
Shaping Elmbridge A New Local Plan



Consultation from 19 August to 30 September



Elmbridge
Borough Council
... bridging the communities ...

Options consultation 2019

Leader's message



The council is committed to preparing a new Local Plan that will deliver much needed new and affordable homes for our residents, which are supported by infrastructure and services, but delivered in a way that also protects and enhances the distinctive character and environment of our borough.

This stage of the plan preparation focuses on new homes. All the major national political parties are committed to increasing the number of new homes built in England to address the 'national housing crisis' and the council itself identified in 2014 that the borough's housing need figure had doubled from 225 to 474 homes per year. The Government's housing target of 623 for Elmbridge has raised this bar further and is a significant increase in the number of homes we had previously planned for and built since our last plan in 2011.

Residents may recall that in 2016 we asked for your views on how the borough should grow and what issues were important to you. At that time, we presented three possible options of where the new homes could be built, we also told you which option the council preferred. We listened and based on your feedback the council has reviewed and re-evaluated its initial conclusions as well as undertaken additional technical work.

This consultation document shares the findings of the review and re-evaluation as well as five possible options for selecting sites for the Local Plan. The council no longer has a preferred option and we want to have an open and honest conversation with our communities about the housing challenges but also the opportunities the Local Plan brings to ensure that Elmbridge continues to be a sustainable and attractive place to live and work.

There has been much talk about national government forcing growth on councils and the government has made it clear if we fail to produce a Local Plan we could be at a real risk of having key decisions on development in our borough or the Local Plan itself being made by the Planning Inspectorate and Secretary of State rather than by locally elected Councillors.

Whilst that is true, this council has a responsibility to its residents to plan for and foster growth in a way that ensures the continued success of the borough and benefits all its residents. To provide new and affordable homes, to ensure our town centres remain vibrant and successful, to broaden the range of employment opportunities on offer and to enhance the borough's much-loved green spaces and natural capital.

We know that not everyone will agree with the options put forward, but we urge our communities to read the consultation document and take part. This consultation is not a vote but an opportunity for our communities to shape the direction of the Local Plan. **We want to know what makes your area special? What are its key characteristics? What would you would like to see happen over the next 15 years and which approach do you think would best enable this to happen?**

Councillor Stuart Selleck

A new Local Plan - aiming for 'good' growth in our borough

We are preparing a new Local Plan which will decide how the communities and places of Elmbridge will develop over the next 15 years. It will allocate land for development and guide decisions on whether or not planning applications should be granted permission.



Our current plan is from 2011 and although it has been successful in delivering sustainable development, it does not plan for enough new homes. An up-to-date plan is essential to ensure that planning decisions are made for the benefit of our borough and our residents now and in the future.

The Government has declared a 'national housing crisis' and the number of new homes we need has increased significantly, beyond

what we had planned for. Our biggest challenge in preparing a new plan is the very high need for new homes; in particular, smaller homes (with 1-3 bedrooms) and more affordable homes. There is also a requirement to plan for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Elmbridge is the ninth most expensive place to live in England¹. As a result, too many young people and families are moving out of the borough to have a realistic prospect of owning or renting their own home. Our older residents are struggling to affordably downsize in a way that will enable them to continue to live independently or with care packages and remain in their communities.

The cost of housing and reliance on people travelling into the borough is also making it difficult for local business and valued services to attract and retain employees, this includes essential key workers, such as teachers and health care providers.

This consultation is focused on housing but while the main pressure is to deliver more homes, supported by infrastructure such as schools, the Local Plan will also need to support key employment areas and

businesses, delivering vibrant local shopping centres and community hubs. We must protect and enhance our historic features, as well as encouraging alternative transport, such as walking, cycling and car clubs to reduce pressure on our road network and improve air quality. A tall order indeed! The Local Plan will also help to deliver many related local, national and European strategies and commitments including the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Elmbridge Economic Strategy and Heritage Strategy.

The number of new homes the council is expected to plan for is set by the Government's standard methodology. This was introduced in July 2018 and the calculation for Elmbridge is 623 new homes per year.

We have already done a lot of work and in 2016 undertook a Strategic Options Consultation and asked you for your views on how Elmbridge should grow over the next 15 years and what issues are important to you. This included those issues relating to employment, retail and infrastructure, which have not significantly changed since the

¹ National Housing Federation – Home Truths 2017/18 – www.housing.org.uk/resource-library/hometruths

Strategic Options Consultation 2016. At that time, we presented three possible options of where the new homes could be built, we also told you which option we preferred. This former consultation document is available to view on our [website](#).

We listened and based on your [feedback](#)², recent changes in national planning policy and findings from our additional technical work the council has reviewed and re-evaluated its initial conclusions in relation to the options of where new homes could go. As a result, the council no longer has a preferred option for the Local Plan and now has five options for housing growth to share with you.

Options 1, 2 and 3 from the Strategic Options Consultation 2016 have evolved and Options 4 and 5 are new, based on the findings of the further work you asked us to do.

It is time for you to help us to choose the option that will form the basis of our Local Plan. Whichever option we choose for the plan it will be robustly tested through an examination in public by an independent Planning Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State.

The Inspector will test our plan to see if it is 'sound' and complies with national planning

policy and the law. There will be significant pressure for the Local Plan to plan for all the homes we need. In fact, national planning policy requires us to. If the Inspector does not think the plan is doing enough to deliver the homes needed, they will likely force us to look again and choose a different option.

We all have different views on what is important for our borough's future and the issues facing our communities. However, there are opportunities to provide the much-needed new and affordable homes in our borough.

This document has been written with our communities in mind. We want to have an open and honest conversation with our residents about the housing challenges, and also the opportunities the Local Plan brings, to ensure that Elmbridge continues to be a sustainable and attractive place to live and work.

We believe that we should have a plan that delivers 'good growth' providing much needed new and affordable homes which are supported by appropriate infrastructure and services but also protects and enhances the character and environment of our borough.

But we need your help. This consultation is your opportunity to shape the direction of the Local Plan. Please take time to consider the options carefully and let us know your views.

Looking beyond Elmbridge

The challenge of finding enough land for new homes is not unique to Elmbridge and especially in areas like ours, adjoining London. Many areas have made the decision to amend Green Belt boundaries for housing including some in Surrey.

Our neighbours are also struggling to meet their needs, so they will be unable to build our homes as well.



² All feedback can be found in the Elmbridge Local Plan Strategic Option Consultation (Regulation 18) Summary of Consultation Response, July 2017

Understanding the evidence

How do you know what needs to be built and where it can and can't go?

In 2018 the Government set a 'standard methodology' that every Council preparing Local Plans must use to calculate how many new homes are needed in their area. **The calculation for Elmbridge resulted in 623 new homes needed each year for the next 15 years.**

Local Plans must also be informed by evidence and over the past 4 years we have been preparing a series of technical documents on a wide range of topics to help us understand what new development we need and how we could plan for it. Together, these are known as the '**Local Plan Evidence Base**'.

The technical documents use a variety of local and national facts, figures and data. Some elements require judgements and reasonable assumptions to be made. We have used our knowledge of the borough to inform this work. All our assessments follow national and European guidance and requirements as well as standard industry practice.

