
Shaping Elmbridge A New Local Plan



Key Theme Summary Paper Ensuring health and wellbeing for all

Elmbridge Local Plan Evidence Base

January 2020



Elmbridge
Borough Council
... bridging the communities ...

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Key theme summary

This Key Theme Overview paper brings together legislation and national policy requirements, guidance and our local plan evidence base which inform the development of planning policies on ensuring health and wellbeing for all in the new Local Plan.

Ensuring health and wellbeing for all includes developing housing to meet our needs, promoting healthy and inclusive communities, ensuring social, recreational and cultural facilities and services are positively planned for, and developing sustainable places and buildings.

A government priority is addressing the shortage of housing in the country and we have to plan for developing housing to meet the needs of our communities, which includes affordable housing, specialist housing and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller accommodation. We also have to ensure that infrastructure is provided alongside new development where it is needed.

Our evidence is showing us that we have an acute need for affordable housing and need to address the housing needs of a changing population. We are seeking through the proposed policy approach to meet these needs and ensure that new homes and places are of a high quality design, that respond to our local context and contribute to sustainable development. Protecting existing social and community infrastructure and providing new, where it is needed, alongside new homes.

Open spaces and recreation contributes to the health and wellbeing of our communities and protecting and enhancing them is an important aspect of our proposed policy direction. A sustainably connected borough through the promotion of active living environments, minimum car parking standards, and car clubs is proposed through the policy direction, contributing to air quality improvements and climate change mitigation.

This paper brings together all these challenges and evidence and explains the policy directions we are considering in the new Local Plan, *Creating our vision, objectives and the direction for development management policies 2020* consultation. The consultation is running from 27 January 2020 to 9 March 2020 and is seeking views on the vision, objectives and direction of development management policies as part of the preparation of the new Local Plan.

Further information on the consultation can be found at: elmbridge.gov.uk/localplan2020

1. Introduction

Purpose

- 1.1 This Theme Summary Paper on Ensuring health and wellbeing for all (Key Theme 3) is one in a series of three that have been produced to support the consultation on the New Local Plan, *Creating our vision, objectives and the direction for development management policies 2020*. The purpose of each Theme Summary Paper is to provide more detail on the legislation, policy and evidence base that have informed the direction for the development management policies for consultation. The two other Key Theme summary papers in this series are:
- Key Theme 1: Climate change and the natural environment
 - Key Theme 2: Growing a prosperous economy
- 1.2 This paper provides a summary analysis on the technical evidence base produced to date, bringing this together with the legislative and policy requirements which the new Local Plan will be expected to meet regarding health and wellbeing.

Overview

- 1.3 Bringing together key pieces of information, the aim of this paper is to provide technical background information for stakeholders and interested parties on the development of the policy direction in the new Local Plan. The paper does not contain any policies or proposals. This paper covers the topics of:
- Quality homes for all
 - Design of new development and space
 - Historic and cultural assets
 - Social and community infrastructure
 - Sustainable movement
- 1.4 The document sets out firstly in section 2 an overview of the legislation and policy requirements; in section 3 a summary analysis of the technical evidence base and in section 4 an overview of the next steps in furthering the evidence base, where needed, and the development of policies. The summary at the front of the document provides a snapshot of the key requirements and issues arising, and the next steps for the consultation.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 In developing the new Local Plan, regard must be had to relevant legislation and National Planning Policy and guidance, as well as regional and local plans and strategies. This section of the paper summarises those that are relevant to the development of the direction of policies on ensuring health and wellbeing for all.

