Tandridge District Council: Examination of ‘Our Local Plan: 2033’

Tandridge District Council Hearing Statement

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?

September 2019
Notes:

1. The term 'The Council' or the abbreviation 'TDC' is used as shorthand for Tandridge District Council
2. The abbreviation LP is used for the submitted 'Our Local Plan 2033' (MD1)
3. All quotations are distinguished in italics and referenced in brackets
4. All references are to published LP evidence documents and the 2012 NPPF and associated 2014 PPG unless otherwise stated
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?

Response to Inspector’s Issues / Question

3.1.1 Yes. The Council’s work on this issue is comprehensive in respect of the NPPF: ‘the Plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence’ (Para.182).

Early stage formation and refinement

3.1.2 The methodology for defining and considering realistic options for distribution of development (‘spatial approaches and spatial options’ in TDC terminology - ‘approaches’ being general and ‘options’ being more site specific) is set out in detail in published evidence (SPS evidence document series, especially SPS2 and through the iterative Sustainability Appraisal process – see Q3.2 for further information). From the outset of the plan-making process the Council has been careful to ensure that all realistic and reasonable alternatives for meeting planning objectives and all aspects of the plan, were considered. Alternatives for development distribution, underwent a comprehensive assessment process from the earliest stages, to ensure that no assumptions were made prematurely about constraints, other than those that were fundamental physical and environmental obstacles and therefore, could not realistically be discounted (SPS6 – Key Constraints). The 2015 Issues and Approaches document presented the Council’s first full exploration of development distribution options and these have continued to be refined throughout the plan-making process, to arrive at the preferred spatial strategy and ultimately, the Local Plan.

Factors considered

3.1.3 The extensive evidence base underpinning the Local Plan demonstrates the breadth of information and factors considered in the formation and refinement of realistic options.

3.1.4 It goes without saying that fundamental constraints and the limited facilities and infrastructure of the main settlements, plus majority (M)GB policy coverage in the District, meant that there would be serious conflicts in respect of the approaches that

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addressed a high level of development need. For this reason the evaluation of options and strategy choices for the LP are ultimately led by capacity evidence and issues, rather than development needs evidence.

3.1.5 Some may argue that given the amount of undeveloped land within the district, that the options that could be considered are numerous. However, the Council has been thorough in its assessment of the ‘realistic options’. These were determined by a combination of evidence and the following factors, throughout the formation and/or refinement stages:

- Plan objectives (SPS 5);
- Available and potentially suitable land, as promoted for development through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) process (SAD evidence document series);
- The need to avoid, or minimise, harm to the District’s key environmental assets. These are mainly natural environment features and the various eco-system services they provide, countryside and landscape character and the historic built environment. These are fundamental, substantive, constraints (SPS6);
- The need to make best use of and enhance the District’s existing social and community services and facilities (infrastructure). This factor is to a degree, but not entirely, embodied in the defined settlement hierarchy. The hierarchy recognises that the largest (higher Tier) settlements provide the greatest range of services and facilities and that ideally development should be located there to minimise travel distances (SBC1/8);
- The need to make best use of and enhance the District’s existing transport infrastructure. Again, this is recognised mainly in the definition of the settlement hierarchy, because generally the best road and rail access is to and from the largest, higher Tier settlements. However the existing road and rail system also determines opportunities beyond the main settlements (SBC1/8); and
- The need to limit harm to NPPF Green Belt. Though not a substantive constraint, this is an overriding strategic planning policy consideration in relation to the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) around London (GB evidence document series).
**Green Belt**

3.1.6 Consultation responses received at each stage of consultation highlight the importance of the Green Belt as a factor to be considered and the Council fully recognise the role and significance of the Green Belt in the District. However, due to the scale of development need faced, a start point ‘policy off’ position was taken. This was done to ensure that the Council could demonstrate that every effort was made in seeking to meet Objectively Assessed Needs in accordance with Paragraph 14 and 47, of the NPPF (2012). However, also in accordance with these same paragraphs and “…as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this framework…”, the application of the policy of Green Belt and other relevant factors set out at footnote 9 of paragraph 14, it has not been possible to meet development needs in full.

3.1.7 The response to this question should be read in conjunction with Matter 4 responses on the Green Belt Assessment (GBA) process. This is because the GBA is a key part of the evidence and in how the Local Plan has been formed.

