Tandridge District Council
Urban Capacity Study
Urban Capacity Study

Final | June 2017

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ARUP

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Tandridge District Council is currently preparing its Local Plan. As part of the development of the emerging Local Plan, the Council produced a Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) in 2016, which identifies land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. Work is currently being undertaken on an updated HELAA for 2017.

Most of the sites which are being assessed in the HELAA have been submitted through the Call for Sites process. However, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that local planning authorities should also actively identify sites through a desktop review process that may have a part to play in meeting development needs.

Around 94% of Tandridge is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places great importance on Green Belts and confirms that – once established – Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of a Local Plan. The Housing White Paper, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in February 2017, sets out proposed changes to national policy on how exceptional circumstances should be demonstrated, which includes making effective use of suitable brownfield sites, and 'optimising' the proposed density of development.

The purpose of the Urban Capacity Study is therefore to:

- **Identify additional sites which have not currently been included in the HELAA process** within existing sustainable settlements, to assist in potentially boosting land supply within settlement boundaries and to help demonstrate exceptional circumstances where Green Belt release is required to meet the Council's objectively assessed housing need.

- **Robustly assess the baseline and optimised densities across sustainable settlements**, in order to boost delivery within settlements and demonstrate exceptional circumstances if required.

Tandridge District Council has prepared a Settlement Hierarchy (2015), which categorises the settlements within the district based on their sustainability. The top three settlement tiers of the hierarchy – which include 19 settlements – are identified as offering at least a basic level of day-to-day services for residents. These settlements are included within the Urban Capacity Study.

Site Search

Chapter 2 presents the findings of the site search to identify brownfield sites within or adjacent to settlements within the top three tiers of the Council's Settlement Hierarchy, which have not previously been promoted through the

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Council's Call for Sites process or the HELAA. The methodology for undertaking the site search is provided in Section 2.3.

In total, 16 brownfield sites have been identified through the site search. A full list and mapping of these sites is presented in Appendix A. The sites range from 0.2 hectares to 3.7 hectares in size. Half of these sites are located within the district's 'Caterham cluster' (Caterham on the Hill, Caterham Valley, Warlingham and Whyteleafe). In contrast, only one site was identified in the other main built-up area in the district, namely the 'Oxted cluster' (including Oxted, Hurst Green and Limpsfield). This is consistent with the conclusions of the HELAA, which identifies a larger number of development sites within or immediately adjacent to the settlements within the Caterham cluster.

The settlements of Smallfield, Woldingham, Dormansland, Blindley Heath, South Godstone, South Nutfield, Godstone, Old Oxted and Tatsfied were found to contain no sites which met the site search criteria. This is generally because the brownfield sites in these settlements have already been identified through the HELAA process, and/or because relevant planning permissions have already been granted on suitable sites.

Implications for the Local Plan

The identified sites require further assessment to determine their suitability, availability and achievability in line with paragraph 47 of the NPPF. It is therefore recommended that each site is subject to the Council's HELAA.

Density Mapping

Built development comprises a wide range of densities within and between Tandridge's settlements. Higher densities are generally found within the centres of the two 'clusters' at Oxted and Caterham, although there are also areas of much lower density within these clusters. Smaller settlements tend to be of a lower overall density, although again there is a range of densities and typologies on display.

Chapter 3 assesses the current and optimised housing densities across the top three tiers of Tandridge's settlements, to maximise delivery within settlement boundaries. The methodology for doing so is provided in Section 3.2.

Six baseline Density Character Areas have been identified through the baseline mapping, set out in Table D.1. More details of the character of each Area is provided in Section 3.3, and a series of maps which show their spatial extent are provided in Appendix B and C.

A series of density optimisation site studies have been undertaken, which found that there are opportunities to optimise densities on sites within many of the baseline Density Character Areas, through the use of alternative typologies, plot sizes, massing, siting, etc. Table D.1 compares the baseline net[1] densities and

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[1] Net density is defined as the number of dwellings per hectare on land devoted solely to residential development. This includes internal access, private open space and parking associated with the development, but excludes distributor roads, public open space and land for infrastructure such as community facilities or utilities.

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optimised net densities in each of the Density Character Areas – the baseline should therefore be thought of as a 'minimum' with the optimised density as a 'maximum'. Appendix D and Appendix E provide more information on the density optimisation site studies and their application across the top three tiers of Tandridge's settlements.

Table D.1: Summary of baseline and optimised densities for the Density Character Areas (excluding Conservation Areas)

Ref.	Name	Baseline Net Density (dwellings per hectare)	Optimised Net Density (dwellings per hectare) (excluding Conservation Areas)
DCA 1	High Density	120 – 150	100 (see explanation below)
DCA 2	Medium-High Density	50 – 120	100 (see explanation below)
DCA 3	Medium Density	20 – 50	60-75[2]
DCA 4	Medium-Low Density	10 – 20	45
DCA 5	Low Density	5 – 10	15
DCA 6	Very Low Density	5 and under	N/A

The density optimisation studies undertaken for the most dense areas (DCA 1 and DCA 2) have found an optimised density which is lower than the baseline density found to be existing in the district. This is largely a result of the prevailing car parking standards in the district, which significantly reduces the amount of space within the site available for residential buildings.

There are also opportunities to further increase densities in areas that are well served by public transport such as railway stations, in accordance with the proposed amendments to national guidance set out in the Housing White Paper and the December 2015 consultation on proposed changes to the NPPF.

Implications for the Local Plan

Tandridge District Council should apply the optimised densities to the sites identified through the HELAA, to update the development potential estimated on sites within settlement boundaries. If the findings of the HELAA show that the development requirements cannot be met on non-Green Belt land alone and the Council decide to pursue Green Belt release through the Local Plan, the evidence set out in this report should be used to support the case for exceptional circumstances.

If the Council choose to include locally specific policies on residential density within the Local Plan, these should be informed by the optimised densities set out above. The Council may also decide to use the findings of this report as a basis for subsequent supplementary planning guidance, design codes, site-specific guidance, and so on.

