
Shaping Elmbridge A New Local Plan



Density Study

Elmbridge Local Plan Evidence Base

July 2019



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



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Introduction

The purpose of the Density Study

- 1.1 The purpose of the density study is to provide the Council with an assessment of existing dwelling densities across the Borough using the character sub-areas created for the Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted by the Council in 2012. It will provide evidence to assist in identifying where and how it may be appropriate to optimise density and help meet the Council's objectively assessed needs for housing and other development¹ in the urban area.
- 1.2 As well as helping with the determination of planning applications, the evidence gained from the study will also assist in the formulation of a new Local Plan policy on density. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of new homes stating that plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identify need for housing as possible. This study will present evidence to help the Council achieve this.

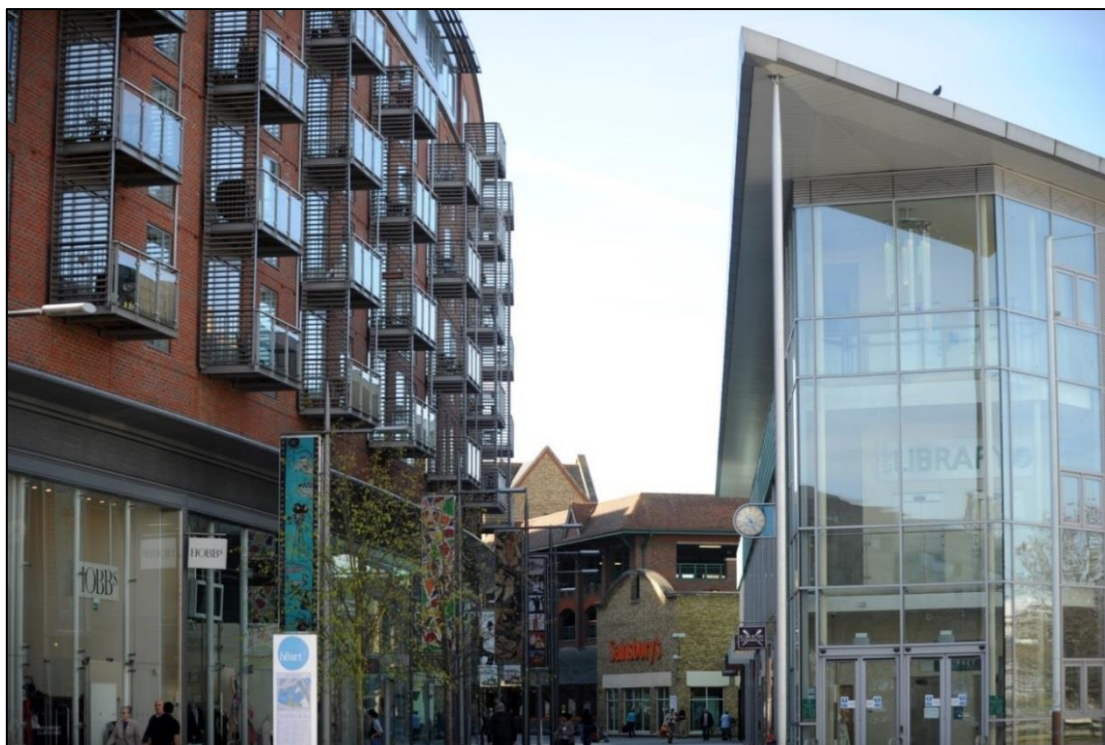


Figure 1: The Heart, Walton-on-Thames

¹ The NPPF requires local authorities to provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other development. This will include market and affordable housing identified through the preparation of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which looks at inward and outward migration, population increases, household growth and market signals.

What is density?

- 1.3 Residential density is used to measure the intensity of development within a given area. There are two types of density; gross density and net density. Gross density is the number of dwellings per hectare of a given area, including public infrastructure such as roads, open space and in some instances non-residential development (e.g. schools and shops).
- 1.4 Net density measures the number of dwellings per hectare on land devoted solely to residential development. While it includes private driveways and private open space (rear and front gardens), it does not include public infrastructure. Net density is the most commonly used approach in relation to specific sites and planning applications. Net density is more appropriate in instances where there are clearly defined boundaries to a site and where the proposed use is residential.
- 1.5 The most appropriate measure for estimating gross/net residential density yield of existing or future housing is dwellings per hectare (dph). Gross/ net density and density per hectare are terms used throughout this study. The following density formula demonstrates how density per hectare is calculated:

$$\text{Number of units (dwellings)} \div \text{Area of the site/sub-area (hectares)} = \text{Density per hectare (dph)}$$

Figure 2: Density Formula

Background

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

- 1.6 The Government introduced the NPPF in 2012 and this provided Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) with the flexibility to 'set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances within the context of boosting the supply of housing and the presumption in favour of sustainable development². It stated that it is proper for planning policies and decisions to 'seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness'³.
- 1.7 The approach outlined in the NPPF provided the opportunity to consider local factors such as the character and the history of a place. This enabled the Council to look at introducing a locally distinctive policy approach to address the issue of residential dwelling density. The NPPF attached great importance to the design of the built environment, noting that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Revised NPPF, 2019

- 1.8 The Government, in its revised NPPF 2019 has reinforced its objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes in England. It has a much greater emphasis upon achieving higher densities from new housing developments, with Chapter 11 focusing on making effective use of land. It is much more direct than the previous 2012 NPPF and states at paragraph 123 that;
- 'Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site.'
- 1.9 Like the previous NPPF, it does state that LPAs should take in account the 'desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character' and highlights 'the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places'⁴. However, unlike the previous NPPF which talked about flexibility when setting out approach to housing density, the new NPPF states that the use of minimum density standards for town centres and other locations that are well serviced by public transport should be used. It also states very clearly that;
- 'local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework.'

² Bullet 5, Paragraph 47, NPPF, 2012

³ Paragraph 60, NPPF, 2012

⁴ Paragraph 122, NPPF 2018

The Housing White Paper, 2017

1.10 Before the publication of the revised NPPF, the Department for Communities and Local Government published the housing white paper 'Fixing our broken housing market'. Later that year, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published a consultation titled 'Planning for the right homes in the right places'. Both these papers contain clear measures to boost housing supply in England.

1.11 The housing white paper was published on 7 February 2017 and sets out a number of proposals that the Government believes will support LPAs and developers to deliver more land for housing and ensure development on this land comes forward more quickly and efficiently. It provides further detail on density and calls for local authorities and applicants to be ambitious about what sites can offer, especially in areas where demand is high, and land is scarce⁵.



Figure 3: Housing White Paper 2017

1.12 To help ensure that effective use is made of land, the Government proposed to amend the NPPF to make it clear that plans and individual development proposal should:

- Make efficient use of land and avoid building homes at low densities.
- Address the particular scope for higher density housing in urban locations.
- Ensure that the density and form of development reflect the character, accessibility and infrastructure capacity of an area.
- Take a flexible approach in adopting and applying guidance that could inhibit these objectives.

1.13 The Government also considers that indicative standards for particular types of location could be helpful in driving the right level of ambition in areas of high demand, and where it is reasonable to expect densities to be relatively high (such as in and around town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport).

1.14 These proposals have been included in paragraph 122 of the revised NPPF.

Planning for the right homes in the right places

1.15 On 14 September 2017, the Government released a further consultation titled 'Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals', which set out a number of proposals to reform the planning system to increase the supply of new homes and increase local authority capacity to manage growth.

⁵ Chapter 1 and Consultation Questions 13 and 14, Housing White Paper 2017

1.16 Proposals included:

- a standard method for calculating local authorities' housing need
- how neighbourhood planning groups can have greater certainty on the level of housing need to plan for
- a statement of common ground to improve how local authorities work together to meet housing and other needs across boundaries
- making the use of viability assessments simpler, quicker and more transparent
- increased planning application fees in those areas where local planning authorities are delivering the homes their communities need.

1.17 The proposed standard methodology increased Elmbridge objectively assessed housing need from 474 to 612 dwellings per year. This method was based on a demographic baseline, which was then modified to account for market signals. To ensure the method is deliverable for those authorities with high house prices, a 40% cap was then applied.

Local Plan Policy in Elmbridge

1.18 The Core Strategy was adopted on 20 July 2011 and includes a policy on Local Character, Density and Design (CS17):

CS17 – Local Character Density and Design - Development Density:

“In order to promote the use of urban land, and to protect the Borough’s green spaces the Council will promote well design, high quality and sustainable developments which contribute to the achievement of an overall housing density target of 40 dwellings per hectare. Other than in the St George’s Hill Estate, Burwood Park and the Crown Estate, Oxshott a minimum density of 30 dph will be required. Developments within town centre should exceed 40 dph. Specific criteria to promote higher densities within each of the town centres will be identified in the Design and Character SPD.”

“In exception circumstances, where overriding harm of the valued character of area would occur as a result of the application of the minimum density threshold, development at a lower density, which maximises the efficient use of land, may be acceptable.”

1.19 This policy seeks a minimum density in the Borough’s suburban areas of 30dph and 40dph in the town centres which was in compliance with the previous Government’s Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing. A year later the Government introduced the NPPF. As detailed in paragraph 2.1 above this provided LPAs with the flexibility to set out their own approach to housing density and it was considered that this local policy was in line with National policy.

1.20 It also stated that LPAs should ‘use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing [...] as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this framework’. In October 2014, a decision was taken by the Council to stop

preparation of its site allocation document (known as Settlement Investment and Development Plans) and commence a review of the evidence base supporting the housing targets set within the Core Strategy. This decision was made on the basis that a number of similar plans were being challenged at examination as they sought to deliver housing targets in their Core Strategies that were adopted prior to the NPPF and were formed on the basis of an evidence base prepared prior to March 2012.

1.21 As a result, the Council wrote and commissioned various evidence base documents including a Green Belt Boundary Review, Land Availability Assessment and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The SHMA presented an Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) figure for the Borough and allowed work to progress on developing Strategic Options for the New Elmbridge Local Plan.