There have been also several supporting documents produced to inform the plan as it

is being prepared to make sure we are complying with national planning policy, law and important environmental, sustainability and equality matters have been properly considered.

The findings of each technical document are carefully considered against the results of other technical work, national planning policy and law. **The evidence base should be read 'as a whole', as many technical documents work together.**

All the technical documents used to inform the 5 options including the choice of locations are available to view on our **website**. These include the additional technical work we have undertaken.

The level of detail in each technical document is proportionate to the plan making stage. Once we choose the preferred approach, more detailed studies and assessments will be undertaken to inform and guide the finer details of the plan.

The key findings from the Local Plan evidence base are shown in the next few pages. Each option has been informed by the evidence available on matters such as employment, infrastructure, transport and the environment. Each option responds to our



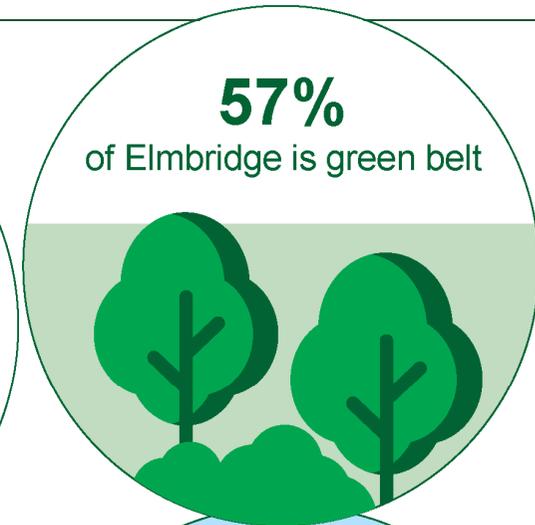
housing challenges differently, specifically in terms of the location of where new homes could go in the borough. We have provided you with an assessment of their benefits and disadvantages.

A borough-wide map showing the potential location for housing development to support each option has been provided. At this stage, these are not proposed housing allocations and do not guarantee that planning permission will be granted in the future.

You asked us to focus on finding more land for new homes in our urban areas and assessing in more detail how Green Belt is working, specifically, whether larger parcels can be broken down into smaller plots of land.

More background information on the **evidence base** and how each option has been assessed is available in our '**useful summaries**' on our website. All technical and supporting documents can be found on our website at **elmbridge.gov.uk/localplan**

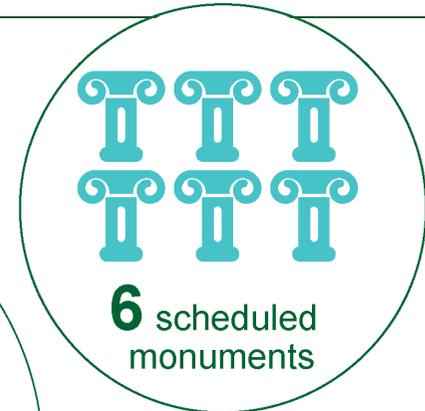
Elmbridge - location and geography



The **River Thames** flows through the north of the borough,
along with a number of other rivers and waterways.

³ Elmbridge Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2019

Elmbridge - character and environment



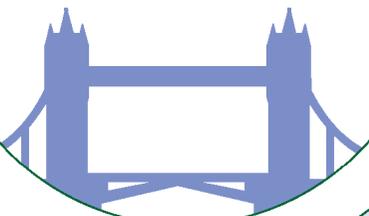
⁴ Local Green Space Designation Study 2016

⁵ Elmbridge Ancient and Veteran Tree Assessment 2018

Elmbridge - economy and connectivity



Close to
Central London, Heathrow
and Gatwick airports, the M3,
M25, M23 and the A3



17 miles
south west of central
London in north Surrey



**Congestion and key
pinch points**
across the borough at
am and pm peak times



10
train stations

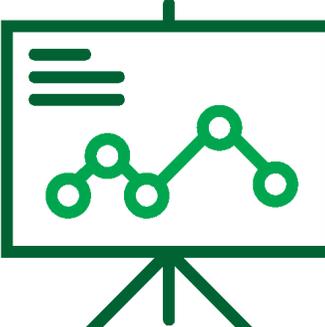
35,150 (54%)
of working age residents
commute out of the Borough
to work, the majority to London⁶



9,450 active
businesses in 2016⁷



15 vibrant
shopping areas⁸



⁶ 2011 Census

⁷ Interdepartmental Business Register, 2016, Office of National Statistics

⁸ Elmbridge Annual Monitoring Report 2017/18

Elmbridge - future housing needs, challenges and opportunities

What are our housing needs?

The minimum number of homes the council is required to plan for is set by the Government through its 'Standard Methodology'. The methodology uses the official household projections with an uplift required for areas such as Elmbridge where average house prices are not affordable for those on an average wage. The average cost of a home in Elmbridge is £759,635⁹ this is 18.8 times the average resident's income of £40,635¹⁰.

Currently on average there are 282 new homes built each year in Elmbridge. In line with Government guidance the council has used the 2014 household projections and this has resulted in a minimum requirement of 623 homes per year. As the plan must be for a minimum of 15 years this would mean we need to plan for 9,345 new homes. This would be a 16% increase in the number of existing homes in the borough (just over 1% growth per year).

The council's own technical assessment¹¹ of housing need in 2016 found that previously there had been too many large homes built and that 99% of new homes need to be either 1, 2- or 3-bedrooms. There was also an acute need for affordable homes (nearly 70% of the homes needed).

National planning policy¹² provides an extensive definition of affordable homes that covers homes to buy and to rent. This can include shared ownership schemes and discounted rents below market rate. These homes are provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. The definition was broadened to reflect the range of needs to meet increasing affordability pressures.

What are our housing challenges?

The minimum number of new homes set by the Government exceeds the amount of urban land and brownfield land available in Elmbridge for development. The council has

undertaken a detailed assessment of the urban capacity for new homes through its **Land Availability Assessment**. There is only enough land in our urban areas to build approximately 5,300 new homes¹³. There would be a shortfall of nearly 4,000 new homes. We need to decide how the Local Plan will meet this shortfall.

It is important to remember that not all sites will be delivered at once, many sites are not expected to come forward for 6 to 10 years or indeed 11 to 15 years.

Although new development will be phased across the 15 years of the plan, we need to ensure we have a rolling 5 years of sites, known as a '5- year land supply'.

We also need to ensure we have made a contingency allowance if sites don't come forward as planned.

⁹ Home Truths 2017/18 National Housing Federation www.housing.org.uk/resource-library/home-truths

¹⁰ North Surrey and Kingston Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment 2016

¹¹ North Surrey and Kingston Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment 2016

¹² National Planning Policy Framework, Annex 2: Glossary (page 64)

¹³ Elmbridge Land Availability Assessment 2018

The Local Plan must be supported by an infrastructure plan to ensure that the necessary facilities and improvements are delivered at the right time to support growth. This will be provided through an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and continued close working with providers and agencies.

At this stage we have undertaken a high-level assessment with the providers and agencies to assess the impact on infrastructure from delivering all the homes needed over the plan period. This indicated that there is unlikely to be a severe impact that could not be mitigated. Once there is a preferred option for the Local Plan more detailed work will be undertaken with the relevant providers and agencies such as NHS Clinical Commission Groups, Surrey County Council and Thames Water Utilities Ltd.

