# Shaping Elmbridge A New Local Plan







Green Belt Boundary Review – Assessment of Previously Developed Land
June 2019



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### 1. Introduction

#### **Purpose**

- 1.1 As part of the preparation of a new Local Plan, one of the key considerations for the Council and its communities is how much growth and new development can be delivered within the Borough whilst, balancing a number of economic; social; and environmental factors. This assessment has been undertaken as part of the Local Plan evidence base to inform the production of the new Elmbridge Local Plan.
- 1.2 This assessment forms part of the Local Plan evidence base, a suite of documents that together, will inform the spatial strategy for the Borough. It is a companion document to the Borough-wide Green Belt Boundary Reviews (GBBRs). These were carried out for the Council by Ove Arup and Partners Limited (ARUP) in March 2016 and December 2018.
- 1.3 The purpose of this study is to provide an assessment of the amount of Previously Developed Land (PDL) within specific Green Belt areas. It forms part of a wider series of assessments and technical studies which together will assist in providing an indication of how weakly performing Local Areas (including the Key Strategic Areas¹) and all Sub Division Areas, as identified by the Green Belt Boundary Reviews, perform in terms of meeting identified requirements for sustainable development including, meeting Green Belt purposes.

#### Scope

- 1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 promotes sustainable patterns of development, directing development to our existing built-up areas and on previously developed (PDL) (brownfield) land. It also states that where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and / or is well-served by public transport (NPPF paragraph 137).
- 1.5 It should be noted that the Council has not concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt Land or whether there are the exceptional circumstances to justify amendments to the existing Green Belt boundaries.
- 1.6 This study identifies PDL, as defined by the NPPF, within the Green Belt in each of the weakly performing Local Areas, including the three Key Strategic Areas (KSA), and all the Sub Areas (SAs) identified through the GBBR 2016 and the GBBR Supplementary Work 2018 respectively.
- 1.7 The outputs from this assessment together with the series of GBBR documents will inform the identification of the Council's options and subsequent approach for the Local Plan and site selection. The series of GBBR documents includes a review of weakly performing Local Areas of Green Belt, an assessment of accessibility and minor amendments. A Green Belt Boundary Review Overview Paper will bring together the outputs and key findings from this series of assessments.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 1}$  As identified in the Elmbridge Local Plan: Strategic Options Consultation 2016 <u>http://consult.elmbridge.gov.uk/consult.ti/lpsoc/consultationHome</u>

**1.8** The assessment was undertaken in Summer 2018

#### **Background**

- 1.9 The outputs of the Green Belt Boundary Review 2016 along with other evidence base document undertaken at the time, informed the publication of the Local Plan Strategic Option Consultation (Regulation 18) 2016. This identified the Council's former preferred approach to meeting its development needs, including the identification of three Key Strategic Areas within the Green Belt which were weakly performing, where the designation could be removed, subject to exceptional circumstances being demonstrated.
- **1.10** At this stage, the Council had focused on identifying a strategic response to meeting housing need and stated that it needed to decide its approach to the remaining weakly performing Local Areas.
- 1.11 In light of the consultation responses received from the Strategic Options Consultation 2016, changes in national planning policy and guidance and the findings from additional technical work the Council decided to review and re-evaluation its initial consultations in relation to the options of how housing need could be met.
- 1.12 Specifically, during the Strategic Options Consultation 2016 a number of representations commented that the Key Strategic Areas were too large, and that further work should be undertaken to identify small areas of Green Belt land that may be suitable for release. This work has now been undertaken as part of the Green Belt Boundary Review Sub-Divisions Report (2018).
- **1.13** The outputs of this assessment in conjunction with the evidence base documents undertaken to date, the ongoing Sustainability Appraisal and consultation responses will inform the identification of the Council's options and subsequent approach for the Local Plan and site selection.

