Dear Sir

Tandridge District Council. Examination of ‘Our Local Plan:2033’
Hearing Statement produced on behalf of Fairfax Properties

We represent Fairfax Properties, for whom we have previously made representations on behalf of as part of the previous Local Plan consultation stages.

On behalf of our client we have considered the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions, and we would like to make further written comments. These comments should be read in conjunction with our previously submitted representations in respect of the Regulation 19 consultation, and also in conjunction with the representation made by Judith Ashton Associates on behalf of the Tandridge Housing Forum, which Fairfax Properties are a member of.

We wish to add to the above with the following comments, in respect of Matter 1 (The Sustainability Appraisal), Matter 3 (The Spatial Strategy), and Matter 4 (Green Belt boundary alterations).

Introduction
On behalf of our clients we have previously made detailed submissions at the various preceding stages of the District Council’s Local Plan public consultation in respect of the emerging Local Plan. These submissions have related to the following specific sites:

- Land adjacent to Blue Anchor Farm, Blindley Heath (HELAA Site Reference BHE 010) – site measuring 2.85 hectares; HELAA estimated yield 36 dwellings. [we wish for the Inspector to note that Fairfax are promoting this site for 87 dwellings plus 32,023 sq. ft of commercial floorspace buildings]
- Land at Heath View & Maynards, Blindley Heath (HELAA Site Reference BHE 015) – site measuring 2.5 hectares; HELAA estimated yield 55 dwellings.
- Land behind Saxby's Lane, Lingfield (HELAA Site Reference LIN 027) – site area measuring 4.56 hectares; HELAA estimated yield 72 dwellings.
- Land to the south of Ferry House, Copthorne Bank (HELAA Site Reference DOM 022) – site area measuring 2.5 hectares; HELAA estimated yield 47 dwellings.
Land west of Roundabouts Farm, Clay Hall Lane, Domewood (HELAA site reference DOM 013) – site area measuring 15.1 hectares; HELAA estimated yield 453 dwellings.

The Council’s Evidence Base document – Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment includes all of the above site, and identifies them as being ‘Deliverable and Developable’ (Appendix 3 of the HELAA document refers). We can confirm that all of these sites remain entirely available and suitable for development, and are they are deliverable in the short term.

In addition, Fairfax are also promoting Land at Frith Manor, Lingfield Road, East Grinstead (HELAA Site References: DPA 007, DPA 009 and DPA 010). The site is subject to a current Outline planning application (TDC application reference 2018/888) which proposes 101 new dwellings on this site together with recreation space (forming a proposed new SANGS).

Lastly, my clients are also promoting Land at Eastbourne Road, Newchapel (HELAA Site Reference FEL 016).

The HELAA (2017-2018) assesses these above sites as being ‘Unsuitable’ (Appendix 4 refers) for the following reason: “The site is unconnected to the boundaries of a sustainable settlement and is therefore not considered suitable.”

Certainly in respect of the Frith Manor sites, we consider this assessment to be flawed. The site IS located very close to the main settlement of East Grinstead, which lies in adjoining Mid Sussex District to the south. Further, advanced discussions have taken place with Surrey County Council as highway authority, the outcome of which confirms that the site is sustainably located. Therefore, it is our opinion that the site should be re-classified as being ‘Deliverable and Developable’.

Matter 1: The Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

1.2 Is the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) adequate?
1.3 Has the SA been undertaken on the basis of a consistent methodology and is the assessment robust?
1.4 Has the SA taken into account the reasonable alternatives and has sufficient reasoning been given for the rejection of alternatives?

The SA at Table 23 encompasses the SA of the Strategic Settlement Hierarchy and Suitability for Growth, and clearly looks to promote development within the upper tier settlements.