1.22 From 16 December 2016 until 24 February 2017, the Council undertook a 10 week public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulation 2012. The purpose of the consultation was to seek views on the options for meeting development needs as part of the preparation of a new Local Plan to replace the Core Strategy. The preferred option proposed by the Council included meeting development needs as far as possible within the existing urban area as well as amending Green Belt boundaries in three 'Key Strategic Areas'. The benefits of this approach would be that this option would increase the delivery of affordable housing and smaller units compared to the previous Core Strategy. The Council had to consider whether there were any exceptional circumstances for amending the Green Belt. These were the exceptional circumstances put forward in the consultation document:

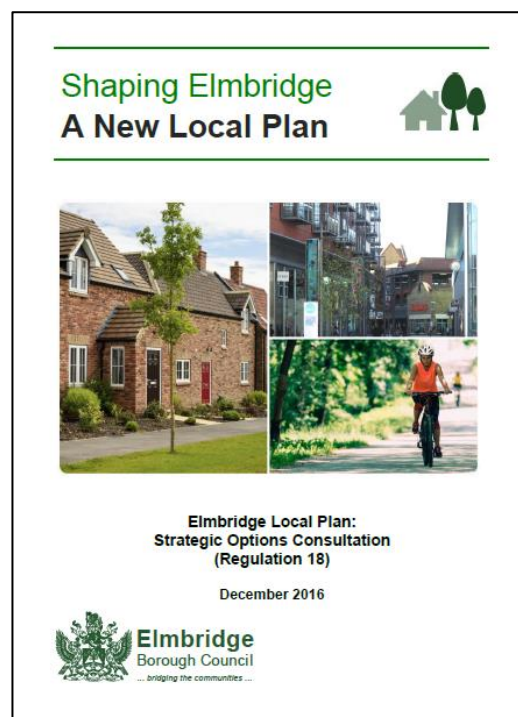


Figure 4: Strategic Options Consultation

- Elmbridge has one of the worst levels of affordability in the country coupled with an under supply of affordable homes;
- Need to deliver a better mix of new housing away from current delivery focussed on houses of four or more bedrooms; and
- The land that is being kept open for the purposes of Green Belt is no longer meeting those purposes.

1.23 Whilst consulting on the Strategic Options, the Government published its Housing White Paper and reinstated its position on Green Belt policy confirming that boundaries can only be amended through the preparation of a Local Plan and that this can only be done in exceptional circumstances. The White Paper proposes to amend national policy to make it clear that LPAs

should amend Green Belt boundaries only when they can clearly demonstrate that they have examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting their identified development requirements. This includes:

- Making effective use of suitable brownfield sites;
- The potential offered by land which is currently underused;
- Optimising the proposed density of development land; and
- Exploring whether other authorities can help to meet some of the identified housing requirement.

1.24 The Housing white paper also stated that the Government will consult on options for introducing a standardised approach to assessing housing requirements. This proposed standard methodology was then published in the 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' consultation. The 29% increase in housing numbers per year has resulted in further work on the Local Plan. This delay has enabled the Council to complete the evidence required to thoroughly explore the four bullet points set out above. This density study specifically deals with bullet point three above.

Strategic Options Consultation: densities

1.25 As well as seeking views on the strategic options for meeting development needs, the consultation also presented questions on a range of issues which will help the development of a new Local Plan. One of these topics was the issue of densities and this also related specifically to the preferred option. The number of new homes that could be developed under the preferred option would depend on densities at which development is delivered. Higher densities of housing would enable the Council to do more in meeting housing needs identified for the Borough.

1.26 The consultation asked people their views on the potential of delivering higher density development in appropriate locations, and where this does not impact negatively on local character. The following text box sets out the three consultation questions on density:

Questions

Given the need for both market and affordable housing:

11. Should we seek to increase minimum densities at sustainable locations in urban areas, such as in town centres and at train stations, above 40 dwellings per hectare, where this would not impact on local character? If yes, what density do you think would be appropriate?

12. Within the three key strategic areas, we will be exploring opportunities for accommodating our development needs taking into account site constraints, land ownership, compliance with other planning policies and the need to support sustainable development. If potential housing sites are identified within these areas, do you consider it appropriate to:

- a) deliver at higher densities i.e. above 40 dwellings per hectare, in order to maximise delivery?
- b) support lower density developments that maintain the open character of an area and reflects the surrounding character?

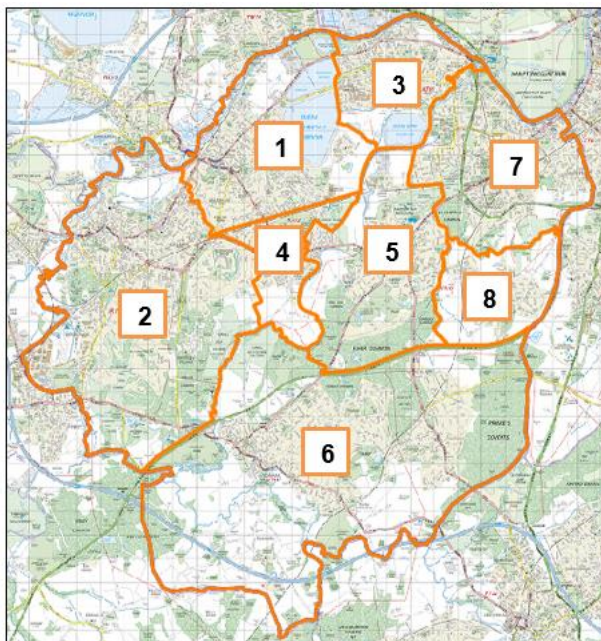
- 1.27 Question 11 is concerned with how the Council approaches density across Elmbridge generally and asks whether we should increase minimum densities at sustainable locations in the urban area, such as town centres and at train stations, above 40dph, where this would not impact on local character. This was a broad question to find out whether people supported this approach.
- 1.28 76% of respondents agreed with this but felt strongly that it must not impact on local character and the existing infrastructure must be able to accommodate this. They supported creative design and mixed development schemes above town centre car parks and shops as methods to successfully achieve high density development.
- 1.29 11% did not agree as they were against the notion of tall, high rise buildings and the overdevelopment that this would cause. They felt high density development would put greater strain on infrastructure and detrimentally impact on the character, social cohesion and sustainability of the Borough.
- 1.30 14% of respondents ticked the do not know option. Along with this 14%, many respondents across all the answers said that they had a lack of knowledge on the matter of density and that density depended on a range of factors. There were many respondents that felt density should be assessed on a case by case basis and not subject to minimum figures.
- 1.31 Despite a large percentage of people being in favour of high densities for question 11, the following questions (12a and 12b) related to the strategic areas and therefore many respondents who are fundamentally against these areas being developed for housing were not prepared to say yes, they would support higher densities at these areas. These respondents do not want housing on the areas at all, so understandably only 6% of respondents said that yes, they would support the delivery of higher densities i.e. above 40 dwellings per hectare, to maximise delivery within the three strategic areas. 88% of respondents did not agree with this and 7% did not know.
- 1.32 Interestingly, only 16% supported lower density development that maintains the open character of an area and reflects the surrounding character within the three key strategic areas. 78% respondents disagreed with this and 6% did not know.
- 1.33 The responses to the consultation indicates that the community are generally in favour of higher density developments but only in the existing urban settlements close to transport links and services, provided this does not impact on the character of the area and that the infrastructure is in place to support it. However, there is little support for higher density development in the key strategic areas as the community do not support amending Green Belt boundaries and developing these areas.

Methodology

Study Area

- 3.1 Overall, Elmbridge Borough Council has a population of 130,875 people residing in 52,922 households. On average 2.47 people live in each household. In Elmbridge 98.9% of people reside in a household and 1.1% lives in a communal establishment. The Borough covers an area of 9,506 hectares and therefore an average population density of 13.8 people per hectare⁶.
- 3.2 The study area that this document focuses upon encompasses the urban area of Elmbridge, with all undeveloped Green Belt land excluded from the assessment⁷. The Borough contains eight urban settlements as identified in the Core Strategy:

1. Walton-on-Thames	5. Esher
2. Weybridge	6. Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside
3. East and West Molesey	7. Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green
4. Hersham	8. Claygate



⁶ 2011 Census Key Statistics (Key demographics, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, health and carers).

⁷ Residential roads in the Green Belt have been included such as Blackhills in Esher and Whiteley Village in Hersham.

The character sub-areas

- 3.3 Each of the eight settlements of Elmbridge as shown on Map 1 was divided into character sub-areas as part of the Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted in 2012. This document was written in partnership with the local community, design consultants (Forum Heritage and Context 4D) and Elmbridge Borough Council. As well as providing design advice, the purpose of the SPD was to ensure there was an understanding of character at the start of the design process. Therefore, each settlement was divided by character sub-areas highlighting the distinct characteristics of areas across each settlement such as building types, use, scale, grain, tree cover and any heritage assets. The sub-areas were shaped using local information and knowledge obtained during a series of workshops and feedback sessions with local community representatives in 2011 and through detailed site visits carried out by the design consultants. There are 69-character sub-areas within the above eight settlements.
- 3.4 Even though the settlement areas have changed through the ward boundary review in 2016, these amendments have no impact on the character of the sub-areas. Therefore, the sub-areas have been presented in the original settlement for the purposes of this study.

Approaches and data sources

Data

- 3.5 To establish an accurate and up to date understanding of existing densities in the Borough, a desk top study was conducted using the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS). The Local Land and Property Gazetteer was used to gain postal addresses for all properties and council tax records highlighted all the residential properties in the Borough. The number of residential units in each sub-area was then divided by the sub-area size (in hectares) which provided the density of each sub-area, expressed as dwellings per hectare (dph). The data was extracted on the 26 May 2017.
- 3.6 By using the postal addresses and council tax records, every residential property in the Borough is included in the density calculation including flats, maisonettes, sub-divisions and apartments. A small percentage of properties maybe occupied by separate families without individual addresses such as bedsits or shared/ communal accommodation. As the census information highlights only 1.1% of the Borough's population are living in shared accommodation this should only have a very small impact on the overall findings.
- 3.7 Planning application records and monitoring data were also studied to gain an understanding of what densities have been permitted across the Borough. A baseline date of 20 July 2011 was used when sourcing the data as this was when the Core Strategy was adopted. All density figures are

shown at two decimal places for accuracy. Appeal decisions and accompanying documents were also studied where appropriate.