We may not simply say that Elmbridge is full, and the new homes will have to go elsewhere. Our neighbouring boroughs and districts face similar challenges and will not be able to take our housing shortfall and we cannot force them to agree. However, we are working closely with them alongside relevant organisations and agencies on strategic matters such as highways, education, health services and on securing infrastructure improvements under our Duty to Co-operate.

What are the opportunities?

A new Local Plan will deliver much needed new homes and affordable homes and can ensure sustainable and cohesive communities offering high quality living environments for current and future residents.

The location of development must be guided by the Government's national policy framework. The new Local Plan can ensure that development is located in the most sustainable places in the borough and safeguard our valued Local Green Spaces.

Through the Local Plan there is the ability to master plan larger sites. This means the council will be able to control the amount and type of development on sites as well as the layout and design principles including the amount of open space provided through detailed policy and guidance. Communities and Councillors will have an opportunity to help shape Local Plan policies and master plans.

The Local Plan policies will need to promote sustainable modes of transport, such as walking and cycling and introduce incentives to reduce car ownership, such as car share clubs. This would assist to relieve road congestion by reducing the number of shorter journeys as well as having wider health benefits.



Option 1 - intensify urban area

Option 1 would deliver all the new homes needed in our borough over the next 15 years by:

- **Significantly increasing densities on all sites across the urban area; and**
- **Identifying open spaces, such as allotments and playing fields for redevelopment and relocating these uses within the existing Green Belt.**

This option would deliver all development of 9,345 new homes but would require all housing sites in the future to be delivered at very high densities of over 85 dwellings per hectare. This would be over double the current density average and would lead to taller buildings than currently in the urban area.

In response to the 2016 consultation you said: There could be support for increased densities to safeguard Green Belt but there was concern over the loss of open spaces. You were concerned over the impact of high densities to the low-rise character of the borough from option 1.

Benefits of option 1

- Delivers all the homes we need.
- Continue to direct development to urban areas to protect all of the existing Green Belt and preserve current boundaries.
- Relocation of open space could mean greater use of the Green Belt by residents.
- Provides smaller homes with smaller floor space which could potentially lower the average price of a new home.

Disadvantages of option 1

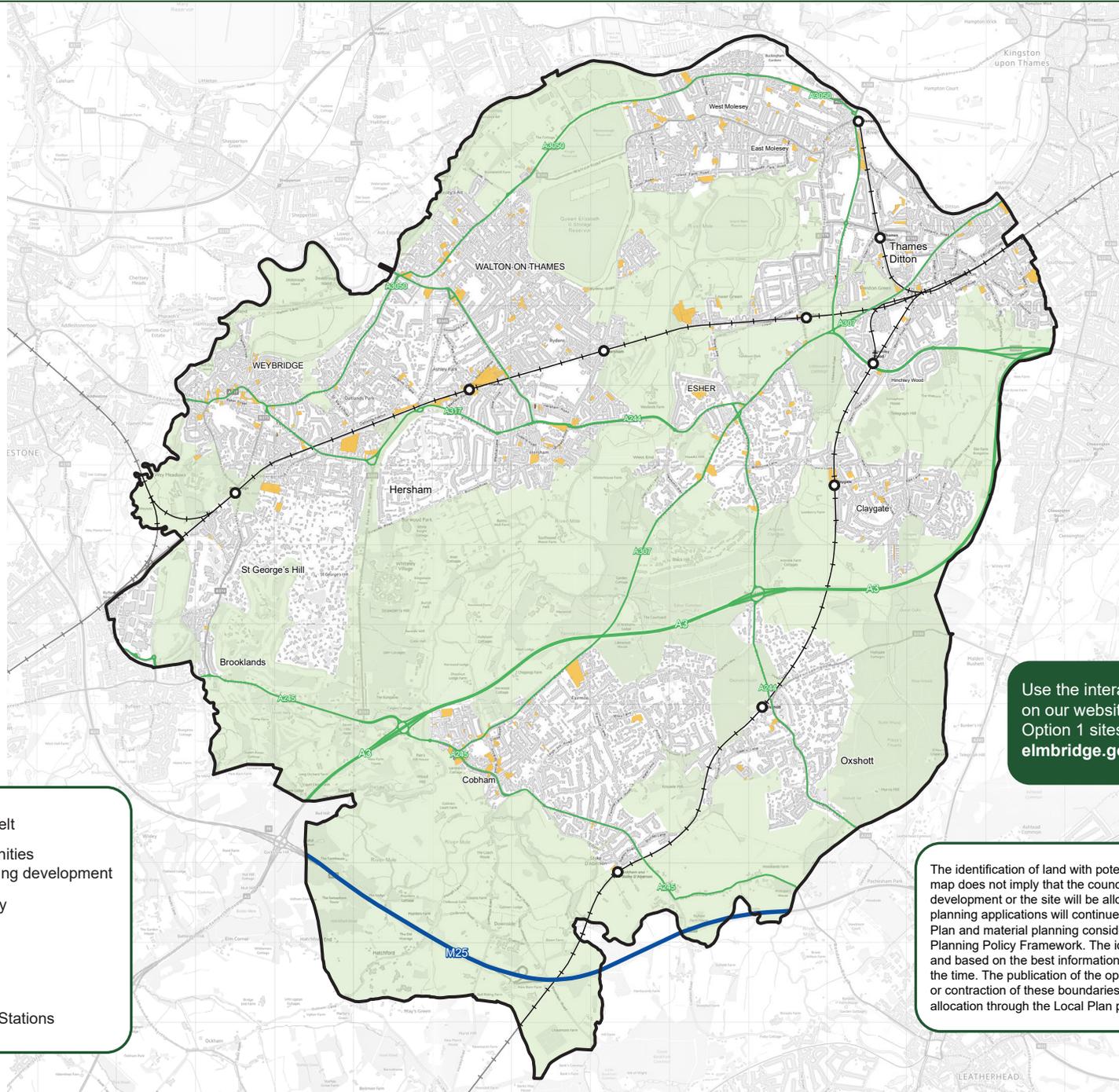
- Much higher density and tall buildings could fundamentally change the character of many areas of the borough.
- Places pressures on those parts of the borough that have in the past seen more development.
- Development will likely be flats and there wouldn't be a mix of housing types, including family homes.
- Relies on all potential sites being developed, if they fail to, the new plan quickly becomes out-of-date.
- Loss of open space in the urban area and new locations may not be as accessible.

See our [useful summary](#) on how each option was formed.

- Taller buildings can have higher build costs which could mean prices for new homes remain high and / or affordable housing is deemed economically unviable (would not leave enough profit for the development to occur).
- Increased pressure on highways at peak times.



Option 1



- Green Belt
- Opportunities for housing development
- Motorway
- A Roads
- Railway
- Railway Stations

Use the interactive map on our website to see the Option 1 sites near you elmbridge.gov.uk/localplan

The identification of land with potential for development on the option map does not imply that the council will grant planning permission for development or the site will be allocated through the Local Plan. All planning applications will continue to be determined against the Local Plan and material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework. The identified site boundaries are indicative and based on the best information and mapping data sets available at the time. The publication of the option map does not limit an expansion or contraction of these boundaries for a planning application or future allocation through the Local Plan process.

