



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

Elmbridge Local Plan

**Cobham, Oxshott,
Stoke D'Abernon &
Downside**

**Settlement Investment
& Development Plan**

Options Consultation

April 2013



Contact Details:

Web site:	www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning
Email:	tplan@elmbridge.gov.uk
Telephone:	01372 474787
Address:	Planning Services Planning Policy Elmbridge Borough Council Civic Centre High Street Esher Surrey KT10 9SD

Summary

What is this consultation all about?

“Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that local plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of an area”

Paragraph 155- National Planning Policy Framework

There have been many changes to the planning system over recent years. The Government is now promoting the production of a Local Plan, a single document that deals with all matters relating to the management and planning of development. However, Local Authorities do have the option to develop their Local Plan through a series of separate related documents. Given that the Council's Core Strategy is up to date, compatible with the Government's planning framework ¹, and has its own locally assessed housing requirement, continuing to develop the Local Plan as a portfolio of documents is the most sensible way forward. In completing our Local Plan portfolio we want to work closely with the community in order to reflect local needs and aspirations as far as possible, with the aim of providing clarity and certainty for those who wish to develop within the Borough. The delivery of our strategy will only be successful if we engage with all those who are affected by new development, infrastructure and services, and all those who provide it. The Council is committed to taking a strong leadership role, co-ordinating skills, resources and knowledge. We will adopt a proactive approach to the planning and management of development in order to ensure that the aims of the Core Strategy are delivered where, when and how we intend.

The aim of Settlement Investment and Development (ID) Plans is simply to plan for investment and development within local areas in partnership with the local community. Elmbridge has 8 distinct settlements, which have very different characters and communities. Recognising these differences, and working together, drawing on the opportunities that arise and addressing the challenges that new development may bring, is key to maintaining local choice, control and ownership. It is the Council's view that to 'do nothing' and sit back and wait for development to happen is a poor way to plan for the future of the Borough. Settlement 'ID' Plans will make a significant contribution to the delivery and management of development that provides for the level of growth set out in the Core Strategy, supported by improved infrastructure and services.

1.[National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)]

Settlement ID Plans identify;

- Open spaces that need to be protected and some earmarked for enhancement
- Employment land that should remain as such because of its strategic importance
- Schools and colleges where there are opportunities for expansion
- Key sites for the delivery of housing, commercial and community development
- Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers
- Infrastructure improvements and priorities

This document is for consultation purposes only. The Council has already directed a significant amount of resources into holding workshops with the local community, landowners, businesses and potential developers. They have provided useful forums to openly discuss needs, aspirations and intentions, but these were just the start of the process. The document presented here is for wider consultation. The aim is that the final version of the plans will truly reflect local aspirations, while acknowledging that landowners and developers are key to delivery.

How you can tell us your views

We are consulting on this document for a 6-week period between **8 April 2013 and 20 May 2013**. Please let us know what you like, what you don't like, and where improvements can be made. Changes are inevitable and we hope that consultation responses can add a greater element of local distinctiveness to each plan.

Within this period, planning officers will be visiting your local area, giving you more opportunity to provide input, and influence future development and infrastructure provision. Visit our web site to see when we will be in your area. We strongly encourage you to use our new on line consultation portal. This is easy to use and the most efficient way of dealing with comments. Log on to our website and, if you need help, just telephone the number below and we will be happy to assist.

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What are we planning to do next?

Once we have received your comments, we will give consideration to all of them and decide what changes should be made in order to better reflect the views of the community whilst being mindful that we do need to plan for growth and be realistic about delivery.

You will be able to see what difference your comments have made in the Consultation Statement which will set out how and why the comments made during the consultation have either been taken on board and influenced the final document, or have not been considered appropriate for inclusion. The Consultation Statement will be available on the Council's website.

If significant changes are considered necessary, either due to the nature of responses or the submission of new information, we will re-consult and everyone will have a further opportunity to comment. In the event that only minor changes are necessary, the plans will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent inspector in the at the start of 2014. At this point, you still have an opportunity to comment on the plans if you so wish. However, it is hoped that by adopting a collaborative approach to drawing up these plans, they will benefit from a significant amount of support from the local community and objections will be kept to a minimum.

Stage in process	Date	Re-consultation necessary (alternative dates)
Publication	November 2013	Summer 2014
Publication for independent examination	December 2013	Autumn 2014
Adoption	Autumn 2014	End of 2014

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1 Introduction

The Planning Strategy for Elmbridge

1.1 The Elmbridge Core Strategy, adopted in July 2011, sets the overarching strategy for the Borough. It adopts a local approach to the promotion of sustainable growth, directing the right sort of development to the right places, whilst protecting the environment and providing community infrastructure.

1.2 In considering the soundness of this planning strategy, the independent planning inspector wrote;

“In terms of housing, employment and other development, the plan provides for growth, reflecting the Government’s agenda, and generally it strikes the right balance between needs and demands”.

‘In its approach to the Green Belt the plan is also consistent with the Government’s Planning for growth agenda. This makes clear that wherever possible the answer to proposals should be yes, while ensuring the key sustainable development principles set out in national policy would not be compromised’

1.3 Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, the Government has published a new planning framework. The Council considers that its Core Strategy is compatible with this planning framework.²

1.4 However, the Core Strategy forms only part of the Elmbridge Local Plan and a commitment has been made to prepare further documents to direct and shape future growth. The diagram overleaf illustrates the family of documents that will make up the Council’s Local Plan and how they relate to each other.

Progress so far

1.5 In response to local concerns about the impact of new development on local character and infrastructure, the Council prioritised the production of two documents which were adopted in April 2012;

- Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document
- Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document.

1.6 In addition, a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, the first in Surrey, which was adopted in April 2013³. This sets a charge of £125 per square metre for new residential development and £50 per square metre for retail development. The

2.[The compatibility checklist can be found at www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning]