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[2] Due to the specific character of the site and adjacent development used in the density optimisation study for DCA 3, a net density of 60 dwellings per hectare has been achieved. However, it is considered that other sites within DCA 3 might be expected to reach higher densities of around 75 dwellings per hectare. For this reason, a range is presented.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

Tandridge District Council is currently preparing its Local Plan. In December 2015, it held a Regulation 18 Issues and Approaches consultation on the issues to be addressed by the Local Plan, its proposed vision and objectives and spatial approaches to accommodating the district's objectively assessed housing and employment need. In November 2016, the Council held a further round of Regulation 18 consultation on specific sites and broad locations for a new, or extended settlement.

As part of the development of the emerging Local Plan, the Council produced a Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) in 2016, which identifies land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period. Work is currently being undertaken on an updated HELAA for 2017.

Around 94% of Tandridge is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places great importance on Green Belts and confirms that – once established – Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of a Local Plan. The NPPF does not define what constitutes exceptional circumstances. The limited body of case law post-NPPF indicates that factors such as constraints on the supply/availability of land suitable for development, along with other factors, may provide justification for Green Belt release. The Housing White Paper[3], published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in February 2017, sets out proposed changes to national policy on how exceptional circumstances should be demonstrated – this is discussed further below. Tandridge District Council prepared a Spatial Approaches Topic Paper (2016), which considers a number of approaches for the delivery of the development needs of the district, and includes details of the Council's current understanding of what considerations could constitute exceptional circumstances.

Most of the sites which are being assessed in the HELAA have been submitted through the Call for Sites process, and are within the Green Belt. However, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that local planning authorities "*should not simply rely on sites that they have been informed about but actively identify sites through the desktop review process that may have a part to play in meeting the development needs of an area*"[4]. In order to justify a lack of suitable non-Green Belt land, a review of potentially appropriate non-Green Belt sites or previously developed sites within and adjacent to settlements is therefore required.

The Housing White Paper reinforces the Government's commitment to delivering more homes. It sets out the importance of making more land available for homes

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[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-our-broken-housing-market
[4] Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and economic land availability assessment, Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 3-011-20140306

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in the right places, by maximising the contribution from brownfield land. This is of particular importance for authorities with a significant proportion of Green Belt land, where exceptional circumstances might need to be demonstrated. Paragraph A.61 of the Housing White Paper provides further clarification on the 'tests' which will need to be met before local planning authorities consider releasing Green Belt. This includes making effective use of suitable brownfield sites, and 'optimising' the proposed density of development.

The PPG also states that if the HELAA indicates that there are insufficient sites or broad locations to meet objectively assessed need, plan makers should revisit the assessment, for example by changing the assumptions used to assess development potential[5]. This includes assumptions on the densities considered appropriate on these sites, and links with the Housing White Paper's requirement to demonstrate that densities on non-Green Belt land have been 'optimised'. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF also states that local planning authorities should set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances.

The purpose of the Urban Capacity Study is therefore to:

- **Identify additional sites which have not currently been included in the HELAA process** within existing sustainable settlements[6], to assist in potentially boosting land supply within settlement boundaries and to help demonstrate exceptional circumstances where Green Belt release is required to meet the Council's objectively assessed housing need.

- **Robustly assess the baseline and optimised densities across sustainable settlements**, again in order to boost delivery within settlements and demonstrate exceptional circumstances if required. These densities should be applied to both the existing sites in the HELAA and the newly identified sites arising from the site search outlined above, as well as informing any planning policy and/or subsequent supplementary guidance, design codes etc. produced by the Council.

The Study is therefore an important element in the evidence base for the Local Plan and will assist the Council in demonstrating the extent of capacity for development in sustainable settlements.

1.2   Context

Tandridge is a predominantly rural district with approximately 94% of the land designated as Green Belt and contains over 30 settlements, which are a range of sizes. To assist in understanding the characteristics of each settlement, the Council prepared a Settlement Hierarchy (2015), which categorises each one based on their sustainability. The top three settlement tiers of the hierarchy are identified as

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[5] Planning Practice Guidance: Housing and economic land availability assessment, Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 3-026-20140306

[6] At the point of commencement of this study the Council had not determined a preferred spatial strategy to be pursued in the emerging Local Plan. As such, all sustainable settlements were considered to maximise the consideration of potentially available land and irrespective of the Green Belt status of the settlement, i.e. inset or 'washed over'. The Council's Settlement Hierarchy (2015) specifies which settlements constitute a sustainable location.

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offering at least a basic level of day-to-day services for residents. There are also a large number of much smaller washed over settlements across the district which are classified as tier 4 settlements and are not included in this assessment because they were not found to be sustainable through the Settlement Hierarchy.

There are two main built-up areas in the district:

- the 'Caterham cluster' in the north of the district, which includes Caterham on the Hill, Caterham Valley, Warlingham and Whyteleafe; and

- the 'Oxted cluster' just south of the M25, which includes Oxted, Hurst Green and Limpsfield.

In addition, there are three larger, semi-rural service settlements which provide more extensive services for wider communities: Lingfield, in the south-east of the district; Smallfield, in the south-west; and Godstone, located south of Junction 6 of the M25. Along with Woldingham, Lingfield and Smallfield are inset from the Green Belt designation. Godstone is washed over by the Green Belt.

The Urban Capacity Study covers the 19 settlements which fall within the first three tiers of the settlement hierarchy. The settlements are:

- **Urban Settlements (Tier 1)**
    - Caterham on the Hill
    - Caterham Valley
    - Hurst Green
    - Limpsfield
    - Oxted
    - Warlingham
    - Whyteleafe
- **Semi-Rural Service Settlements (Tier 2)**
    - Godstone
    - Lingfield
    - Smallfield

- **Rural Settlements (Tier 3)**
    - Bletchingley
    - Blindley Heath
    - Dormansland
    - Felbridge
    - Old Oxted
    - South Godstone
    - South Nutfield
    - Tatsfield
    - Woldingham

Further information on the character of these settlements is provided in Section 3.1.