# 2. Key National Policies

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 reinforces the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of homes in England. The NPPF requires that, as a minimum, Local Plans should provide for an area's housing and other development needs, as well as any that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development.
- 2.2 The NPPF sets out the overarching national policy for local plan making in England. It sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and in paragraph 11 states that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs unless any adverse impacts of doing so outweigh the benefits or where the NPPF indicates development should be restricted.
- 2.3 Local Plans should seek to significantly boost the supply of housing (paragraph 47) and plan for a mix of housing (paragraph 59). Paragraph 16(a) of the NPPF states that Local Plans should "be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable". Local Plans should allocate sites to promote development bringing new land forward where necessary for the flexible use land.
- 2.4 National planning policy takes a view that development should not be built on the Green Belt unless in "very special circumstances". As stated in paragraph 145 "a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt".
- 2.5 Therefore, it is defined in Chapter 11 (Making effective use of land) in paragraph 117 that planning policies and decisions should "promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and safe and healthy living conditions". The NPPFs focus of making effective use of the land is targeted on previously developed or 'brownfield' land.
- 2.6 Paragraphs 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138 and 139 of the NPPF set out the policies which must to be taken into consideration if a Local Planning Authority needs to amend or review their Green Belt boundaries. Paragraph 136 makes clear that boundaries can only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan, whilst paragraph 138 sets out the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.
- 2.7 In paragraph 144 the NPPF refers to the consideration that should be given in planning applications. Substantial weight must be ensured when there is any harm given to the Green Belt. In addition, "very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations". National planning policy considers the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt; exceptions to this are set out in paragraph 145.

#### 2.8 Paragraph 145 states that:

"A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
  - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
  - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority."
- 2.9 This assessment forms part of a wider assessment and technical studies which together will provide an indication of how the weakly performing Local Areas (including the Key Strategic Areas) and all the Sub Division Areas perform in terms of meeting identified requirements for sustainable development including meeting Green Belt purposes.

### 3. Approach

#### Introduction

- 3.1 The Green Belt Boundary Review 2016 (GBBR 2016) and the Green Belt Boundary Review- Supplementary Work (GBBR 2018) considered how the Green Belt performs against the relevant purposes set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This included consideration of purposes that Green Belt serve:
  - a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.2 As set out in the GBBR 2016 (section 4.4.3), Purpose 3 seeks to safeguard the countryside from encroachment, or a gradual advancement of urbanising influences through physical development or land use change. The assessment considered openness and the extent to which the Green Belt can be characterised as 'countryside', resisting encroachment from development. Within the GBBR, openness was referred to as the extent to which Green Belt land could be considered 'open' meaning an absence of 'built development'. This is different to a landscape character perspective, where openness might be characterised through topography.
- 3.3 The GBBR 2016 and 2018 considered the percentage of built form within a Green Belt Local and Sub Area using GIS tools based on the land area of features that are classified as manmade (constructed) within the Ordnance Survey MasterMap data, excluding road and railway lines. The data included buildings (of all uses), some surfaced areas such as car parks, infrastructure such as sewerage treatment works, glasshouses and other miscellaneous structures.
- 3.4 This approach is considered sound for the purposes of assessing Green Belt performance in relation to openness. However, it does not align with the definition of Previously Developed Land (PDL) as defined in national planning policy. The definition of PDL as set out within the NPPF also considers the use of the buildings, for example it explicitly excludes agricultural or forestry building.
- 3.5 This study seeks to identify the extent of PDL (as defined in the NPPF) on the weakly performing Local Areas (LAs), including Key Strategic Areas (KSA), and all the Sub Areas (SAs) as identified in the Green Belt Boundary Review work in 2016 & 2018.

#### What is Previously Developed Land?

3.6 For the purposes of this study, PDL is as defined in the NPPF (2019), as:

"Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been

- developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape".
- 3.7 The Court of Appeal decision of Dartford Borough Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor [2017] EWCA Civ 141 found that the term 'previously developed land' as defined by the glossary forming part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 does include private residential gardens in an area that is not built-up. As such the definition specifically excludes private residential gardens in a built-up area. This has been taken into account in this study, but it should be noted that ARUP, within the GBBR 2016 and 2018 assessments, did not include residential gardens in the manmade areas data.