**Site options**

3.1.8 In addition to the spatial approaches series of documents and sustainability appraisal, further information on the consideration of site options is usefully summarised in the Housing Topic Paper (HNS2 Section 2, especially Paras.108-110, Section 3 and the diagram; Figure 1 - page 57). The stages of the process were closely linked to public consultation stages in plan preparation. The LP approach / spatial option was selected after very careful consideration, and, as far as possible, reconciliation, of all relevant planning objectives and evidence (SPS2).

**The Preferred Spatial Strategy**

3.1.9 The preferred strategy option was selected and refined as set out in SPS2 and became the basis of the LP. The elements and specific allocations which are included in the submitted Local Plan, have evolved since March 2017, when the Council adopted the preferred strategy, and was informed by all information gathered to that point and further evidence such as Green Belt Assessment Part 3 (GB1) and the most up to date Housing Land Availability Assessment information (SAD3).

3.1.10 The important attributes of the preferred strategy (as set out in SPS2) are:

- The District’s most important environmental assets are appropriately protected.

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• In the immediate future development is directed to the higher Tier and more sustainable existing settlements, but scale and scope is limited by environmental and Green Belt constraints. This provides a range of small to medium sized sites that should be eminently developable and readily viable in the earlier years of the LP. The effect is to allow a significant amount of housing to proceed quickly, to ensure a five year housing land supply, whilst the preparations are made for larger scale development proposals for the longer term (the Garden Community, which inevitably has a longer lead in time).

• A large part of development need is accommodated in the south of the District (GBA Strategic Area C – GB6) in the form of a strategic, Garden Community (new settlement), development that can provide essential new infrastructure and, in particular, make best use of an existing, relatively under-utilised, rail line and its connections. Here Green Belt impact and harm is inevitably extensive, but is mainly to the Green Belt countryside protection purpose, not to settlement sprawl or merge related purposes. Creating a new settlement is a more challenging form of development, where time is needed to prepare (land assembly and master planning and implementation arrangements) and provide essential infrastructure. Given this lead in time this is the best option to address long term needs, including beyond the plan period.

• Strategic Green Belt purposes are inevitably compromised by the chosen option, but in the least harmful way possible. This is achieved by limiting development in the more built up northern and central parts of the District (GBA Strategic Areas A and B GB6). It is in these areas that the remaining openness is most fragile in respect of accommodating further development. This is because many high value countryside and landscape areas remain, but, partly due to proximity to Greater London, there are only very limited gaps between the many scattered areas of development and infrastructure. Only a few small ‘opportunity’ sites around the main settlements in this area can be developed without serious harm to Green Belt purposes.

3.1.11 All the spatial approaches and options (for the distribution of development) were formally appraised, through statutory Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This was done

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consistently and iteratively, from the outset of plan-making. This is detailed in the SSHA evidence document series, especially SSHA3 and referred to in other responses to the Inspector’s questions, especially through the Council’s responses to Matter 1 (TED03) and Q3.2 below.
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?

Response to Inspector's Issues / Question

3.2.1 Yes, the distribution of housing is supported by the Sustainability Appraisal. This matter has been appraised in the Sustainability Appraisal in a number of different ways and has developed iteratively throughout the SA process.

3.2.2 Essentially, the ‘Local Plan Strategy / Delivery Strategy’ and the ‘Overall Quantum of Housing’ have both been subject to appraisal, together with alternatives. In addition, the sustainability of individual settlements have been assessed to ascertain whether they are sustainable locations for growth. Finally, individual site options have been the subject of appraisals. All of these considerations have in turn helped inform the overall quantity and distribution of development proposed in the Local Plan.

SA of the Local Plan Strategy / Delivery Strategy Approaches

3.2.3 An SA of the Local Plan Strategy / Delivery Strategy Approaches was first considered in section 1-5 of the 2015 Issues and Approaches Regulation 18 SA (SSHA18) which appraised six alternatives. These approaches (or options) focused on consideration of various approaches concerned with the inclusion / exclusion of sites within / without inset settlements and at different Tiers of the settlement hierarchy at the time (SBC8). The options were as follows:\(^1\):

- **Approach 2a:** Residential: Approach 1 + sites within the inset areas in the district – Tier 1/2 (Oxted, Limpsfield, Hurst Green, Caterham on the Hill, Caterham Valley, Warlingham, Whyteleafe, Smallfield, Lingfield and Godstone). Commercial: Intensification of existing employment sites within the inset areas.

- **Approach 2b:** Residential: Approach 1 + sites within the existing inset areas in the district built at a higher density (at least 70dph).