1.3   Structure of the Report

The remainder of this report is structured in the following way:

- **Chapter 2** sets out the methodology for, and findings of, the site search to inform the HELAA.

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- **Chapter 3** presents a summary of the findings of the settlements density assessment.

- **Appendix A** provides a list of sites and associated maps for the sites identified through the site search.

- **Appendix B** outlines the baseline characteristics of each Density Character Area.

- **Appendix C** provides baseline Density Character Area maps for each settlement.

- **Appendix D** includes a series of density optimisation site studies which were undertaken as part of the Study (more details of which are provided in Chapter 3).

- **Appendix E** provides optimised Density Character Area maps for each settlement.

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2   Site Search

2.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the site search to identify brownfield sites within or adjacent to settlements within the top three tiers of the Council's Settlement Hierarchy, which have not previously been promoted through the Council's Call for Sites process and/or the HELAA. It sets out the context within which the site search has been undertaken, the methodology used to identify possible development sites, a summary of the results of the site search and implications of the site search for the Local Plan.

2.2   Site Search Context

The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has previously been developed; brownfield land (Paragraph 11). This land should be prioritised for development, provided that it is not of high environmental value. The Government's preference for utilising brownfield land is reflected in its approach to Green Belt. As stated in Chapter 1, the NPPF places great importance on Green Belts and confirms that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of a Local Plan. The Housing White Paper also emphasises the importance of making effective use of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land. The identification of sites in this document makes no conclusions about the Green Belt status of site, where the designation applies, and this would be a consideration for the Local Plan preparation.

In this context, Tandridge District Council has commissioned this study to ensure that in relation to brownfield and underutilised land, all reasonable options to identify such sites have been explored. Such an approach is supported by Paragraph A.19 of the Housing White Paper, which seeks to tighten the definition of what evidence is required to support a 'sound' Local Plan. This includes ensuring that "*clear and concise evidence is available on the key issues that affect the capacity of each area to accommodate development*".

Some brownfield sites have been identified through the Council's Call for Sites process and the associated preparation of its HELAA. This includes identifying underutilised land. However, there is a need to more systematically review the ability of the settlements within the top three tiers of the Council's Settlement Hierarchy to deliver homes through brownfield sites. The site search therefore identifies additional brownfield sites that have not previously been included in the Council's HELAA and ensures a more thorough approach to considering all reasonable alternatives.

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2.3   Site Search Methodology

In preparing the HELAA, the Council reviewed a number of data sources to identify brownfield sites, which included:

- Sites submitted to the Council for consideration through the 'Call for Sites' process.

- Undeveloped sites, which were identified through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2011). Paragraph 4.3 of the HELAA (2016) states that there were a number of sites that were submitted for assessment in the SHLAA (2011) that had not been developed. The Council therefore felt it was appropriate to consider these sites as part of the HELAA process.

- Vacant and derelict land and buildings.

- Surplus public sector land including the Council's own assets. This included a review of review of surplus publicly-owned open spaces.

- Land in non-residential use which may be suitable for re-development for housing[7].

- Sites identified through the pre-application advice service, or where planning permissions had been refused or lapsed, and may therefore be granted permission in the future.

Given the previous work undertaken by the Council, it was agreed that the site search should not seek to duplicate this work and should focus on identifying additional sites that had not yet been promoted to the Council. As discussed in Chapter 1, such an approach is considered consistent with the guidance for HELAA's contained in the Planning Practice Guidance.

The remainder of this section sets out the steps followed to identify additional brownfield land within or adjacent to settlements (e.g. previously developed Green Belt land) within the top three tiers of the Council's Settlement Hierarchy.

Step 1: Determining the Boundaries of the Site Search

The first step involved determining the search area for identifying sites. Paragraph 4.13 of the HELAA defines the parameters of locational sustainability, and states that sites should be within or immediately adjacent to a sustainable settlement. The HELAA defines a sustainable settlement as falling within the top three tiers of the Settlement Hierarchy (outlined in Section 1.2), and therefore excludes limited and unserviced settlements which are considered unsuitable for potential development.

The HELAA report also states that "*in determining locational suitability, a judgement was made that if a site was not within or immediately adjacent to a sustainable settlement, then it would not be a suitable location for development at*

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[7] The Council's approach to employment sites has been informed by the Economic Needs Assessment (ENA) (2015), which advised that the majority of sites should be retained or intensified.

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this point in time" (Paragraph 4.13). For consistency, the same approach to site location has been adopted in the site search. The exception to this was for brownfield sites that directly adjoined a HELAA site, where the HELAA site was adjacent to the settlement boundary[8]. In this instance, such a site was considered suitable due to its proximity to a sustainable settlement, and was therefore included in the results of the site search.

Including previously developed Green Belt land within the site search is considered consistent with existing and emerging national policy. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that "*a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt*". There are however a number of exceptions to this policy, including "*limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use*". Paragraph A.63 of the Housing White Paper also confirms that "*when carrying out a Green Belt review, local planning authorities should look first at using any Green Belt land which has been previously developed and/or which surrounds transport hubs*".

Step 2: Collating Data Sources

The Planning Practice Guidance suggests that in identifying sites for development, local planning authorities should consider sites from as many sources of data as possible and provides some guidance on data sources that local planning authorities may wish to review (Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 3-012020140306).

As set out above, the Council has reviewed many of these data sources in preparing its HELAA, and through other corporate processes such as a corporate asset review. The site search was not seeking to duplicate this work, and therefore these sources of sites were not considered as part of this commission. In addition, sites which met the following criteria were excluded from the site search:

- Sites assessed as part of the HELAA and Employment Needs Assessment (ENA) (2015).