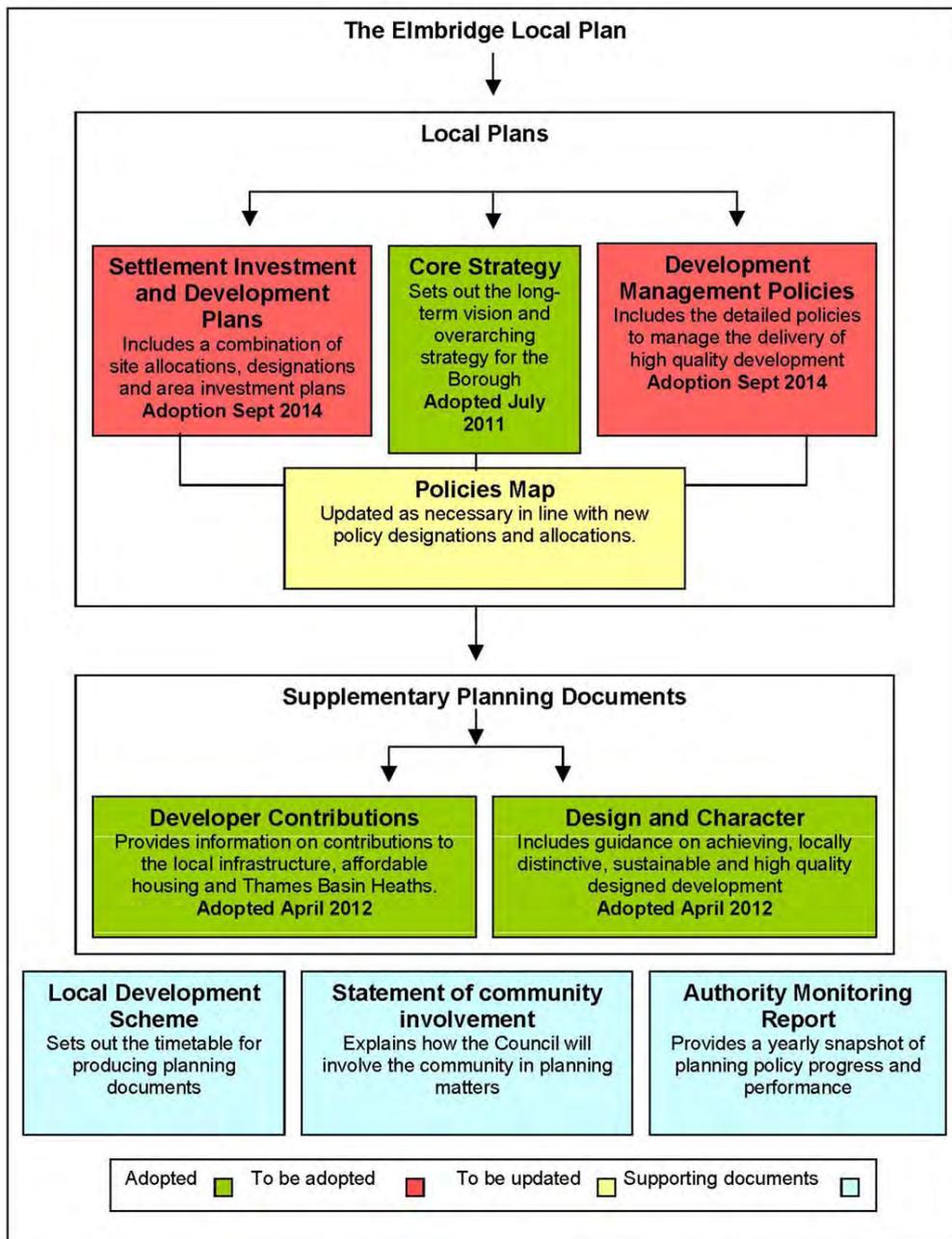
aim is to provide clarity about expectations prior to buying land, and ensure that new development contributes to the creation of an environment where growth is not stifled through lack of infrastructure and investment. It is estimated that this charge will raise in the region of £24 million over a 10 year period which will go towards funding a comprehensive package of infrastructure improvements across the Borough.

1.7 The Council is now producing the remaining documents that will complete its Local Plan;

- The Development Management Plan
- Settlement ID (Investment and Development) Plans

1.8 These two documents are being produced concurrently and are both subject to consultation now.

3.[CIL is a new levy that will be charged on new developments. The money raised can be pooled and used to fund infrastructure that the council and the local community wants - for example, new or safer road schemes, school expansion or improvements to leisure facilities. Further details of CIL including a summary can be found on the Communities and Local Government website and the Council's website www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning]



Supporting new development that's right for local areas

1.9 The Council will adopt a positive approach to the consideration of development proposals. We will work with the local community as well as developers to find solutions, which means that appropriate sites will be allocated for development wherever possible, in order to provide a clear and coherent plan that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the Borough. Whilst promoting the right sort of development in the right places, we are committed to making sure that the

key sustainable development principles set out in the Government's planning framework are not compromised.

Why is it good to have a plan?

1.10 With or without a plan, development will happen anyway. Adopting a plan led approach allows the Council to take a strong leadership role that will steer development within the Borough, protecting valued open spaces, directing investment in improved infrastructure where it is needed most, and delivering development of a type and within locations that are considered to be most appropriate. Such an approach means that the Council has to make difficult decisions, but it allows us to manage and plan for development, taking account of the potential impact on local areas.

1.11 The Core Strategy commits to the delivery of approximately 3,375 new homes between 2011- 2026. This equates to 225 units each year. In the first 2 years, we anticipate that 550 units will have been completed , 100 above the requirement. Whilst this puts the Council in a strong position with regards to retaining decision making at a local level, this supply needs to continue, and in a manner that the Council chooses, rather than decisions being made by the Planning Inspectorate or the Secretary of State.

1.12 By taking a proactive approach the Council can plan ahead, ensuring that the right infrastructure comes forward at the right time. Only through the identification of where and how growth is likely to happen can effective infrastructure planning take place.

1.13 ID Plans, prepared for each of the 8 individual settlements within Elmbridge, will make a significant contribution to supporting the delivery and management of development that;

- Protects land from development where appropriate,
- Provides the required level of growth set out in the Core Strategy, and
- Improves infrastructure and services to support this growth.

1.14 Through encouraging the local community to take part in this process, it is hoped that these Settlement ID Plans, will reflect local opinion as far as possible. We will do all that we can to take on board your views but we are duty bound to plan within the context of the Government's wider growth agenda. We think our approach will achieve the best results for local communities, achieving the right blend of local knowledge and professional expertise. Nevertheless, there are alternatives.

What if you don't like the plan for your area?

1.15 Tell us. Nothing is set in stone but we do have to start somewhere, and if we don't ask we won't know. However, if you really want to take control and make the

decisions yourself, you can. Local communities do have the option of preparing their own neighbourhood plans. These can set planning policies to determine decisions on planning applications, but they do need to be prepared in the overall context of the Core Strategy and the Government's planning framework.

1.16 Importantly, neighbourhood plans cannot be used to restrict development. They can steer development and set out plans for more development than set out in the Core Strategy but not less.

1.17 Whilst there have been some expressions of interest by local community groups, no proposals for a neighbourhood plan have been progressed. This does remain an option should community groups decide they wish to prepare their own local neighbourhood plan for growth.

1.18 Another alternative is to sit back and wait for development to come, not knowing where, when or how much - a sure way to create uncertainty and 'lag' with regards to infrastructure provision. It is an alternative that avoids making difficult decisions but fails to plan properly for the future of our local areas. As a responsible Council, we will make the difficult decisions and plan for the future.

What will Settlement ID Plans do?

1.19 The Settlement ID Plans have 3 distinct roles;

- i. Protecting sites in their current use –these are **designated** to ensure that they are not lost to other uses.
- ii. Identifying key sites for new development – these are **allocated** and will act as a framework within which the Council can plan and manage growth in the future
- iii. Assessing infrastructure needs- these will need to be prioritised in line with the delivery of new development in an area, together with an assessment of its impact and the aspirations of the local community.

1.20 Each ID Plan will differ dependant on its local character, the capacity of existing infrastructure to accommodate growth and the opportunities available for new development and environmental enhancement.

Protecting land for existing uses

Open Spaces

1.21 Overall, open spaces within the urban area will be given greater protection than before through Development Management policy- DM5.⁴ This sets out that existing open spaces should not be built on unless:

4.[The Council's Draft Development Management is also being consulted on at the moment. Please visit our web site to take part in this consultation and consider the new policies we propose to protect our open spaces]

- “An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- The development is for alternative sports or recreational provision the needs of which clearly outweigh the loss”.

1.22 In addition the Government’s planning framework⁵ sets out an additional protection that can be given to green spaces of particular importance to local communities. These can be designated as ‘Local Green Space’ and will benefit from the same level of protection as Green Belt. However, in considering the designation of Local Green Space, the framework states that:

“The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to the 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
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”

1.23 As open space is afforded a higher level of protection than has previously been the case it is considered that the existing Strategic Open Urban Land designation is no longer relevant.