National policy and guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) contains chapters on delivering a sufficient supply of homes, promoting healthy and safe communities, promoting sustainable transport and achieving well-designed places.
- 2.3 The NPPF places significant weight on the need to significantly boost the supply of homes with, a sufficient amount and variety of land coming forward. Meeting the housing needs of specific groups is also required. When identifying the minimum number of homes to be provided, the NPPF requires local authorities to use a local housing need assessment to inform strategic policies, which is calculated using the standard method in national planning guidance. This is unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach. The NPPF, paragraph 60 goes on to say, “in addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for”.
- 2.4 Within this the size, type and tenure of housing need for different groups needs to be assessed and reflected in planning policies. In terms of affordable housing the NPPF, paragraph 62 expects planning policies to identify the type of affordable housing required and the expectation is that on-site affordable housing is provided. In paragraph 63 the NPPF states that affordable housing should not be required from residential developments that are not major developments, and to support the re-use of brownfield land “where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount”. Policies should also expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership.

- 2.5 Paragraph 65 of the NPPF states “Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period. Within this overall requirement, strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations”.
- 2.6 The NPPF requires strategic policy-making authorities to have a thorough understanding of the land availability in their area and from this, develop planning policies that identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, and these policies should (paragraph 67):
- a) Specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period, and
 - b) Specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan
- 2.7 It is expected that strategic policies include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period. This should be updated annually, maintaining a five-year supply of sites against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies.
- 2.8 The NPPF expects planning policies to aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places, policies that:
- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;
 - b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high-quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
 - c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

- 2.9 Furthering this, the NPPF expects policies to ensure that social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs are positively planned for, taking into account local strategies to improve health and social well-being, guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, ensure that facilities and services are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community, and ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.
- 2.10 In providing for education needs, the NPPF expects local planning authorities to take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, helping to develop a wider choice in education.
- 2.11 Open space and recreation and access to a network of it is recognised as important for the health and well-being of communities. Up to date and robust assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities and the opportunities for new provision should be used to inform planning policies, addressing identified need. The NPPF expects existing spaces not to be built on unless there is evidence to demonstrate it is surplus or is being replaced with improved facilities.
- 2.12 Paragraph 99 of the NPPF allows local communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them through the designation of Local Green Space. However, the NPPF stipulates criteria where the designation can be used (paragraph 100):
- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 2.13 The NPPF promotes sustainable transport and expects in paragraph 102 for opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use to be pursued, and for parking and other transport considerations to be integral to scheme design, contributing to achieving high quality places.
- 2.14 Paragraph 103 expects the planning system to support limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes, taking into account that the opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions vary between urban and rural areas. The following NPPF requirements are relevant to developing policies in Elmbridge:

- a) support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities;
- b) be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned;
- c) identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development;
- d) provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans);

2.15 Paragraph 105 of the Framework sets out what policies should take into account when setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, which include:

- accessibility of the development,
- type, mix and use of development,
- availability and opportunities for public transport,
- local car ownership levels, and
- the need to provide spaces for electric charging points.

2.16 Paragraph 106 states that “maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote sustainability for pedestrians and cyclists”.

2.17 In considering development proposals the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

2.18 Paragraph 122 expects development to make the efficient use of land, considering, amongst other things “the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use”.

- 2.19 The NPPF expects plans to set out a clear design vision and expectations, recognising that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and creates better places in which to live and work. The use of visual tools, such as design guides and codes should be considered. Planning policies should ensure developments add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to local character and history, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, promoting health and well-being.
- 2.20 In conserving the historic environment, a positive strategy should be set out in local plans which should take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
 - d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.21 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) supports the implementation of the NPPF giving further guidance and details on the requirements. The guidance covers a range of policy areas such as design, housing, healthy and safe communities, heritage, open space and transport.
- 2.22 Planning policies should not only set out design outcomes, but also pursue tools and processes that are expected to be used to embed good design. These policies, the guidance suggests, can be included in a plan's vision, objectives and overarching strategic policies, but also in non-strategic and supplementary planning documents.
- 2.23 The PPG outlines what plan-making bodies need to consider in developing healthy communities, in both the provision of health care services and facilities and in creating healthy environments. Engagement with relevant health organisations is considered key in achieving both these outcomes. Healthy places should reduce health inequalities, and promote opportunities for physical and mental health, promoting social interaction with inclusive

design.