Presenting the data

- 3.8 Each assessment starts with a map of the relevant settlement area highlighting the sub-areas (by number) that are in the urban area of said settlement area. Urban green space is highlighted as well as open water, key gateways, local landmarks and Conservation Areas. Any surrounding green belt land is described as the landscape setting. This map helps to identify where the sub-areas are located.
- 3.9 Following on from the map, tables have been produced for each settlement area featuring all the sub-area numbers and names. Initially, gross density figures for residential properties located in the entire sub-area have been calculated. This was then undertaken a second time, but excluding large open spaces⁸, large civic or office buildings or commercial/ industrial areas over 1ha in size. Commentary then follows to discuss the figures in the table highlighting the sub-areas that have the highest and lowest gross densities in the settlement area and why this maybe the case. The section also discusses the other specified sites that have been excluded.
- 3.10 The next section focusses on the average approved densities and begins with a table which presents the average net densities that have been granted planning permission in the sub-area using the residential site area only. These are permissions granted under policies contained within the Core Strategy and hence run from its adoption date 20 July 2011 to the 20 July 2017⁹. Accompanying commentary then highlights any specific application that has a particularly high density. It also looks at why low densities have been permitted and patterns in development types and locations. Ultimately the discussion seeks to determine whether the sub-area is achieving the current Core Strategy policy target of a minimum of 30dph for suburban areas and 40dph in the town centre.
- 3.11 A brief explanation of the settlement and sub-areas characteristics from the site visits is then presented. This is concerned with heights, patterns and scale of development and provides information to what could be accommodated in each settlement. A section on the settlements and sub-areas sustainability in terms of transport links, healthcare provision, education facilities and employment opportunities then follow.
- 3.12 The final and concluding section of the assessment identifies where the opportunities lie for potentially higher density developments particularly using methods that do not impact on character such as using large detached buildings to house flats.

⁸ All green spaces featured in the Open Space and Recreation Assessment (2014) have been excluded

⁹ The data does not include any prior notification applications.

- 3.13 These assessments aim to provide a detailed view of each of the Borough's settlements in terms of its current density, average densities of planning permissions and whether the settlement could potentially accommodate higher density development without impacting on the character of the area. This provides crucial information to help assess whether densities can be optimised across the Borough within the urban areas.

Assessment Findings

4.1 This chapter presents the assessment findings. It is divided by the settlement areas and includes the Design and Character maps which show where the sub-areas are located.

Claygate

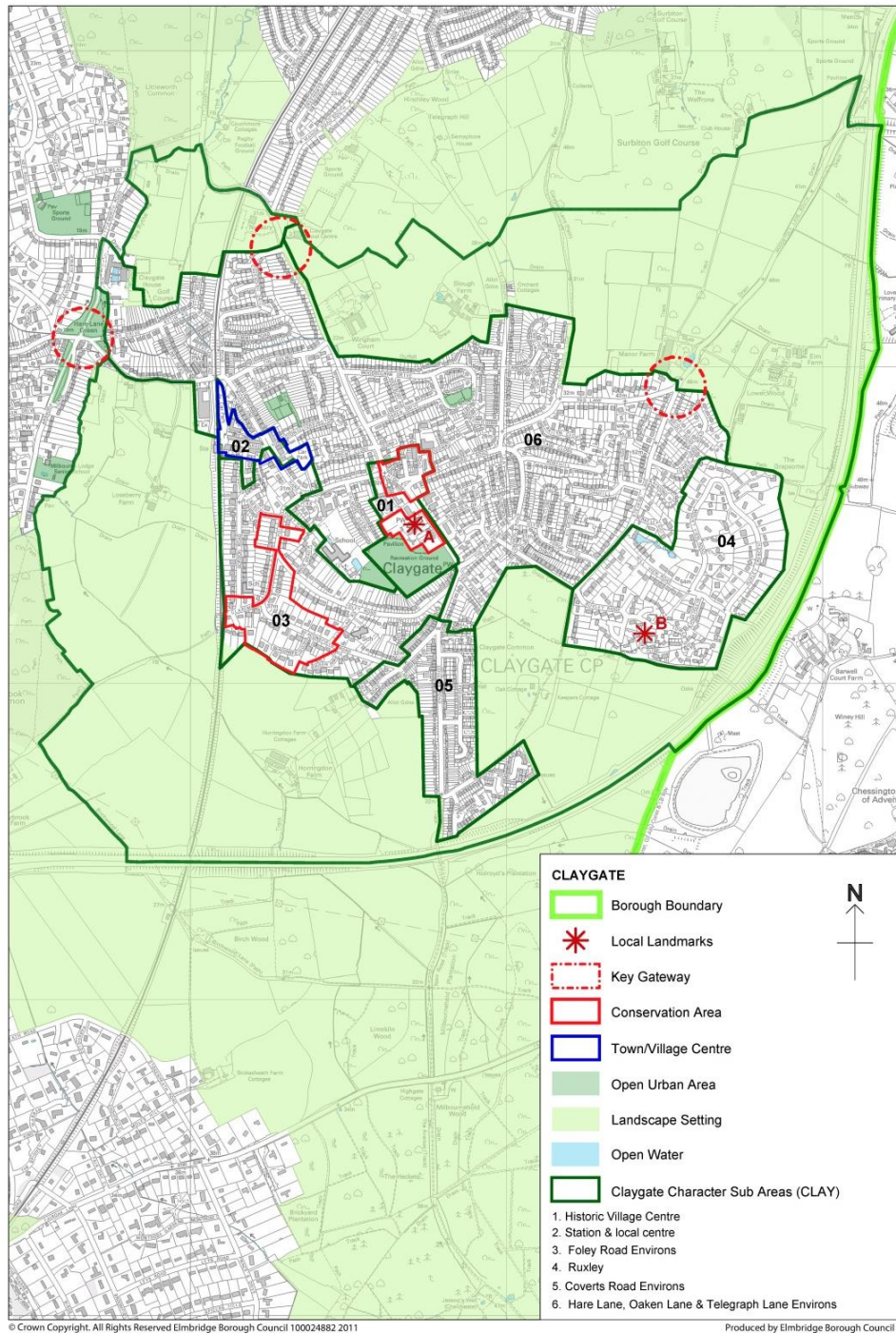


Table 1 – Claygate density figures: **Highest Density/** **Lowest Density**

Claygate						
Sub-area no.	Sub-area Name	No. of dwellings	Density of sub-area (Gross)		Density of sub-area excluding open green spaces and other specified areas (Gross)	
			Units	Area (Ha)	Dph	Area (Ha)
CLAY01	Historic Village Centre	87	8.02	10.85	3.96	21.9
CLAY02	Station & Local Centre	88	2.94	29.83	2.94	29.83
CLAY03	Foley Road Environs	323	28.57	11.3	28.54	11.32
CLAY04	Ruxley	201	28.77	6.99	28.52	7.05
CLAY05	Coverts Road Environs	422	15.30	27.57	15.05	27.96
CLAY06	Hare Lane, Oaken Land & Telegraph Land Environs	1726	106.86	16.15	102.34	16.86
Settlement Area Density		2847	190.46	14.94	181.35	15.69
Totals/averages						

Existing densities with Claygate

- 4.2 Densities are low across Claygate. No sub-area is above 30dph even when excluding open green spaces and other specified areas. The Station and Local Centre sub-area (CLAY02) is the closest to 30dph at 29.83 dph and this is likely to be due to the presence of flats above shops and commercial properties along Hare Lane. The Coverts Road Environs (CLAY05) is also close to 30dph at 27.96dph when excluding open spaces. As referenced in the Design and Character SPD, this sub-area has a higher residential density with a fine grain. The Ruxley sub-area (CLAY04) has the lowest density at 6.99dph and 7.05dph when excluding open spaces. This sub-area comprises the private estate of Ruxley Heights which contains large detached houses in large plots set back from the road.
- 4.3 In terms of other specified areas, Trinity Church and hall (covering 1ha) located in sub-area CLAY01 has been excluded. Additionally, Claygate House and grounds (1.5ha) and Claygate Primary School and fields (1.88ha) have also been excluded from sub-area CLAY06. However, the exclusion of these areas has made little difference to the low densities of this settlement.

Table 2 – Claygate density figures: **Highest Density**/ **Lowest Density**

Claygate Average Permitted Densities		
Sub-area no.	Sub-area Name	Average density permitted since July 2011 (Net density based on site area)
		DPH (number of applications)
CLAY01	Historic Village Centre	142.86 (1)
CLAY02	Station & Local Centre	175 (2)
CLAY03	Foley Road Environs	34.5 (2)
CLAY04	Ruxley	9.2 (7)
CLAY05	Converts Road Environs	48 (3)
CLAY06	Hare Lane, Oaken Land & Telegraph Land Environs	27.5 (6)

Existing densities with Claygate

4.4 There was one planning permission allowed in sub-area CLAY01, the historic village centre, between 20 July 2011 and 20 July 2017. This was for a change of use of the ground floor from A3 (café and restaurant) and various alterations to the building to create 4 flats (See figure 4 below). Due to the small site size and flatted scheme, this permitted a high density of 146.86dph for the development. Similar net densities are present within the village centre due to flats above shops.



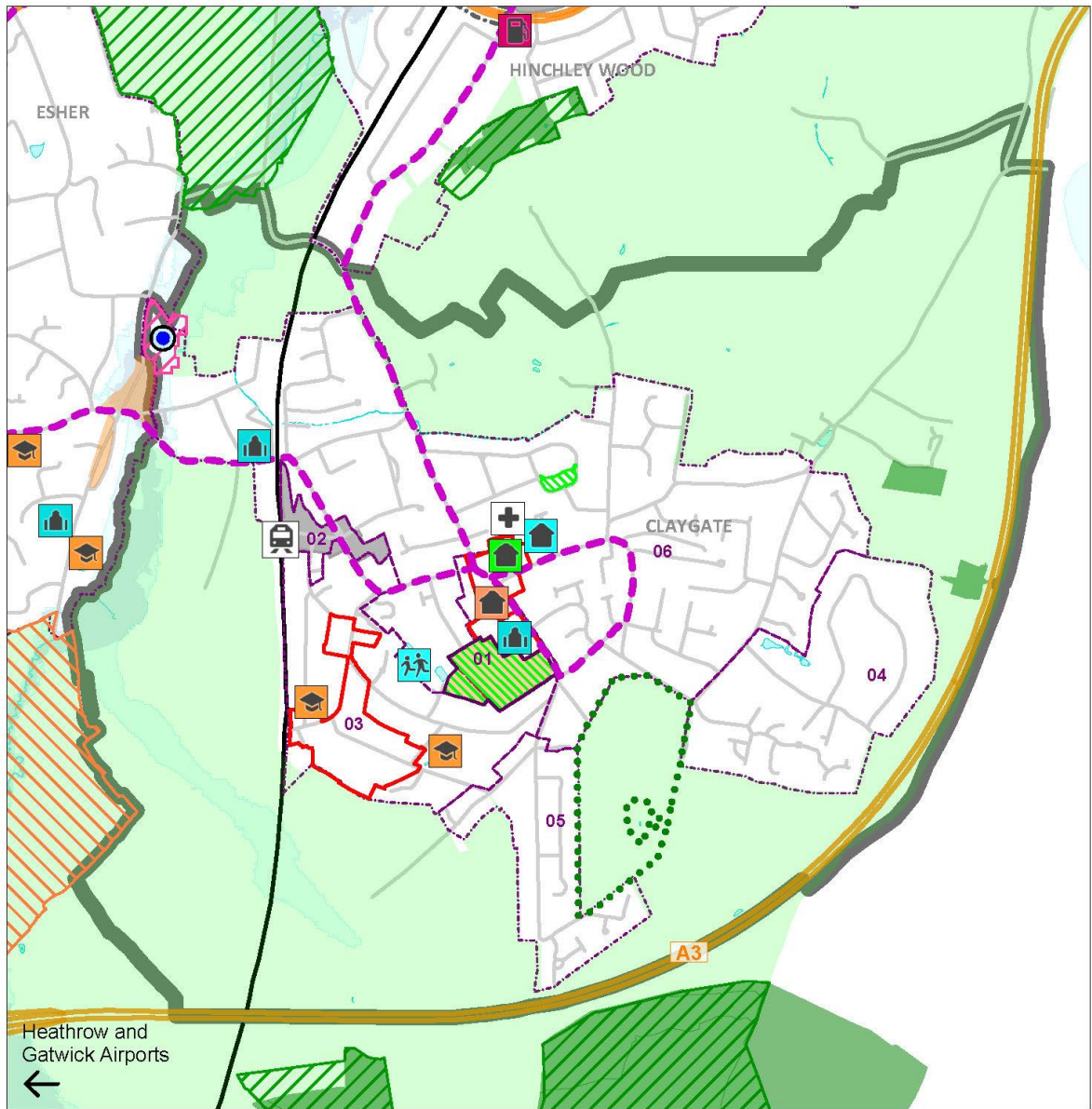
Figure 5: Amarilla House, High Street, Claygate, 142dph.