Employment land

1.24 In line with Core Strategy policy CS23 Employment Land Provision, the designation of Strategic Employment Land will seek to ensure an adequate, yet flexible, supply of employment land. In considering the designation of sites, paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework needs to be taken into account;

“Planning policies should avoid the long-term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed. When there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to

5.[Paragraphs 76, 77 and 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework]

market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable communities”

1.25 The Council regularly monitors the demand for employment floorspace as well as employment land projections for the Borough. The need for certain types of employment land is changing. Currently, there is a high level of vacant office floorspace and the need for industrial land is declining. However, we need to take a long-term view of what we may need in the future and balance this against the need for other uses, specifically the continual demand for housing and in particular affordable housing.

1.26 Careful consideration will need to be given to designating areas as Strategic Employment Land. The balance needs to be struck between maintaining a sufficient supply that addresses employment growth projections, whilst ensuring that there is a degree of flexibility when considering the future use of other employment sites. Core Strategy policy CS23 Employment Land Provision will ensure that sites will continue to be protected and redevelopment only supported where it can be shown that its employment use is redundant and that its change of use will benefit the community.

1.27 Given the above, it is proposed that the number of sites currently designated as Strategic Employment Land is reduced. Those that are proposed to retain a designation are considered to be significant to the delivery of economic growth, not only within the Borough, but also across the wider M3 Local Economic Partnership (LEP) area. Factors such as the current use, future demand, levels of employment, size and sub regional impact have been assessed in the consideration of strategic designation.

7

Gypsy and Traveller sites

1.28 Whilst the number of pitches to be provided for Gypsies and Travellers is significantly lower than the Borough’s overall housing need, suitable sites are often difficult to deliver. The ID Plans propose new sites to address the additional need, but this assumes that existing provision is not lost to alternative uses. As such existing, permanent and legal Gypsy and Traveller sites, as well as Travelling Showpeople sites, have been designated for continued protection.

Promoting the right development in the right places

1.29 Through ID Plans, the Council is encouraging the most effective use of land through promoting development on allocated sites and improvements to open spaces. Uses vary but include;

- Housing
- New Gypsy and Traveller pitches.
- Mixed use sites in town centres
- Community, social and education provision

- Major open space improvements to provide alternative visitor destinations for people who would otherwise visit the Thames Basin Heaths, an area protected for its high ecological value.

1.30 Local character, design and density are key factors that need to be taken into account when considering the acceptability of any new development, regardless of its use. The Council already has policies in place that aim to make the most effective use of land whilst delivering high quality design that takes account of the different roles and character of different areas across the Borough⁶.

How do we judge what is the best use of a site?

1.31 It's not easy and there are often competing uses for a site that we need to consider. The allocation process has been developed to ensure that only reasonable alternatives for development will go through to the consultation stage. Reasonable alternatives will be judged against the following criteria which essentially act as a 'sift'.

1.32 The assessment process has been divided into a number of stages (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Proposed Allocations – Assessment process

- **Stage A** – Initial Assessment – this eliminates sites that are not in line with the Council's Core Strategy or are considered too small for inclusion.
- **Stage B** – Deliverability Assessment – eliminates any sites that are not genuinely developable and available to be delivered.
- **Stage C** – Detailed Assessment – assesses the social, economic and environmental effects of the proposed development (incorporating Sustainability Appraisal)

Further details can be found at www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning

1.33 In addition, where a site has been discussed at the local workshops, the level of community support has been taken into account. In most cases this has influenced

6.[Policy CS17 - Local Character, Density and Design. Elmbridge Core Strategy, July 2011. Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document. Elmbridge Local Plan, April 2012. Core planning principles, paragraph 17, National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012]

whether a site has been put forward as an 'opportunity site' or an 'other possible site' for consultation purposes.

1.34 The intention is not to allocate all sites that could potentially be developed over the lifetime of the plan. This would be impossible and an approach riddled with uncertainty. Only key sites, of particular significance to the area will be allocated. The ID Plans present a range of site for consultation. The threshold for inclusion differs between areas, the minimum being 6 units.

1.35 It is inevitable that some sites will fall out, and others come forward during the lifetime of the plan. The Council's Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment therefore continues to be an important document. Through rigorous monitoring and annual review of this land availability assessment, the Council will always have up to date evidence of potential future land supply in order to ensure the delivery of our overall housing target, and potential capacity for employment floorspace.

Do we really have room for more development?

1.36 Yes we do. The Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment provides a key tool to assess potential capacity for all sites above 6 units. This is updated annually. It is designed to reflect, and take account of, the turnover and 'churn' of sites in the Borough and provide an up to date picture on potential capacity. Importantly, it does not allocate sites for development but acts as a guide to whether housing requirements are likely to be met. The Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment will continue to play an important role in providing a flexible and up to date response to potential housing capacity but it does not represent Council policy nor does it reflect any views of the local community.

Is an allocation the same as planning permission?

1.37 No it's not. An allocation in a Settlement ID Plan provides much greater certainty as to the future development of a site. These sites are all subject to public consultation, sustainability appraisal, viability assessment and ultimately, agreement by the Council. An allocation does not grant planning permission. However, it does show that the Council agrees with the general principle of development but all proposals will still be subject to detailed consideration against relevant planning policies should an application be submitted.

Investing in infrastructure

1.38 New development will inevitably put increasing pressure on existing infrastructure, so we have made sure that new development 'pays its way' through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

1.39 Investment in infrastructure will be dependent on;

- Existing commitments by service providers (such as Surrey County Council, Network Rail etc),
- The level of growth within an area and the consequent impact on infrastructure
- Priorities identified by the local community.

1.40 The Council has recently appointed an Infrastructure Delivery Officer who will be responsible for ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure and producing a transparent spending programme that prioritises the money that will be raised through the Community Infrastructure Levy. A key objective of the post is to work closely with other delivery agencies, co-ordinating spend with other spending programmes, including existing funds already collected from developments, and other available finance such as the New Homes Bonus⁷

1.41 Where improvements can be identified, such as the potential expansion of a school, then these have been included for consultation. However, in many cases it will not be possible to identify the specific improvement in infrastructure. In these cases, the matter to be dealt with has been identified generically eg. Improvements to tackle congestion, improvements to open spaces etc. Schemes will then be drawn up as and when sufficient finances become available. Local people will be asked to assist in setting spending priorities.

1.42 This Settlement ID Plan sets out a range of potential improvements that could be made within the area. Many of the infrastructure needs for the Borough have already been identified in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, prepared in support of the Core Strategy and subsequently updated for the preparation of the Community Infrastructure Levy. In addition suggestions put forward in the local workshops have also been included as appropriate.

Local Plans for local communities

1.43 Investment and Development Plans have been produced for the 8 individual settlements identified within the Core Strategy. They all follow a standard format for initial consultation with local communities and others that have interests within the Borough. They are based on information that the Council believes to be correct, but inevitably this will change as a consequence of consultation and, of course, the passage of time. If the information is wrong-please tell us! It is hoped that, through engaging local communities, each ID Plan will develop in a locally distinctive way that reflects the wishes of the community. As such, we encourage you to become involved in the development of these plans.

⁷[\[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-homes-bonus-final-scheme-design--2\]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-homes-bonus-final-scheme-design--2)

These Settlement ID Plans are exactly what they say they are-
Initial drafts for public consultation.

It is for you to tell us your views so that we can shape them into the documents that you would choose in order to plan and manage development within your local area.

No decisions have been made at this stage. Consider the options. Are there any others?

1.44 In doing so, choices must be made within the wider context set out in this introduction. They must accord with national planning policy and help to deliver the overall strategy for the Borough set out in the Core Strategy. Meeting our housing objectives is key to the Council maintaining local control over decision making. As such, the anticipated level of new housing to be provided within each settlement area is reproduced for convenience below.