Option 2 - optimise urban area and 3 areas of Green Belt release

Option 2 would not meet housing need in full but would deliver new homes over the next 15 years by:

- **Optimising densities and ensuring effective use of land across the urban area and that new homes are of the right type to meet local needs.**
- **Create areas for new homes by removing land from the Green Belt where:**
 - **It is weakly performing the purpose(s) of Green Belt policy;**
 - **It is in a sustainable location for new homes; and it is not, or only partially, affected by absolute constraints which prevent development coming forward**
- **Using the Duty to Co-operate to see if other authorities can meet some of our need.**

This option would deliver approximately 6,800 new homes across the existing urban area and within three Key Strategic Areas. Not all of the land contained within the key strategic areas is suitable or available for

development. The part which could be suitable has been highlighted on the mapping on the next page. In total the three sites could deliver approximately 1,400 homes.

The council would need to decide whether or not there are exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary.

Benefits of option 2

- Protects the urban area from significant change in character.
- Continues to direct development to urban areas and uses urban land more efficiently.
- Provides smaller sized homes that meet local need.
- Larger sites could deliver new infrastructure and facilities on site.
- Higher number of new affordable homes on larger sites.

Disadvantages of option 2

- Fails to plan for all the homes needed.
- Other authorities already indicated they cannot take our need.
- 3% loss of Green Belt land.
- Increased pressure on highways at peak times.

Key Strategic Areas

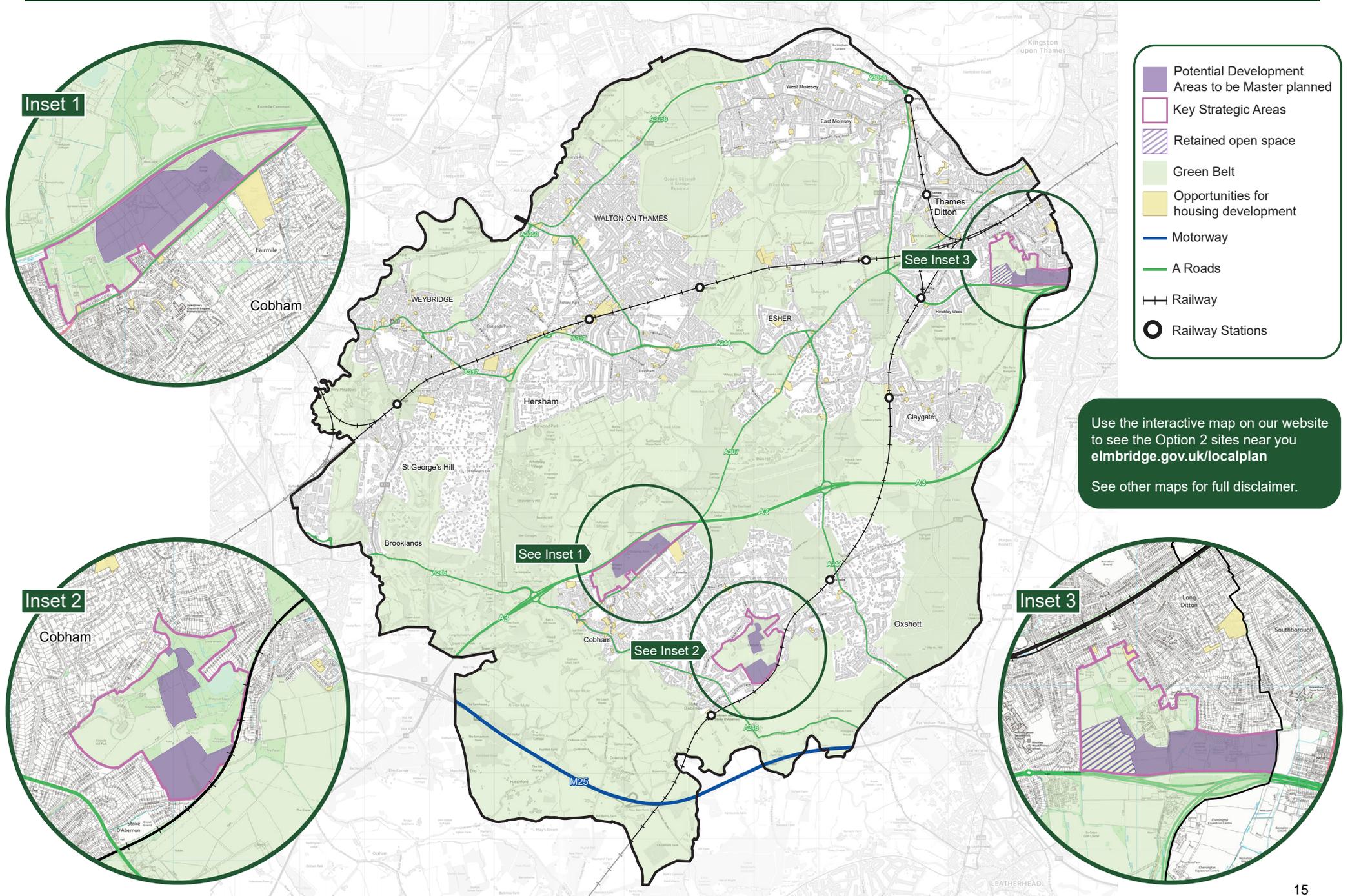
In 2016 the technical work indicated that there were three areas of Green Belt land in the Borough that were weakly performing their Green Belt role and had potential to accommodate a large housing site within it.

These were termed 'Key Strategic Areas'.

See our [useful summary](#) on how each option was formed.

In response to the 2016 consultation you said: You had concerns in relation to Green Belt release and you weren't sure if there were exceptional circumstances to look at land in the Green Belt. You said there was a need to find more brownfield and underutilised urban land. You said that the key strategic areas in option 2 were too large and the extent of the potential area for development wasn't clear.

Option 2



Option 3 - optimise urban area and large Green Belt release

Option 3 would deliver all the new homes needed in our borough over the next 15 years and would be able to help other boroughs and districts meet their housing need by:

- **Optimising densities and ensuring effective use of land across the urban area and that new homes are of the right type to meet local needs.**
- **Creating areas for new homes by removing land from the Green Belt where:**
 - **It is weakly performing, or it is not essential for the Green Belt policy to work properly,**
 - **It is being put forward for development by the landowner regardless of strength or importance; and**
 - **It is not, or only partially, affected by absolute constraints which prevent development coming forward.**

See our [useful summary](#) on how each option was formed.

This option could deliver approximately 16,300 new homes across the existing urban area and 618 hectares of land removed from the Green Belt.

The council would need to decide whether or not there are exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary.

Benefits of option 3

- Delivers all the homes we need.
- Provides smaller sized homes that meet local need.
- Can improve the affordability of housing.
- Enables delivery of a higher number of new affordable homes on larger sites.
- More even spread of where new homes will be located across the borough.
- Protects the urban area from significant change in character.
- Larger sites will deliver local highway improvements and new infrastructure on site.