When comparing the assessment matrix for South Godstone (table 46) and that for South Godstone Garden Community Option (table 57), against the assessment matrix for the sites that were assessed in for example Caterham (table 30), Dormansland (table 34), Felbridge (table 36), Godstone (table 38), Lingfield (table 40), Oxted (table 42), Smallfield (table 44) and Warlingham & Whyteleafe Site (table 52), it appears that the sites in Caterham,
Dormansland, Godstone, Lingfield, Oxted, Smallfield and Warlingham & Whyteleafe score more favourable than those in South Godstone / the South Godstone Garden Community Option, in many areas especially:

- Health (Caterham, Godstone, Lingfield, Smallfield and Warlingham & Whyteleafe)
- Transport and services (Caterham, Oxted and Warlingham & Whyteleafe)
- Economics (Caterham)
- Natural resources (Caterham and Warlingham & Whyteleafe)
- Flood risk (Caterham, Dormansland, Felbridge, Godstone, Lingfield, Oxted, Smallfield, and Warlingham & Whyteleafe)
- Air quality, noise and light pollution (Caterham, Dormansland, Lingfield, Oxted, and Warlingham & Whyteleafe)

The one objective that South Godstone scores more highly in than any other area is climate change mitigation. Yet the SA and Submitted Plan still look to promote the South Godstone Garden Village above these alternatives, which suggests the SA has not been undertaken on the basis of a consistent methodology and is not robust.

It also calls into question the rational for seeking to oppose these alternatives given the acute housing needs of the area and fact these options appear less environmentally harmful than the chosen option. Should for example the SA have assessed a further option, one that encompassed the preferred approach and some of development in these less sensitive areas to arrive at an alternative option that would have provided for more of Tandridge’s needs. Surely it is not unreasonable to expect TDC to have pursued this approach with more vigour if they wanted to promote a plan that is ‘positively prepared’ and consistent with national policy.

The SA assessment of the individual settlements and sites contained therein also highlights that in many cases the chosen allocations score no better than a number of those sites that have not been selected for allocation.

A review of section 5.11 of Vol 2 of the SA would suggest that there are many sites within the district, including those being promoted by Fairfax Properties (as detailed above), which perform better than the proposed Garden Village at South Godstone in SA terms.

This either suggests a higher housing number can be accommodated within the Local Plan, and/or the allocation of the Garden Village at South Godstone is flawed and should be replaced by allocation of a number of others sites, including those being promoted by Fairfax Properties. It’s clear from section 5.11 of the SA that more housing need does not necessarily harm the local landscape or place a strain on local services. Fairfax’s sites are sustainably located, and the vast majority are acknowledged by the Council as being ‘Deliverable and Developable’ (Appendix 3 of the HELAA document refers). Where the HELAA identifies Fairfax’s Frith Manor site (DPA 007, DPA 009 and DPA 010 – hereafter referred to as ‘Frith Manor’) as being ‘unsuitable’ we have identified in our previous representations that this assessment is flawed.
Indeed, since making our most recent representations at the Reg 19 stage, an Outline planning application for 101 new dwellings on the Frith Manor site has now been refused by the District Council (TDC application reference TA/2017/888). A copy of the decision notice is attached to this submission. The Inspector will note that the reasons for refusal simply raise two principle issues:

1. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt; and,
2. Absence of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in order to mitigate harm to the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area.

With respect to Reason 1, it would be a situation where a Local Plan allocation of the site would permit its release from the Green Belt, thereby overcoming this planning principle objection. In any case, and for the reasons detailed in our previous submissions, we do not agree that the Frith Manor site meets the tests for inclusion in the Green Belt.

With respect to Reason 2, the applicants have now secured the use of a SANG in adjacent Mid Sussex District, which has capacity to accommodate occupants of a new development of the scale proposed at Frith Manor. It is understood from discussions with Natural England and Tandridge Council that this would therefore overcome Reason 2 as a reason for resisting the development.

With the above in mind, Fairfax are currently considering their position, and the submission of a Planning Appeal is likely.