- Sites located within the boundary of the emerging Caterham Masterplan. As part of developing the Caterham Masterplan the Council will be considering the opportunities for re-development and intensification and therefore sites within the boundary of Caterham Masterplan were not considered in order to avoid duplication.

- Sites that contained a significant amount of built development. These were not considered appropriate to include as part of this study as they were not considered to represent realistic potential development sites.

- Sites subject to extant planning permission for development. Since these sites have received planning permission, and are subject to an existing commitment for new development. They were considered unlikely to be available for future

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[8] The settlement boundary has been interpreted as the Green Belt boundary where the settlement is inset. Where the settlement is 'washed over' by the green belt, the assessment has used the settlement boundary as determined in Policy DP12 of the Local Plan Part 2 – Detailed Policies document, 2014.

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additional development beyond that already consented and therefore were not assessed as part of this study.

To be consistent with paragraph 12 of the Planning Practice Guidance, it was agreed that live planning applications, withdrawn and refused planning applications and pre-application enquiries should be reviewed as part of the site search to identify potentially suitable sites. Such sites had previously not been considered by the Council in its HELAA due to historically high build-out rates in the district. However, for completeness it was considered appropriate to review them as part of this study.

The data sources used to inform the site search are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 Data inputs used to inform the site search

Data source	Use
Planning applications Geographical Information Systems (GIS) layer	Used to help identify potential sites. Live or refused and withdrawn planning applications from the last three-years (1 April 2014 to 28 February 2017) were reviewed as a source of potential sites where they had proposed new residential development or demolition of the existing development on the site.
Pre-application enquiries GIS layer	Used to help identify potential sites Pre-application enquiries from the last three years (1 April 2014 to 28 February 2017) were reviewed as a source of possible sites where they had proposed new residential development or demolition of the existing development on the site.
Open Space GIS layer	Identified open space (commons and village greens) to exclude from the site search.
HELAA sites GIS layer	Identified existing HELAA sites to exclude from the site search.
ENA sites GIS layer	Identified existing ENA sites to exclude from the site search.
Caterham Masterplan boundary	Identified the area subject to the Masterplan to exclude from the site search.

Step 3: Undertaking the Site Search

Once the boundaries of the site search had been established and the data obtained, the site search consisted of a desk-based assessment, whereby settlements were methodically reviewed for potential sites using aerial imagery overlaid with the GIS mapping of sites/areas to exclude from the search.

To ensure a consistent approach was adopted across each settlement a number of criteria were established to support the identification of sites:

- **Site size**: in line with Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 3-010-20140306), the HELAA considered sites capable of delivering five or more dwellings on sites of 0.25ha (Paragraph 4.15). Due to the variety of development densities across the district, a physical site size was required, as aerial imagery alone could not determine whether a site could accommodate

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five units. A site size threshold of 0.2ha was considered to provide a precautionary approach, which meant that the site search would identify smaller sites that could potentially accommodate five dwellings or more.

- **Planning applications and pre-application enquiries**: using the GIS data layers provided by the Council (see Table 1 above), sites were identified where the planning application or pre-application enquiry proposed new residential development or demolition of the existing development on the site.

- **Residential gardens:** paragraph 53 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should consider policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens so that development does not cause harm to the local area. It was agreed with the Council, that sites comprising of residential gardens would not be identified as part of this study.

The site search considered new sites within or adjacent to the settlements. These were identified through a desktop review of aerial imagery across the 19 settlements falling within the top three tiers of the Settlement Hierarchy. The aerial imagery used dated from 2011; where a site was identified it was checked against Google Maps aerial imagery (which generally is more recent), to see if the site potentially remained available for development.

Newly identified sites were considered suitable where significant residential development did not already exist on-site, and where sites comprised an open air use, which provided opportunities for consolidation and redevelopment, such as car parks or previously developed land.

Step 4: Recording Identified Sites

Once a potential site was identified using the criteria outlined in Step 3, each site was mapped using GIS. Ordnance Survey Mastermap topographical data was used to delineate a site boundary in order to minimise the likelihood of multiple land ownerships on the site. The Ordnance Survey Mastermap topographical data was used to draw the boundary of each site, to ensure a consistent approach, at a scale of 1:10,000.

A GIS shapefile and associated log was created for each newly identified site, and information recorded (including site size, address and description) to support the site's identification.

2.4   Results of the Site Search

Following the methodology outlined above, 16 brownfield sites have been identified. A full list and further detail on each site is included in Appendix A1. This is supported by a set of maps showing the geographic location and extent of the identified sites in Appendix A2. The remainder of this section provides an overview of the sites identified.

2.4.1   Settlement Breakdown

The 16 sites identified are distributed across the district; Table 2 provides a breakdown of which settlements the sites are located within or adjacent to.

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The settlements of Hurst Green, Limpsfield, Smallfield, Woldingham, Dormansland, Blindley Heath, South Godstone, South Nutfield, Godstone, Old Oxted and Tatsfied were found to contain no sites which met the site search criteria. This is generally because the brownfield sites in these settlements have already been identified through the HELAA process, and/or because relevant planning permissions have been granted on suitable sites. In some instances, land has also been identified as an employment site through the ENA (2015).

Table 2 Breakdown of sites by settlement

Settlement Category	Settlement	Number of Sites
Tier 1: Urban settlements	Caterham on the Hill	1 site
	Caterham Valley	1 site
	Warlingham / Whyteleafe	6 sites
	Hurst Green, Oxted, Limpsfield[9]	1 site
	Total for Tier 1	**9 sites**
Tier 2: Semi-rural service settlements	Lingfield	4 sites
	Total for Tier 2	**4 sites**
Tier 3: Rural settlements	Felbridge	1 site
	Bletchingley	2 sites
	Total for Tier 3	**3 sites**

Table 2 shows that the majority of sites (more than 50%) are located within the district's main built up areas. In particular, the Caterham cluster, as identified in the Settlement Hierarchy as Caterham on the Hill, Caterham Valley, Warlingham and Whyteleafe, provides the highest number of sites; eight of the 16 sites identified. The Oxted cluster (Hurst Green / Oxted / Limpsfield) is the other main built up area in the district, however only one site was identified through the site search in this cluster. This finding is consistent with the conclusions of the HELAA, which identifies a larger number of development sites within or immediately adjacent to the settlements within the Caterham cluster.