Disadvantages of option 3

- 11% loss of Green Belt.
- Will extend urban areas potentially joining up previously separated towns and villages.
- New Green Belt boundaries may not function properly.

- Does not direct all new development to the most sustainable locations.
- Increased pressure on highways at peak times.

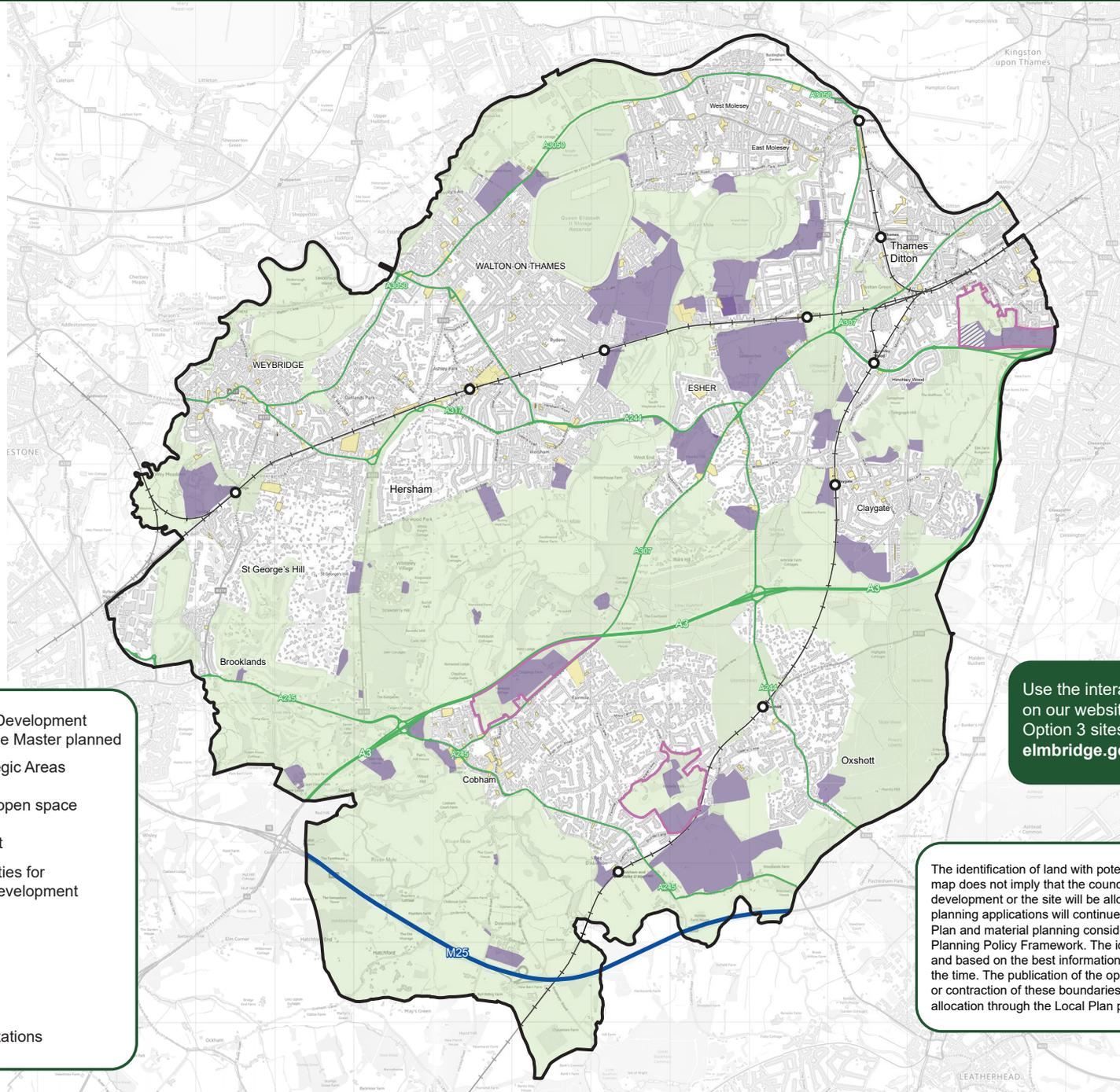
Why will larger and greenfield sites deliver more new affordable homes?

Typically, smaller, brownfield sites cost more to redevelop and often squeeze profitability, limiting the amount of affordable housing that can be provided by a developer.

Greenfield sites unlike brownfield sites have no demolition or clean-up costs enabling the developer to provide more affordable housing.

In response to the 2016 consultation you said: You had concerns in relation to Green Belt release and you weren't sure if there were exceptional circumstances to look at land in the Green Belt but acknowledge there would be a more even spread of development across the borough. However, option 3 would weaken the Green Belt too much.

Option 3



- Potential Development Areas to be Master planned
- Key Strategic Areas
- Retained open space
- Green Belt
- Opportunities for housing development
- Motorway
- A Roads
- Railway
- Railway Stations

Use the interactive map on our website to see the Option 3 sites near you elmbridge.gov.uk/localplan

The identification of land with potential for development on the option map does not imply that the council will grant planning permission for development or the site will be allocated through the Local Plan. All planning applications will continue to be determined against the Local Plan and material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework. The identified site boundaries are indicative and based on the best information and mapping data sets available at the time. The publication of the option map does not limit an expansion or contraction of these boundaries for a planning application or future allocation through the Local Plan process.

Option 4 - optimise urban area

New Option

Option 4 would not meet housing need but would deliver new homes over the next 15 years by:

- **Optimising densities and ensuring effective use of land across the urban area and that new homes are of the right type to meet local needs.**
- **Using the Duty to Co-operate to see if other authorities can meet some of our need.**

This option would deliver approximately 5,300 new homes over the next 15 years. We would continue to promote the use of good design to ensure the most effective use of all brownfield and urban land.

Benefits of option 4

- Increases the number of homes delivered.
- Provides smaller sized homes that meet local need.
- Maintains existing Green Belt boundaries.
- Continues to direct all development to urban areas and uses urban land more efficiently.

Disadvantages of option 4

- Fails to plan for all the homes needed.
- Other authorities already indicated they cannot take our need.
- Fewer new affordable homes built on smaller brownfield sites.
- Relies on all potential sites being developed, if they fail to, the new plan quickly becomes out of date.
- Difficult to bring forward new facilities and infrastructure which requires land.
- Increased pressure on highways at peak times.