Settlement	Anticipated housing distribution
Walton	675-725
Weybridge	625-675
Hersham	350-400
East and West Molesey	475-525
Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green	375-425
Esher	250-300
Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside	575-625
Claygate	50-100

1.45 Whilst delivery may be higher in some areas and lower in others, overall delivery must at least meet the minimum overall housing target of 3,375 set out in the Core Strategy. Given the market attractiveness of the Borough, coupled with the Council's commitment to retain local control and adopt a sensible approach to planning for sustainable growth, it is considered that this target will be achieved, and potentially exceeded, without resulting in unacceptable consequences on the local environment or the economic health of the Borough.

**The following sections of this Settlement ID Plan sets out the initial draft plans for consultation for your local area.
We would like to hear your views.**

2 Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon, Downside Investment and Development Plan

About the area

2.1 This settlement area is located in the south of the Borough and is separated from the rest of Elmbridge by the A3 as well as by extensive areas of Green Belt. This acts as an important recreational resource with locations such as Oxshott Heath, Fairmile Park and Cobham Park being popular with both residents and visitors alike. Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside Village are four distinctly different areas. Whilst recognising that they share a variety of common characteristics, their individuality is of primary importance to the local community.

2.2 The vast majority of development in the area is residential. The area contains 7,245⁸ households supporting a population of nearly 19,000⁹. The majority of these houses, 56%, are detached with a further 22% being semi detached. To the east of the settlement area the proportion of detached houses increases to more than 70%. This means that the density of development is relatively low and creates a distinctive local character reflected in the high overall cost of housing and general affluence of the population. However, higher density development of more affordable houses can be found in the Cobham Fairmile ward to the west of the town centre and north of the Portsmouth Road towards the A3.

2.3 The largest of the four neighbourhoods is Cobham, which has the fourth largest retail centre in the Borough with 122 retail units. 40% of all the floorspace in the town centre is in a retail use which increases to 79% on the primary shopping frontages¹⁰. Vacancy levels are also low, making this one of the most economically successful retail centres in the Borough. In addition, Cobham has two supermarkets, one being out of centre, making it a largely self-sustaining settlement. Outside of Cobham there are retail centres at Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon.

2.4 Land outside of town centres in employment use is limited with three significant sites in the urban area all along the Portsmouth Road - No.s 74 and 78 (known as Cedar House and Wyndham Court) currently designated as Strategic Employment Land and Munro House. In addition, there are offices at Knowle Hill House in the Green Belt occupied by Cargills and supporting a workforce of around 200 people.

2.5 The area has good rail links with stations at Stoke D'Abernon and Oxshott providing frequent services to London. In terms of road transport, there are problems with congestion locally and only very limited bus services operate, which limits the use of more sustainable transport modes.

8.[Dwelling stock by Council Tax Band (VOA)]

9.[Resident Population Estimates 2010 (ONS)]

10.[Elmbridge Town and Village Centre Audit (2012)]

2.6 Whilst the area is well served by state funded primary schools (St Matthews Church of England Infant School St Andrews Primary School, and The Royal Kent Primary School) there is no state secondary school. The size of the population, coupled with the fact that over 50% of children have independent education, means that there are insufficient numbers to support a secondary school in the area.

2.7 The majority of recent development in the area has been residential, and between 2006 and 2011 300 new dwellings were built with over 43% of those properties built having 4 or more bedrooms, compared to a Borough wide average of 22%¹¹ The other major development in the area has been the new M25 service station at New Barn Farm near Downside.

The Core Strategy

2.8 The Core Strategy provides the overarching context for the future development of the Borough. Policy CS10 sets out a specific strategy for Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside to 2026 and the Settlement Investment and Development Schedules contained in Appendix 2 of the Core Strategy provide an outline of the delivery of development and investment expected within the settlement area. In summary the Core Strategy sets out:

- An anticipated level of housing provision in the area to be between 575 to 625 units between 2011 and 2026.
- No additional employment floorspace.
- No identified need for additional retail floorspace, however, mixed use developments that promote the vitality and viability of the town centre will be promoted.
- An additional form of entry at primary school level needed in the area.
- A commitment to address parking issues through a local parking strategy and a local management plan.
- Platform extensions at both stations.
- Improvements to local footpaths and bridleways.
- Improvements to access at Esher Common as part of the mitigation of the potential impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

2.9 The Core Strategy makes it clear that delivery of development and infrastructure will change over time. Up-to-date information will be included within the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Authority's Monitoring Report and Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment ¹²

2.10 The following table¹³ shows the settlement's housing delivery.

11.[Authorities Monitoring Report 2012].

12.[www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/policy/evidencebase.htm]

13.[Figures taken from the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment 2012]

Housing delivery		Dwellings
Anticipated level of housing delivery in plan period (2011 to 2026)		575-625
Minus:		
Dwellings built in 2011/12	32	336
Dwellings under construction in 2011/12	25	
Dwellings with permission not yet implemented in 2011/12	69	
Estimated number of dwellings on small sites from 2015 to 2026	210	
Estimated remaining housing to be delivered on larger sites from 2012 to 2026		239-289

Purpose of this ID plan

2.11 The purpose of this ID Plan is to support the delivery of the Council's Core Strategy by:

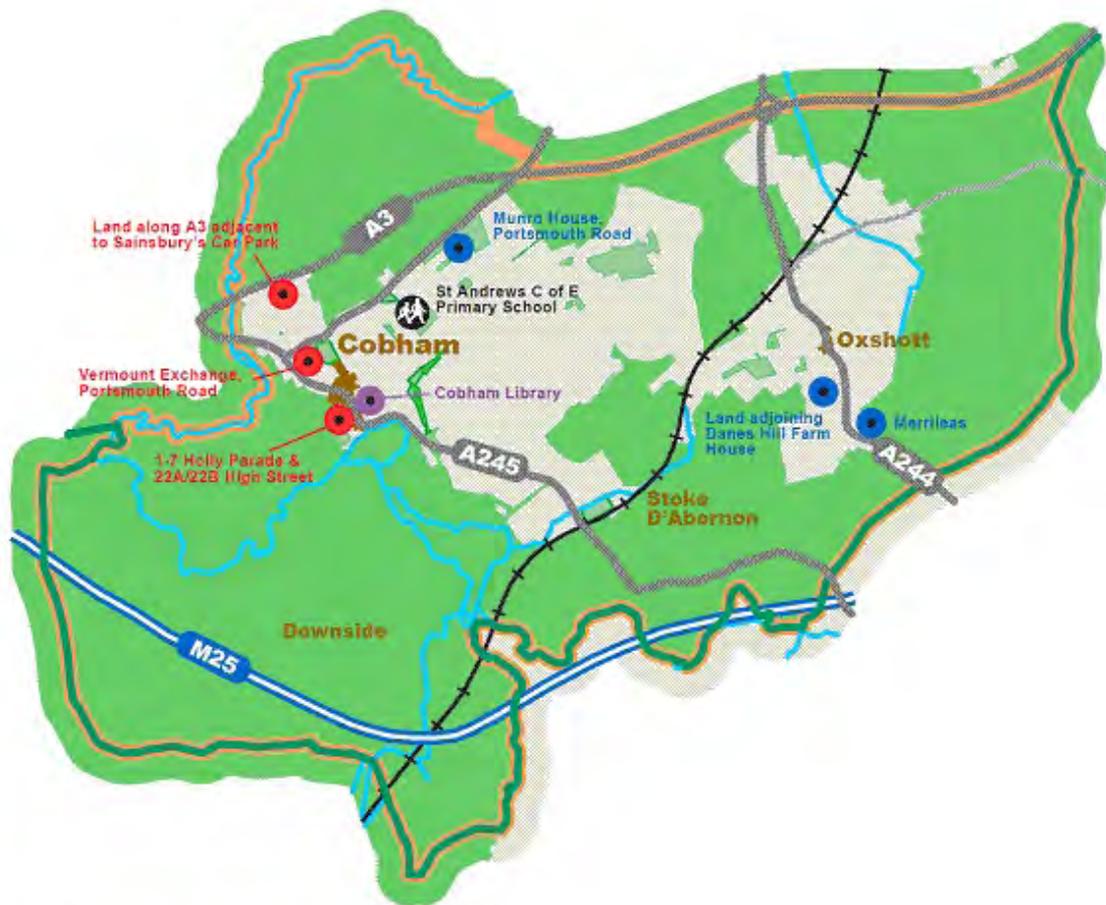
- Allocating key sites with potential for development in the urban area in order to deliver the requirement set out within the Core Strategy and enable the continued protection of the Borough's Green Belt and urban open spaces. This includes the delivery of housing and mixed-use residential/ retail development.
- Designating open space within the urban area for continued protection.
- Reviewing the designation of Strategic Employment Land for long-term protection.
- Identifying priorities for future investment in infrastructure e.g. schools, transport, highways etc.