Notwithstanding this, what the above confirms is that aside from a principle objection arising from the sites location in the Green Belt, in all other respects development of the site is agreed as being acceptable. It therefore is reasonable to presume that if re-assessed now the HELAA must conclude that this site is also ‘Deliverable and Developable’ and merits consideration for allocation in the Local Plan. Given the lack of identified landscape, heritage, highway, drainage, arboricultural, ecology or any other harm – it must be concluded that the provision of new housing at this site would comprise sustainable development. Therefore, and along with the other sites being promoted by Fairfax (as detailed above), we respectfully suggest that these sites should all be considered favourably for allocation in a revised, modified version of the Local Plan.

In conclusion, we must reiterate that whilst the HELAA has provided an overview of what is developable, the District Council have, through the SA simply failed to assess the merits of further allocations / Green Belt releases in the context of the different spatial options and associated impact on the affordability issues in the district, which results in a Plan approach that is inconsistent with national policy, unjustified and not positively prepared i.e. unsound.

The affordable needs of the area suggest that TDC need to do more in the way of housing provision. In addition, they amount to overriding Exceptional Circumstances to warrant the alteration of Green Belt boundaries.
The HELAA indicates there are ample sites to meet the need and the SA suggests in section 5.11 that there are many sites that are less environmentally sensitive and more readily deliverable than the chosen approach, such that there is, if TDC chose to consider it, an alternative option that provides for greater growth. It is not unreasonable to expect the LPA to consider such an approach given the acute housing needs of the area.

**Matter 3: The Spatial Strategy**

**Issue:** Is the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy as set out in Policies TLP01, TLP06, TLP07, TLP08 and TLP09 justified as the most appropriate strategy and is it based on robust evidence?

3.1 Have all realistic options for the distribution of development within the District been identified and considered robustly in the formulation of the Plan?

3.2 Is the proposed distribution of housing and other development supported by the Sustainability Appraisal, and will it lead to the most appropriate pattern of housing growth?

3.3 Is the distribution of new homes between the Tiers of settlements and proposed garden community justified and how has it been established?

Policy TLP01: Spatial Strategy looks to direct development to the tier 1 and 2 settlement during the short to medium term, and then to the garden village at South Godstone.

Policy TLP06 identifies the Tier 1 settlements as being Caterham on the Hill, Caterham Valley, Hurst Green, Limpfield, Oxted, Warlingham and Whyteleafe; and suggests that these will be the focus of development and will make provision for around 768.

Policy TLP07, identifies the Tier 2 settlements as being Godstone, Lingfield and Smallfield, and suggests that these will make provision for 533 new homes.

Policy TLP08 identifies the Tier 3 settlements as being Bletchingley, Blindley Heath, Dormansland, Felbridge, Old Oxted, South Nutfield South Godstone, Tatsfield and Woldingham, where some growth is provided for via a set of criteria-based policies.

Policy TLP09 indicates that all settlements not listed in policies TLP06, TLP07 and TLP08 are the Limited and Unserviced Settlements, where limited growth will occur.

We also have concerns regarding the Council’s settlement hierarchy. In particular assessment of Domewood sites, including Fairfax promoted sites DOM 013 and DOM 022. Like Frith Manor, it seems that the Council have disregarded development at this location due to the sites not being adjacent to a settlement in Tandridge. This assessment fails to acknowledge that the Domewood sites are immediately adjacent to the sustainable
settlement of Copthorne in Mid Sussex (which is identified as a Category 2 settlement in the Mid Sussex District Plan, 2018 [Policy 6 refers]).