- 4.5 Two planning applications were approved in the Station and Local Centre sub-area (CLAY02). One was for the conversion of a former bank and extension to the three-storey building to provide nine flats, at 150dph. Another involved alterations and part conversion of a retail store to provide two flats on the parade. This resulted in a density of 200dph. These high-density developments are in character with the sub-area with many flats above offices on Hare Lane and above shops on the Parade. With a regular local bus, rail line into London and range of local shops makes this a sustainable location that can accommodate higher density housing. Although the densities of these developments are high, they represent a low volume of actual development.
- 4.6 Both sub-area CLAY01 and CLAY02 have permissions that are in line with the Core Strategy policy and have achieved a density of over 40dph in the town and village centres.
- 4.7 Converts Road Environs sub-area (CLAY05) also achieves a high density mainly due to a planning permission in the area granted at 100dph. The permission was for the creation of two flats following an extension to the former dwelling and demolition of a garage. The creation of two flats on such a small site area has increased the density significantly, but again, does not represent in of itself, a large quantum of development. Another permission in this sub-area achieved 40dph and this was to convert the existing detached dwelling into a pair of semi-detached houses. These applications achieved the Core Strategy target of 30dph for development in the suburban area.
- 4.8 The lowest average densities permitted are those planning approvals in sub-area CLAY04, Ruxley, as this is a low density private estate. Additional new dwellings have been granted but densities remain low in this part of Claygate to maintain the character of the area. Foley Road (CLAY03) has average densities permitted over 30dph in line with Core Strategy Policy CS17 (Local Character, Density and Design) but CLAY06 has a slightly lower 27.5dph for the six applications permitted.

- 4.9 Apart from two sub-areas (CLAY06 and 04), average planning permissions granted in Claygate exceed the minimum density of 30dph in the suburban area and 40dph in town and village centres in line with CS17. Despite the headline figure of high densities granted in some of the sub areas, it needs to be recognised that these applications do not contain a large quantity of units, and thus they will not have greatly impacted the character of the area overall. The high densities reported, reflect the density on an individual site, and not a wider area.

Site visit observation

- 4.10 There is no high-rise development in this settlement area and limited land in the urban area available for development. Claygate is mainly residential with suburban roads containing detached, semi-detached and terraced housing. There are very few flatted developments apart from the flats over shops in the Local Centre and over three storey commercial properties located in Hare Lane at the junction of the Local Centre.



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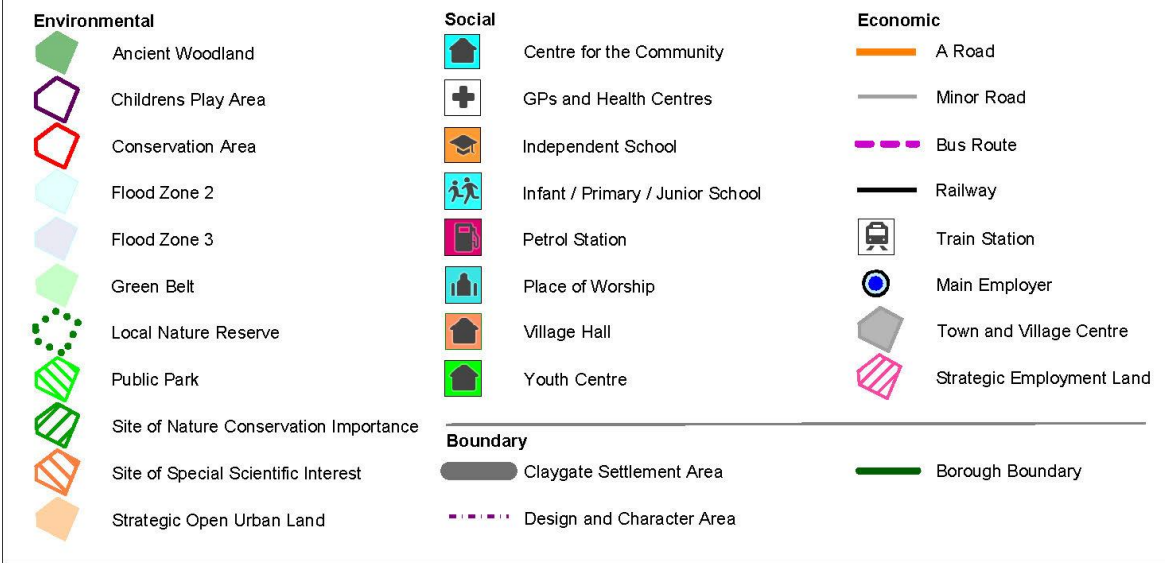


Figure 5. Policy layers for Claygate

Sustainability

- 4.11 Sub-area CLAY02 and parts of Sub-area CLAY01, 03 and 05 are considered highly sustainable. This is due to the train station (with rail services to London and Guildford) being in the centre of Claygate, which is in walking distance for many of the nearby residential roads. A bus route into Esher and Kingston travels through sub-areas CLAY 01, 02, 05 and 06 allowing people to access other services and a wider range of shops outside the settlement. Neighbouring the train station is the Local Centre which has a range of different shops and services allowing people to shop locally for day to day goods. As noted above, residents do have to travel outside Claygate for greater supermarket shopping choice and other major retail needs.
- 4.12 Sub-area CLAY01 contains the settlement's GP and day centre allowing people to access important health services. Claygate's recreation ground and primary school is also located centrally in sub-area CLAY01 and CLAY06 giving residents' easy access to education and leisure facilities. There is a small local economy in terms of the Local Centre and Dairy Crest (located in Claygate House) is the settlement's largest employer. Besides these, Claygate has limited business and commercial properties and hence there are few employment opportunities within the settlement.

Opportunities for higher densities

- 4.13 As identified when studying previous planning permissions, higher densities can be achieved in the Local Centre, around the station and in the local parade of the village centre. This is due to the conversions of offices and businesses above shops and the size of the site plot. As well as flatted development above shops and offices, there have also been many examples of existing dwellings being sub divided, rebuilt and/ or converted to allow extra dwellings to be built which does increase densities. Claygate has a low-rise character and so it is unlikely that high rise flatted development will be built. Instead, opportunities for higher densities could be achieved by the conversion or rebuild of single dwellings into flatted developments that appear to look like larger dwellings. This could work in the Ruxley area where densities are low due its spacious and low-rise character.

