

TANDRIDGE LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION: SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

RESPONSE BY LIMPSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL, AUGUST 2026

Background

Earlier this year Tandridge District Council carried out an early-stage consultation on its Local Plan. Along with other local organisations and individuals, The Parish Council responded with comments about the overall strategy.

Having considered the views expressed in this earlier consultation, TDC has now published, for consultation, its draft vision and objectives for the plan, together with its strategic options for delivering that vision and its preferred approach. At the same time, the Council has published a range of documents which comprise the ‘evidence base’ for the emerging Plan, including a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Study and the first stage of a Green Belt Assessment.

The approach being adopted by the District Council and its target for submitting a draft plan to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of 2026 is fully supported. The extent to which the District Council has sought to take on board the responses received because of its earlier consultation is appreciated and, whilst there may be several detailed comments from the Parish Council, the overall strategy being developed is also supported.

Introduction to the Consultation

The first section of the Consultation Document focuses on the way in which the current document builds on the consultation undertaken earlier in the year. It picks up key themes, including the importance of infrastructure, the need to protect green belt and countryside and the acceptance of the need to deliver homes, but conditional on a number of key factors (appropriate and sustainable locations, supported by infrastructure, the right type of housing and respect for local character and environmental constraints)

The Evidence Base and Context

The next section of the Consultation addresses the evidence base and context within which the Plan will sit. A particular focus is the housing requirement which using the Government’s standard method of assessment equates to 819 homes per year over the 15 year plan period, rising to 983 homes per year when past under delivery is considered. Alongside this, is a recognition that the Local Plan must consider the extent to which the requirement can be realistically and sustainably accommodated. That provides a context for background documents which address, at a preliminary level,

sites which, in the early stages of the plan process, have been put forward for development.

Vision

The Vision has been significantly shortened but is now supported by a set of focussed objectives explaining how the vision will be achieved. The vision contains important elements which reflect views expressed by the Parish Council and others:

- Specific reference to the distinctive characteristics of the area and specific roads / streets within it
- Recognition of the need for a wider choice of homes
- Focus on sustainable locations with infrastructure delivered in step with growth

We support the vision which provides a clear direction and reflects the need to secure sustainable growth whilst respecting the qualities which make Tandridge attractive and distinctive. Reflecting the Parish Council's earlier comments on the importance of the District's living environment, the vision could be strengthened by an extra clause at the end of the first para: '.....qualities that make the district distinctive and its towns and villages attractive places in which to live and work'.

Strategic Objectives

This section provides clear priorities to inform the spatial development strategy

The importance of securing growth whilst maintaining the local character of the towns, villages and neighbourhoods is identified in objective 4 but could be strengthened. Whilst major developments can be managed by the strategic objectives, there is a risk that smaller developments, if not appropriately managed, will erode the character of the area and prejudice the overall vision for the District.

We support the objectives but seek an amendment to Objective 4 to ensure that it is seen to relate to all developments, as follows: '.....towns and villages, and to ensure that all new development is carefully managed and respects the character of the area in which it is to take place.'

Spatial Strategy

Four options for the spatial strategy are considered - a hierarchical approach, a hierarchical approach with an additional strategic development at Redhill Aerodrome, a capacity led approach and a capacity led approach with the additional strategic development at Redhill Aerodrome.

A capacity led approach, as set out in Options 3 and 4 reflects the character of and opportunities for new development in different parts of the District. This approach

is considered to secure the maximum amount of development whilst respecting the character of different parts of the District and is supported.

Whilst it would not be appropriate to comment on the specific issues relating to Redhill Aerodrome, the principle of incorporating a strategic component, as proposed in Option 4, is also supported. It is acknowledged that the Strategy will involve the release of some land which is in the Green Belt. The principle that any release of Green Belt should be plan-led is supported.

Strategic Policies

The Consultation Document describes 11 aspects for which strategic policies are proposed.

The range of strategic policies proposed is broadly to be supported.

1. Spatial Strategy and Housing Provision.

The overall approach towards the scale and location of new housing development, informed, but not rigidly determined by the settlement hierarchy, is supported. It is also appropriate to include housing mix and, in this respect, and to reiterate the Parish Council's views on the importance of smaller dwellings in meeting a range of housing needs, including smaller households and people seeking to downsize.

We note on p32 the statement on avoiding over reliance to a single site – this appears to be in contradiction to the options put forward which seem wholly reliant on the Redhill Aerodrome site.