- 2.24 One element which the PPG considers planning can influence is the ability of the built environment to improve health and reduce obesity. Planning policies should have regard to issues such as evidence on obesity and health inequalities, over-concentrations of uses within a specified area and odours and noise impact.
- 2.25 Furthering the NPPFs positive strategy that should be set out for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, the PPG goes on to detail that plan-making bodies should identify “specific opportunities within their area for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, including their setting”, and where appropriate development that makes a positive contribution to “the heritage asset, or reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness with particular regard given to the prevailing styles of design and use of materials in a local area”.
- 2.26 Several areas of the PPG deal with housing, giving further information on the implementation of the NPPF and the strong drive to deliver more housing. Detailed guidance is given on how local authorities should undertake housing land availability assessments in their areas, and how the needs of different groups should be assessed.
- 2.27 In meeting the needs of different groups within the borough the PPG expects local authorities to have regard to the standard methodology, and anticipate the deliverability of different forms of provision, having regard to viability and also consider the implications of equality legislation. Groups where housing needs should be considered include the private rented sector, self-build and custom build housing, student housing, and affordable housing.
- 2.28 Affordable housing is considering all households whose housing needs are not met by the market and who are eligible for one or more types of affordable housing as set out in the NPPF’s definition of affordable housing. In assessing the level of affordable housing need we are expected to take into account:
- the number of homeless households
 - the number of those in priority need who are currently housed in temporary accommodation;
 - the number of households in over-crowded housing;
 - the number of concealed households;
 - the number of existing affordable housing tenants in need (i.e. householders currently housed in unsuitable dwellings); and
 - the number of households from other tenures in need and those that

cannot afford their own homes, either to rent, or to own, where that is their aspiration.

2.29 To assess the total affordable housing supply requires us to identify:

- the number of affordable dwellings that are going to be vacated by current occupiers that are fit for use by other households in affordable housing need;
- suitable surplus stock (vacant properties); and
- the committed supply of new net affordable homes at the point of the assessment (number and size).

2.30 Older people is a group that the PPG identifies as critical to plan for as there is expected to be a significant increase in the proportion of older people in the population, and it is expected that it is considered from the early stages of plan-making. The PPG states “offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them to live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems”. Where a need exists, a local plan needs to provide specialist housing for older people, but also consider the role general housing may play.

2.31 We also need to consider the housing needs for disabled people, including specialist and supported housing. Housing should be accessible and adaptable, providing a greater housing choice. The PPG expects clear policies addressing these needs in the area, and how proposals for such housing will be considered. Where an identified need exists, we can set minimum requirements for accessible housing, making use of the optional technical standards, setting out the proportion of new housing that will be delivered to the following standards:

- M4(1) Category 1: Visitable dwellings (the minimum standard that applies where no planning condition is given unless a plan sets a higher minimum requirement)
- M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings
- M4(3) Category 3: Wheelchair user dwellings

2.32 The PPG details the Optional Technical Standards for housing that local authorities have the option to set that exceed the minimum standards required by Building Regulations. These are for access, water and space standard. To include these Optional Technical Standards, “Local Planning Authorities will need to gather evidence to determine whether there is a need for additional standards in their area and justify setting appropriate policies in Local Plans”.

- 2.33 The optional standard regarding access includes the option to make enhanced provision for accessible and adaptable dwellings, and wheelchair user dwellings, setting out what proportion of new dwellings should comply with the requirements. Regarding water, the Optional Technical Standards give local planning authorities the option to require new dwellings to meet the tighter water usage per day of 110 litres/person/day, compared with the current building regulation requirement of 125 litres/person/day. In terms of space standards, a local planning authority can require minimum space standards by referencing the nationally described space standard.
- 2.34 The PPG recognises the important role open space plays in providing health and recreation benefits. Local planning authorities are expected to assess the need for open space within their areas, as well as the opportunities for new provision. Through the NPPF/ PPG areas that meet the set criteria can be designated as Local Green Space in Local Plans. However, the PPG states “Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. In particular, plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making”.