What does the Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D' Abernon, Downside ID Plan propose?

2.12 The ID Plan for Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside includes the following proposals for consultation:

- 7 sites that may have potential to be allocated for development
- 19 areas of open space in the urban area for designation as well as 4 areas of Local Green Space
- 1 education site where there is potential for future expansion to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers.
- Priorities for investment in other forms of infrastructure including schools, transport and highways etc

2.13 The map below gives an overview of the potential development sites to be allocated and open spaces to be designated. Sections 3-5 set out these in further detail.



Key

- Opportunity Sites
- Other Possible Sites
- Sites with Planning Permission
- Education Opportunity Area
- Settlement Boundary
- Borough Boundary
- Green Belt
- Open Space
- Local Green Space
- Town, District, Local Centre

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What you have told us so far

2.14 In August 2012 we held a ‘Managing Development’ workshop at Cobham Centre for the Community. This was a key part of our early engagement to inform the preparation of the ID Plan for Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D’Abernon and Downside. The workshop was attended by a wide range of organisations and individuals including representatives from the local community, landowners, agents etc. This provided an

excellent forum for discussion and debate and highlighted areas of both agreement and disagreement between those attending.

2.15 This was the first stage of engagement in the preparation of the ID Plan and provides a snapshot of views from those people who attended the workshop. It does not represent views across the whole community but provides a starting point for the preparation of the plan and future engagement.

2.16 The key issues discussed at this workshop included¹⁴ :

Sites to be protected

- Existing Strategic Open Urban Land should be protected. However, removing the designation from the Cobham Rugby Club site and the green space by the side of the Portsmouth Road in front of Munro House was considered by some to be acceptable.
- General consensus that existing Strategic Employment Land should be retained but mixed response regarding the long term protection of Munro House.
- It was suggested that the land adjacent to the A3 behind Sainsbury's, currently identified as having potential for residential development, could be protected for employment uses. However, there were concerns regarding access to this site for employment uses.

Potential development sites

- The Telephone Exchange on Church Road, Cobham was widely regarded as suitable for development if or when the site becomes available.
- Munro House was considered by some as being suitable to be redeveloped for housing.
- The A3/ Sainsbury site was considered by some as suitable for development with it also being suggested as a potential site for Gypsies and Traveller pitches. However, environmental concerns were raised as a potential barrier to any future development.
- Vermont Exchange was identified as having potential for housing. Key to any development on this site was the sympathetic design required due to the listed building. It was also suggested that any development could potentially encompass the small parade of shops to the north of the site.
- Potential scope to relocate recreation ground and/ or tennis courts in Oxshott elsewhere and redevelop these sites. The tennis courts' site was considered suitable for a new health centre given its central location.
- Old Common/ Pennyfields open space was identified by some as suitable for housing. This site has no Green Belt designation.
- The Cobham Community Centre has potential to be redeveloped to provide a better community facility.

14.[A detailed summary of the workshops can be found at -www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/policy/mdw.htm]

- Previous development interest at 1-7 Holly Parade was discussed. Some concerns that an important car park in the town could be lost if a proposal came forward.
- All development needs to be sympathetic to the character of the local area.

Priorities for investment

- Improvements to schools and transport are seen as the key priorities.
- St Andrews Primary School should be the priority for any education expansion in the area.
- A new secondary school was considered to be important considering the distance many children have to travel to school.
- Outdoor gyms for older people and a swimming pool.
- Transport improvements included a bus service between residential areas and the station, improved cycle and pedestrian routes, improved lighting to encourage year round use of footpaths.
- Protect parking in town and village centres

2.17 Further reference to issues discussed at the workshop is made throughout the Plan.

3 Sites to be protected

3.1 In order to deliver the overarching strategy for Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside as set out in the Core Strategy this section sets out those sites that could be designated for continued protection in their existing use.

3.2 Included within this section are those areas of open space and employment land that are considered vital for the long-term sustainability of the settlement area and the Borough as a whole and which will be protected from redevelopment for another use. Further details of proposed designations can be found below and are indicated on the map in [Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon, Downside - Appendix 1](#).

3.3 All sites have been subject to a rigorous assessment process incorporating the requirements of Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment in order to determine the appropriateness of their designation. Details can be found in the Site Assessment Methodology documents¹⁵

Open Space

3.4 Policy DM5 – Open Space and Views of the Development Management Plan sets out the policies for the management of open spaces. The current Strategic Open Urban Land designation in the Replacement Elmbridge Borough Local Plan 2000 is not considered to be required any longer given the high level of protection given to open space in the Government's planning framework¹⁶. The Council has identified the following options for the designation of open space and selected a Preferred Option.

Option A – Designate all existing open space as 'open space in the urban area'
Option B – Designate some existing open space as 'open space in the urban area' and designate those sites demonstrably special to the local community as Local Green Space

Preferred Option: Designate some existing open space as 'open space in the urban area' and designate those sites demonstrably special to the local community as Local Green Space

Commentary: The preferred option will ensure that areas of open space that are important to the local community are designated and receive a greater level of protection than other areas of urban open space.

3.5 The Council welcomes comments on the options and Preferred Option proposed which has been used in identifying the following open space designations:

15.[Site Assessment Methodology documents – www.elmbridge.gov.uk].

16.[National Planning Policy Framework – www.communities.gov.uk]

Open space in the urban area

3.6 All open spaces identified on the map in [Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon, Downside - Appendix 1](#) and noted below will be considered as open space and the criteria in Policy DM5 of the Development Management Plan will apply. This policy provides a higher level of protection than the existing Strategic Open Urban Land designation and will apply to all those open spaces within the urban area shown below. It outlines that all existing open space should not be built on unless it can be shown they are surplus to requirements; the loss would be replaced by open space of equivalent quality and quantity; or the development is for an alternative sports and recreation use, the needs for which clearly outweighs the loss¹⁷.