#### Methodology

- 3.8 Using Ordnance Survey MasterMap data, officer knowledge and planning history of sites this study assesses the extent of previously developed land (PDL) (as defined in the NPPF) on the weakly performing Local Areas (LAs), including Key Strategic Areas (KSA), and all of the Sub-Divisions Areas (SA) as identified in the GBBR 2016 & 2018.
- 3.9 This assessment seeks to identify the PDL areas of Green Belt sites within the Borough that could have potential development opportunities. This would be subject to demonstrating that that Very Special Circumstances exist that clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm or would not be inappropriate as it meets the exceptions set out in paragraph 145 of the NPPF.
- 3.10 The size, nature and scale of operation of the site is a key consideration as well as its current and future contribution to the Borough. The site's potential and availability for redevelopment (in whole or part) will need to be considered. This assessment does not seek to demonstrate that development would meet exception provisions, nor does it provide a case for Very Special Circumstances, it seeks solely to identify potential locations.

#### Limitations

- **3.11** The study does not assess each area for its future development potential but rather, provides a broad overview of the extent of PDL that exists in each area. Whether an area has the potential to be developed and, if so, the area's capacity will be determined through the combination of a number of evidence base documents brought together to inform the Council of a preferred approach for the Local Plan and sites.
- 3.12 The assessment was undertaken in Summer 2018 and the Ordnance Survey aerial photograph 2012 and from 2013-15 were used to undertake the assessment.

### 4. Assessment

4.1 Maps identifying the areas assessed with and without previously developed land are set out in Appendix 1.

# Previously Developed Land in Weakly Performing Local Areas Table 1: Previously Developed Land in Weakly Performing Local Areas

Local Area Ref	Parcel area (ha)	PDL on site (Y/N)	Commentary on existing land uses
LA18	4.5	Yes	There are two residential properties with large plots on the western edge with access points to both properties on the A3 / A245 roundabout junction. One of these properties appears to have been vacant for some time. In the south-east corner of the parcel there is a third residential house. Convent Lane passes through the Local Area, parallel to the parcels east edge, providing access to Notre Dame School and Walton Firs Activity Centre (the school and activity centre not within the Local Area). 2.5ha or approximately half of the Local Area has been developed.
LA36	13.5	Yes	The parcel is characterised by a narrow strip of dense woodland parallel to the Seven Hills and Queens Roads. Approximately 10% of the Local Area is covered by development, mostly to the north of the parcel, from Burview Hall, Walton Leigh School and the private residential development at former Ellesmere Hospital (Ellesmere Place).
LA37	17.6	No	Almost the entire parcel is undeveloped, but the trees and woodland which line the eastern edge of the Seven Hills and Queens Roads are fragmented, severed by access roads, cars parks and other dispersed structures. The parcel also cuts across the rear gardens of 25 properties on Ince Road.
LA50	9.9	Yes	There are two small clusters of residential developments / apartment blocks located within the northern section (Whittets Ait). These are accompanied by car parking, road access arrangements and managed open space. The land to the south of the Local Area (Bull Dogs (Island)) is semi-rural in nature, comprising a large area of managed open space with dense trees located on the edges. Only one small building is located to the south of the Local Area.
LA51	4.1	Yes	Most of the Local Area is a publicly-owned (either by Elmbridge or Surrey County Council) green space with a variety of recreational uses including allotments, children's play space, a bowling green, football pitches, tennis courts, a paddling pool and a pavilion. The south-western corner of the Local Area is woodland.
LA53	11	Yes	The majority of the parcel forms the grounds of the Oatlands Park Hotel, most of which has been landscaped and utilised as a small golf, tennis courts, and croquet lawn course for hotel guests. The playing field for St James School and Broadwater Cottage also form part of the Local Area; both are in the northwest corner of the parcel.

Local Area Ref	Parcel area (ha)	PDL on site (Y/N)	Commentary on existing land uses
LA70	19.2	Yes	Only 18% of the Local Area is covered by built form, however most of the parcel is comprised of sports training pitches in connection with the Imber Court Sports Club. The training pitches include cricket pitches, football pitches, tennis courts, a bowling green and an archery range. The north end of the parcel is used as an equestrian parade ground. The south-west corner of the parcel contains agricultural uses and Emberside recreation ground.
LA71	7.5	Yes	The Local Area covers principally the riverside path and rear gardens of properties that back onto the path but also contains two open green spaces: Felix Road Recreation Ground and Riverhouse Gardens. Publicly-owned, publicly accessible open green space between the riverside path and Hillrise residential apartments is also within the Local Area. There are no buildings within the parcel and so just 11% of the parcel is comprised of built form from other structures.
LA77	3.1	Yes	The Local Area is Spencer Park, a small landscaped private park for the enjoyment of the residents living in Spencer Park House. The house is the only building within the parcel (at its centre) and contains multiple flats / apartments. The total 13.5% of built form covering the parcel is because of the house.

