that period. It remains committed to resisting the loss of suitably located employment land and premises in order to support local businesses by maintaining a successful, sustainable and diverse local economy.
- 4.10. The Council wishes to protect, to the extent that it can, existing employment land provision in those areas which are suitably located, close to services and best meet the needs of future businesses. ‘Suitably located’ is characterised by good accessibility by public transport as well as proximity to local shops and services. It also wishes to retain groups of businesses, such as those on business and research parks, where the proximity provides opportunities for synergies between businesses in terms of shared support services, labour and networking.
- 4.11. Article four directions remove the right to carry out certain types of ‘permitted development’. In October 2016 Mole Valley District Council resolved to commence the making of directions restricting changes of use from offices / light industrial to residential. This was to seek to safeguard the provision of office floorspace on some of the district’s key employment sites. In total some 11 directions have been served which come into effect between December 2017 and February 2018. These, together with maps identifying the areas to which the directions apply can be viewed on the Council’s website at www.molevalley.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=32247.
- 4.12. The Directions apply in some cases to a single building or a small group of buildings in a commercial area or within a designated strategic business park. Mole Valley, in accordance with national planning guidance has not made blanket orders over whole areas. The prior