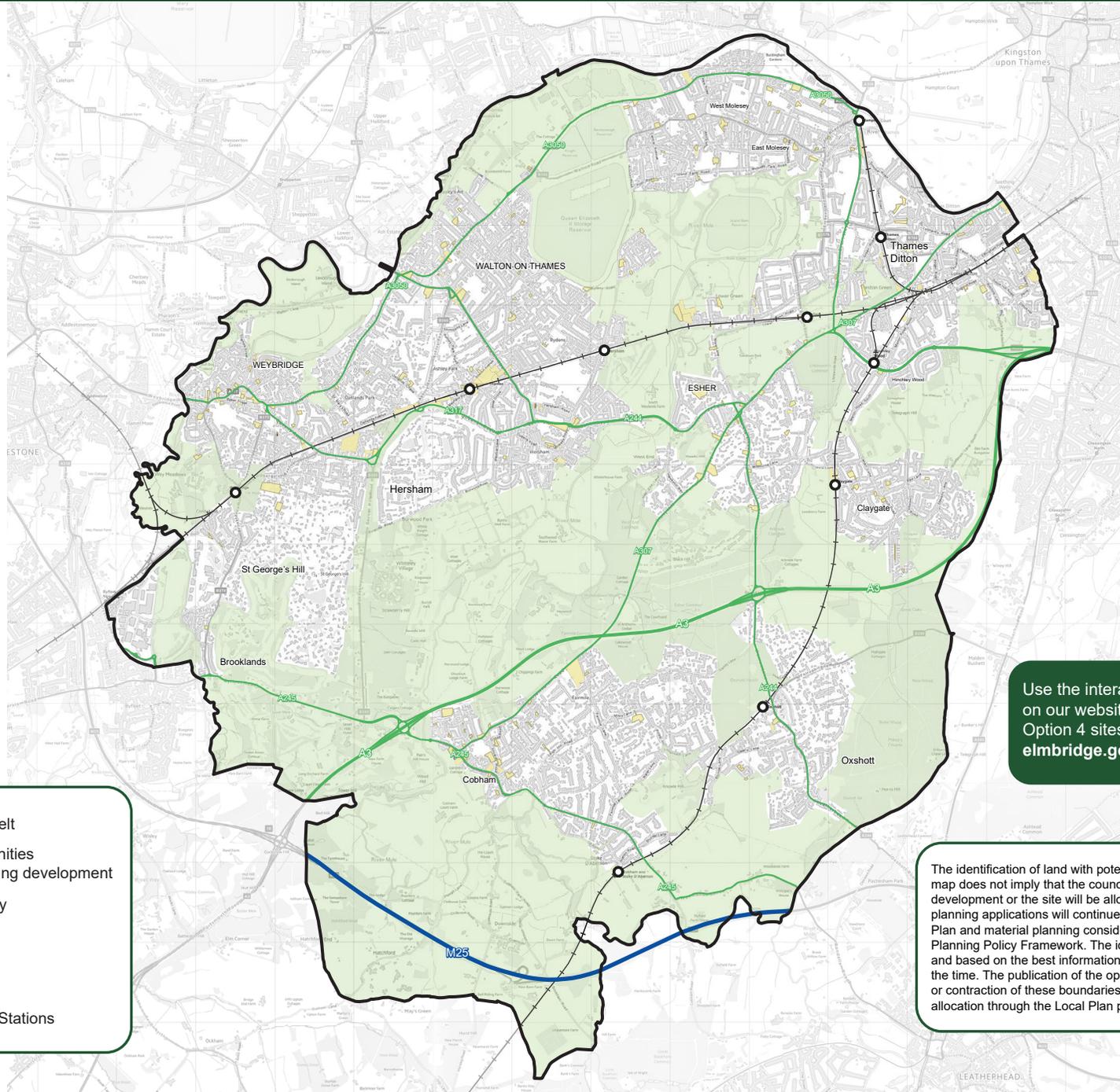
Current national and local policy requires that development sites are optimised and that low-density housing that fails to meet local need is avoided.

See our [Density Statement](#) on our website for more information.

See our [useful summary](#) on how each option was formed.



Option 4



- Green Belt
- Opportunities for housing development
- Motorway
- A Roads
- Railway
- Railway Stations

Use the interactive map on our website to see the Option 4 sites near you elmbridge.gov.uk/localplan

The identification of land with potential for development on the option map does not imply that the council will grant planning permission for development or the site will be allocated through the Local Plan. All planning applications will continue to be determined against the Local Plan and material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework. The identified site boundaries are indicative and based on the best information and mapping data sets available at the time. The publication of the option map does not limit an expansion or contraction of these boundaries for a planning application or future allocation through the Local Plan process.

Option 5 - Optimise urban area and small areas of Green Belt release

New Option

Option 5 would deliver all the new homes needed in our borough over the next 15 years by:

- **Optimising densities and ensuring effective use of land across the urban area and that new homes are of the right type to meet local needs.**
- **Creating areas for new homes by removing smaller sub-divided parcels of land from the Green Belt where:**
 - **It is weakly performing, or it is not essential for the Green Belt policy to work properly; and**
 - **It is not, or only partially, affected by absolute constraints which prevent development coming forward**

If all 33 small areas of Green Belt were included in the final plan, this option could deliver approximately 9,400 new homes across the existing urban area and within 338 hectares of land removed from the Green Belt. The council would need to decide whether or not there are exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary.

Benefits of option 5

- Delivers all the homes needed.
- Can improve affordability of housing.
- Provides smaller sized homes that meet local need.
- Smaller areas for development but more evenly spread across the borough.
- Enables delivery of a higher number of new affordable homes on larger sites.
- Protects the urban area from significant change in character.
- New Green Belt boundaries would function properly.
- Larger sites will deliver local highway improvements and new infrastructure on site.

