

The Site

The 58.8ha site subject to this outline planning application is located to the north of the A25 Nutfield Road and adjacent to the village of Nutfield.

The site comprises the former Laporte Works, a minerals and processing site, which was subsequently restored to its current state. The operational mineral extraction largely ceased in the 1950s with some works ongoing on part of the site, to the west, as late as 1986. The site was decommissioned in 1997.

The previously worked site now comprises a mixture of grassland, blocks of self-seeding woodland and waterbodies in the northern part of the site with an area of the former infrastructure remains to the south of the site including access roads, derelict equipment, pipework and former settlement lagoons.

Only 7ha (or 12%) of the total site area is proposed to be built development or hardstanding, which is concentrated to the south, visually contained by existing landscaping and closest to the existing village of Nutfield. The developable areas use existing clearings, including comprising the Former Laporte Works and the alignment of overhead power cables, which are to be buried. The remaining 52ha of the site is proposed to be open space - c.2ha within and around the housing areas, and the remaining 50ha comprising general open space bisected by footpaths and cycleways.

The Proposed Development

- Up to 166 residential units inclusive of market and affordable homes and self-build plots (Class C3);
- Up to 70 care home beds (Class C2);
- Up to 41 extra care facility beds (Class C3);
- Up to 1,500 sqm Class E(e), F2 flexible use floorspace;
- A new vehicular access junction onto the A25 including pedestrian/cycle facilities;
- A package of highway improvements, including: fully funded electric buses, electric cycle scheme and restoration of Sustrans 21 route to Redhill Station; and
- An extensive on-site Biodiversity Net Gain of +22%.

The Planning Balance & VSC Case

As defined by National Policy, the proposed development would constitute ‘inappropriate development’ in the Green Belt and should only be approved where very special circumstances can be demonstrated (para 152, NPPF).

For the proposed development to be supported and for very special circumstances to be deemed to exist, it is necessary to demonstrate that ‘other considerations’ exist which deliver extensive and wide-ranging benefits that clearly outweigh the identified harm(s) to the Green Belt (para 153, NPPF).

The benefits of the Nutfield Green Park scheme are evidenced extensively within the application submission documentation and summarised in the table below and attributed relative weights to inform the overall planning balance exercise (as set out in the Planning Statement - Section 7). The combination of the housing, sustainability and transportation benefits, together with the failure of the development plan (unsound) and the plan-making process, combined with the acute deficiency in the five-year housing land supply and housing delivery test, and the other benefits set out in the table below, **clearly outweigh the harm** to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and other limited harm resulting from the proposal. Therefore, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development of Nutfield Green Park exist.

The 'benefits' assessment is further supported by an accompanying Highways Response Note (Vectos/SLR); Sustrans Restoration Appraisal (Land & Water) issued to the Council on 30 April 2024; and a viability assessment prepared by Aspinall Verdi.

A short description of each benefit of the proposed development is provided within the table below:

Benefit	Short Description	Weight Attributed
Social Benefits		
Market Housing	<p>There is a chronic shortfall in housing land supply (at just 1.57 years as accepted in TDC's own evidence) and there has been consistent under delivery of new homes. The Government's Housing Delivery Test (HDT) reinforces this position with relevant data showing that TDC delivered just 38% of its housing need over the last 3 years.</p> <p>The proposals will deliver up to 166 new homes, directly contributing towards this substantial need.</p>	Very substantial
Affordable Housing	<p>Monitoring data shows the delivery of affordable housing in recent years has been significantly below the housing requirement of affordable homes per year.</p> <p>The proposals will deliver an on-site provision up to 36% affordable homes across all C3 houses, which is in excess the adopted affordable housing policy requirement of 34% (policy CSP4). This represents a provision of up to 74 affordable homes of the 207 new homes proposed on site [inclusive of 41 extra care units] with a proposed split of 75% affordable rented and 25% shared ownership in accordance with policy requirements.</p> <p>The Nutfield proposals are supported by the local registered provider, Raven Housing Trust.</p>	Very substantial

Care Provision	<p>The current provision of care home beds in Tandridge amounts to 978 beds, split as 325 for personal care and 653 for nursing care. There is a future need up to 2035 for a further 463 beds for personal care, with a reduction of 99 beds for nursing care over that same period.</p> <p>There is an evident acute identified need for the provision of later living and nursing care beds within TDC that this development can directly contribute towards.</p> <p>The proposed Illustrative Masterplan identifies a 70 bed care home within an Integrated Retirement Community (IRC), with 41 extra care units at the eastern part of the site.</p>	Very substantial
Self-build Housing	<p>At a national level, the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act (2015) placed a legal duty on authorities to keep a register of groups who want to acquire serviced plots. Locally however, there are no policies relating to the provision of self-build and custom housebuilding.</p> <p>Our evidence suggests that there are 1,421 people interested in building their own home in Tandridge. Substantial unmet demand exists for self-build and custom build plots.</p> <p>The Illustrative Masterplan includes the provision of 8 serviced plots for self-build and custom housebuilding. This would address 22% of the shortfall that has accrued between 2016-2020.</p> <p>The form and tenure of these plots are yet to be confirmed but the Applicant is open to ensuring the specific self-build need is met.</p>	Substantial
Employment	<p>The construction phase will generate an average of 60 direct and indirect additional full-time employment (FTE) opportunities.</p> <p>The operation phase is anticipated to generate a further 125 direct and indirect additional jobs generated by the IRC in a range of roles and skill types.</p> <p>A further 45 jobs are anticipated to be supported within the local retail and leisure industry because of future resident expenditure.</p>	Significant