Esher

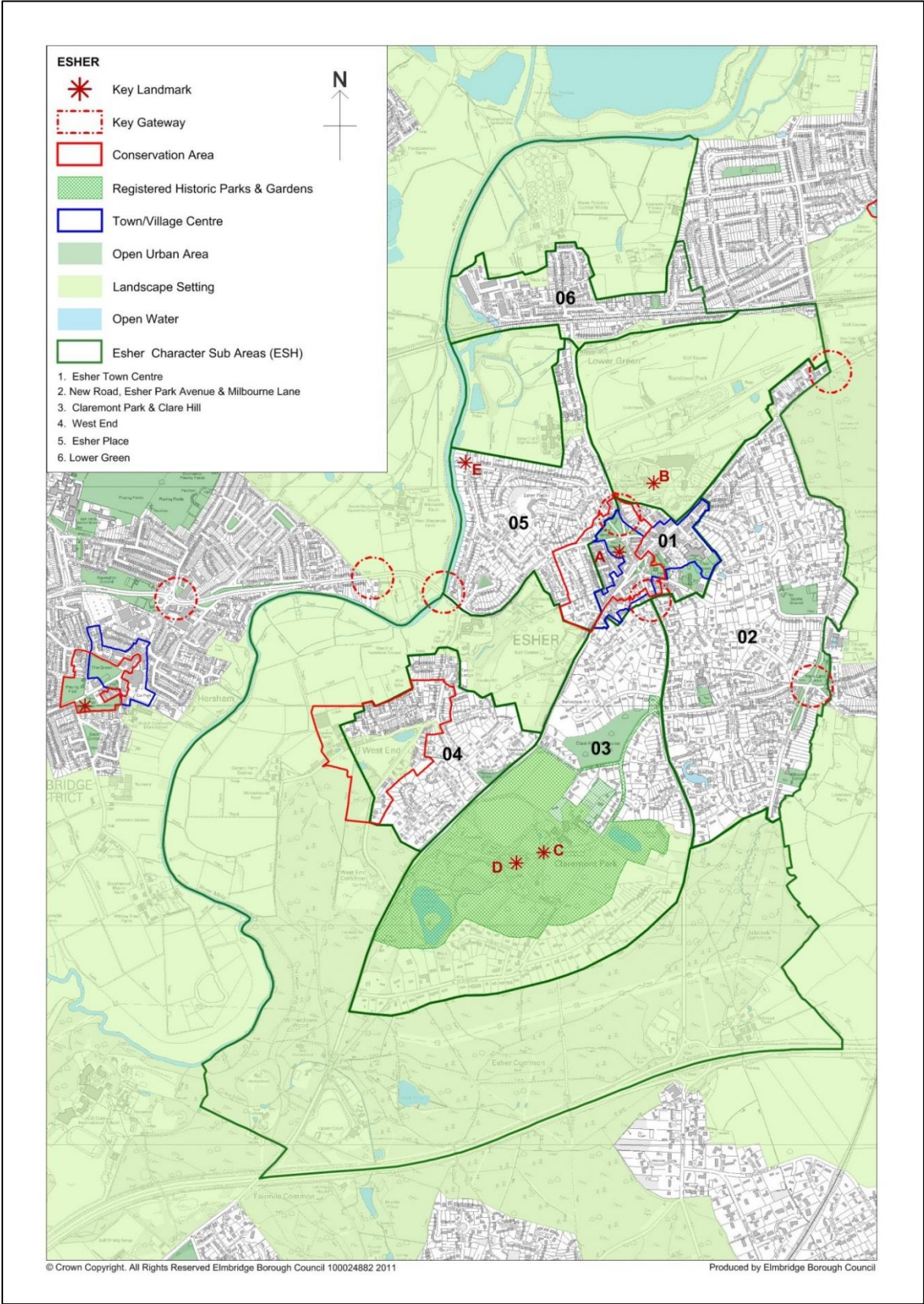


Figure 6. Policy layers for Esher

Table 3 – Esher density figures: **Highest Density**/**Lowest Density**

Esher						
Sub-area no.	Sub-area name	No. of dwellings	Density of sub-area		Density of sub-area excluding open green spaces and other specified areas	
			Units	Area (Ha)	Dph	Area (Ha)
ESH01	Esher District Centre	417	22.15	18.82	16.29	25.5
ESH02	New Road, Esher Park Avenue and Milbourne Lane	805	112.43	7.16	108.12	7.4
ESH03	Claremont Park and Clare Hill	300	151.66	1.98	99.66	3.01
ESH04	West End	421	44.13	9.54	38.68	10.88
ESH05	Esher Place	448	52.40	8.55	52.10	8.6
ESH06	Lower Green	547	32.70	16.72	26.1	20.95
Settlement Average Density		2938	415.47	7.07	340.95	8.61

Existing densities in Esher

- 4.14 No sub-area in Esher is above 30dph even when excluding open spaces and other specified areas. Esher District Centre (ESH01) is the closest at 25.5dph. This is largely due to its location in the District Centre and its higher proportion of flats mainly located above shops and offices. The Claremont Park and Clare Hill sub-area (ESH03) is the lowest density with and without its open spaces. Nearly all a private estate at Clare Hill, this area consists of large detached dwellings set in generously sized plots. The sub-area also includes Blackhills, which although located in the Green Belt, is again, a residential road comprising large detached dwellings set within generous sized plots.
- 4.15 As well as all the open spaces being excluded, other specified areas including the Civic Centre, King Georges Hall, Esher Library, Bowling Club and public car park (2.78ha in total) from sub-area ESH01- Esher District Centre have not been included when calculating the density for this area. Sandown and River Mole Business Park (4.87ha) has been excluded from ESH06- Lower Green. 2.13ha of open space at the Pavilion, New Road, has also been excluded from ESH02- New Road, Esher Park Avenue and Milbourne Lane. Despite these exclusions, current densities in Esher are still low.

Table 4 – Esher density figures: Highest Density/ Lowest Density

Esher Average Permitted Densities		
Sub-area no.	Sub-area Name	Average density permitted since July 2011 (Net density based on site area)
		DPH (number of applications)
ESH01	Esher District Centre	73.08 (17)
ESH02	New Road, Esher Park Avenue and Milbourne Lane	12.11 (13)
ESH03	Claremont Park and Clare Hill	41.91 (3)
ESH04	West End	11.5 (5)
ESH05	Esher Place	12.5 (4)
ESH06	Lower Green	28.47 (4)

Existing densities in Esher

- 4.16 Between 1 July 2011 and the 1 July 2017, Esher District Centre (sub-area ESH01) has the highest average densities of planning permissions granted within Esher. This is largely due to its District Centre location and the amount of development submitted for flats above shops and offices, office conversions and changes of use.



Figure 7: 3 King Georges Walk, High Street, Esher, 67dph

- 4.17 Perhaps surprisingly, Claremont Park and Clare Hill (ESH03) achieves an average of 41.91dph in recent planning permissions. Even though Claremont Park and Clare Hill are low density private residential estates, the sub-area includes two main roads into Esher (Portsmouth Road and Claremont Lane) and it is these roads that have seen higher density developments due to its proximity to the High Street. For example, permission was granted for the demolition of the existing house and the erection of a building that contains 8 flats which totalled 66.67dph. Another included the demolition of a house and the erection of a building containing 5 flats.
- 4.18 The West End sub-area (ESH04) has the lowest average permitted densities due to the 5 planning permissions being single for additional dwellings on larger plots. Three permissions in Lower Green (ESH06) were for additional dwellings and had densities of 16.67, 25 and 33dph. However, bucking this relatively low-density trend was the permission was allowed on appeal for the demolition of a dwelling and the erection of two pairs of semi-detached houses, two flats, and a detached dwelling. This development had a density of 38.8dph.
- 4.19 Only two sub-areas in Esher (ESH01 and ESH03) have met the minimum density of 30dph in the suburban area and 40dph in the town and village centre.

Site visit observations

- 4.20 Esher is a low-rise settlement and contains many low-density housing estates surrounding the main District Centre. Mixed use commercial buildings located in the centre are often more than two-storey but there are no particularly high-rise developments in Esher.

Sustainability

- 4.21 Esher's train station, with services into London and Guildford, is located at the edge of the settlement and does not neighbour any of the settlement's sub-areas. Although many people walk from sub-area 02 to the station, it is not considered easily accessible for many of the sub-areas in Esher. Sub-area 01, the District Centre, is the most sustainable with access to several bus routes, a GP surgery and various employers. Neighbouring sub-areas, 02, 03 and 05 also benefit from particularly close proximity to the services offered in the centre where residential roads are in walking distance. There is one state primary and secondary school available in the settlement and these are located on the bus route. The A307 runs through the settlement and allows car access to the A3 and M25, towards Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

Please see sustainability map.

Opportunities for higher densities

- 4.22 There are opportunities for higher density development (including flatted development) within the District Centre utilising office buildings and building properties above shops. Areas along the main roads into Esher could also provide higher density flatted development or smaller terraced development as already seen with various planning permissions. The low-density areas could increase their densities by converting and rebuilding existing large dwellings and creating flats within them which would retain the low-rise character of the settlement of Esher, whilst increasing the number of dwellings present.

