

# **TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN 2024–2044 EARLY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTATION RESPONSE FROM LIMPSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL (PLANNING COMMITTEE)**

This response has been prepared by Limpsfield Parish Council Planning Committee for submission to Tandridge District Council's Planning Policy Team as part of the Early Engagement Consultation on the preparation of the new Local Plan 2024–2044.

## **Background**

Limpsfield Parish Council notes that Tandridge District Council has commenced preparation of a new Local Plan for the District.. The Parish Council supports the District Council in its approach to the preparation of the Plan and notes the timetable proposed.

Notwithstanding the many and varied issues which the new Local Plan will need to address, Limpsfield Parish Council considers that a fundamental underlying issue is the scale of housing development required by national policy and the extent to which that level of growth can realistically and sustainably be accommodated within the District.

The Parish Council has an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan (LNP), which was made in 2019 and forms part of the statutory development plan for the District. The Parish Council has recently completed a review and update of the LNP, which is currently awaiting approval by Tandridge District Council. In addition, the Parish Council has prepared and had adopted the Limpsfield Village Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan (2021). This response to the Local Plan consultation has been prepared in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan, including its vision and priorities, and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. The Parish Council acknowledges that, as the Local Plan progresses, it may become necessary to undertake a further review of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that it remains up to date and consistent with strategic policy.

At this stage, it is not possible to be definitive about the future role of Parish Councils in later stages of Local Plan preparation. However, given the proposed replacement of Tandridge District Council with a much larger authority covering East Surrey, Limpsfield Parish Council anticipates that Parish Councils will play an increasingly important role in representing local views and acting as a conduit between communities and the new authority.

In considering the consultation material, the Parish Council has concluded that it is more appropriate to provide a structured set of general comments, rather than seeking to respond to the detailed questionnaire accompanying the consultation document.

## **An Initial Vision**

Limpsfield Parish Council welcomes the proposed initial vision as a strong statement about the future of the area as a place to live and work, with clear commitments to environmental quality and the sustainability of new development. Although broader and more detailed, the vision is broadly aligned with the vision set out in the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to accommodate development in sustainable ways while protecting the local environment, including open spaces, the Green Belt and countryside.

This alignment does not imply that the Parish Council assumes there will be no new development; indeed, in some areas there may be a significant amount of growth. As the Local Plan evolves, it may be appropriate for the vision to recognise this more explicitly. At this early stage, the Parish Council offers the following observations.

An important element of the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan vision is the emphasis placed on the character of individual roads and streets. The quality and variety of living environments is a defining characteristic of Limpsfield and of the District more generally. This could be reflected in the Local Plan vision through wording such as: *Change and new development will have been accommodated within the District's towns and villages, but the underlying quality of individual roads and streets will have been protected.*

While the vision refers to the delivery of infrastructure and services to keep pace with growth, this could be strengthened to acknowledge that in some locations there are already issues relating to the scale and accessibility of local services. This could be addressed by wording along the following lines: *Deliver infrastructure and services in locations which improve their accessibility to the local community, and which keep pace with the growth in population and housing.*

The Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan places specific emphasis on the role of local shops and services. Town and village centres play a fundamental role in community life and merit explicit recognition in the vision, for example through wording such as: *Maintain and strengthen the role of town and village centres in the delivery of services to the local community.*

## **Where Development Should Go**

Limpsfield Parish Council considers that there is no single or simple answer to the question of where development should be located. In principle, a balanced mix of options is likely to be required to deliver the scale of growth needed, although the outcome will depend heavily on how that balance is struck. The Parish Council does not consider that an even distribution of development across the District would be appropriate, as this would fail to reflect the differing character, needs and opportunities of individual settlements.

Given the sensitivity of towns and villages to the impacts of development, the Parish Council considers that new settlements should form part of the strategic vision. However, it is also recognised that within and around existing settlements there may be opportunities for development which, in some cases including Green Belt land, could provide suitable and sustainable locations for new housing.