\(^1\) Note Approach 1 was a continuation of Core Strategy (2008) development.

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• Approach 3: Residential: Approach 1 + Approach 2a + sites that are currently in the Green Belt around the main urban settlements and semi-rural service settlements Tier 1/2 (Oxted, Limpsfield, Hurst Green, Caterham on the Hill, Caterham Valley, Warlingham, Whyteleafe, Smallfield, Lingfield and Godstone). Commercial: Intensification of all employment sites within the district.

• Approach 4: Residential: Approach 1 + Approach 2a + sites that are currently in the Green Belt around the rural settlements Tier 3 (Bletchingley, Woldingham, South Nutfield, Dormansland, South Godstone, Tatsfield, Blindley Heath, Felbridge and Old Oxted). Commercial: Intensification of all employment sites within the district.

• Approach 5: Residential: Approach 1 + Approach 2a + Approach 3 + Approach 4 (this scenario is based on maximum capacity). Commercial: Intensification of all employment sites within the district.

• Approach 6: A large urban extension or new settlement.

3.2.4 At the time in 2015, SSHA18 concluded that approaches 3 and 5 performed well in terms of providing sufficient housing to enable people to live in a home suitable to their needs, whilst noting that this level of development meant that they scored relatively poorly against a number of the other sustainability objectives (5, 13, 14, 15, 16).

3.2.5 Although approaches 2a and 2b have scored very poorly against the SA objectives; provision of sufficient housing and growth of the economy, they scored well against many of the other objectives as the approaches sought to protect the environment around the existing built up areas.

3.2.6 Not dissimilarly, approach 4 would have delivered a relatively low number of dwellings compared to the objectively assessed housing need number, so it scored poorly against the provision of housing. Unlike 2a and 2b however, approach 4 also scored poorly against other key sustainability objectives such as reducing the need to travel, improving noise and light pollution, enhancing the landscape character and enhancing biodiversity. This was largely due to the rural nature of the sites.
3.2.7 Approach 6 of SSHA18 envisaged the delivery of a large-scale development which would provide a significant level of housing in the long term. Generally this option scored well on housing and economic benefits, but less well on environmental impacts. It was recognised that a large number of locations would need to be considered and thoroughly assessed to ensure selection of the most appropriate location is selected.

3.2.8 These options were elaborated upon and developed later in the process, initially within SSHA13 - Sustainability Appraisal of Delivery Strategy Approaches Appendix B to Agenda item 5 2017; and then subsequently within SSHA3 and MD5. It was recognised (within SSHA13) that SSHA18 had already considered 'a large extension or new settlement' (approach 6). However, none of the approaches published in 2015 had considered the new / extended settlement alongside wider development within the District. It only looked at the expansion of settlements as well as the concept and considered a potential location of a new settlement on its own. Therefore, a further five alternative approaches (7a, 7b, 7c, 8a and 8b) were considered. All five approaches consider higher levels of housing delivery, via a new / extended settlement together with some development in the wider District. Where individual settlements are referred to, it can be assumed that development would be considered both within the settlement and at fringe locations. The five approaches are:

- Approach 7a: Focus residential development on Tier 1 and 2 settlements, plus development of a 'New / extended settlement'; all at standard density. Intensification of all employment sites within the District, plus new sites within a new/extended settlement.

- Approach 7b: Focus residential development on Tier 1 and 2 settlements, plus development of a 'new / extended settlement' - all at higher density (HD) 70dph. Intensification of all employment sites within the District, plus new sites within a new/extended settlement.

- Approach 7c: Focus residential development on Tier 1 and 2 settlements at standard density; plus development of a 'new / extended settlement' at higher density (HD). Intensification of all employment sites within the District, plus new sites within a new/extended settlement.
• Approach 8a: Focus residential development on Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlements, plus development of a 'new / extended settlement'; all at standard density. Intensification of all employment sites within the District, plus new sites within a new/extended settlement. This maximised capacity by inclusion of Tier 3 settlements.

• Approach 8b: Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlements plus 'New / extended settlement ' - all at higher density (HD). Intensification of all employment sites within the District, plus new sites within a new/extended settlement. This option maximised capacity.