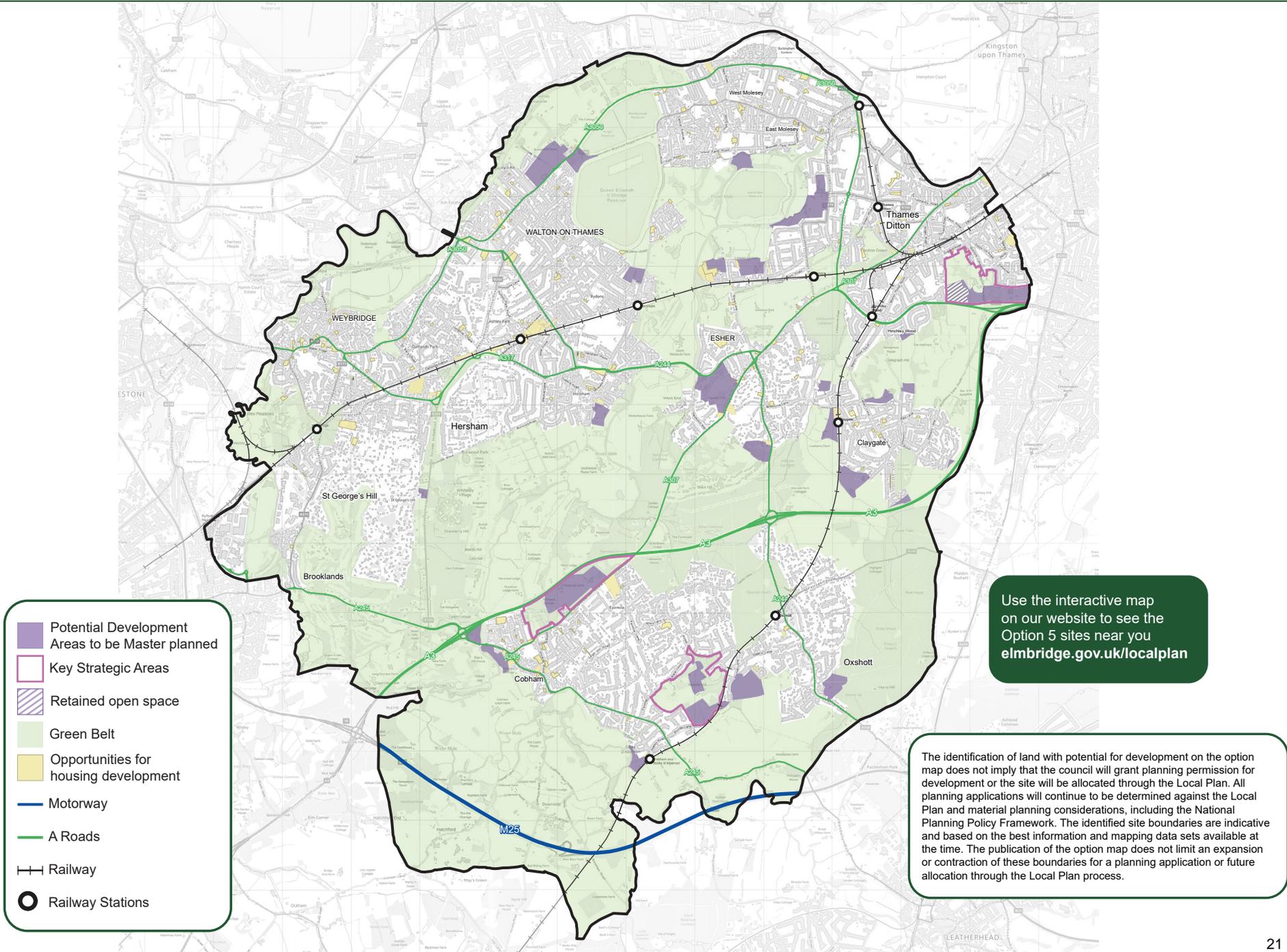
Disadvantages of option 5

- 6% loss of Green Belt land.
- Urban areas will be extended around the edges.
- Increased pressure on highways at peak times.
- Smaller sites might not have the critical mass to provide significant amounts of affordable homes and infrastructure on site.



See our [useful summary](#) on how each option was formed.

Option 5



Reviewing our detailed day-to-day planning policies

The focus so far has been on the high-level policies of the Local Plan, mainly on how many homes should be built in the Borough and where they will be located. However, we also need to update our detailed day-to-day planning policies on matters such as sustainability, design, density, changes of use, parking provision and adverts against which planning applications and enforcement action is assessed.

These policies will ensure that the right homes are built and that we create high quality places to live and work. This could include the removal of Special Low Density Residential Area designations that conflict with national policy and hinder the delivery of the right homes as well as the number of homes needed in our borough.

These day-to-day policies are found in the **Development Management Plan** and date from 2015. With new national planning policy published last year it is the right time to 'take stock' to see how effective these policies are and whether they will be fit for purpose to support our chosen option. The aim is to produce a single Local Plan that comprehensively covers the high-level matters, site allocations and detailed day-to-day policies.

It is important that our detailed policies:

- Avoid repetition
- Do not reiterate national planning policies and legislation
- Focus on key local issues that will help deliver the high-level policies.

We have started to review the development management policies and the majority are working well and will not require any significant amendments regardless of whatever option is chosen. However, we know that there is a lot of repetition within the policies which can be confusing for those applying for planning permission. We also know there are not enough day-to-day policies on environmental issues, such as renewable energy and sustainability of new buildings.

If the Local Plan includes large sites we will be able to create detailed policies and guidance which will provide a master plan for how these sites should be designed.

Are you aware of any issues that need to be addressed in our detailed day-to-day policies? Your feedback will inform new or amended day-to-day policies which will be included in the draft Local Plan to be published for comment in early 2020. We will then pass on any responses to the planning inspector, who will examine these policies as part of the Local Plan.

More information and the findings of the initial review of the development management policies can be found on our website at elmbridge.gov.uk/localplan

Supporting infrastructure

We know the importance of having the infrastructure and services to support new development. Infrastructure planning and funding is often complex with various agencies responsible for the provision and operation of infrastructure and services outside of our control. We have been working very closely over the past four years with these agencies as part of our Duty to Co-operate for the benefit of residents and have produced an updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Each agency has considered the effect of meeting housing need each year for the next 15 years across our urban areas. They concluded that at this stage there will be additional services needed but there are no major concerns to ensuring there is sufficient capacity. For more information see our [Infrastructure Delivery Plan December report](#) on our website.

The next stage will be to share with the agencies the details of sites to be carried forward into the draft Local Plan to understand the local impact in each area of the borough as well as the cumulative impact of development. Their response will influence, where and when development could come forward in the borough. They will tell us what improvements and new

infrastructure will be required, when it needs to be in place and how it will be funded. The council is committed to partnership working to secure the improvements where they are required, for the benefit of all residents. These will be set out in the new Infrastructure Delivery Plan and priority projects programme, which will be monitored and regularly reviewed alongside the new Local Plan.

In response to the 2016 consultation you said: that a key priority must be to ensure that local infrastructure and services can cope with the number of new homes.



We have been collecting contributions from developments that we use to provide infrastructure in the following way:

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - all liable developments must pay this contribution, which we use for funding large and small infrastructure in the borough. Since its induction in 2013, nearly £20m of CIL has funded education, community facilities, leisure, sport and open space improvements, highway and parking improvements as well as environmental improvement projects.

S106 agreements (S106) - although largely replaced by CIL we still need to use them to secure affordable housing and any site specific infrastructure required to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It is also used to secure Thames Basin Heaths mitigation contributions.

We will be reviewing our CIL charging schedule alongside the new Local Plan. This will review the existing rate we levy.

Getting involved

Finding more information	Giving my view	Promoting land for development
<p>More background detail is available in our useful summaries and technical documents, which can be found on our website at elmbridge.gov.uk/localplan</p> <p>If you have questions you can book a place at one of the public question and answer area meetings. Further details can be found on our website at elmbridge.gov.uk/localplantickets</p>	<p>Complete the online questionnaire at elmbridge.gov.uk/localplan by midnight on Monday 30 September 2019.</p> <p>You will need to register, and your comments will be published. See our privacy notice on our website for further details.</p> <p>Hard copies of this document are available to view at the Civic Centre in Esher and at libraries across the Borough.</p>	<p>If you have yet to put forward a site for housing or any other use, we encourage you to, regardless of where it is in the borough, so it can be fully considered as part of this plan process.</p> <p>Sites can be submitted on our website by completing the <u>‘call for sites’ form</u>.</p> <p>To discuss promoting a site, please contact us at localplan@elmbridge.gov.uk</p>



Next steps

This consultation is the second of three in the plan making process and it will run for 6 weeks. We will collate all the responses, and these will be published on our website in the autumn.

After that we will consider the feedback and prepare a draft plan known as the 'pre-submission draft'. You will also be asked for your views on the draft plan before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.

The chart opposite sets out the current timetable. To receive alerts on the Local Plan and to make comments, sign up on our website at consult.elmbridge.gov.uk



Local Plan myth busters

Myth: We don't need a new plan

Fact: The Local Plan is a statutory requirement and the Government has made it clear that all local authorities must have an up-to-date plan.