2.4.2   Site Size

The size of the identified sites ranges between 0.2 and 3.7 hectares. Table 3 provides a summary of the sites with regard to size, in hectares. It shows that the majority of the sites identified are small in scale, with over half of the 16 sites identified between 0.2 and 0.5 hectares in size, and a further five sites below 1 hectare. Given that Tandridge is a predominantly Green Belt authority and has historically been subject to relatively high levels of windfall development, it is not surprising that where sites have been identified they are small in size. Most large scale opportunities within the settlement boundaries have either historically been built out or have already been identified through the HELAA.

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[9] The settlement boundaries for Hurst Green, Oxted and Limpsfield are not separately defined on GIS, and as such the Oxted cluster has been treated as one area for the purposes of the assessment.

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Table 3 Site size summary

Site size	Number of sites
Between 0.2 and 0.5 ha	9
0.51 to 1 ha	5
1.01 ha to 1.5 ha	0
1.51 ha to 2 ha	1
Greater than 2.01 ha	1

2.4.3 Existing Site Use

Based on a desk based appraisal of the sites, they appear to vary in terms of their current usage, although some similarities can be found as set out in Table 4. The majority of sites, a total of 11 out of the 16 identified, form car parks within the three top tier settlements in Tandridge, or on adjacent Green Belt land. The car parks support a range of uses, including three supermarkets, one public house and one small retail area. A number of sports facility car parks have also been identified as potential sites, including Bletchingley Golf club, Bletchingley Village Hall and Croydon Post Office, Social Club and Athletics Club. In addition, three of the identified car parks support the railway stations at Whyteleafe, Warlingham and Lingfield. The Council is currently undertaking a series of car parking reviews on settlements including Oxted (the findings of which were presented to the Resources Committee and Community Services Committee on 23 March 2017) and may undertake reviews for other settlements in the district including Caterham and Woldingham. The findings of these reviews may inform whether the car park sites identified through this study may become available for development.

A further site currently houses a mix of uses, which include a car park alongside a residential block of flats and open garden space. While this would typically have been excluded on the grounds of its residential / garden use, a live planning enquiry exists on the site for the provision of 15 specialist housing units and as such the site has been retained for further consideration.

Of the remaining four sites, two of these are used for storage, while the existing uses of the two remaining identified sites could not be determined from aerial photography, but appear to be non-agricultural in nature.

Table 4 Site Type Summary

Site Type	Number of sites
Car Park	11
Mixed use	1
Storage site	2
Unknown	2

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2.5   Implications for the Local Plan

In summary, 16 brownfield sites have been identified within or adjacent to settlements within the top three tiers of the Council's Settlement Hierarchy, which have not previously been promoted through the Council's Call for Sites process and/or the HELAA. This equates to approximately 12 hectares of land which, subject to further assessment, may be appropriate for development to provide additional capacity in the built up areas in the district.

The sites identified range in size, type and location, and require further assessment to determine their suitability, availability and achievability in line with paragraph 47 of the NPPF. It is therefore recommended that each site is subject to the Council's HELAA.

Where the Council determines that any of the sites are suitable (in accordance with the HELAA methodology) and are therefore subject to an availability assessment, the Council will need to undertake a Land Registry search to determine land ownership. While the Ordnance Survey Mastermap topographical data was used to define logical site boundaries, these do not always relate to land ownership and depending on the results of the Land Registry search may require the boundary of the site to be amended accordingly. Such an approach would be consistent with the 'fact checking' undertaken for the original SHLAA (2011) and HELAA sites.

As stated in Section 2.4.3, the car parking reviews being undertaken by the Council may inform whether the sites currently in use as car parks may become available for development.

Further information may also need to be sought to inform the achievability assessment of these sites in the absence of direct promotion by a developer including consideration of market factors, cost issues and delivery constraints.

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3 Density Mapping

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to robustly assess the current and optimised housing densities across Tandridge's settlements, to maximise delivery within settlement boundaries. The chapter sets out the methodology for undertaking the density mapping exercise, an overview of the findings, and the implications for the Local Plan.

Built development comprises a wide range of densities within and between Tandridge's settlements. Higher densities are generally found within the centres of the two 'clusters' at Oxted and Caterham. However, there are also areas of much lower density within these clusters. Smaller settlements tend to be of a lower overall density, although again there is a range of densities and typologies on display.

There are 11 railway stations in the district; both in the larger, more built-up settlements (e.g. Oxted and Caterham Valley), as well as in a number of the less dense settlements. The Housing White Paper includes a proposal to amend the NPPF to make it clear that Local Plans should address the particular scope for higher-density housing in locations that are well served by public transport, such as around railway stations. There may be other opportunities to increase densities within Tandridge's built-up areas, e.g. through the upgrade of Caterham town centre, explored through the emerging Caterham Masterplan.

3.2 Methodology

In undertaking the density assessment, the methodology outlined below was followed.

3.2.1 Step 1: Baseline Mapping

A desk-based review of the 19 settlements was undertaken to identify different Density Character Areas across Tandridge. The purpose of the Density Character Areas is to provide a high level assessment of density character across areas. In order for the exercise to be proportionate (as per the requirement of paragraph 182 of the NPPF) the baseline mapping does not indicate the density and typology of every property; instead it provides an overall appraisal for an area recognising that there may be some variance between the density and typologies found.

The following information was used to identify the Density Character Areas:

- Aerial photography (2011) produced by ESRI.

- Ordinance Survey Mastermap topographical GIS data, provided by Tandridge District Council.

- Address point GIS data, provided by Tandridge District Council.