3.2.9 It is important to note that by the time of the assessment of approaches 7a to 8b, the earlier assessments in 2015 (Approaches 1-6) were no longer considered directly applicable in their original form. They had been undertaken in an earlier context and additional background evidence had subsequently been undertaken which modified earlier 2015 assumptions about potential delivery. Such evidence included the SFRA and assessments relating to ecology, landscape and Gree Belt – all of which resulted in reduced assumptions regarding delivery capacity. In addition, the terminology used in 2015 was specific to the time of writing, e.g. approach 5 was termed 'maximum delivery' in 2015, even though it did not incorporate the 'new / extended settlement' and was no longer the maximum delivery option in comparison to approaches 7a to 8b.

3.2.10 In fact, SSHA13 concluded that all the more recently assessed approaches (7a to 8b inclusive) would boost growth relative to the previously assessed approaches 1-6. This was due to approaches 7a to 8b inclusive including a new/extended settlement alongside development in the wider district. However, SSHA13 also noted that those options which applied much higher densities (e.g. 7a and 8b) or extended development into Tier 3 rural settlements (8a and 8b) effectively promoted growth at the expense of environmental considerations to a greater extent. The issues are such, for example impacts upon rural landscape and cultural heritage, that it is difficult to envisage mitigation measures that may address them.

3.2.11 Therefore on balance, SSHA13 concluded that approach 7a represented the most sustainable option across a range of factors. By incorporating a new / extended settlement alongside development in sustainable Tier 1 and Tier 2 locations elsewhere in the District, Approach 7a represents a high level of housing growth,
whilst avoiding the worst of the more damaging negative impacts that may result from approaches 7b, 8a and 8b.

3.2.12 SSHA13 also recognised that Approach 7b has some positive aspects (Tier 1 and 2 settlements at standard density; plus 'New / extended settlement ' at higher density). It would secure higher levels of housing delivery, although a new new / extended settlement built at high density may impact negatively on established rural character, as well as infrastructure and the road network. Therefore, it recommended that if higher densities were to be applied to the new / extended settlement this should be limited to the settlement core and / or around public transport nodes.

3.2.13 The five spatial options 7a to 8b were then carried through to Section 5.8 of documents SSHA3 and MD5, essentially in a similar form and with the same conclusions, although MD4 elaborated on what these options may represent in terms of overall numbers. All options were considered in terms of the duration of effects, their geographic scale and their impact magnitude in terms of probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility.

3.2.14 Therefore, the Local Plan strategy to focus residential development on Tier 1 and 2 settlements, plus development of a 'new / extended' settlement was solidly supported and positively appraised against reasonable alternatives through the course of the sustainability appraisal process, which has demonstrably concluded it to be the most appropriate pattern of housing growth.

SA of the Overall Quantum of Housing

3.2.15 Various options for the overall housing number were assessed in Section 5.4 of documents SSHA3 and MD5. SSHA3 and MD5 appraised the following reasonable alternatives for ‘Overall Housing Numbers’. Inevitably, these options require balancing the aim of meeting housing needs whilst minimising adverse effects arising from development.

- DCLG new methodology housing number (equates to 645 dwellings per annum (dpa).
- Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) SHMA 2015 Update (equates to 470 dpa).
- Maximum potential in light of background evidence (equates to 306 dpa).
- Continuation of Core Strategy 2008 Equivalent (equates to 125 dpa).

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3.2.16 The maximum potential in light of background evidence reflects the figure taken forward in the Local Plan 2033. It did not fair particularly well against environmental objectives, but the OAN and Standard Method figure were progressively more harmful. Although delivering the least housing and performing poorly against objective 1, the final option of continuing the equivalent 2008 Core Strategy growth was the least harmful against environmental objectives. The outcomes of these appraisals demonstrate the genuine difficulties of trying to accommodate levels of housing growth that are so much higher than the current Core Strategy target, as well as demonstrating the significant negative environmental effects that will arise.

**SA of Individual Settlements and the Settlement Hierarchy**

3.2.17 An SA of individual settlements’ suitability for growth, in the context of the settlement hierarchy was undertaken in section 5.10 of documents SSHA3 and MD5.

3.2.18 The appraisal findings validate the overall development strategy of the Local Plan 2033, identifying that most pre-existing settlements in Tandridge District are very small scale, lack basic services and infrastructure and cannot be considered either sustainable or suitable for growth. Such unsustainable settlements correlate to the Tiers 3 and Tiers 4 of the settlement hierarchy (SBC8 and SBC1). Therefore the search for suitable sites is justified in focusing on Tiers 1 and 2 settlements, which is reflected in the Spatial Development Strategy of the Local Plan in Policy TLP01. It is recognised that there could be an opportunity to make them sustainable, when considered against the level of development that would be needed to make that happen and the environmental constraints and Green Belt, this is considered inappropriate and unrealistic.