2. Strategic Development site.

No further comment

3. Site Allocations.

This may be the appropriate place to comment on the sites which are being considered through the HELAA:

- Sites to the South of the A25 between Wolfs Row and Brassey Road/Brassey Hill.

At this point the A25 creates a strong boundary between the built-up area of Limpsfield and the open land to the South. Whilst there are several houses within the area, particularly on the sites to the west of the area, the strength of the woodland which surrounds them limits their impact on the Green Belt. Any development would contribute to the sprawl of the built-up area in this location. The impact would be heightened by the proximity to Limpsfield Village Conservation Area [please make sure this is named as such, rather than simply

“Limpsfield Conservation Area” as is currently referenced in the Consultation] which extends south of the A25 along Wolfs Row.

Development in this area, particularly at its eastern end, would detract from the historic nature of the Conservation Area, with the open land to the west of Wolfs Row forming an important context for the cottages and houses in Wolfs Row.

In the event that it is considered that some or all of the sites can be taken out of the Green Belt and allocated for development, it is essential that the sites to be allocated are considered comprehensively or as linked, homogenous blocks, to ensure that they form an effective extension to the built up area, to avoid the less effective use of land that would result from piecemeal development, to minimise any adverse effect on the Conservation Area, and to ensure that secure, long term boundaries to the Green Belt are established

- Council Offices, Library and Health Centre.

Within the built-up area and within Oxted Town Centre, this site is suitable to be considered for development. However, it must be recognised that the site plays a fundamental role in delivering services for the community in a highly appropriate and sustainable location. The Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan specifically identifies the Health Centre and Library as a site where the loss or reduction of space for community services will be resisted. Alongside this, it is apparent that there could be further residential development within or close to Oxted, Hurst Green and Limpsfield. Against this background, any development should retain the core community facilities on the site and enable their expansion to provide a fuller service to people living and working in the area, avoiding the need to travel significant distances to alternative facilities elsewhere in the District or adjoining areas.

4. Affordable Housing

As in the previous comments from the Parish Council, whilst acknowledging the ongoing need for social rented housing, affordable housing should, in an area of high house prices, 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.

We understand that “affordable housing” is a complex subject and would welcome clearer guidance on what this means in the context of the local area, recognising that the definition and practical application may vary considerably between different locations.

5. Economy, Employment and Retail

The approach is to be supported.

To reiterate: Although retailing is mentioned in the title, more attention could be given to the importance of retaining retail and other activities, such as restaurants and coffee shops, which draw people to and add vitality to town centres. In this respect the accessibility of the town centres by a variety of transport modes, including, walking cycling, public transport and suitably managed car parking is important.

The support for the rural economy is also echoed in the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Transport and Delivery

To reiterate:

It is essential that the level of contributions made by developments reflects the substantial needs which should be met within the District.

We look forward to reading the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, in particularly the Oxted (Godstone) water treatment works.

7. Historic Environment

To reiterate:

The approach put forward is to be supported in its protection of the District's heritage. It is worth noting that the concepts of 'adding value' 'reinforcing local identity' and contributing to sustainable placemaking are also applicable in the context of the many areas within the District, which have strong and much-loved character, but which are not defined as heritage assets. Where there are existing conservation area statements and programmes, there will be a case for them being updated.

8. Design and Placemaking

The principles are to be supported. In the context of Limpsfield, it is particularly important to emphasise the importance of street layout to the character of the area and the importance of ensuring that small, infill developments do not detract from that character and comply with local policies and local guidelines. In this context, it would be appropriate for the Plan to refer to local guidance as contained in Neighbourhood Plans and Conservation Area Statements.

9. Natural Environment and Nature Recovery

It is right for the policy to focus on broad issues relating to the natural environment. However, the policy should also refer to the impact that smaller developments can have on the natural environment and the importance of appropriate landscaping in managing that impact and supporting the natural environment within the built-up areas of the District.

10. Health Wellbeing and Communities

As indicated previously, it is fundamental to the delivery of the Plan's vision that people have access to high quality local services – from schools and health facilities to open spaces and sports facilities. The plan should secure the protection of existing facilities and, where needed, their expansion.

11. Climate Change and Sustainable Design

No comment

In closing – to reiterate:

The Plan should refer to the role of Parish Councils in helping to deliver the Plan and in preparing or helping to prepare local policies and guidance. The role of Parish Councils and other local bodies will become increasingly important as planning and other local services are moved to a larger unitary authority.

Thank you.

LIMPSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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