Flexible floorspace	The proposals include up to 1,500 sqm of flexible use floorspace, proposed as health care and/or community floorspace. The health care provision would include space for consulting rooms to aid accessibility to screening, health checks and diagnostics. This has been supported by Prostate Cancer UK and Professor Langley of Urology and Surrey & Sussex Cancer NHS Alliance.	Moderate
Environmental Benefits		
Biodiversity Net Gain	<p>The proposals will deliver a significant on-site BNG of +22% with over 50ha for open space, biodiversity, and wildlife enhancement inc. ponds, wetlands, wildflower meadows, new scrub and woodland planting.</p> <p>This is significantly above the mandatory requirement to create a 10% gain.</p>	Significant
Tree Retention & Planting	<p>The proposals include the retention of a significant number of the trees, groups, and woodlands protecting their contribution to nature conservation and biodiversity. All the existing woodland areas on site will be managed and improved as part of the proposals enhancing the habitats already present.</p> <p>The proposals include significant new areas of woodland, feature planting (including trees and hedgerows), and transitional scrub planting.</p> <p>All tree removals are internal to the site with the site boundary tree cover being maintained and managed to improve biodiversity and to mitigate any perceived visual impact of the development. In light of the retained mosaic and density of landscaping, visual containment of the proposed development and new replacement tree planting, no significant adverse effects to public amenity are anticipated as a result of the proposals and tree removals.</p>	Moderate

The proposals will deliver low carbon homes through passive design measures, fabric first approach, exploring the potential of Local Energy Resources and District Heat Networks and the use of efficient building services. The proposal will also seek to maximise renewable energy opportunities, considering solar PVs and heat pumps to achieve an all-electric development. This embedded sustainable approach, at outline stage, seeks to set the clear intention and parameters of the sustainability credentials of the scheme and detailed design at reserved matters stage.

Sustainability	<p>The proposals further encourage active travel, including walking and cycling and promotes the use of sustainable transport to assist in a shift in attitude towards car dependency and creates greater connectivity within the site, between the site and surrounding Nutfield and South Nutfield villages as well as Redhill.</p> <p>To this end, the proposals include the improvement of all existing footpaths, upgrading of footpaths 192 & 616 and improving the NCNR21 (Sustrans) route, to allow for cycle use. The proposals will include the provision of two electric buses and drivers and electric vehicle charging point provided to each home.</p>	Moderate
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Extensive Ground Investigations	<p>Given the site’s history as a restored, former minerals and processing site, extensive ground investigations have been undertaken. The scope of the investigations were approved by the pollution control officer at TDC prior to the 2023 site investigations. The Environmental Protection Group Limited (EPG) were commissioned on behalf of TDC to review and comment on the investigation proposals and findings.</p> <p>The investigations have not identified any significant contamination in the area of the proposed development that cannot be remediated as part of the development.</p> <p>Subject to further detailed investigations to be undertaken at a detailed design stage and secured by condition, the proposals and layout of the residential parcels is not anticipated to cause any harm in regard to ground conditions on site and for future living conditions.</p>	Moderate
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Both TDC and EPG have reviewed the accompanying report prior to the submission of this application, raising no objection. The EA and the Council's pollution control officer have also raised no objection, subject to the inclusion of conditions on the approval of the application.

Drainage and Water Management

The proposed development area will be actively drained by the proposed drainage network, which will ensure the development is safe from surface water flooding over its lifetime. Any existing flow routes through the site will be maintained.

The outline drainage strategy has been developed to mitigate potential impacts on the local ecology. The collected rainwater will be released at a controlled (greenfield) rate and flows from each of the residential parcels will be conveyed through to a network of detention basins and ponds to the recreation ponds at the north of the site before connecting into the Redhill Brook via the existing outflow connection.

The collection of rainwater and use of the detention basins, particular the pond proposed just to the north of the IRC, provides the unique and innovative opportunity to incorporate water source heat recovery to serve the care provision with an on-site renewable energy source.

The EA, LLFA and Southern Water have raised no objection to the proposals.

Moderate

Economic Benefits¹

Construction & Operational Revenue

The construction phase will contribute £25.5 million GVA to the cost of Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area's economic output during the construction period, of which £20 million will be concentrated in Tandridge.