3.2.19 However, for the purposes of SA, the investigation of sites discussed in the next paragraphs was extended to also include Tier 3 settlements to ensure that within them there were no anomalous individual sites that could be considered sustainable.

**SA of Individual Sites**

3.2.20 Consideration of alternative sites has been subject to an iterative assessment, initially within SSHA16 - Sustainability Appraisal for Tandridge District Regulation 18 Sites Consultation 2016, and latterly within section 5.11 of documents SSHA3 and MD5. Gypsy and Traveller sites were considered within section 5.20 of documents SSHA3 and MD5. Whilst much of the earlier work remains relevant, the latter SA reports

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undertook further refinement assessments of alternative sites options and their effects.

3.2.21 The SA consideration of sites has helped ensure that even within locations that otherwise conform with the preferred spatial strategy (i.e Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements), only sustainable sites have been allocated for development.

Consideration of specific locations for a new settlement (Garden Village/Settlement/Community)

3.2.22 The final location of the Garden Settlement is also supported by the Sustainability Appraisal and is considered to be the most sustainable location.

3.2.23 Consideration of specific locations for a new settlement (Garden Village/Settlement/Community) began in SSHA16 - Sustainability Appraisal for Tandridge District Regulation 18 Sites Consultation 2016, with Section 4 considering seven ‘concept areas’ – potential locations for a large scale mixed-use development. Subsequently document SSHA12 - Sustainability Appraisal for Tandridge District Regulation 18 Potential Garden Village Locations 2017 broadened the investigation of options to sixteen sites, by this stage termed ‘potential Garden Village Locations’. By 2018, the options were narrowed to a final three potential locations for what was now termed the Garden Community and these were appraised with section 5.13 of documents SSHA3 and MD5.

3.2.24 SSHA3 and MD5 concluded that all three broad locations have significant negative environmental impacts. However, these have to be balanced against the need to provide housing and, on balance of considerations, South Godstone is the preferable location of the three for a new Garden Community.

3.2.25 Therefore, the SA again supports the proposed distribution of housing with regard to the Garden Community and considers that South Godstone is the most sustainable option that will result in the most appropriate pattern of housing growth.

SAs of Employment Land

3.2.26 For employment, two reasonable options for the Economic delivery strategy are considered in Section 5.10 of documents SSHA3 and MD5, as follows:

- Option 1: Identify and protect key employment sites and intensify existing sites within the district.

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• Option 2: Identify and allocate new employment sites on undeveloped land or land currently in other uses.

3.2.27 Option 1 performed better overall against the 16 SA objectives and was reflected in Local plan policies TLP20 and TLP21.

3.2.28 Options around the quantum of employment provision are considered in Section 5.9 of documents SSHA3 and MD5, as follows:

- Option 1: GL Hearn’s Labour Demand Baseline scenario from Economic Needs Assessment Update (15.3ha of employment land)
- Option 2: GL Hearn’s Growth Scenario from Economic Needs Assessment Update (22.5ha of employment land)
- Option 3: Completions Trend Scenario from Economic Needs Assessment Update (4.8 ha of employment land)

3.2.29 Option 1 is marginally preferable on SA terms, which supports Local Plan policy TLP20(iii).

3.2.30 Individual employment sites were assessed in Section 5.11 of SSHA3 and MD5 and again support the employment allocations within the Local Plan as being the most sustainable and most appropriate.

**Overall Conclusions**

3.2.31 In conclusion, it can be seen that the process of SA supports the Local Plan Spatial Development Strategy and distribution, subject to environmental reservation about quantum of housing development the Local Plan is seeking to deliver.
3.3  Is the distribution of new homes between the Tiers of settlements and proposed garden community justified and how has it been established?

Response to Inspector's Issues / Question

3.3.1  See response to Qs 3.1/2.

3.3.2  The distribution of housing development was established by, and follows directly from, the development distribution strategy choices outlined (and referenced to extensive evidence) in the response to Qs 3.1/2. The distribution outcomes are very well justified by the evidence work referred to. The distribution is made on the basis of the Council's assessment of all the material planning issues, including the place and role of towns and villages in the settlement hierarchy (SBC8 and SBC1). For Tandridge, there is no sound planning justification for any sort of proportional or ‘fair shares’ distribution directly based on the hierarchy, or any other consideration. This is because the allocation of sites has to respond primarily to sustainability considerations, as well as environmental and Green Belt policy constraints (see response to Q3.1).