Likewise the Frith Manor site lies adjacent to northern edge of East Grinstead, which also lies within Mid Sussex. The Mid Sussex District Plan identifies East Grinstead as a Category 1 settlement – again please see below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Settlement characteristics and function</th>
<th>Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Settlement with a comprehensive range of employment, retail, health, education leisure services and facilities. These settlements will also benefit from good public transport provision and will act as a main service centre for the smaller settlements.</td>
<td>Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>Larger villages acting as Local Service Centres providing key services in the rural area of Mid Sussex. These settlements serve the wider hinterland and benefit from a good range of services and facilities, including employment opportunities and access to public transport.</td>
<td>Copthorne, Crawley Down, Cuckfield, Hassocks and Keymer, Hurstpierpoint and Lindfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>Medium sized villages providing essential services for the needs of their own residents and immediate surrounding communities. Whilst more limited, these can include key services such as primary schools, shops, recreation and community facilities, often shared with neighbouring settlements.</td>
<td>Albourne, Ardingly, Ashurst Wood, Balcombe, Bolney, Handcross, Horsted Keynes, Pease Pottage, Sayers Common, Scaynes Hill, Sharpham, Turners Hill and West Hoathly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 4</td>
<td>Small villages with limited services often only serving the settlement itself.</td>
<td>Ansty, Staplefield, Slaugham, Twineham and Warninglid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 5</td>
<td>These small settlements have very limited or no services.</td>
<td>Hamlets such as Birch Grove, Brook Street, Hickstead, Highbrook and Walstead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 1. Extract of Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy, Mid Sussex District Plan (March 2018)

Clearly the Inspector dealing with the Mid Sussex District Plan examination agreed that East Grinstead and Copthorne are sustainable locations, where new housing should be focussed. The fact that Fairfax sites are in Surrey County and therefore 'on the wrong side' of the administrative boundary, should not matter when assessing a site in respect of its suitability for development. On this basis alone the Council’s settlement hierarchy strategy is clearly flawed.

We suggest that the settlement hierarchy should acknowledge the role of settlements outside of the District, and how land on the edge of such settlements, would still provide sustainable development opportunities that require further assessment on suitability
grounds. As set out in our previous submissions, we are of the view that the Fairfax sites identified are all entirely suitable for development, and warrant consideration for allocation in a modified version of the Tandridge Local Plan.

Of Fairfax’s other sites, we note that sites BHE 010 and BHE 015 lie within a Tier 3 settlement (Blindley Heath), whilst LIN 027 lies within a Tier 2 settlement (Lingfield).

We consider that there are robust grounds to upgrade Blindley Heath to a Tier 2 settlement. In respect of BHE 015, to serve as an example, we have produced the following table which shows a summary of local facilities within appropriate walking and cycling distances from the site:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maynards, Blindley Heath Amenities/Services</th>
<th>Location/Address</th>
<th>Distance from Access (km)</th>
<th>Walk time from Access (min)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recreation &amp; Leisure Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olden Craig Equestrian Centre</td>
<td>Tandridge Lane, RH7 6LL</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Barn – Gastropub</td>
<td>Tandridge Lane, RH7 6LL</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith &amp; Western Bar &amp; Restaurant</td>
<td>Eastbourne Road, RH7 6JJ</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Forman Social Club and Institute</td>
<td>Eastbourne Road, RH7 6JP</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery School – Huggetts</td>
<td>Eastbourne Road, RH7 6JR</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery School - Lingfield</td>
<td>Bank Farm, Ray Lane, RH76JH</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retail</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Convenience – Spar at Esso</td>
<td>Eastbourne Road, RH7 6JJ</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Box</td>
<td>Eastbourne Road, corner of Ray Lane, RH7 6</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATM</td>
<td>Esso Garage, Eastbourne Road, RH7 6JJ</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John the Evangelist Church</td>
<td>Eastbourne Road, RH7 6JH</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Transport</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearest Bus Stop</td>
<td>Blindley Heath, adj. Albion House</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearest Bus Stop</td>
<td>Blindley Heath, opp. Albion House</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With respect to public transport, there are three bus services that route past the site. The 409 service operates on an hourly frequency, and routes to/from Selsdon through Caterham, Godstone, Blindley Heath, Lingfield before terminating at East Grinstead. This service is complimented by the 315 and 915 services. These bus services provide a travel alternative for those living near the site, and will give end occupiers of the proposed development opportunity to travel by bus should they choose to do so. With regard to rail services the nearest rail station is at Godstone, circa 3.3km from the site. Whilst this station falls outside accepted walk distances from the application site it does fall within a 5km cycle catchment, and will be attractive for some end occupiers to cycle to and from. The station will also be attractive for end occupiers to ‘rail head’ to the station for longer distance trips to East Croydon, Clapham and Central London.