National Design Guide, September 2019

- 2.35 The National Design Guide (2019) forms part of the Government’s collection of planning practice guidance and builds on the NPPF in achieving high quality places and buildings. The aim of the National Design Guide is to address the question of how we recognise well-designed places through outlining and illustrating the Government’s priorities for well-designed places. This takes the form of ten characteristics:
- Context – enhances the surroundings
 - Identity – attractive and distinctive
 - Built form – a coherent pattern of development
 - Movement – accessible and easy to move around
 - Nature – enhanced and optimised
 - Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive
 - Uses – mixed and integrated
 - Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable
 - Resources – efficient and resilient
 - Lifespan – made to last
- 2.36 It is expected that these 10 characteristics are incorporated into local design

guides, codes or policy. Each of the ten characteristics are set out in detail in the guidance and accompanying each is a section on 'looking forward'. The guide expects "continuing change as a consequence of climate change, changing home ownership models and technological changes". Planning policies are expected to consider the issues identified in looking forward and how these could be addressed.

Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2019

- 2.37 In 2019 the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board published a 10-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy which focuses on three priorities:
- Priority one: helping people in Surrey to lead a healthy life
 - Priority two: Supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of people in Surrey
 - Priority three: Supporting people to fulfil their potential
- 2.38 The strategy identified some challenges for Surrey that it can work to improve outcomes to deliver the Community Vision for Surrey 2030:
- Widening inequalities
 - Ageing population
 - Transport emissions impacting air quality
 - Unmet needs of the carers of Surrey
 - Access to services
 - Unmet needs of those with learning disabilities in Surrey
 - Substance abuse issues
 - Increasing reported domestic violence
 - Impact of social isolation
 - Increasing need for emotional wellbeing support
 - Increasing reporting rates of violent crime, and concern about knife crime
- 2.39 The strategy tackles these issues through the priorities across the whole population, but with a focus on four specific groups; Children with special needs and disabilities, and adults with learning disabilities and /or autism; those people living in deprivation, or those who are vulnerable across Surrey; those people living with illness and/ or disability; and all young and adult carers in Surrey.
- 2.40 The strategy sets out key outcomes to achieve those priorities, those of relevance to preparing are new Local Plan are:
- Working to reduce obesity and excess weight rates and physical

inactivity

- Ensuring everyone lives in good and appropriate housing
- Improving environmental factors that impact people's health and wellbeing
- Helping people to live independently for as long as possible and die well
- Preventing isolation and enabling support for those who do feel isolated
- Enabling children, young people, adults and elderly with mental health issues to access the right help and resources
- Supporting children to develop skills for life
- Supporting adults to succeed professionally and/ or through volunteering

2.41 In order to deliver the strategy the Board has identified system capabilities that they are developing including improvements in digital and technology, developing a single workforce strategy and a Surrey public sector skills academy, and establishing a unified estates and assets approach across all of Surrey.

3. Evidence base

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy requires us to develop policies in the new Local Plan based on evidence. Our evidence base comprises documents that have helped inform past and current stages of our Local Plan policy development; emerging evidence will help inform future development of policies for the Local Plan.
- 3.2 The Council has published several evidence base documents relating to the natural environment which are all available to view on the Council's website. These evidence base studies cover the topics of housing, open space and recreation, community facilities and heritage.
- 3.3 The key current evidence documents relevant to developing policies on health and wellbeing are:
- Kingston and North Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016
 - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2017
 - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Site Assessment Study 2018
 - Local Green Space Designation Study 2016
 - Open Space and Recreation Assessment 2014
 - Playing Pitch Needs Assessment Study 2013
 - Heritage Strategy 2015 – supported by Character Appraisals and Management Plans.