Evidence

GB evidence document series

HNS2 - Tandridge Local Plan 2033 Housing Topic Paper 2019

MD4 - Tandridge Local Plan 2033 Sustainability Appraisal Volume 1 Context

MD5 - Tandridge Local Plan 2033 Sustainability Appraisal Volume 2 Options Assessment 2019

MD6 - Tandridge Local Plan 2033 Sustainability Appraisal Volume 3 Effects and Conclusions 2019

MD7 - Tandridge Local Plan 2033 Sustainability Appraisal Appendices 2019

SAD evidence document series

SBC1 - Settlement Hierarchy Addendum 2018

SBC8 - Settlement Hierarchy 2015

SPS1 - Spatial Approaches Topic Paper Garden Villages Consultation 2017

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SPS2 - Our Local Plan Preferred Strategy Paper 2017

SPS3 - Spatial Approaches Topic Paper Sites Consultation 2016

SPS4 - Spatial Approaches Topic Paper Issues and Approaches Consultation 2015

SPS5 - Topic Paper 01 Issues and Objectives 2015

SPS6 - Tandridge District Council Key Constraints 2015

SSHA evidence document series

Supporting Papers

None
Spatial Strategy Policy wording

TLP06: Urban Settlements

3.4 Is the Policy effective and consistent with national policy in requiring accordance with the Councils Infrastructure Delivery Plan which is not a development plan document?

Response to Inspector’s Issues / Question

3.4.1 There is no formal guidance setting out how an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) should be undertaken or a requirement for it be a Development Plan Document. The Council’s Infrastructure Delivery Plan is a living document which sets out the infrastructure needs of the district. To enable the IDP to be a live document it is necessary for it not be a Development Plan Document in its own right. This is to allow for sufficient flex over time to adapt to changing infrastructure requirements as need arises, needs change and is based on dialogue with the relevant infrastructure stakeholders. The IDP is the starting point for infrastructure related matters and demonstrates that the provision of infrastructure has been fully considered within the plan-making process and sets the Councils expectation for infrastructure improvements that are necessary to support development in the District. The IDP will be reviewed on a regular basis through the life of the Local Plan to accommodate changes to the policies and strategies of service providers and the introduction of any new technology, infrastructure requirements and their costs. Public funding levels may also change over the life of the plan and necessitate a site specific Development Management response in dealing with infrastructure issues.

3.4.2 If the IDP were to be a Development Plan Document in its own right this might provide certainty for development to come forward, however, would severely restrict the ability for the Council, and its partners to adapt to changing circumstances. Further, it would restrict the development industry’s ability to negotiate or to meet needs via alternative provision/mechanisms where it is appropriate to do so. It is recognised that infrastructure requirements may change in response to changing or unexpected circumstances and that delivery agencies may have to review their management and investment plans and priorities over time taking into account economic conditions. Therefore, an on-going review of infrastructure requirements will be needed and

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continuous dialogue with delivery agencies and developers to co-ordinate development and infrastructure delivery as investment plans and budgeting processes of the different agencies may not be aligned and commercial information may not be currently available.

3.4.3 As such the IDP is not a policy document. It does not override or amend agreed/adopted strategies, policies in the Local Plan and commitments the Council and other infrastructure providers currently have in place. Any review of policy by infrastructure providers during the period of the Local Plan will impact on the amount and type of infrastructure required. The IDP therefore sets out a broad framework for infrastructure provision to 2033 and more detailed infrastructure requirements and costs where these are known.

3.4.4 The IDP forms the basis for assessing infrastructure contributions that would be sought to meet the needs of new development. The importance of robust infrastructure planning is emphasised in the NPPF (2012) which reiterates the need for plans to include strategic policies to deliver the provision of infrastructure (para. 156) and to plan positively for the development infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives of this framework (para 157).

3.4.5 The Council contends that, by signposting to the latest IDP, TLP06 is positively prepared in that the plan should be formulated based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements. By building in the flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances, including those of infrastructure providers, the policy, through referring to the IDP is effective in that it makes provision to enable the plan to be deliverable, and to remain up to date, based on joint working reflecting the strategic priorities of all partners. It is consistent with national policy by enabling delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework including, Paragraph 7 – ‘an economic role’.
3.5 Are the proposed Modifications necessary for soundness?