Failure to do so could lead to intervention whereby the Government writes our Local Plan and policies. Without a new plan we could find ourselves unable to resist unacceptable development or refused applications being allowed on appeal. This could result in unplanned development in unsustainable locations.

Myth: We will be able to defend all speculative development schemes

Fact: So far, we have been successful in defending inappropriate developments in the Green Belt. However, the longer we are without an up-to-date plan, the greater the risk that ad-hoc development will be allowed on appeal in an unplanned way and in unsustainable locations.

Myth: We won the Drake's Park appeal so this site cannot be considered in the preparation of the new Local Plan

Fact: The Drake's Park application and appeal were considered against the current Core

Strategy policies and national policy relating to proposed development in the Green Belt.

Notwithstanding this, the site is being promoted for development and removal from the Green Belt by the land owner through the Local Plan. This is different from a planning application and the council is required to include the site in its technical assessments and consideration of the options.

The identification of the site as part of option 3 as a potential location does not guarantee that the site will be taken through to the final plan or that planning permission will be granted in the future.

Myth: There was public objection to the three Key Strategic Areas, so they should not be included as an option

Fact: We have listened to all the feedback. However, the Local Plan evidence base continues to indicate that these three areas remain a valid option when considering how we can respond to housing need.

Myth: Planning permission will be granted on the sites shown in the option maps

Fact: The sites shown on the maps are potential locations for development which have

been identified through high-level technical work. The identification of a site in any option does not guarantee that it will be taken through to the final plan or that planning permission will be granted in the future. Detailed technical work would need to be completed to support any site in the final plan.

Myth: We can challenge the housing numbers

Fact: The number of new homes that we need is determined by a set calculation, known as the 'standard methodology'. This is based on nationally-published population and household projections. Although the Council objected to the introduction of this method in the past, the Government expects us to prepare our plan to meet this housing requirement in full.

Myth: We don't have to do what the Government wants or the Planning Inspector

Fact: We can only adopt a new Local Plan if it is deemed to be 'sound' by the Planning Inspector. The plan must be consistent with national policy (set by the Government) to be considered 'sound'. The longer we are without an up-to-date Local Plan the greater the risk that the Government intervenes and writes our plan for us.

Myth: There is plenty of brownfield land in our urban areas

Fact: As well as setting a new housing target and policies to deliver new homes, we must ensure we have enough sites for the next 5, 10 and 15 years. Although development will not happen all at once, if we cannot demonstrate an on-going 5-year supply of housing sites, or the number of new homes built does not meet the target, the plan becomes out of date.

A detailed search for potential land has increased our estimated supply of housing land to 5,300 new homes over the next 15 years. However, the amount of brownfield land is different across the borough and in total there is not enough to meet need and there would be a shortfall of nearly 4,000 new homes.

Myth: The Green Belt is sacrosanct

Fact: The Green Belt is not sacrosanct. However, it is heavily protected from development, except in very special circumstances, by national and local planning policies.

Myth: The Green Belt can't be amended

Fact: National policy states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in **exceptional circumstances**, as part of a Local Plan. These have been defined by national policy and 3 nearby Surrey authorities have recently concluded that there were exceptional

circumstances to justify amendments to their boundaries.

As we don't have enough land in our urban area for all the homes needed, we are required to review the potential of land in the Green Belt. This enables us to demonstrate that all available options have been properly assessed. We need to decide if there are exceptional circumstances, as set out by national planning policy to amend the boundaries in Elmbridge.

Myth: The Government said we don't have to build on the Green Belt

Fact: In the past there has been a number of political statements made by MPs. However, national policy sets out the exceptional circumstances to justify amending Green Belt boundaries through the Local Plan.

Myth: High density and smaller homes will ruin the character of my area

Fact: The character of an area relates to matters such as building size, scale and distances between buildings and boundaries. It does not relate to the number of bedrooms a property has or indeed the number of homes in a building. New development schemes will need to be innovative and utilise higher densities while respecting the local character.

Myth: We won't be able to protect our valued open space

Fact: A new Local Plan will provide opportunity to place strong protection on our important and valued open spaces, these would be called Local Green Spaces. This high level of protection means that there is a strong presumption against development. You have already told us which spaces are important to you and we have been able to identify spaces which would be suitable for this status. They can be found in the [Local Green Space Designation Study](#).

Myth: There are never any affordable homes built in Elmbridge

Fact: There is a huge shortage of affordable homes. They are being built and priority is given to households who live and work in the borough, but the number built each year is not keeping up with need.

The council has established a housing company, EBC Homes with the aim of providing our own affordable homes in the future. Currently affordable homes are mainly built as part of private developments. Where private developers make planning contributions towards meeting the need for affordable housing locally, these are preferred on site.

In simple terms, the more new market homes are built the more affordable homes will be delivered. Just building more housing is unlikely to significantly bring down open market house

prices, as this is influenced by factors beyond simple supply and demand. However, building homes of a size that we need will create more choice with smaller homes, ultimately commanding lower purchase or rental prices than larger homes.

Myth: The council will make lots of money from new homes

Fact: There is potentially an increase in the overall tax and CIL collections from more homes and more residents, but that also brings extra costs for us and Surrey County Council from more bin collections, roads to maintain and public services to provide. Any homes built by the council will be to increase local affordable housing and not for profit.

Myth: Elmbridge Borough Council controls the amount and level of infrastructure provision in the borough

Fact: The council works closely with infrastructure providers on roads, health, education, utilities and emergency services. The plan must be prepared in consultation with providers and in a joined-up way to ensure the right type and levels of infrastructure are provided.

However, it is the infrastructure providers themselves who decide what infrastructure requires improvement or additions based on their own service level agreements with the Government.

To understand what infrastructure currently exists and what improvements the providers are planning, the council has produced the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This living document will pull together the infrastructure needs for the plan period. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be used to inform a programme for the delivery of infrastructure projects to be funded by development through the Community Infrastructure Levy Tax.

To date we have asked providers and agencies to consider the impact of meeting housing need evenly across the borough. Once we have determined which sites could be carried forward into the draft Local Plan we will go back to the providers and agencies to understand the local impact in each area of the borough. Their response will influence, where and when development could come forward in the borough.

Myth: The options are fixed and whichever one is picked will become the Local Plan

Fact: The options and the potential locations for development have been formed by using the technical assessments which have been applied across the borough. However, they are not fixed and are not a draft plan in disguise.

Given that there are such distinct differences in the areas of our borough, it is likely that no sole option can be applied universally across the borough sustainably.

That is why we are asking you what option would be best for your area and why. We also want to know what makes your area special and how you would like to see it grow in the next 15 years. This will enable us to tailor a bespoke plan for Elmbridge that focuses on place making but also responds to our housing challenges.

Myth: The option which residents are most in favour will be taken forward

Fact: The consultation is not a vote or referendum. In the next stage of the plan preparation, the council will need to marry up as best it can our residents' visions for their area and views on how the borough should grow over the next 15 years to meet the Government's requirements for the Local Plan.

Myth: Our views won't be listened to

Fact: We take all peoples views into account. Responding to your comments and feedback has enabled us to look at our options again and add to them.

Further myth busters and Frequently asked Questions can be found on our website at elmbridge.gov.uk/localplan