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- GIS data on Scheduled Ancient Monuments, listed buildings and assets, buildings of character, Conservation Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) / Candidate AONB and Areas of Great Landscape Value, provided by Tandridge District Council.

- Google StreetView (various dates of image capture).

The desk-based review also took into account evidence base documents produced in support of emerging Neighbourhood Plans including:

- the Heritage and Character Assessment (April 2017) undertaken by AECOM for Limpsfield Parish Council in support of the emerging Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan. The purpose of the Heritage and Character Assessment is to provide a summary of the history and town and landscape character of the parish. The baseline mapping produced as part of this study and the conclusions of the Heritage and Character Assessment for Limpsfield are broadly consistent. However, as would be expected, the Heritage and Character Area Assessment was produced at a more fine grain level and therefore in a limited number of locations provides more detail about individual buildings which are of a higher density. This limited number of differences is considered to be consistent with the density ranges used to distinguish different Density Character Areas.

- the character appraisals included in the appendices of the draft CR3 Forum (Caterham) Neighbourhood Plan. The purpose of the character appraisals are to outline the key character elements of each ward within the neighbourhood plan area and outline its land uses. The character appraisals are produced at a more fine grain detail than this Study but, again, are judged to be consistent with the baseline Density Character Areas.

From the desk-based review, draft GIS maps were created which identified baseline Density Character Areas within the settlement boundaries. The draft maps were validated and 'ground-truthed' through site visits in March 2017 and refinements made accordingly. As part of the site visits, photos of the different Density Character Areas within each settlement were taken; a selection of which are included in Appendix B.

For each baseline Density Character Area, a number of smaller areas were used to estimate the current net density (expressed in terms of dwellings per hectare), using the address point GIS data provided by the Council. Net density is defined as the number of dwellings per hectare on land devoted solely to residential development; this includes internal access, private open space and parking associated with the development, but excludes distributor roads, public open space and land for infrastructure such as community facilities or utilities. Because the amount of land required for these non-residential uses is dependent on a whole range of factors including size of development, relative location, existing facilities in close proximity and so on, net density is a more comparable measure than gross density (which would include those land uses outlined above which are excluded from net density) and so has been used in this assessment.

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3.2.2 Step 2: Density Optimisation

A sample of sites (taken from either the sites identified in the site search, or from those already identified in the HELAA) in each of the Density Character Areas was used to test how densities might be optimised. This was done using a series of density optimisation site studies.

It should be noted that the density optimisation studies have been developed solely for the purpose of this study and therefore for testing the potential for densification across the district. The selection of a site for this purpose does not suggest that a site should be allocated or brought forward for development. The density optimisation site studies have been undertaken based on a range of assumptions (see below for further details) and seek to identify, at a strategic level, the likely potential for densification within different Density Character Areas. In order, therefore, for the results of the density optimisation site studies to be applicable to the Density Character Areas as opposed to a specific site, the site studies do not represent design proposals that could be developed at the specific sites, and therefore do not take into account any site specific opportunities or constraints that would arise from a detailed consideration of the site.

The following assumptions and information sources were used to inform the density optimisation site studies:

- Siting and massing is based on its appropriateness within the wider landscape, townscape and site characteristics of the Density Character Area, taking into account heights, plot sizes, proximity to the roadside, etc.

- The split of types of dwellings (houses or apartments) within each site is based on its appropriateness to the wider Density Character Area. Within these types, the proportion of different dwelling sizes (number of bedrooms) is based on Tandridge District Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2015[10].

- Areas required for each type and size of dwelling (number of bedrooms) are taken from DCLG's Nationally Described Space Standards (2015)[11], with the upper ranges (in terms of 'bed spaces', or persons) used to provide flexibility in terms of design or form of development that may come forward.

- The number of parking spaces required, and the area required for each space, is based on Tandridge Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2012). The majority of the typologies deploy surface parking, although in one typology garages are incorporated. As noted in Section 2.4, a car parking review is currently being undertaken in the district, which primarily considers public parking provision.

- Given the small size of the study sites, it has been assumed that contributions towards public open space would be made off-site. Tandridge District Council

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[10] Proportions taken from the third column of Figure 3.3 Size of Accommodation Required 2013-2033 in 'Addressing the Needs of All Household Types: Technical Paper for Tandridge District Council', which forms part of the 2015 SHMA.

[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard

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do not currently seek contribution for off-site open space provision. An Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Assessment is currently being prepared, which will review existing open space standards and advice on strategic and site-specific infrastructure funding. If the optimised density maps are applied to larger sites and on-site contributions are desirable, these should be met in accordance with the Council's emerging evidence base in relation to open space standards.

- There is no guidance available relating to the provision of private amenity space (private and communal gardens, courtyards, balcony space etc.) in Tandridge. A review of surrounding districts found that very few provide such guidance. Worthing District Council's Space Standards SPD (2012) includes minimum space standards which range from 50-100m² depending on the type of dwelling. However it is considered that this standard is not consistent with an aspiration to optimise density. Private residential amenities have therefore been based on the requirements for private residential amenities in the London Borough of Sutton Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2014), which are considered to be more appropriate:

  - 40m² for two bed houses;

  - 70m² for three or more bed houses; and

  - 25m² of amenity space (in form of private balcony and communal amenities) for flatted dwellings (regardless of the number of bedrooms).

Where this level of private amenity space could not be provided on site, the remaining amount has been provided through communal amenity space. The total amount of amenity space provided by a specific scheme should be considered as part of detailed design and through the determination of planning application(s).

3.2.3   Step 3: Application of Optimised Density

The optimised densities established in Step 2 were then applied to the sites identified through the site search set out in Chapter 2. In order to convert the sites to net density, the 'ready reckoners' set out in Table were used to calculate the approximate net developable area of the site.

Table 5 Net developable area assumptions

Site size (ha)	Net developable area ratio (%)
< 1	100
1 to <5	90
5 to < 10	80
10 and above	65

The optimised density for the relevant Density Character Area was then applied to the net developable area of each site.