Kingston and North Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016

- 3.4 This was a joint assessment undertaken with The Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames, Mole Valley District Council and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. The study noted the high house prices in Elmbridge, with affordability remaining a key problem. Under the national planning policy at that time the study calculated the objectively assessed need for the borough as being 9,480 homes (474 per annum) and in Elmbridge the majority of this requirement is for smaller (1-2 bedroom) units.
- 3.5 The study concluded that the projected dwelling size requirements from Elmbridge to 2035 would be 28% 1 bedroom, 42% 2 bedroom, 29% 3 bedroom and 1% 4+ bedrooms. The borough's annual need for affordable housing is 332 homes.

- 3.6 The assessment also considered the needs of some specific groups, including older households and households with members who have disabilities and wheelchair users. The study noted that Elmbridge have one of highest rates of increase for the 85 plus age group and based on ONS projections the increase of the over 65s is forecast to increase by 13,600 in Elmbridge. In terms of households aged 65 or over in the borough this is expected to increase by 67% by 2037. When assessing specialist accommodation, the assessment highlight at that time Elmbridge has a surplus of sheltered and enhanced sheltered accommodation, and a shortage of extra care.
- 3.7 The SHMA 2016 was prepared prior to the introduction of the Standard Methodology and is now more than two years since publication. Noting best practice advice for evidence to be no more than two years old from the time of submission the SHMA findings are being reviewed and an update is underway to inform the draft Local Plan.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (2017)

- 3.8 The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) provides a robust assessment of the current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in the borough. The GTAA has sought to understand the accommodation needs through a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder interviews and engagement with members of the Travelling Community.
- 3.9 Based upon the evidence gathered in the study the estimated additional pitch provision needed to 2031 for Gypsies and travellers who meet the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) definition is for 2 additional pitches. However due to a number of households, who may meet the PPTS definition of a Traveller, the study also concludes that the overall level of need could rise due to this to a total of 9 pitches. Further to this the needs of Gypsies and Travellers who do not meet the 'planning' definition in the GTAA will need to be considered and assessed as part of the wider housing needs of the area.
- 3.10 Due to the definition change through PPTS in 2015, the study was unable to conclude if any transit sites were needed in the borough. The study recommended that a further update study be undertaken once there is a three-year evidence base to enable a better understanding of the evidence and to establish if there is need for invest in more formal transit sites or emergency stopping places. This review is currently underway.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Site Assessment Study 2018

- 3.11 The purpose of the study was to identify sufficient sites required to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers in line with the methodology set out in the PPTS (2015) and to meet the need identified in the Council's most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2017. Local planning authorities are currently required to identify a supply of specific sites to meet the needs of these groups within their local plans. This means that when delivering sites, consideration is required about which sites are available and suitable for different parts of the travelling community.
- 3.12 The study considered 45 sites in the borough in both the urban area and on Green Belt. Through the assessment 4 sites were highlighted as having potential to meet the borough's needs (as identified in the GTAA 2017).

Local Green Spaces Designation Study 2016

- 3.13 The Local Green Spaces Designation Study (2016) and the Local Green Spaces Assessments (2016) sets out the methodology used for the assessment of potential areas for designation as Local Green Spaces.
- 3.14 As a result of extensive consultations with the community and Members, 164 areas were suggested as Local Green Space opportunities. A number of these potential areas were excluded from consideration as they were protected from development by an existing piece of legislation or policy (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)), were below the site size threshold set by the Council or had planning permission for an alternative form of development. Following on from the detailed assessments, the initial findings found that there are 38 areas which meet the Local Green Space Criteria. The Study is being updated to take into account new areas submitted for consideration as Local Green Space.