Open space in the urban area¹⁸

Open space name	Size (ha)	Existing designation
Hamilton Avenue Play Area	0.04	NONE
Station Road	0.06	NONE
Green Lane	0.26	NONE
Canada Road	0.39	NONE
Burleigh Park	0.39	NONE
The Barton	0.46	NONE
Royal Kent Church of England Primary School	0.49	NONE
Four Acres	0.66	NONE
Burstead Close	0.67	NONE
Littleheath Recreation Ground	0.71	NONE
St Andrew's Church	0.78	NONE
Danes Hill Pre Preparatory School	0.85	NONE
St Andrew's Primary School	2.25	NONE
Tilt Common	2.8	NONE
Somerville Road and Littleheath Common	2.93	NONE
Portsmouth Road	3.33	SOUL
Reed School	10.75	NONE
Land adjoining Danes Hill Farm House	0.90	NONE
Cobham RFC Sports Ground	4.08	SOUL

Core Strategy links	CS14-Green Infrastructure
Framework paragraphs	73-78
Development Management Plan	DM5-Open space and views
Other documents or guidance	Green Space, Sport & Recreation Study 2006

17.[Paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework – www.communities.gov.uk]

18.[Open spaces as identified in the Green Space, Sports and Recreation Study (March 2006) – www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning]

Local Green Space

3.7 There is the opportunity for some sites to be designated as Local Green Space. These sites must be of significant local importance and meet the criteria set out in the Government's planning framework¹⁹ (see Section 1).

3.8 It clearly states that a Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas and this will be an important consideration in the designation of such sites. A number of sites were put forward at the community workshop and these are set out below and indicated on the map in [Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon, Downside - Appendix 1](#). Should you wish to suggest a site for designation as a Local Green Space it is important that you consider the criteria mentioned in Section 1 and include reasons as to why it is important to the local community. Once designated these sites will have a level of protection equivalent to the Green Belt as set out in Policy DM5 – Open Space and Views of the Development Management Plan.

Local Green Space

Open space name	Size (ha)	Existing designation
Tartar Road Common	0.67	SOUL
Leigh Hill Common	2.32	SOUL
Stoke D'Abernon Recreation Ground	2.65	SOUL
Cobham Recreation Ground	3.12	SOUL

Core Strategy links	CS14-Green Infrastructure
Framework paragraphs	73-78
Development Management Plan	DM5-Open space and views
Other documents or guidance	Green Space, Sport & Recreation Study 2006

Strategic Employment Land

3.9 The Government's planning framework highlights the importance of taking a flexible approach to the management of employment land including the need to avoid the long-term protection of sites where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose²⁰. It also states that land allocations should be regularly reviewed. This section therefore seeks to review the Strategic Employment Land designation included within the Replacement Elmbridge Local Plan 2000 and the Core Strategy (Policy CS23 – Employment Land). Employment land not designated as

19.[Paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework – www.communities.gov.uk]

20.[Paragraphs 21 and 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework – www.communities.gov.uk]

strategic will continue be protected under Policy CS23 unless redevelopment for other purposes provides wider benefits to the community.

3.10 All sites outside of town centres and included in the Employment Land Review²¹ were assessed for their potential to be designated as Strategic Employment Land. Full details of this assessment, including how we define ‘strategic’, are included within the Site Assessment Methodology documents. The Council has identified the following options for the designation of Strategic Employment Land and selected a Preferred Option.

Option A – Designate Strategic Employment Land based on the criteria set out in the Site Assessment Methodology documents

Option B – Designate Strategic Employment Land based on alternative criteria

Preferred Option: Designate Strategic Employment Land based on the criteria set out in the Site Assessment Methodology documents

Commentary: The preferred option will ensure a flexible approach to the management of employment land avoiding the long-term protection of sites whilst ensuring that redevelopment will only be permitted where it can be clearly justified that there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for its existing purpose.

3.11 The Council welcomes comments on the options and Preferred Option proposed which has been used in identifying key areas to be designated as Strategic Employment Land.

3.12 Employment floorspace in Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D’Abernon and Downside is largely office space. The only areas of land currently designated as Strategic Employment Land are two office buildings on Portsmouth Road to the north of town centre. There are no industrial estates or business parks in this area.

3.13 It is proposed to remove the Strategic Employment Land designation from the area encompassing 74 and 78 Portsmouth Road, Cobham. The site is considerably smaller than the 5 hectare threshold of strategic sites used by the M3 Local Economic Partnership, of which Elmbridge is part, and whilst it continues to be a valuable employment site it is not considered to be of strategic importance. At the community workshop the potential for Munro House to be designated was raised. However, its small size does not support designating Munro House as Strategic Employment Land. No sites have been designated as Strategic Employment Land in this area of the Borough. Any changes to existing designations are shown below

Ref	Name	Area (ha)	Existing Designation	Proposed designation
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21.[Employment Land Review & Addendums – www.elmbridge.gov.uk]

EMP/ COB1	74 & 78 Portsmouth Road	1.20	Strategic Employment Land	Remove Strategic Employment Land designation
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Core Strategy links	CS23-Employment land provision
Framework paragraphs	18-22
Development Management Plan	DM10-Employment
Other documents or guidance	Employment Land Review, Town Centre Audit

4 Potential development sites

4.1 This section sets out those sites that could potentially be allocated for development.

4.2 All sites have been through a rigorous assessment process, incorporating the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal ²² Details can be found in the Site Assessment Methodology documents. Reasonable alternatives for the development of sites have been considered where possible.

4.3 For some of the sites below we have outlined what we consider to be the preferred option based on our assessments of the options and taking into account community comments so far. However, for others we are seeking your opinion on the different options proposed. For these sites no preferred option has been selected. Potential development sites have been subdivided into 3 categories that reflect their current status:

- **Opportunity sites** – these sites have been promoted by their agents or owners for allocation within the ID Plan or where the Council considers there is reasonable certainty that the site will come forward for the nature of development proposed. Reasonable alternatives for the development of these sites have been considered where possible.
- **Other possible sites** – other sites that may have potential for development but where further work is being undertaken to determine whether there is support for these sites to be allocated. Whilst other sites contained in the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment may come forward, some people favour the flexibility offered by the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment in the consideration of future development potential. Reasonable alternatives for the development of these sites have been considered where possible.
- **Sites with planning permission not yet implemented** - those sites with an existing unimplemented planning permission that will be allocated for development as set out in the approved application. This is factual information and therefore not subject to consultation. Reasonable alternatives for the development of these sites have therefore not been considered.

Opportunity sites

1-7 Holly Parade & 22a/22b High Street
Vermont Exchange, Portsmouth Road
Land along A3 adjacent to Sainsbury's Car Park

Other possible sites

22.[Further detail of the assessment process is set out in the Introduction to the ID Plans and the Site Assessment Methodology documents - www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/policy/IDPlans.htm]

Munro House, Portsmouth Road
 Land adjoining Danes Hill Farm, Leatherhead Road
 Land at Merrileas, Leatherhead Road
Site with planning permission not yet implemented
 Cobham Library, Cedar Road

4.4 At the workshops Old Common/Pennyfields Open Space and the tennis courts in Oxshott were mentioned as having potential for development. These were examined but not considered as being appropriate for development as they offer value areas of open space and as such have not been included. Further details of the sites that have been included are provided in the detailed site schedules below. They are also indicated on the map included in [Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon, Downside - Appendix 1](#).

Opportunity sites

1-7 Holly Parade & 22a/22b High Street, Cobham

Site Ref	Address	
DEV/COB4	1-7 Holly Parade & 22a/22b High Street, Cobham	
Settlement area	Existing use	Site area (ha)
Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside	Retail/office/residential	0.2
Planning constraints	Ownership	Delivery
Area of High Archaeological Potential, Thames Basin Heath zones; District Centre; Primary Retail Frontage	Private	1-5 years
Description		
The site is located within a District Centre on a Primary Retail Frontage. There are retail units with offices/flats above on the High Street frontage and a surface parking area at the rear. The site backs onto residential terraced properties with District Centre uses surrounding all other boundaries. The site falls within Thames Basin Heath zone and within an Area of High Archaeological Potential.		
Background		

No planning history involving this site. The site was promoted by the owners for development as part of the preparation of the 2009 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and continues to be considered available for development.