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3.3 Overview of Density Mapping

3.3.1 Baseline Mapping

Six baseline Density Character Areas were identified through the baseline mapping. They are summarised in Table 6 including the net density range, and described in more detail in Appendix B, including site photos. The conservation areas included within the settlements have been included in this baseline mapping.

Table 6 Summary of baseline Density Character Areas

Ref.	Name	Net Density (dwellings per hectare)	Key Characteristics of Area
DCA 1	High Density	121 – 150	Predominantly made up of clusters of three-to-four storey apartment blocks, close to the centres of main built-up clusters. Usually single use areas (i.e. residential), but are adjacent to mixed use areas such as town centres. Tend not to include private gardens; private open space for use by the residents tends to be communal. Some (limited) examples of balconies providing private amenity space.
DCA 2	Medium-High Density	51 – 120	Predominantly located within the centre of settlements, in close proximity to rail stations and/or near (or part of) high streets. Characterised by apartments – either standalone buildings, or above other ground floor uses such as retail. Wide net density range is a factor of the mix of uses found within this character area. For example, non-residential uses such as retail are sometimes present but do not contribute to housing density. Whilst there is a range of densities, for the reason given above these areas often feel like they are towards the higher end of this density range. Similar in many respects to DCA 1, though provision of private amenity space (gardens, communal open space and balconies) is more prevalent reflected in the slightly lower densities observed.
DCA 3	Medium Density	21 – 50	Typified by terraced and semi-detached neighbourhoods. Majority of dwellings are two storeys, although there are some instances of bungalows. Dwellings tend to be arranged on either side of a road, or along a cul-de-sac.

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Ref.	Name	Net Density (dwellings per hectare)	Key Characteristics of Area
			Areas are predominantly residential. Dwellings tend to have private gardens, rather than communal gardens. Sometimes - but not always - off-street parking present.
DCA 4	Medium-Low Density	11 – 20	Typified by detached houses with gardens, although also includes some semi-detached houses with larger gardens. Plots tend to be larger than in DCA 3, but still 'line the streets', rather than being set back in their own plots. Dwellings tend to be one or two storeys high. Dwellings tend to have off-street parking, including garages.
DCA 5	Low Density	6 – 10	Typified by detached houses with gardens - plots tend to be very large. Whilst some of the houses are on or close to the public highways, others are sited further within the plots and are accessed by private tracks. In some areas, dominance of vegetation (such as tree and/or vegetation-lined plots) and green space. Dwellings tend to be one or two storeys high, and tend to be larger than in other parts of the built-up area. Dwellings tend to have off-street parking, including garages.
DCA 6	Very Low Density	5 and under	Similar characteristics to DCA 5, but with larger plot sizes.

Appendix C provides a series of maps which show the spatial extent of Density Character Areas across the 19 settlements included in the study. As noted above, the maps provide a high level assessment of density, and do not indicate that every property within each Area are of the same density or typologies outlined in Table 6.

3.3.2 Density Optimisation

The density optimisation site studies have found that there are opportunities to optimise densities on sites within many of the baseline Density Character Areas, through the use of alternative typologies, plot sizes, massing, siting, etc.

Table 7 compares the baseline net densities and optimised densities in each of the Density Character Areas – the baseline should therefore be thought of as a 'minimum' with the optimised density as a 'maximum'. Appendix D sets out the density optimisation site studies which were undertaken for each Density Character Area. It should be noted that:

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- Density optimisation has not been undertaken for the Conservation Areas, because of the increased sensitivity of the areas and the extra controls the local planning authority has in relation to the design of new development. The optimised densities should therefore not be applied to Conservation Areas; instead, it is recommended that the baseline densities should be applied and development proposals considered on a case-by-case basis. Should the Council wish to provide more guidance on the approach to density, it is considered that this matter is more appropriately dealt with through the management plan for Conservation Areas.

- The areas covered by the optimised Density Character Areas maps (see Appendix E) include many non-residential uses within the settlement boundaries. This is not to suggest that a change of use to residential is appropriate or supported; rather, it provides guidance on the optimised density for those sites if they were to come forward for housing.

- The densities set out in Table 7 relate to brownfield sites in existing settlements. Such densities should not necessarily be directly applied to edge-of-settlement sites; consideration will need to be given to the surrounding character of the area and whether an alternative density on all or part of the site might be more appropriate.

- Tandridge District Council may decide, when determining planning applications or producing site-specific guidance for any given site, that a higher or lower density might be appropriate, taking into account site-specific considerations.

Table 7 Summary of baseline and optimised densities for the Density Character Areas (excluding Conservation Areas)

Ref.	Name	Baseline Net Density (dwellings per hectare)	Optimised Net Density (dwellings per hectare) (excluding Conservation Areas)
DCA 1	High Density	120 – 150	100 (see explanation below)
DCA 2	Medium-High Density	50 – 120	100 (see explanation below)
DCA 3	Medium Density	20 – 50	60-75[12]
DCA 4	Medium-Low Density	10 – 20	45
DCA 5	Low Density	5 – 10	15
DCA 6	Very Low Density	5 and under	N/A (see explanation below)

The density optimisation studies undertaken for the most dense areas (DCA 1 and DCA 2) have found an optimised density which is lower than the baseline density found to be existing in the district. This is largely a result of the car parking standards taken from the Tandridge Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document, which significantly reduce the amount of space within the site available for residential buildings. Higher densities might be possible if the

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[12] Due to the specific character of the site and adjacent development used in the density optimisation study for DCA 3, a net density of 60 dwellings per hectare has been achieved. However, it is considered that other sites within DCA 3 might be expected to reach higher densities of around 75 dwellings per hectare. For this reason, a range is presented.

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standards for parking were amended, or if alternative forms of parking could be provided on site, such as decked or basement parking (given inclusion of such types of parking can impact on the viability of a particular scheme, they have not been tested as part of the density optimisation studies). Higher densities might also be possible if a different mix of dwelling sizes were delivered in these locations – i.e. more one or two-bed flats.