Elmbridge Open Space and Recreation Assessment (Atkins, 2014)

- 3.15 The Elmbridge Open Space and Recreation Assessment was produced in 2014 by the consultants Atkins. The assessment identified the quantity and appraised the quality, value, and accessibility of open space provision across the borough.
- 3.16 It identified a level of local open space needs by analysing demographic and socio-economic indicators that influence the open space needs of different localities. It found that natural or semi-natural greenspaces represent the largest share of total open space, and there is a good coverage of natural

greenspace across the borough. There was no additional requirement in terms of accessibility.

- 3.17 The study assessed the quality and value of the borough's open spaces. It concluded that the value placed on open space is multi-functional and relates to a range of roles. It found that 22% of the open spaces assessed were of high quality / of high value to the community. However, many of the high-quality / low value spaces represent mono-functional open spaces which only contribute to the community in a limited way.
- 3.18 It identified areas deficient in public open space and children's play provision and recommended that public park provision should increase by 6 ha and that the remaining deficiencies could be met by improving the facilities within existing open spaces.
- 3.19 The assessment identified individual spaces that had scope for improvement and how the open spaces can be improved. The assessment concluded that projected population growth will place increasing pressure on existing open spaces and recreational facilities as the number of users increase and potentially, that existing facilities are likely to face increasing pressure from development for alternative uses.

Review of Playing Pitches Study 2013

- 3.20 The 2013 Playing Pitch Study was reviewed as part of the Open Space and Recreation Assessment by Atkins. The Playing Pitches Study was considered to be robust as the Sports England Playing Pitch Methodology was applied to the pitch and team data to provide supply and demand for the playing pitches. In addition, consultation took place with key stakeholders and their feedback and comments were incorporated into the final version.
- 3.21 It noted that the population projections used in the open space assessment were slightly higher than those used in the playing pitches study. It advised that the playing pitch model results used in the 2013 study are monitored over time.

Heritage Strategy 2015

- 3.22 The purpose of the strategy was to provide a framework for how we understand, preserve, manage, integrate, interpret and promote our heritage. The strategy considered the national and local heritage planning context, and utilised results from the national Heritage Count 2014 to suggest key priorities and recommendations regarding heritage in Elmbridge.

- 3.23 The study covers the heritage assets within the borough which includes around 770 Statutory Listed Buildings, over 300 locally listed buildings, 26 Conservation Areas, 3 Historic Parks and Gardens, 6 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 56 Sites of High Archaeological Potential.
- 3.24 In responding to identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the strategy identifies 4 key priorities for future work. Firstly, to deliver an informed regulatory planning service, which maximises opportunities for the conservation of heritage assets particularly those at high risk; secondly, to have a better coordinated approach with partners to delivering heritage services, particularly where the heritage assets are within Council control; thirdly, to work with and support the local heritage community, and fourthly to improve awareness and understanding of Elmbridge's heritage assets.

4. Ensuring health and wellbeing for all

- 4.1 This section of the report brings together the legislation, national policy requirements and the main issues and challenges highlighted by the evidence base in relation to the policy areas being discussed in this consultation.
- 4.2 Each of the headings below relate to the policy directions being considered in Theme 3: ensuring health and wellbeing for all in the consultation document.

Excellently designed development and spaces

- 4.3 The NPPF and the supporting National Design Guide requires us to promote and achieve well designed, inclusive places in new development and balance this with protecting our heritage and cultural assets. Our overall policy direction that is considered in the consultation maintains this approach seeking to protect those special and sensitive assets in our borough.
- 4.4 Important in achieving this wider policy will be more detailed design guidance, following from the National Design Guide and interpreting the ten characteristics identified more specifically for Elmbridge.
- 4.5 In achieving better designed places and spaces, we are, in line with the options set out in the PPG, considering setting standards for the proportion of accessible and adaptable, and wheelchair housing in future local plan policies. This is supported by our local evidence which highlights our ageing population and the need to provide a range of homes.