Options

Option A – Allocate for mixed use development with the potential to deliver up to 15 dwellings with an appropriate town centre use on the ground floor

Option B – Do not allocate (as existing)

Preferred option

Allocate for mixed use development with the potential to deliver up to 15 dwellings with an appropriate town centre use on the ground floor

Comments

The location of this site is highly sustainable with a range of services and amenities located in the town centre. Being within the District Centre and on a Primary Shopping Frontage, the most appropriate form of development is considered to be a mixed-use scheme maintaining an appropriate town centre use on the ground floor. As the developable part of the site is behind existing shops the potential loading, unloading and associated parking for the development would need careful consideration. It may be preferable to restrict residential development to upper floors to create appropriate parking on the ground floor.

Development considerations

- Retention of an appropriate town centre use on the ground floor
- Provide sufficient amenity space for occupiers
- Careful design of access, loading/unloading and associated parking required for the development
- Investigation required as located in an Area of High Archaeological Potential
- Thames Basin Heaths mitigation contributions
- Potential to deliver up to 6 affordable units, in accordance with policy CS21

What you have told us so far

Previous development interest at 1-7 Holly Parade was discussed at the workshop. Some people raised concerns that an important car park in the town could be lost if a proposal came forward.

Vermont Exchange, Portsmouth Road

Site Ref		Address	
DEV/COB5		Vermont Exchange, Portsmouth Road, Cobham	
Settlement area		Existing use	Site area (ha)
Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside		Restaurant and hotel	0.69
Planning constraints		Ownership	Delivery
Listed Building, Flood Zone 2, Thames Basin Heath zones		Private	1-5 years
Description			
<p>The site includes a Grade II listed building, currently in use as a restaurant and hotel with extensive car parking. It also includes 46a Portsmouth Road, which is a single storey building in retail use. The main building fronts the roundabout and there are vehicular accesses from Portsmouth Road (A307) and Between Streets (A245), although the latter appears to be a service road only. The site is located within walking distance of Cobham District Centre.</p>			
Background			
<p>The site has been the subject of recent pre-application discussions with a variety of schemes including residential redevelopment of part of the car park. It is included in the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment</p>			
Options			
<p>Option A – Allocate for development with potential to deliver up to 60 dwellings, including conversion of the listed building.</p> <p>Option B – Do not allocate (as existing)</p>			
Preferred option			
<p>Allocate for development with potential to deliver up to 60 dwellings, including conversion of the listed building.</p>			

Comments

The site is considered to be appropriate for housing. It is located in a reasonably sustainable location close to the town centre and local schools. As a residential development in the vicinity of a District Centre, and taking into account the density of the flats at Fieldgate Court (95dph), a density of 90dph is considered to be appropriate. There is also potential to develop part of the car park in isolation or to include conversion of the building into flats. Any scheme would need to take account of the Grade II listed building as well as retaining sufficient parking for the development. The entirety of the site is situated within flood zone 2 which will need to be adequately mitigated in any proposal.

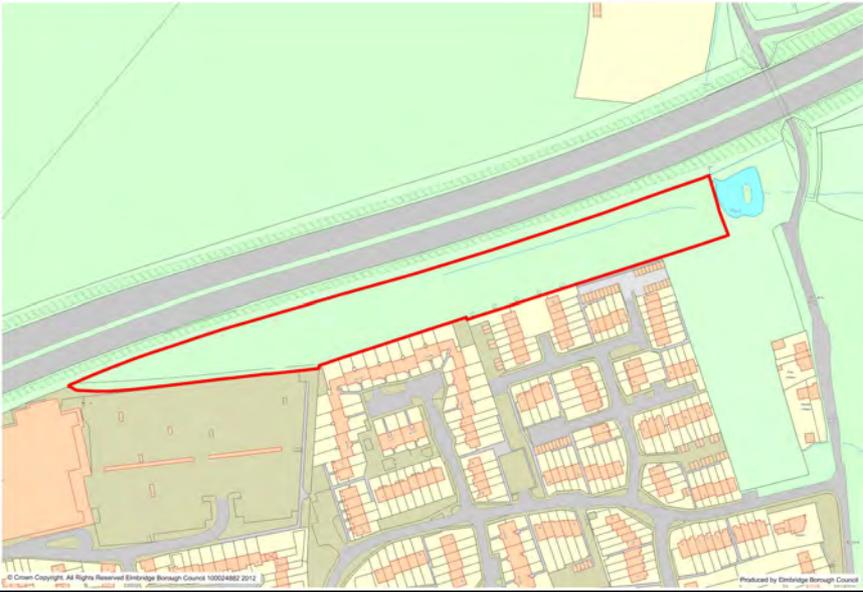
Development considerations

- Sensitivity of the Grade II listed building in the scheme
- Mitigation to address flood risk
- Adequate car parking
- Provision of amenity space
- Potential to deliver up to 24 affordable units, in accordance with policy CS21

What have you told us so far?

Vermont Exchange was identified as having potential for housing across at the community workshop. Key to any development on this site was the sympathetic design required due to the listed building. It was also suggested that any development could potentially encompass the small parade of shops to the north of the site. These have not been included at the current time as there has been no contact with the owner to suggest that they are available.

Land along A3 adjacent to Sainsbury's Car Park, Cobham

Site Ref		Address	
DEV/COB9		Land along A3 adjacent to Sainsbury's Car Park, Cobham	
Settlement area	Existing use	Site area (ha)	
Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside	Vacant site	1.32	
Planning constraints	Ownership	Delivery	
Biodiversity Opportunity Area, Thames Basin Heath zones	Private	6-10 years	
Description			
<p>A largely level vacant site between a housing development/supermarket car park and the A3. The site is currently a Greenfield site but is not part of the Green Belt. To the south lie the Sainsbury's supermarket and car park and a residential housing estate of two-storey terraced properties. To the north is the A3, which rises on an embankment above the site level and, beyond that, open agricultural Green Belt.</p>			
Background			
<p>No previous planning history Land alongside A3 however, it was promoted by the land owners for inclusion in the 2011 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.</p>			
Options			
<p>Option A – Allocate for development with potential to deliver up to 70 dwellings Option B – Do not allocate (as existing)</p>			
Preferred option			
<p>Allocate for development with potential to deliver up to 70 dwellings</p>			
Comments			
<p>The site is close to the centre of Cobham, local primary schools, and other key services. However, the key constraint to development of this site is its proximity to the</p>			

A3 with the Highways Agency being a key consultee regarding the use of this land as it falls within 50m of a major trunk road. Key to the development of the site would only be the provision of appropriate noise mitigation. In addition the sites status as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area would require any development to ensure that it includes appropriate landscaping to support biodiversity.

Development considerations

- Mitigation of noise from the A3
- Appropriate landscaping to provide screening and support biodiversity, maintaining a green link along the A3
- On-site amenity space, if appropriate
- Potential to deliver up to 28 affordable units, in accordance with policy CS21
- Suitable access and parking provision

What have you told us so far?