Based on this review, site BHE 015, and indeed the wide Blindley Heath settlement, is demonstrated as being in a sustainable location, within walking and cycling distances of a range of local facilities and existing public transport services. This indicates that Blindley Heath should be assessed as being a Tier 2 settlement, where housing provision should be directed by policies in the Local Plan.

**Matter 3 Word Count – 737**

**Matter 4: Green Belt boundary alterations**

**Issue: Is the Green Belt Assessment consistent with national planning policy for Green Belts, is it based upon appropriate criteria and is it adequate and robust?**

4.1 Was the Green Belt Assessment undertaken on the basis of a clear methodology consistent with national planning policy for protecting Green Belts?

4.2 In terms of paragraph 84 of the Framework, have the proposed alterations to the Green Belt boundaries taken account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development and are they consistent with the Local Plan strategy?

4.3 Have all realistic alternatives to releasing land from the Green Belt been considered, such as further development in the urban area or increasing development densities, and would the most efficient use of land proposed for release from the Green Belt be made?

4.4 Is the site selection methodology for sites to be released from the Green Belt robust and are the proposed alterations to the Green Belt boundaries justified?

4.5 In overall terms, are there exceptional circumstances for the proposed alterations of the boundaries of the Green Belt, to accommodate the level development proposed?

4.6 In overall terms, are the proposed boundaries of the Green Belt defined clearly and would they be likely to be permanent or capable of enduring beyond the plan period?
This matter has largely been dealt with in detail within the Judith Ashton Associates submissions for the Tandridge Housing Forum (for which Fairfax is a member) and our previous site-specific assessments contained within the previous representations we have made in relation to the draft Plan (i.e. Regulation 18 representations, dated December 2016), we therefore do not wish to repeat these submissions here as they remain entirely relevant.

However, we use this opportunity to confirm our clients position that there are clear exceptional circumstances to justify the release of land from the Green Belt in order to help Tandridge District meet their full OAHN. We do not however believe the Green Belt Assessment was undertaken on the basis of a clear methodology consistent with national planning policy for protecting Green Belts, or that the site selection methodology is robust. Nor are the proposed boundaries of the Green Belt clearly defined – they are in effect still to be confirmed as far as the proposed Garden Community at South Godstone is concerned.

When considering individual sites for allocation, we maintain our position that ALL of the Fairfax sites are suitable for residential development. We can confirm that these sites all remain available, sustainable and deliverable and should be allocated for residential redevelopment. The District Council’s Local Plan provides the mechanism for acting on this positive recommendation.

As part of our previous submissions, we have demonstrated that development of the Fairfax sites would accord with the requirements of national planning policy, principally in that they would provide sustainable development without compromising the purposes and role of the Green Belt.

As submitted, we therefore do not consider that the Tandridge Local Plan is sound. We submit that the Local Plan should be revised so as to include a significantly increased housing provision figure, so as to meet the OAN of the District, when taking into account market signals, improve affordability, and help meet the unmet affordable housing needs of the District. This will require the allocation of further sites (including those promoted by our clients) for future residential development, and these sites should be removed from their current Green Belt designation. This revised strategy would represent a more robust approach to meeting the District Council’s significant need for new housing.

Matter 4 Word Count – 375

Fairfax Acquisitions Limited have instructed Rodway Planning Consultancy Limited to continue to promote the above sites on their behalf. In all respects our previous submissions with regard to these site remain entirely relevant.
We trust that the examining Inspector can closely consider our observations and suggestions, and in doing so we respectfully encourage the Inspector to recommend that the Plan is modified in-line with our comments.

Yours faithfully,

Tim Rodway
Director

c.c. Fairfax Properties