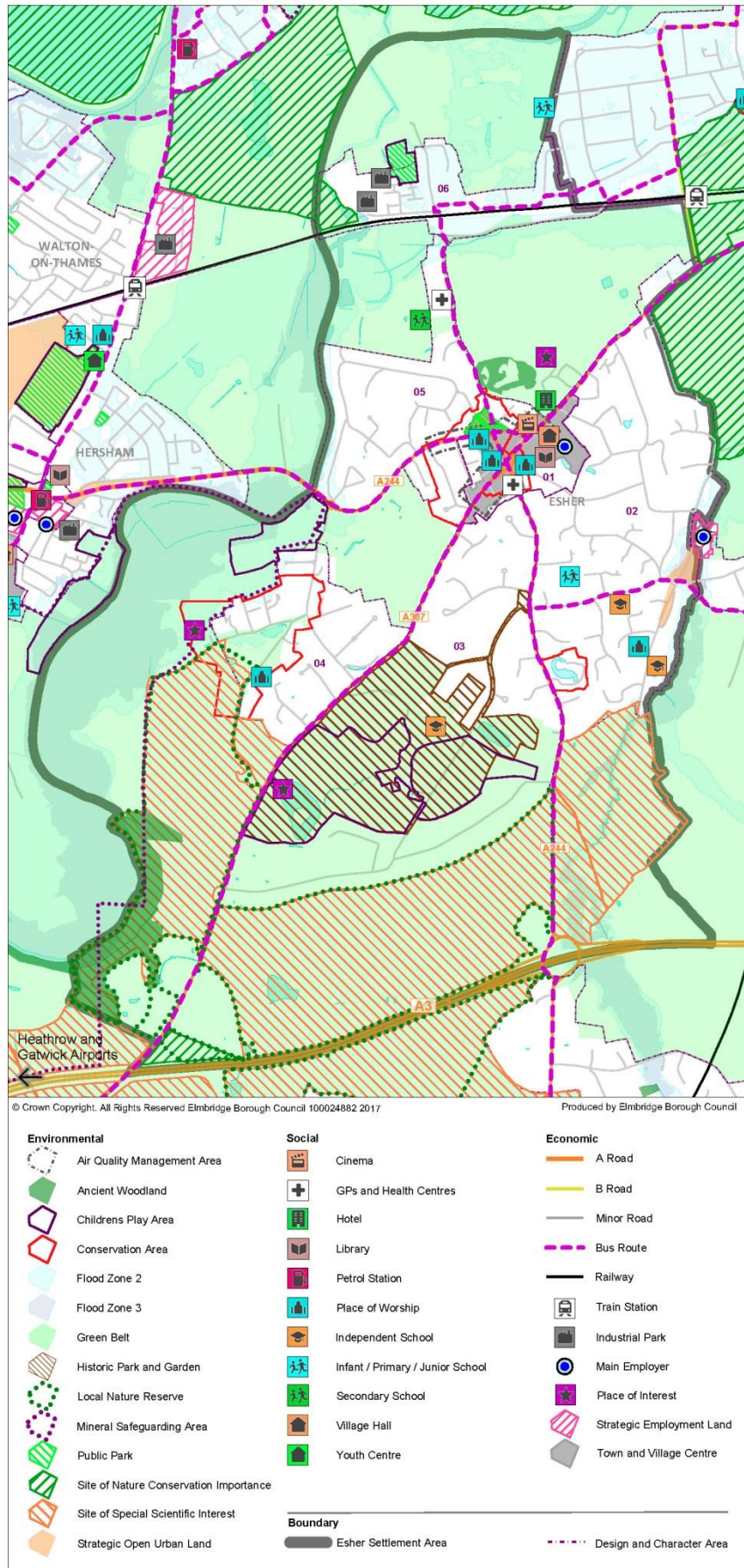


Figure 8. Policy layers for Esher

Weybridge

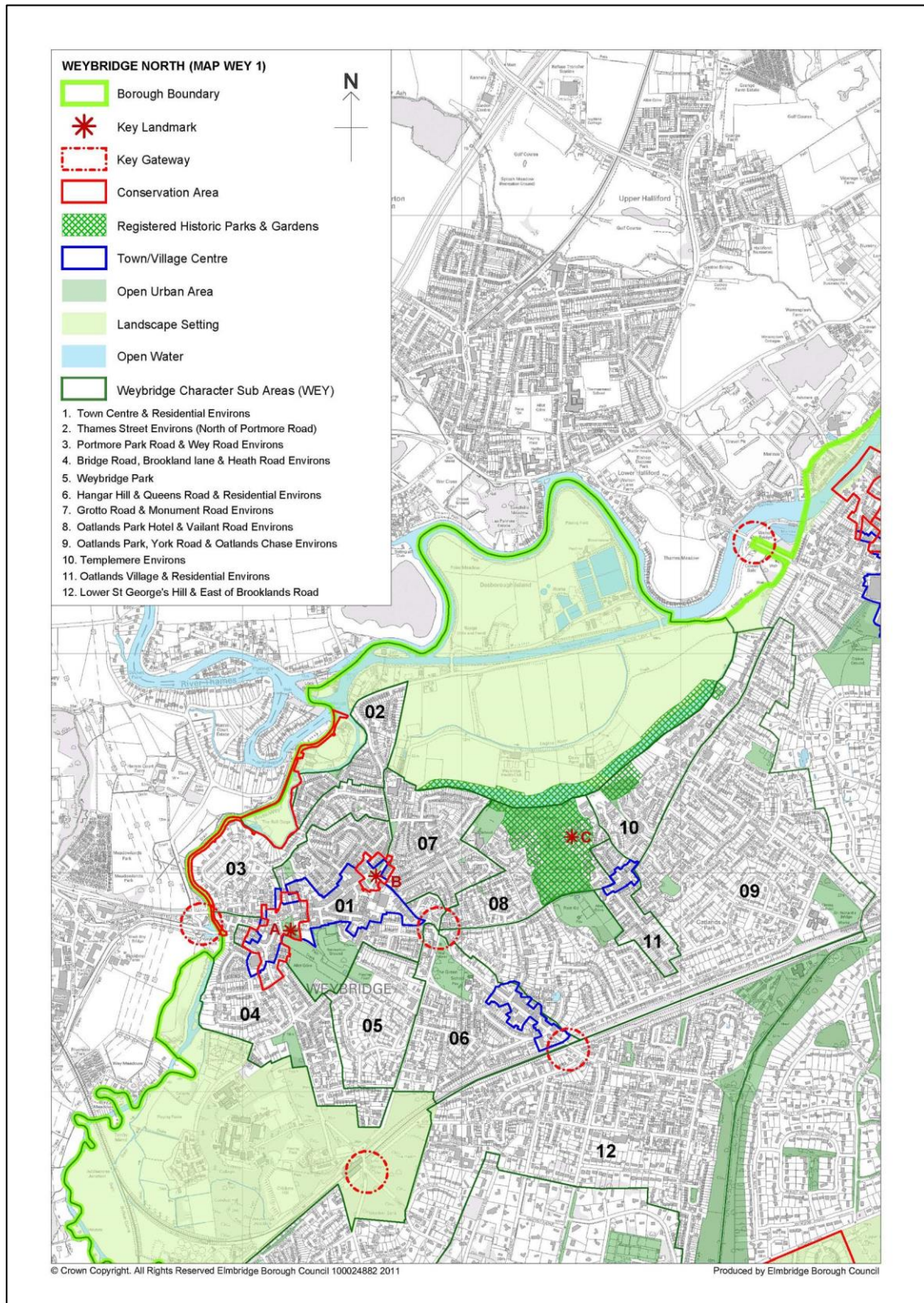


Figure 9. Policy layers for Weybridge

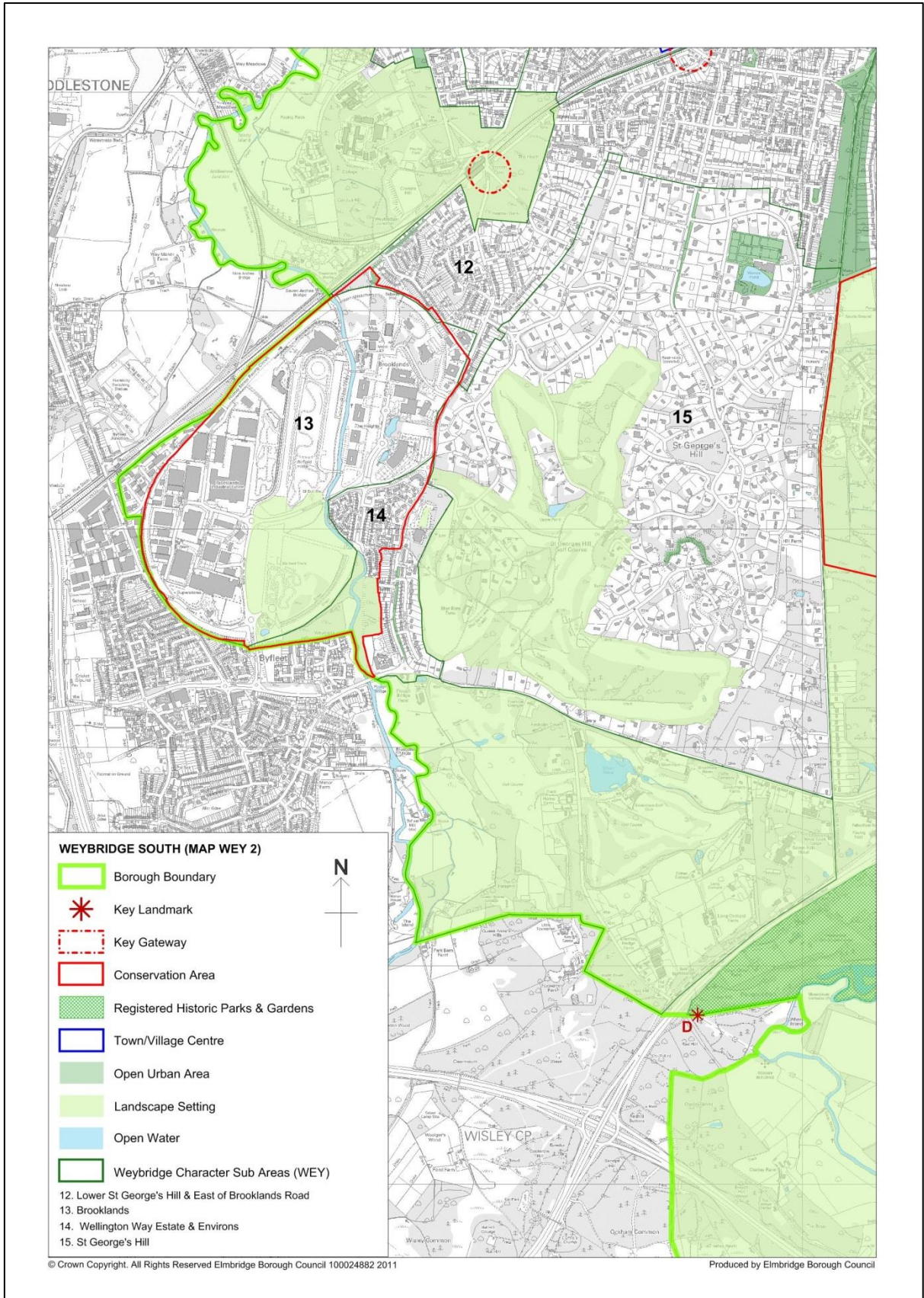


Figure 10. Policy layers for Weybridge

Table 5 – Weybridge Density figures: Highest Density/ Lowest Density

Weybridge						
Sub – area no.	Sub-area name	No. of dwellings	Density of sub-area		Density of sub-area excluding open green spaces and other specified area	
		Units	Area (Ha)	Dph	Area (Ha)	Dph
Wey 01	District Centre and Residential Environs	1161	43.15	26.9	33.87	34.3
Wey 02	Thames Street Environs (North of Portmore Road)	325	15.51	20.94	15.39	21.05
Wey 03	Portmore Park Road & Wey Road Environs	326	21.16	15.4	19.57	16.6
Wey 04	Heath Road Environs (including Brooklands Lane to Bridge Road)	618	31.57	19.57	30.37	20.35
Wey 05	Weybridge Park	159	17.90	8.88	17.04	9.33
Wey 06	Hangar Hill & Queens Road & Residential Environs	745	32.32	23.05	29.56	25.2
Wey 07	Grotto Road & Monument Road Environs	629	22.20	28.33	20.75	30.3
Wey 08	Oatlands Park Hotel and Vaillant Road Environs	347	26.56	13.06	26.23	13.19
Wey 09	Oatlands Park, York Road & Oatlands Chase Environs	1460	111.73	13.07	102.84	14.1
Wey 10	Beechwood Avenue Environs	108	16.69	6.47	16.69	6.47

Wey 11	Templemere Environs	524	22.26	23.54	21.12	24.8
Wey 12	Oatlands Village and Residential Environs	315	9.19	34.25	9.14	34.43
Wey 13	Lower St George's Hill & East of Brooklands Road	2231	154.53	14.44	146.30	15.25
Wey 14	Brooklands	15	146.16	0.1	0.40	37.5
Wey 15	Wellington Way Estate and Environs	477	38.14	12.51	33.61	14.19
Wey 16	St. Georges Hill	523	407.56	1.28	405.37	1.29
Settlement Average Density		9963	116.63	8.92	928.25	10.73

Opportunities for higher densities

- 4.23 There is only one sub-area in Weybridge that is over 30dph before excluding any other land. This is WEY12- Oatlands Village and Residential Environs. The design and character SPD discusses the sub-area's village location, terraces and flats above shops and commercial properties which all contribute to a higher density. This changes when the green space and other specified areas are excluded and another three sub-areas in Weybridge then have densities over 30dph. These are the District Centre and Residential Environs (WEY01), Grotto Road & Monument Hill Environs (WEY07) and Brooklands (WEY14). For sub-area (WEY01) this is likely to be a result of flats above shops and offices and the higher density terraced properties that surround the High Street. WEY07 contains ex-local authority housing from the inter-war and post-war periods, two-storey terraced and semi-detached properties and new flatted developments, which all increase its density.
- 4.24 The lowest density area is Brooklands due to its non-residential uses including a community park, museum, racing track and out of town retail centre. There are only 15 residential addresses in this area and hence the density is low when considering the whole sub-area. However, when the commercial land is excluded, the density increases to 37.5dph. This is due to the tightly arranged terraced roads adjacent to the commercial area. Most of the other residential areas of Weybridge have a low density and this is largely due to the style of property (often detached) and the size of plot.
- 4.25 The library, church hall, car park and local hospital (2.19ha) have been excluded from sub-area WEY01 the District Centre and Residential Environs. St Charles Borromeo Primary School and Church and Youth Centre (1.56ha) have been excluded from WEY03. Manby Lodge School and St James Primary School (1.95ha) and Cleves School (4.55ha) have all been excluded from WEY 06, WEY07 and WEY09. This is in addition to all open spaces and recreation sites across the settlement.