Response to Inspector's Issues / Question

3.5.1 No. The Council’s view is that the proposed modifications to TLP06 do not go to the soundness of the Plan (these are proposed other or minor modifications identified through tracked changes in Examination Library Document MD1 - the Publication ‘Our Local Plan:2033’). The modifications are only suggested for the benefit of clarity / consistency with the wider plan and to assist in the interpretation of the policy. The intent and use of the policy is not altered by these modifications.

3.5.2 That said, as set out in Examination Document TED01 (prepared as part of the Council’s response to the Inspector’s initial questions (ID 2 and 3), it is accepted that an alternative interpretation, as to whether some of the Council’s proposed other / minor modifications constitute a main modification, could exist. All of the proposed modifications to TLP06 have therefore been highlighted as a potential main modification in TED01/02 (Part 2 – Proposed modifications originally categorised as proposed minor modifications (May 2019).

Evidence

MD1 – Our Local Plan 2033 Submission 2019

TED01 – Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications (May 2019)

TED02 – Response to Inspector Documents ID2 and 3
TLP07: Semi-Rural Service Settlements

3.6 Is the Policy effective and consistent with national policy in requiring accordance with the Councils Infrastructure Delivery Plan which is not a development plan document?

Response to Inspector's Issues / Question

3.6.1 See response to Q 3.4 above. The principles set out in that response also apply in respect of this policy.
3.7 Are the proposed Modifications necessary for soundness?

Response to Inspector's Issues / Question

3.7.1 No. The Council's view is that the proposed modifications to TLP07 do not go to the soundness of the Plan (these are proposed other or minor modifications identified through tracked changes in Examination Library Document MD1 - the Publication ‘Our Local Plan:2033’). The modifications are only suggested for the benefit of clarity / consistency with the wider plan and to assist in the interpretation of the policy. The intent and use of the policy is not altered by these modifications.

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Evidence

MD1 – Our Local Plan 2033 Submission 2019
TED01 – Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications (May 2019)
TED02 – Response to Inspector Documents ID2 and 3

Document Reference TED07:
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TLP08: Rural settlements

3.8 Is the Policy sufficiently clear and would it be effective in respect of Woldingham which is inset, in part, from the Green Belt?

Response to Inspector's Issues / Question

3.8.1 Yes. Along with the other settlements of the District, Woldingham was considered thoroughly through the preparation of the Local Plan and the spatial strategy which has been determined. Policy TLP08 has specifically set out to identify the rural settlements where Green belt constraints and criteria exist in accordance with national policies; and then where further policies should be applied to all rural settlements, including Woldingham. Unlike all other rural settlements, Woldingham is not designated as Green Belt and therefore some element of distinction is necessary.

3.8.2 The Council's spatial strategy and policy TLP08 (along with policies TLP01 – 07 and TLP09), have been informed by, amongst other things, an up to date assessment of settlement sustainability through the Settlement Hierarchy (SBC1 and SBC8) and which has categorised settlements based on their current ability to demonstrate service provision and is not influenced by their Green Belt status. Policy TLP08 accurately recognises Woldingham as a rural settlement.

3.8.3 Despite being a non-Green Belt settlement, policies relating to Woldingham in earlier development plans, have remained respectful and reflective of its nature and character and it continues to be an area where development should be carefully controlled.

3.8.4 It is the Council's view that the implementation of policy TLP08, alongside the policies of the wider development plan, including Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan (2016), provides a sound and effective basis upon which to ensure Woldingham can support appropriate development.
3.9 Are the criteria set out in A) consistent with Green Belt policy as set out in paragraph 89 of the Framework and are they justified?

Response to Inspector's Issues / Question

3.9.1 Yes. Given the nature of Tandridge District it is necessary to further specify and detail how development within the rural settlements will be treated, especially given that all but one of the rural settlements hold the designation of Green Belt.

3.9.2 Whilst Paragraph 89 of the NPPF 2012, focuses on possible exemptions to that which is otherwise considered to be inappropriate development, policy TLP08 takes a positive approach to development but in a controlled manner. Further, Tandridge District has several settlements and employment sites which are ‘washed over’ by Green belt as such it is important to remember that infilling, the redevelopment of existing brownfield land and opportunities for community facilities are common place within the area and the further and local detail in the criteria is reflective of this. That said, the Council has made sure to include VI, to reinforce the link to the framework.
3.10 Is the Policy effective and consistent with national policy in requiring accordance with the Council’s Housing Strategy which is not a development plan document?