Quality homes for all

- 4.6 The borough has some of the highest house prices in England and continues to have acute affordable housing needs. National policy requires us in the new Local Plan to plan to meet all housing needs and in particular affordable housing. The policy approaches being considered in the new Local Plan are to optimise the use of land to respond housing to meet need. Our previous consultation in August/ September 2019 went into detail on strategic options being considered to respond to overall housing need.
- 4.7 The current policy on affordable housing seeks financial contributions on sites of 4 units or less and expects on site provision of affordable housing on sites of 5 units or more. A change in national policy considers that affordable housing should only be sought on major sites, i.e. those of ten units or more. However, we are considering a policy approach of continuing to seek contributions for affordable housing on small sites (those less than ten units).

Our local evidence strongly demonstrates that unaffordability of homes in the borough is coupled with the acute need for the provision of affordable housing. Most of the development in the borough is also on small sites, which also impacts on the council's ability to achieve affordable housing to meet our identified needs. There is also evidence through recent planning applications that shows that the current retention of this policy ask is not having an adverse effect on the viability and delivery of developments.

- 4.8 Our evidence also identifies that we have an aging and older population in the borough, and national policy and guidance states that through our Local plan we need to plan for the needs of older people. We are considering a policy direction that delivers a choice of quality homes that respond to evolving lifestyles.

Connectivity, movement and parking

- 4.9 The new local plan is expected to promote sustainable travel, in line with national policy and regional strategies. Our new local plan policy directions are seeking to achieve more sustainable travel in the borough through promoting other travel choices, ensuring new developments address the provision of cycle parking and electric vehicle charging, as well as looking at introducing minimum parking standards which will reflect the accessibility of different areas of the borough.

- 4.10 Achieving a modal shift over the lifetime of the plan is also important in achieving other plan objectives and policy directions, including reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality, which is linked to vehicle emissions in the borough. We are also seeking to include a policy that promotes more use of car clubs, providing further modal choice through new developments.

Social and community infrastructure

- 4.11 Through the new local plan we need to plan for the facilities and infrastructure to support new development in the borough, but also, as set out in the NPPF, to protect existing facilities that serve local communities.
- 4.12 We are considering a local plan approach that encourages the provision of these facilities in town and local centres, supporting their vitality and providing facilities in accessible locations.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 This review brings together the national policy requirements, regional strategies and the evidence base document outcomes and recommendations that have led to the policy directions considered in the consultation. The NPPF does requires us to base our policies on up to date evidence.
- 5.2 We are undertaking further work on our housing needs. The Strategic Housing Needs Assessment was completed in 2016 and to ensure that our new Local Plan policies continue to meet our housing need this study is being updated in 2020. This will review our housing needs in terms of the size of dwellings needed in the borough for different tenures. It will also assess our affordable housing need taking into account those factors set out in the PPG. This evidence will then be used to inform the detail of the policies in the new local plan.
- 5.3 Alongside this piece of work the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is also being updated. The original assessment was undertaken in 2017 not long after the National Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites was published in 2015 which altered the definition of a traveller. A recommendation in the original study was that further work was undertaken when there was more evidence on which to make an assessment and a time period of three years was suggested. Updating this study now will enable us to utilise data collected since 2016; incorporate an assessment of the needs of houseboat dwellers and ensure that the new Local Plan meets the needs of these communities within the borough.
- 5.4 The Borough are also undertaking work to establish the accommodation needs of houseboat dwellers to comply with the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and March 2016 DCLG draft guidance on periodically reviewing the housing needs for caravans and houseboats. The purpose of this assessment is to quantify the accommodation and housing related support needs of boat dwellers in Elmbridge between 2020 and 2036. This is in terms of both permanent residential and temporary moorings for boat dwellers. The results will be used to inform policy development in housing and planning.
- 5.5 As part of assessment green space in the Borough a Green (and blue) Infrastructure Strategy is currently being produced. A qualitative assessment is being undertaken of our existing open spaces and recreation areas with the aim of establishing links between spaces and future development.

5.6 Following the consultation we will consider the feedback to these policy approaches, whether any further evidence is required.