If such a balanced approach is pursued, the Parish Council considers that the following fundamental principles are essential. Within towns and larger villages, policies should allow for appropriate development while protecting the essential character of streets and neighbourhoods, avoiding incremental densification that would erode the quality and variety of living environments. On the edges of towns and villages, land to be released for development, including Green Belt land, should be considered comprehensively, to maximise benefits in terms of housing mix, numbers and infrastructure provision. Any review of Green Belt boundaries should result in strong, defensible boundaries that minimise the risk of future urban sprawl into the countryside. In both new and existing settlements, the scale of infrastructure investment required, and the cost of improving local services, should be clearly reflected in the contributions sought from new development.

Limpsfield Parish Council would wish to place on record its willingness to participate fully in any exercise to review Green Belt boundaries.

### **Housing Provision**

The Parish Council recognises that meeting Government housing targets presents a major challenge. In this context, its comments on development distribution and Green Belt review are particularly relevant.

In terms of housing type, Limpsfield Parish Council considers that within Limpsfield Parish, and potentially more widely, there should be a clear focus on smaller dwellings of three bedrooms or fewer. This would help meet the needs of older residents wishing to downsize, thereby releasing larger homes for families, and support first- and second-time buyers. While flatted development may be appropriate in the most accessible locations, such as town centres, elsewhere the emphasis should be on smaller houses that provide residents with both indoor and outdoor space. The Parish Council also considers that the Local Plan should specify maximum floor areas, not solely bedroom numbers, to ensure that the objective of delivering genuinely smaller homes is achieved.

### **Affordable Housing**

While acknowledging the ongoing need for social rented housing, Limpsfield Parish Council considers that in an area of high house prices, affordable housing should also function as a pathway to full ownership. Shared equity and similar models should be supported, with mechanisms in place to ensure properties can be returned to the social housing provider when occupiers move on.

### **Economy, Employment and Retail**

At a local level, the approach outlined in the consultation document broadly reflects the principles set out in the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan, and the Parish Council supports the five headline principles identified. The Neighbourhood Plan also highlights the growing importance of home working, which should be supported subject to appropriate controls to protect residential amenity and local character.

Although retail is referenced in the consultation material, the Parish Council considers that greater emphasis could be placed on the importance of retaining retail and complementary uses such as cafés and restaurants, which contribute vitality to town centres. Accessibility

by a range of transport modes, including walking, cycling, public transport and well-managed car parking, is key to this objective. Support for the rural economy is also consistent with the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Infrastructure, Transport and Delivery**

Limpsfield Parish Council considers that securing infrastructure improvements is critical to supporting growth. As noted elsewhere in this response, it is essential that development contributions are commensurate with the substantial infrastructure needs arising within the District.

### **Our Places**

Given the scale of development proposed, the Parish Council strongly supports the emphasis on protecting local character. The Local Plan should explicitly recognise the importance of neighbourhood plans, character assessments and design codes in protecting local distinctiveness. Limpsfield Parish Council anticipates that Parish Councils will have an important role in developing design codes to ensure that new development respects the character of valued roads and neighbourhoods.

### **Historic Environment**

The Parish Council supports the proposed approach to protecting the District's heritage assets. It also notes that concepts such as adding value, reinforcing local identity and contributing to sustainable placemaking are equally relevant to areas with strong character that are not formally designated as heritage assets. Where conservation area appraisals and management plans exist, there will be a case for their review and updating.

### **Natural Environment and Nature Recovery**

The positive and proactive approach to the natural environment is welcomed and closely aligns with the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan and its associated implementation projects.

### **Health, Wellbeing and Communities**

The Parish Council supports the approach taken in relation to health, wellbeing and communities. Particular importance is attached to Local Green Spaces, as designated in the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan, amenity space within new developments, and adequate garden provision within residential curtilages. Together with wider initiatives, these elements make a direct contribution to quality of life.

### **Climate Change and Sustainable Design**

Limpsfield Parish Council supports the approach to climate change and sustainable design, which is consistent with the Neighbourhood Plan's aspiration for an increasingly sustainable community.

## **Monitoring and Delivery**

The Parish Council considers that the Local Plan should explicitly recognise the role of Parish Councils in supporting delivery, monitoring progress and preparing local policies and guidance. As planning responsibilities move to a larger unitary authority, the contribution of Parish Councils and other local bodies will become increasingly important.

## **Limpsfield Parish Council Planning Committee**

**Approved by Council on 9 February 2026**