- 4.26 St Georges Hill has the lowest density in the settlement area of Weybridge both as a sub-area and when excluding green spaces. It is designated a special low-density area and is an exclusive private estate predominately containing large gated detached houses, set in very generous wooded plots with large front and rear gardens. The estate has a spacious layout which is landscape dominated. The special low-density area was subject to its own policy in the Replacement Elmbridge Borough Local Plan 2000, containing detailed information about relevant plot sizes, distance to boundaries, frontage widths, building lines and landscape features (Appendix 1). This policy was designed to protect the low-density character of the area, retaining much of its original design concept.
- 4.27 As well as the previous planning policy, the 'St George's Hill Weybridge Estate Act' 1990 contains specific planning guidance. Detailed in part II of the Schedule, the Act states that plots must be at least 1 acre (0.4ha) each and buildings must be detached dwellings centrally located within the plot to avoid intrusion on other plots. There are guidelines on gross floor area to plot area and plot ratio guidance. Houses on the estate are also subject to legal covenants preventing properties from sub dividing and reducing in plot size. Due to this legislation, it is unlikely that the estate will ever allow the sub division or intensification of housing and hence density will remain low.

Table 6 – Weybridge Density figures: Highest Density/ Lowest Density

Weybridge Average Permitted Densities		
Sub-area no.	Sub-area Name	Average density permitted since July 2011 (Net density based on site area) DPH (number of applications)
WEY01	District Centre and Residential Environs	131.7 (16)
WEY02	Thames Street Environs (North of Portmore Road)	-
WEY03	Portmore Park Road & Wey Road Environs	28.74 (3)
WEY04	Heath Road Environs (including Brooklands Lane to Bridge Road)	19.01 (7)
WEY05	Weybridge Park	9.09 (1)
WEY06	Hangar Hill & Queens Road & Residential Environs	82.97 (12)
WEY07	Grotto Road & Monument Road Environs	48.13 (3)
WEY08	Oatlands Park Hotel and Vaillant Road Environs	-
WEY09	Oatlands Park, York Road & Oatlands Chase Environs	54.0 (10)
WEY10	Beechwood Avenue Environs	-
WEY11	Templemere Environs	21.39 (1)
WEY12	Oatlands Village and Residential Environs	138.62 (4)
WEY13	Lower St George's Hill & East of Brooklands Road	36.79 (28)
WEY14	Brooklands	-
WEY15	Wellington Way Estate and Environs	23.25 (2)
WEY16	St. Georges Hill	2.57 (7)

Average permitted densities

- 4.28 Sub-area WEY12 (Oatlands Village and Residential Environs) has seen the highest densities in the settlement area when considering planning permissions granted from 1 July 2011 to 1 July 2017. The four applications granted for this sub-area include the demolition of four houses and the erection of a building to provide six flats. Just providing another two flats creates an on-site density of 162.13dph. The other three permissions relate to one site address that has had three different schemes permitted. The most recent permission is to change the use of the drinking establishment to residential and provide four flats and one terraced house. This scheme has the highest density at 221.24dph. This sub-area achieves high densities due to its small plot sizes and flatted schemes. As previously stated, high density development does not necessarily equate to large amounts of housing being built.
- 4.29 Like the other sub-areas of Elmbridge, Weybridge's District Centre has also witnessed higher density planning permissions. Again, this is due to conversions and change of uses to properties above shops within the High Street location. One scheme has a density of 275dph and involves the demolition of a vacant public house and the erection of a building containing 11 flats (see figure 6). Another permitted scheme involves the erection of a new three storey building providing three new flats. This scheme achieves 300dph because it infills the width of the plot behind shops in the High Street. These applications have all exceeded the housing density targets set out in policy CS17 of the Core Strategy and reinforce the fact that high density development can be delivered in the urban area without impacting on the character of the area. However, it must be noted that the amount of homes being delivered is not necessarily high in terms of actual numbers. As explained in the policy section of this study, the Government are keen to significantly boost housing supply and so emphasis must be on how to design schemes that can yield greater housing units.

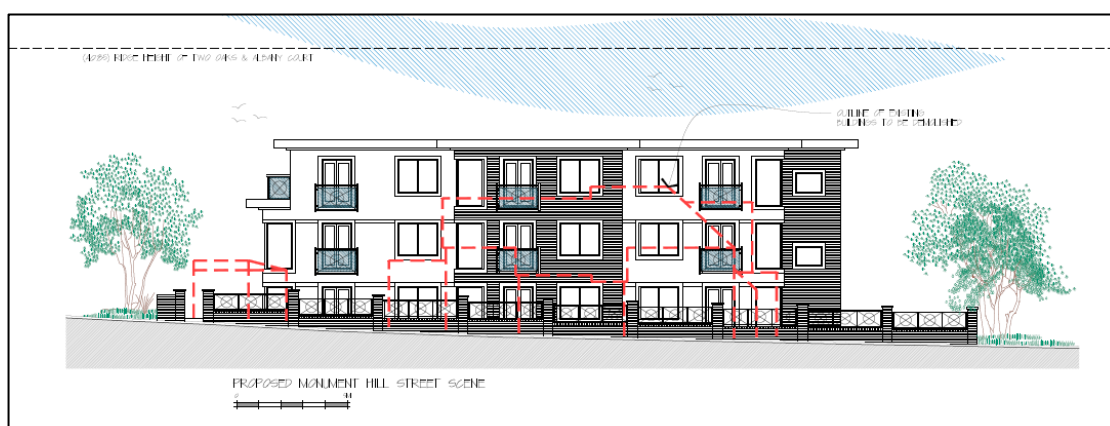


Figure 11: Monument View, 99 Baker Street, Weybridge, 275dph

- 4.30 Four other sub-areas in Weybridge are seeing averages over 30 and 40 dph for planning permissions. Again, these are largely conversions and low-rise buildings containing flats. Six other sub-areas achieve average densities below 30dph. These are mainly single additional dwellings on large plots. The St Georges Hill sub-area WEY16 achieves the lowest density at 2.57dph and this involves only those properties on the edge of the private estate as no new dwellings can be built within the estate. Four sub-areas have had no additional dwellings permitted in the last six years, largely due to their size, established pattern of built form and lack of available land for development.

Site visit observations

- 4.31 Weybridge contains many low rise residential roads with an established pattern of development such as the late 20th century housing at Vaillant Road or the low density private residential estates such as Weybridge Park and Beechwood Avenue. There is a mix of housing types with some post war housing and former local authority housing estates. However, the leafy green suburban roads with detached dwellings are common place and there are no high rise flatted developments. There are some high rise commercial buildings located in Brooklands and across other parts of the settlement such as Queens Road, but there are no high rise residential blocks.
- 4.32 There have been examples of high density developments over the last 20 years in Weybridge. Large residential buildings containing flats have been built along the main roads entering Weybridge and these have shown how densities can be increased without adversely impacting on the character of an area.