DCA 6 (Very Low Density) is only located within the settlement of Woldingham (see Appendix B and Appendix C). Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan was made in April 2016 and therefore forms part of the adopted development plan. Policy L1 of the Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan states that development (amongst other criteria) should not require the inappropriate subdivision of curtilages, deemed as such where it results in curtilages of less than 0.2 ha or where it involves the further subdivision of part of an already subdivided curtilage. It is therefore considered that densities cannot be optimised in DCA 6 whilst remaining in accordance with the Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan. A density optimisation site study was not therefore undertaken for this Density Character Area.

The optimised densities accord with all made neighbourhood plans located within the district. It is acknowledged that other neighbourhood plans may come forward before adoption of the Local Plan, in which case the optimised densities may need to be reviewed to ensure they remain consistent. It is the Council's current intention to include policies within the Local Plan on density, which would constitute strategic policies for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. Any future emerging neighbourhood plans would therefore need to conform with these policies.

A series of optimised Density Character Areas maps are provided in Appendix E. The boundaries shown in some cases vary from those shown in the baseline maps in Appendix C for a number of reasons:

- The boundaries of the emerging Caterham Masterplan have been removed, to reflect the fact that more detailed work on densities is being undertaken for this area.

- There are opportunities to further increase densities in areas that are well served by public transport such as railway stations, in accordance with the proposed amendments to national guidance set out in the Housing White Paper and the December 2015 consultation on proposed changes to the NPPF.

3.3.3   Application of Optimised Density

Table 8 sets out the indicative yield from the sites identified through the site search exercise, applying the optimised densities established above (Table 7)[13]. Again, it should be emphasised that the Council may decide, when updating the HELAA or determining planning applications for any given site that a higher or lower density might be appropriate, taking into account more detailed site-specific considerations.

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[13] The upper end of the range (75 dwellings per hectare) for DCA 3 has been applied.

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Table 8 Application of optimised densities to the findings of the site search

Settlement	Site Reference	Density Character Area	Site Size	Net Developable Area	Indicative yield
Bletchingley	UCS15	DCA 3 (Medium) (Conservation Area)	0.22	0.22	8*
	UCS16	DCA 3 (Medium)	0.58	0.58	43***
				Total	**51**
Caterham on the Hill	UCS01	DCA 2 (Medium-High) (Conservation Area)	0.75	0.75	53*
				Total	**53**
Caterham Valley	UCS02	DCA 4 (Medium-Low)	0.22	0.22	10
				Total	**10**
Felbridge	UCS14	DCA 5 (Low)	2.00	1.80	27
				Total	**27**
Hurst Green / Oxted / Limpsfield	UCS09	DCA 3 (Medium)	0.84	0.84	63
				Total	**63**
Lingfield	UCS10	DCA 4 (Medium-Low)	0.29	0.29	13
	UCS11	DCA 5 Low) (Conservation Area)	0.25	0.25	2*
	UCS12	DCA 3 (Medium)	0.86	0.86	64***
	UCS13	DCA 3 (Medium)	0.26	0.26	19**
				Total	**98**
Warlingham and Whyteleafe	UCS03	DCA 3 (Medium)	0.27	0.27	20
	UCS04	DCA 3 (Medium)	0.83	0.83	62
	UCS05	DCA 3 (Medium)	0.21	0.21	15
	UCS07	DCA 1 (High)	0.45	0.45	45
	UCS08	DCA 3 (Medium)	3.69	3.32	249***
	UCS06	DCA 1 (High)	0.30	0.30	30
				Total	**421**
				Grand Total	**723**

This site is within a Conservation Area and so the mid point of the baseline density rather than the optimised density has been applied.

** A small part of the site is within a Conservation Area and so the density applied may not be appropriate for the entirety of the site.

*** This site is outside and not immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary, but directly adjoins a HELAA site which is adjacent to the settlement boundary (see Section 2.3). In order to provide the site an optimised density, the nearest Density Character Area has been applied. However, given the edge of settlement location, in proximity to the open countryside, an alternative density on all or part of the site might be appropriate.

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3.4 Implications for the Local Plan

Tandridge District Council should apply the optimised densities to the sites identified through the HELAA, to update the development potential estimated on sites within settlement boundaries. If the findings of the HELAA show that the development requirements cannot be met on non-Green Belt land alone and the Council decide to pursue Green Belt release through the Local Plan, the evidence set out in the Urban Capacity Study should be used to support the case for exceptional circumstances. The findings of the study may also form one of the considerations in the decision to amend Green Belt boundaries in relation to 'washed over' settlements through the Local Plan – for example by identifying areas in the Green Belt of higher baseline density which might be more suited for being inset, or the impact that higher density development might have on the openness of a given area – where this also accords with the guidance provided in paragraph 86 of the NPPF.

Should the Council choose to include locally specific policies on residential density within the Local Plan, these should be informed by the optimised densities set out in this report. The Council may also decide to use this study as a basis for subsequent supplementary planning guidance, design codes, site-specific guidance, and so on.

As set out in Section 3.3, the current parking standards set out in the Tandridge Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2012) may act as a barrier for delivering high densities in the district. The Council may choose to consider whether amendments to these standards are required – either across the district as a whole, or for particular areas or specific sites. This decision may be informed by the car parking review currently being undertaken by the Council.

As stated in Section 3.2, an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Assessment is currently being prepared, which will review existing open space standards and provide advice on funding for strategic and site-specific open space including potential mechanisms for securing contributions for open space provision. Decisions on the delivery and funding of open space requirements including the extent to which open space is provided on- and off-site, may impact on the densities which might be realised on particular sites.

The study does not take into account the infrastructure requirements – including transport, utilities and social infrastructure – that would be required to support development on the additional sites identified in Chapter 2, or the optimised densities established in this chapter. The Council should ensure that this is considered as part of progressing the Local Plan and in deciding to what extent further development can be supported.

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