# Previously Developed Land in Key Strategic Areas Table 1: Previously Developed Land in Key Strategic Areas

Local Area Ref	Parcel area (ha)	PDL on site (Y/N)	Commentary on existing land uses
LA14	65.1	Yes	Residential, Scout camp
LA20	61.5	Yes	Agricultural, Public House, shooting range, wildlife area
LA58	61.3	Yes	Hockey club, cricket club, cemetery, allotments, wildlife area, garden centre, agricultural use, Buddhist Temple, SEN school

# Previously Developed Land in Sub Division Areas Table 2: Previously Developed Land in Sub Division Areas

Sub- Area Ref	Local Area Ref	Parcel area (ha)	PDL on site (Y/N)	Commentary on existing land uses
SA-1	7	45.80	Yes	Chelsea FC training ground
SA-2	7	20.48	No	Agricultural
SA-3	7	91.76	Yes	Agricultural, livery stables, garden centre, residential properties
SA-4	7	4.78	Yes	Agricultural, 1 residential property
SA-5	7	50.34	Yes	Agricultural, residential properties
SA-6	9	4.77	Yes	Railway station
SA-7	10	24.54	Yes	Agricultural, residential properties, cemetery
SA-8	10	27.5	No	Agricultural / woodland

Sub-	Local	Parcel	PDL	Commentary on existing land uses
Area	Area	area	on site	, c
Ref	Ref	(ha)	(Y/N)	
		()	( - / /	
SA-9	10	1.18	No	Paddock field
SA-10	10	5.68	Yes	Garden Centre
SA-11	10	14.72	No	Green field open land
SA-12	11	5.26	Yes	Car park and meadows
SA-13	11	7.89	Yes	Football pitch, sports field, allotments, skate park
SA-14	11	6.21	No	Green field open land
SA-15	11	10.96	Yes	Education
SA-16	12	5.89	No	Green field open land with possible agriculture
SA-17	12	5.48	No	Greenfield Open land
SA-18	27	26.73	Yes	Agricultural (including farm house)
SA-20	25	35.68	Yes	Race track, hotel, museum, dirt track
SA-21	22	3.98	No	Woodland
SA-22	31	26.93	No	Agricultural
SA-23	32	11.66	No	Agricultural
SA-24 SA-25	32 33	14.50 1.62	No No	Agricultural
SA-25 SA-27	33	17.78	No	Green field open land Agricultural
SA-27	22	1.42	Yes	Garden centre
SA-20	32	9.07	Yes	Agricultural, residential properties
SA-30	21	59.36	Yes	Cemetery, golf course, garden centre, residential
0/100		00.00	103	property
SA-31	22	4.58	Yes	Residential
SA-32	32	2.20	Yes	Agricultural and residential properties
SA-33	31	22.88	No	Agricultural
SA-34	21	14.46	No	Green field open land
SA-34	34	0.50	No	Green field open land
SA-36	28	8.79	Yes	C2 care home and wooded green field
SA-37	21	8.45	Yes	Dog kennels and greenfield open land
SA-38	21	17.41	Yes	Agricultural, soft play centre
SA-39	34	1.51	No	Green field open land
SA-40	21	3.76	Yes	Allotments; community centre
SA-41	31	6.27	Yes	Agricultural (including buildings and farm house)
SA-42	31	13.24	Yes	Agricultural; residential properties
SA-43 SA-44	21 34	4.47 5.01	Yes No	Garden Centre Agricultural
SA-44 SA-45	21	1.40	No	Agricultural Agricultural storage
SA-45 SA-46	34	5.08	No	Agricultural Storage
SA-40	21	4.05	Yes	Part educational and part caravan site
				·
SA-48 SA-49	34 34	4.78 3.10	No Yes	Agricultural Agricultural (including buildings and farm house)
SA-49 SA-50	23	13.99	Yes	Golf Club, retirement home, residential properties
SA-51	34	3.75	Yes	Agricultural (including buildings and farm house)
SA-52	23	10.33	No	Agriculture, allotments, rear gardens of residential properties, recreation
SA-53	34	3.79	No	Agricultural
SA-54	23	10.11	Yes	Residential properties and care home
SA-55	34	5.99	Yes	Wingham Court care home and green field open land
SA-56	34	4.05	Yes	Agriculture and Agricultural buildings, farm house and allotments
SA-57	34	19.69	Yes	Woodland, scout centre and agriculture