The operational phase is anticipated to generate £7.4 million GVA to the LEP area's economy each year of operation, inclusive of £5.2 million concentrated in Tandridge.

The future residents are estimated to increase the annual spending power by £6.9 million within the local economy, with circa £5.7 million estimated to be spent on retail and leisure goods and services by the future residents.

Moderate

¹ All figures expressed within this Economic Benefits section are estimations. Accurate figures will be confirmed at detailed design stage and to be agreed with TDC

Council Tax & Business Rates	<p>The operational phase of the development is anticipated to generate approximately £510,000 in Council Tax that will be collected annually by TDC. A further £30,000 in business rates is estimated to be collected annually by TDC.</p> <p>Both sums will contribute to maintaining and enhancing the delivery of local public services and infrastructure.</p>	Moderate
Community Infrastructure Levy	<p>Whilst a matter for detailed design and Reserved Matters application(s), an initial estimate of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipt is circa £2.11 million. This is subject to future indexation and detailed floor areas at the Reserved Matters stage.</p> <p>The CIL monies will fund local infrastructure which is needed to support the growth of the district, including schools, healthcare and transport improvements.</p>	Moderate
Other Financial Contributions	<p>In line with the SCC Developer Contribution Guide (2020), the proposals are likely to be required to make financial contribution towards education (subject to discussion with officers). These are estimated as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early Years: approximately £805,526 - Primary School: approximately £749,909 - Secondary School: approximately £157,346 	Moderate

Highway and Locational Sustainability Benefits

The following table sets out the specific highways and transportation proposals of the Nutfield Green Park development and the improvements to locational sustainability, as aligned with paragraph 109 of the NPPF.

These highway and locational sustainability benefits encapsulate the proposed multi-mode access; improvement to pedestrian and cycling links; the creation of greater access to sustainable transport modes and improvements to existing infrastructure, inclusive of speed reductions, bus stop and junction improvements (as necessary).

Highway and Locational Sustainability Benefits

Cycle and Pedestrian Links	<p>The proposals include the retention of all existing footpaths on site, together with an improved cycle connection to NCNR21 (Sustrans) through the upgrading of footpaths 192 & 616 to allow for cycle use. This will create better connection between Nutfield and NCNR21, and subsequently Redhill and Merstham. This improvement has received support from British Cycling.</p> <p>A commitment to improving the NCNR21 is also proposed, following discussions with SCC and as an alternative to cycle access along A25. Please see the accompanying Sustrans Restoration Appraisal by Land and Water.</p>	Significant
Sustainable Transport	<p>The proposals will include the provision of two electric buses, providing 4 journeys per hour to Redhill and 4 journeys from Redhill during peak periods. During off-peak hours, the service would also serve the extra care units and the Integrated Retirement Community (inc. care home) facilities providing journeys to Redhill, Oxted and South Nutfield.</p> <p>An electric bike loan scheme will also be offered to all future residential site users.</p>	Significant
Multi-Mode Access	<p>The proposed access to the site, as agreed in consultation with SCC, will include a 3.0m shared footway/cycleway, and a raised crossing for pedestrians/cyclists. This will provide a clear active travel route between the site and the A25 for the use of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.</p>	Moderate

Improvements to existing infrastructure	Outside the site boundary, a puffin crossing has been agreed in principle with SCC to improve pedestrian access to the Memorial Hall and the Cemetery bus stops on the A25. This would facilitate controlled movements between the north of the A25, and the amenities south of the A25, such as Nutfield Church Primary School, Nutfield Station, and Nutfield Parish Allotments.	Moderate
Reduction of Speed	The 30mph speed limit in the vicinity of the site access will be extended to the west. This, coupled with the anticipated reduction in HGVs movements once the Biffa site ceases operations (2029), will encourage road users to reduce speeds for a greater distance along the A25 and create a more pedestrian friendly environment to the site and Nutfield Village.	Moderate
Parking	<p>Policy compliant parking (car and cycle) for each home within the development.</p> <p>Electric vehicle charging point provided to each home.</p>	Moderate
Church Hill improvements	The St Peter and St Paul Church car park, owned by the Applicant, will be retained for the continued use and betterment of the local community and Church visitors.	Moderate
Possible Junction Improvement²	<p>Should traffic capacity and junction operation require further improvement, the scheme has identified potential enhancements that can be implemented if certain triggers are reached to improve capacity at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A25 / Mid Street junction: changes to lane markings within the existing carriageway width to formalise the left-and right-hand lane from Mid Street onto the A25. - Church Hill / A25 / Cooper's Hill Road junction: the potential signalisation of the existing crossing on the A25 has been investigated to improve pedestrian safety. 	Moderate

² Junction improvement can be triggered by defined capacity triggers. Subject to on-going discussions with TDC and SCC officers