Some people at the community workshop considered this site was suitable for housing development. Others suggested that the land should be protected for employment uses although there were concerns regarding access. It was also suggested as a potential site for Gypsies and Travellers but this has not been considered as the site is not in public ownership or been put forward specifically for this purpose and as such would not be deliverable. Concerns were raised that the site should not be developed at all given the proximity to the A3.

Other possible sites

Land adjoining Danes Hill Farm

Ref	Size (ha)	Current use	Planning constraints
DEV/COB7	1.39	Playing fields	Proposed to be Open space
<p>The land is owned by the Crown Estate and was promoted for development in 2007 and has been included in successive Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments. However, since 2007 there have been no further discussions</p>			
<p>Commentary The residential nature of the area would suggest a housing development would be most appropriate should this site be developed. The main constraint is the site's current use as a sports ground which is protected from development by the Government's planning framework unless it can be shown that the site is surplus to requirements, it can be replaced or development is for alternative sports or recreation provision that outweighs the loss. As the sports ground could be re-provided on the adjoining Green Belt site next to the school there is potential to address this. The site also has the benefit of being situated 250m from Oxshott village centre and the services it offers. The nature of the site and its surrounding area would mean that the density of any proposed development would likely be in the region of 30 dwellings per hectare.</p>			

Land at Merrileas, Leatherhead Road

Ref	Size (ha)	Current use	Planning constraints
DEV/COB11	1.8	Private garden	Strategic View; adjacent to Green Belt
<p>The site was allocated for a residential development at 20 dwellings per hectare in the Replacement Elmbridge Borough Local Plan 2000. However, enquiries about the future of the site have not been successful and the Council is considering the appropriateness of retaining the allocation in future.</p>			
<p>Commentary The site is located 600m from Oxshott village centre and is some 300m from a school. Located in a predominantly residential area, it is considered suitable for housing development. Any housing development will require sensitive layout and design so that it takes account of the mature trees on the site and does not appear detrimental to the openness of the adjoining Green Belt land. A lower density scheme would take account of the extensive tree coverage of the site, which limits its development potential.</p>			

Munro House, Portsmouth Road

Ref	Size (ha)	Current use	Planning constraints
DEV/COB8	1.37	Offices	Land to the front currently Strategic Open Urban Land; proposed as open space; Thames Basin Heath zone
The site has been promoted in the past, most recently in 2009 when the site was put forward for inclusion in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.			
<p>Commentary</p> <p>A housing scheme would be suitable here and would reflect the surrounding development which is principally residential. However, the site is some distance from Cobham District Centre and local train stations which impacts on its wider sustainability both as an office or residential site. There are good road network links to Esher and Cobham and good access to the A3 and M25. If the developable area of the site is reduced to exclude the open space at the front, leaving 1.37 ha, it is considered that a density of between 30 and 40 dwellings per hectare could be achieved. Any loss of employment floorspace would need to be justified.</p>			

Sites with planning permission

4.5 The following sites have an existing planning permission and will be allocated for development as set out in the approved application²³. These can be viewed online at – www.elmbridge.gov.uk

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Sites with planning permission not yet implemented

Ref	Application No.	Site address	Current use	Proposal
DEV/COB13	2011/0721	Cobham Library, Cedar Road	Library and empty buildings formerly used by Surrey County Council	13 residential units and replacement library

23.[Details of the planning applications can be found on our online application search facility - <http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/online.htm>]

5 Priorities for investment

5.1 Outlined below are the priorities for investment in infrastructure within the settlement area to address the increasing population resulting from further development. Whilst these were originally outlined in the Core Strategy (see Section 1) it was acknowledged that these will change over time and this section provides an update to this. Any improvements made will depend on the resources available to deliver these improvements. Set out below are the priorities for improvement that will provide a framework for allocating a range of funds aimed at addressing the impacts of new development such as the Community Infrastructure Levy and the New Homes Bonus. This information will continue to be reviewed and updated regularly through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to prioritise spend.

Education

5.2 It is expected that demand for school places in Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside will increase due to both new development and the changing demographics in the Borough. Over the next ten years around one additional form of entry will be required at primary level and the growing population will contribute to the expected need for five forms of entry at secondary level across the whole Borough. Working with Surrey County Council, we have identified a number of options as to where investment could take place in schools in Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside in order to meet the growing need for school places.

5.3 The key school for increasing primary school places in the area is St Andrews Primary School in Cobham. The school is centrally located and sits in extensive grounds providing significant opportunities for expansion. In addition, the Cobham Free School has been set up as part of the Government's policy of supporting local communities to establish their own schools. This has provided one additional form of entry within the area and its impact on demand for school places within the area will be monitored. Expansion of St Matthews in Downside has also been debated locally and proposals put forward by the school to provide a new junior school on a new site in the Green Belt. However, as the school is located in the Green Belt this would not be considered to be appropriate development. Given the capacity at St Andrews, there is no justification to allow development in the Green Belt.

5.4 Our preferred option is to identify those schools where there is capacity for expansion to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers. This will ensure that such are sites safeguarded to ensure that sufficient land is available to accommodate future need. Assessments of capacity are based on the findings of the Education Provision Assessment²⁴ which was prepared in partnership with Surrey County Council or additional evidence provided. **The aim of this Settlement ID Plan is to only identify**

24.[Education Provision Assessment www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning]

where there is physical capacity for expansion. It is the responsibility of Surrey County Council and local schools to agree the nature of provision (such as the balance between infant, junior and primary schools) and whether that provision addresses other factors such the preferences expressed by parents and the geographic spread of demand across an area.

- Option A – Allocate existing school sites ²⁵ for potential expansion to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers
- Option B – Do not allocate existing school sites for potential expansion

Preferred Option: Allocate existing school sites for expansion to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers

Commentary: The preferred option will ensure that the schools identified are safeguarded for education expansion to ensure that sufficient land is available to accommodate future need.

5.5 The table below outlines those schools where there is potential capacity for expansion. It does not indicate the potential decision that will be made by Surrey County Council. In addition to capacity the County Council will take into account the preferences expressed by parents

Potential education opportunity areas

Ref	School	Size (ha)	Capacity
DEV/COB3	St Andrew’s Church of England Primary School	4.05	Potential to expand

Transport and Highways improvements

5.6 Transport studies have shown that there are a number of areas that should be the focus of future investment in order to manage congestion by offering sustainable alternatives, improvements to junctions and traffic/parking management. The two key routes in this settlement area that will see an impact from additional development are the High Street and the A244 in Oxshott. Improvements to these routes will also need to be examined in totality including those stretches through the Painshill Junction of the A3 and on into Woking as well as potential improvements in Esher, recognising that potential solutions may lay outside of Cobham and Oxshott, or indeed Elmbridge.

5.7 Key improvements that have been put forward by the County Council and at the community workshops include:

25.[Including sites formerly in education us]

- Improvements to cycle and pedestrian access between the town centre and station, including improved lighting.
- Improve safety and traffic flows on High Street and at roundabout junction with the Portsmouth Road.
- Improve cycle parking capacity at the station.
- Increase frequency of public transport between town centre/ Station/ Brooklands.
- The potential for improvements to A3 junction at Painshill to reduce excessive delays.
- Improved junction layouts to assist pedestrian and cycle movements.

Other infrastructure

5.8 There are a number of other infrastructure priorities that were set out within the Core Strategy that are still relevant and these are set out below:

- A commitment to address parking issues through a local parking strategy and a local management plan
- Improvements to local footpaths and bridleways
- Improvements to access at Esher Common as part of the mitigation of the potential impacts on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

Workshop feedback

5.9 In addition, discussions at the workshop raised a number of areas where it was considered important to focus future investment including outdoor gyms for older people and a swimming pool.