Sub-	Local	Parcel	PDL	Commentary on existing land uses
Area	Area	area	on site	
Ref	Ref	(ha)	(Y/N)	
SA-58	34	2.36	No	Agriculture
SA-59	45	2.38	Yes	Former corporate head office (vacant) and associated golf course, pool and bowling green
SA-60	45	9.64	Yes	Agricultural buildings and stables
SA-61	34	2.46	Yes	Tennis courts, hockey pitches, netball court
SA-62	34	3.82	Yes	High school playing fields and pavilion
SA-63	45	3.59	Yes	Rugby pitch and pavilion, 2 residential properties
SA-64	45	2.99	No	Green field open land
SA-65	34	1.77	No	Green field open land
SA-66	48	2.81	No	Woodland (associated with golf course)
SA-67	34	3.89	Yes	Residential
SA-68	59a	10.539	Yes	Recycling and Refuse
SA-69	52	0.48	No	Recreation/Leisure
SA-70	52	2.26	Yes	Green field open land and residential properties
SA-71	62	2.22	No	Green field open land
SA-72	59a	54.60	Yes	Residential properties, agriculture, lake
SA-73	59b	5.21	Yes	Esher Rugby Club
SA-74	62	8.09	Yes	Education
SA-75	62	4.62	Yes	Recreation/Leisure, Green field open land, car parking
SA-76	62	4.22	Yes	Breaker's yard, Green field open land
SA-77	59b	4.78	No	Sports pitches
SA-78	66	16.71	Yes	Woodland, open space, sports pitches
SA-79	59b	2.57	No	Green field open land
SA-80	62	24.07	Yes	Green field open land, 1 residential property
SA-81	62	14.68	Yes	Water treatment works
SA-82	69	3.78	No	Green field open land
SA-83	59a	8.44	Yes	Green field open land
SA-84	59a	2.65	No	Recreation ground / equestrian paddocks
SA-85	75a	9.52	Yes	Allotments / equestrian paddocks/ farm house and buildings
SA-86	72a	8.37	Yes	Sports pitches, woodland
SA-87	69	6.22	Yes	Green field open land, woodland and 1 residential property
SA-88	72a	5.87	No	Green field open land
SA-89	75a	9.97	Yes	Agricultural; equestrian; residential
SA-90	75a	7.75	Yes	Waste treatment works
SA-91	72a	5.35	Yes	Recreation/Leisure, woodland
SA-92	75a	19.70	Yes	Sports hub
SA-93	75a	8.68	Yes	Residential (under construction)
SA-94	69	1.32	Yes	Green field open land / reservoir infrastructure

## 5. Conclusions and next steps

- 5.1 This study has assessed the extent of Previously Developed Land (PDL) (as defined in the NPPF) on the weakly performing Local Areas (LAs), including Key Strategic Areas (KSA), and all of the Sub Areas (SA) as identified in the Green Belt Boundary Reviews 2016 & 2018.
- 5.2 The study found that approximately 70 of the areas examined are considered to have an element of PDL, including all 3 Key Strategic Areas, 7 of the Local Areas, and 58 of the sub-areas. The outputs of this study, together with the series of Green Belt Boundary Review documents, will inform the identification of the Council's preferred approach for the Local Plan and site selection. This includes an assessment of accessibility as well as minor boundary amendments.
- 5.3 Should the Council seek to pursue an approach for the Local Plan which includes Green Belt release, further work should determine whether they are exceptional circumstances to justify amendments to the Green Belt and the release of each individual locations. This work will be produced alongside a detailed assessment of the availability and deliverability of the developable areas of each Local Area or Sub-area.

# Appendix 1- Areas Assessed

