Response to Inspector’s Issues / Question

3.10.1 See response to Q 2.21. The principles set out in that response also apply in respect of this policy.

3.10.2 The only point to add is that the reference to the Council’s Housing Strategy in this Policy is made specifically because of the need to take account of detailed rural / local needs in a situation where the policy allows for ‘small scale’ development in Tier 3 Rural Settlements washed over by Green Belt (‘within defined settlement boundaries’) under NPPF Para. 86. This policy is deliberately somewhat more permissive than NPPF Green Belt policy Para. 89 (restricted to ‘limited infilling’). In terms of the positive intent of the policy to allow some rural development to meet local needs it is necessary to rely on Neighbourhood Plans and / or ‘Local Housing Needs Assessments’. In some cases these forms of local policy and guidance that may not yet exist, so the policy mechanism is designed to provide other guidance that can inform a Development Management judgement of NPPF Para. 88 Green Belt ‘very special circumstances’. The policy approach is pragmatic and justified in view of the difficulty of incorporating detailed rural needs information and evidence into the Plan.
3.11 Are the proposed Modifications necessary for soundness?

Response to Inspector’s Issues / Question

3.11.1 No. The Council’s view is that the proposed modifications to TLP08 do not go to the soundness of the Plan (these are proposed other or minor modifications identified through tracked changes in Examination Library Document MD1 - the Publication ‘Our Local Plan:2033’). The modifications are only suggested for the benefit of clarity / consistency with the wider plan and to assist in the interpretation of the policy. The intent and use of the policy is not altered by these modifications.

Evidence

MD1 – Our Local Plan 2033 Submission 2019

SBC1 – Settlement Hierarchy Addendum 2018

SBC8 – Settlement Hierarchy 2015
TLP09: Limited and Unserviced settlements

3.12 Are the second and third bullet points consistent with paragraph 90 of the Framework in not taking into account the preservation of openness and the purposes of including land in the Green Belt?

Response to Inspector's Issues / Question

3.12.1 Yes. It is the Council's view that neither bullet points 2 nor 3 of TLP09 imply that it would be acceptable to harm the openness of the Green Belt. Any application would be considered on a case by case basis and assessed on their own merits against the wider development plan, including national policy.

3.12.2 The NPPF 2012 should be read as a whole and to consider policies or topics, such as Green Belt, in isolation may result in an ineffective interpretation of the wider framework. The role of bullet points 2 and 3 of policy TLP09 are to ensure that the ‘golden thread’ of sustainability, is embedded in the development process by demonstrating that appropriate infrastructure, flood resilience and green infrastructure is accounted for. NPPF 2012, paragraphs 7 and 17, also recognise the need for infrastructure specifically as a facet of sustainability and positive planning.

3.12.3 Paragraph 65 of the NPPF 2012, also establishes that in considering planning applications:

“Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (unless the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to the asset or its setting which is not outweighed by the proposal’s economic, social and environmental benefits).”

3.12.4 As such, it would be remiss of the Local Plan, to not ensure such elements were considered, especially in a district which is 94% Green Belt and which experiences flooding and has infrastructure capacity issues. The provision of these elements would not be arbitrarily supported. Where needed and justified, applications would need to satisfy the conditions of the wider development plan including design and environmental constraints such as TLP18, TLP03 and indeed, paragraph 90 of the

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NPPF 2012, which identifies that “…local transport infrastructure which can
demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;…” may not be considered to be
inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

3.12.5 Further, the approach taken in the Local Plan is also consistent with the approach
taken by the revised NPPF 2019 and updated Planning Practice Guidance which not
only continues the position of paragraph 90 of the NPPF 2012 (which becomes
paragraph 146 of the NPPF 2019), but also further details the role to be played by
Green Infrastructure, in offsetting any alterations to Green Belt boundaries (NPPF

3.12.6 As such, the Council consider its approach to establishing a clear steer for
infrastructure provision for the rural areas, to be a positive, justified and effective one.
3.13 To be effective, should the Policy state ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plan rather than ‘adopted’?

Response to Inspector’s Issues / Question

3.13.1 The term adoption has been used for the benefit of all readers where that term is more readily understood, as opposed to ‘made’. The Council do not feel that the terminology goes to the soundness of the plan, however, should the Inspector’s view be that the policy wording should be clarified to either amend, add to the glossary, or bracket the terminology, the Council is open to a minor / other modification which will be implemented on adoption of the Local Plan.

Evidence

None

Supporting Papers

None