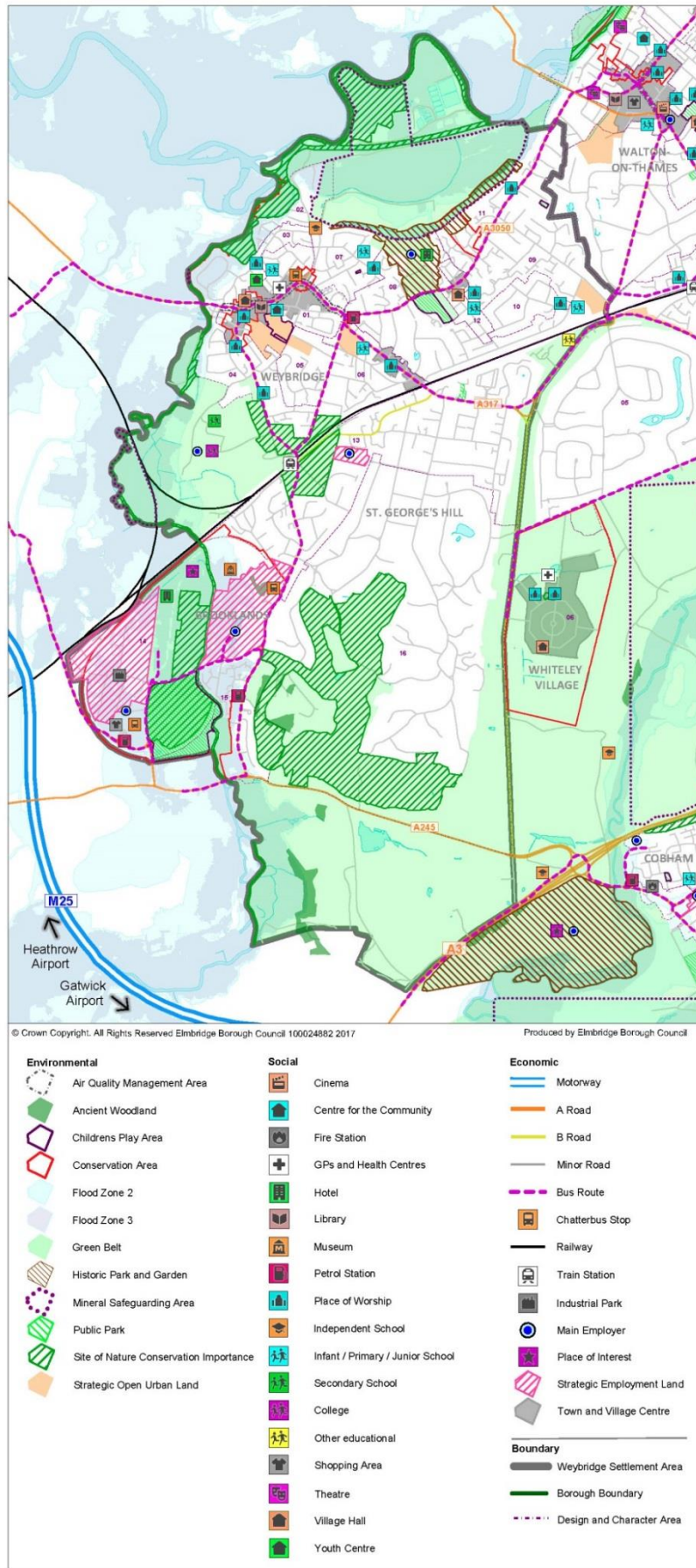


Figure 12. Policy layers for Weybridge

Site visit observations

- 4.33 Although not centrally located in this settlement, sub-area WEY01 (the District Centre) is possibly the most sustainable sub-area. This is due to the local shops and services available including two major supermarkets, GP and health centre. However, at the time of writing this document the community hospital has been demolished due to fire damage but is expected to be rebuilt.
- 4.34 Local bus routes travel through the District Centre providing public transport to key local areas such as schools and out of town shopping at Brooklands as well as locations further afield such as Chertsey, Addlestone, Staines, Kingston and Woking. The Cobham Chatterbus operates through the centre and there is a bus route to St Peter's Hospital. Many residents from adjacent roads in sub-area WEY01 and neighbouring streets in sub-area WEY07 can access these services by foot making these sub-areas more sustainable.
- 4.35 One of the main detractors from Weybridge's sustainability is that its train station is located outside of the District Centre and is only in walking distance to some of the properties in sub-area WEY13. The train station provides rail services to London and Basingstoke and includes stopping services and direct train routes to the capital. Weybridge is also in close proximity to the A3 and M25 allowing quick motorised access to Heathrow and Gatwick airports.
- 4.36 Large international employers are based at Brooklands and hence the local economy is relatively strong and there are local job opportunities.

Opportunities for higher densities

- 4.37 Weybridge does have more scope to increase densities. It has a rail line into London, local job opportunities at Brooklands and access to good local services in the District Centre. The issue is that the train station is located some distance from the District Centre and within the Green Belt. The Government is keen that high density development is built close to key transport hubs and therefore it could theoretically be a key location for housing. However, its Green Belt designation may restrict this.
- 4.38 Other than this (and if the character of Weybridge is to be maintained) flattened development appears to be the easiest way to increase densities. There are large office buildings on major roads to the centre which could be converted into flats. New detached buildings that look like a single dwelling but in fact contain flats / apartments could be used across the suburban area of Weybridge to increase densities and housing delivery. There are no large, un / underused areas of urban land that could accommodate a new residential estate, starter homes or small houses and therefore flats appear to be the most likely way to increase densities and in turn future housing supply in this settlement.

Hersham

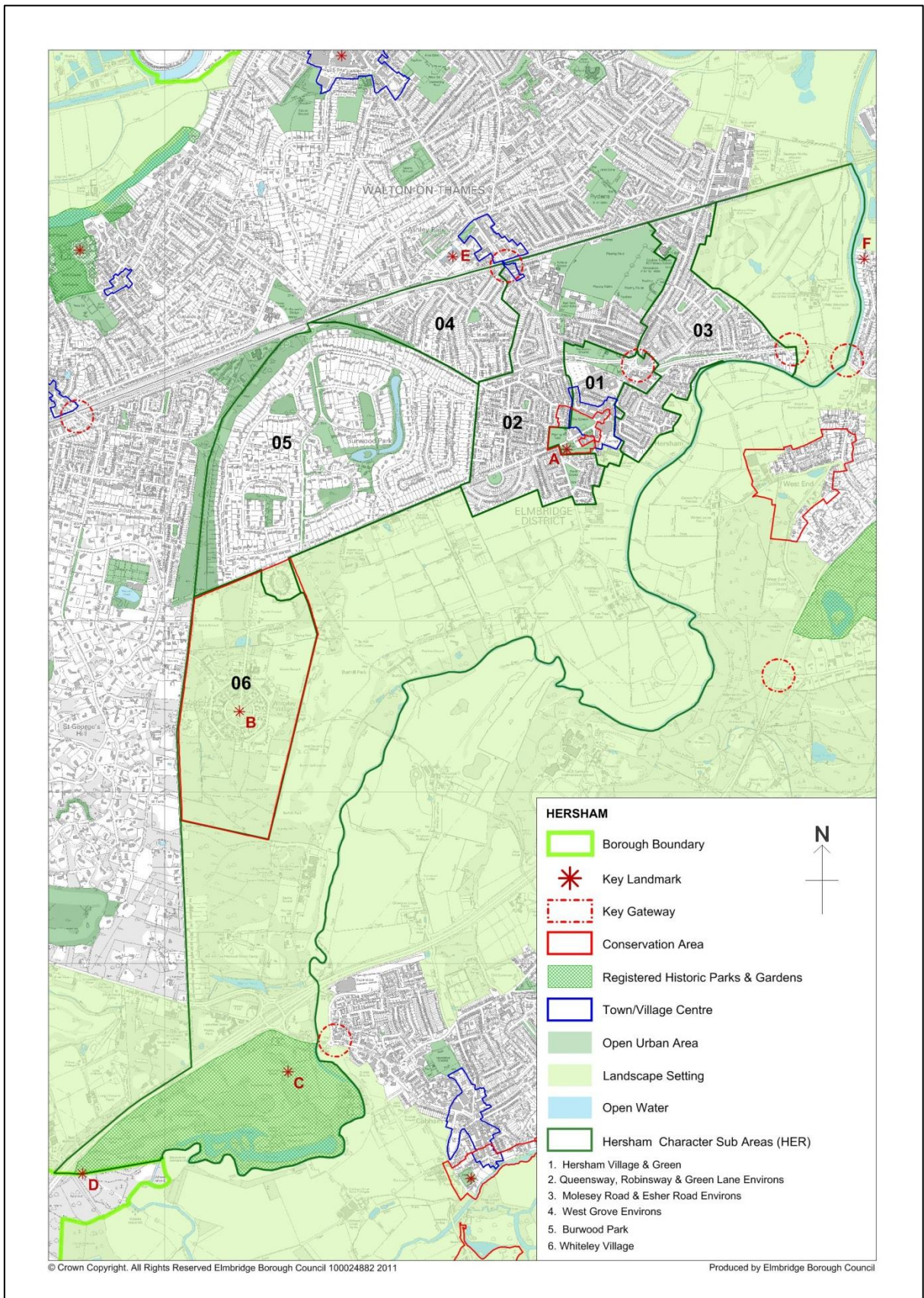


Figure 13. Policy layers for Hersham

Table 7 – Hersham Density figures: **Highest Density/** **Lowest Density**

Hersham						
Sub-area no.	Sub-area name	No. of dwellings	Density of sub-area		Density of sub-area excluding open green spaces and other specified areas	
			Units	Area (Ha)	Dph	Area (Ha)
HER01	Hersham Village & Green	205	24.80	8.26	15.09	13.58
HER02	Queensway, Robinsway & Green Lane Environs	2071	103.43	20.02	73.88	28.03
HER03	Molesey Road & Esher Road Environs	1456	56.09	25.96	54.34	26.79
HER04	West Grove Environs	772	40.46	19.08	39.11	19.74
HER05	Burwood Park	624	170.42	3.66	138.83	4.36
HER06	Whiteley Village	358	93.76	3.82	57.73	5.01
Settlement Average Density		5486	488.96	11.21	378.98	14.47

Existing densities in Hersham

4.39 With or without excluding open spaces and other specified areas, no sub-area in Hersham is over 30dph. The closest to 30dph is sub-area HER03 (Molesey Road and Esher Road Environs) at 25.96dph and 26.79dph excluding open spaces and other specified areas. This may be due to the modest sized semi-detached and terraced housing located in the northern section of this sub-area. Excluding Rydens School, Bell Farm School and their fields (11ha), HER02 is 28.03ha.

The lowest densities can be found in Whiteley Village and Burwood Park.

- 4.40 As well as Rydens school being excluded from sub-area HER02, Air Products (Hersham Technology Park) and its car park (4.1ha) was excluded from sub-area HER01. This however has not increased its density significantly and the District Centre has a very low density at 13.58dph even when excluding open spaces and other specified areas. This is unusual for a District Centre as they often contain high density development such as flats above shops and offices and apartment blocks due to their more sustainable location. However as explained in the Design and Character SPD, this sub-area is mixed in its character with some high-density development in its centre but medium density surrounding the green and within its conservation area in the south west of the sub-area.
- 4.41 Burwood Park has the lowest densities with and without its open spaces in the settlement of Hersham. This sub-area includes one of the Borough's three Special Low Density Residential areas and has previously been subject to a separate policy in the Replacement Elmbridge Local Plan 2000 which aimed to retain this low-density character (Appendix 1).
- 4.42 Burwood Park is a private residential estate comprising 380 private dwellings. It consists mostly of two-storey but occasionally single storey detached houses that sit within well-landscaped semi-wooded spacious plots. Residential properties in the park are subject to legal covenants which are managed by the Burhill Estates Company Limited. According to the Burwood Park Residents Association, these covenants limit new housing and ban commercial activities. The previous policy, current Design and Character SPD policy and covenants have all ensured that this sub-area retains its low-density character.
- 4.43 Sub-area HER06 consists of Whiteley Village, which is a unique philanthropic retirement village built in the 1920s set within a 225-acre estate. The buildings were designed by eminent architects of the period and retain many original features. Most of the buildings within the village are Grade II listed and the entire village is a designated Conservation Area. Being located entirely within the Green Belt, Whiteley Village retains its original low-density character.

Table 8 – Hersham Density figures: Highest Density/ Lowest Density

Hersham Average Permitted Densities		
Sub-area no.	Sub-area Name	Average density permitted since July 2011 (Net density based on site area)
		DPH (number of applications)
HER01	Hersham Village & Green	60.87 (6)
HER02	Queensway, Robinsway & Green Lane Environs	43.75 (15)
HER03	Molesey Road & Esher Road Environs	43.53 (8)
HER04	West Grove Environs	40.77 (4)
HER05	Burwood Park	7.9 (3)
HER06	Whiteley Village	125 (1)

Average permitted densities

- 4.44 Sub-area HER06 (Whiteley Village) has the highest permitted density in a development in Hersham. However, this development was for the conversion of a building (that was already used for staff accommodation) to five flats. The high density can be explained by the net plot size in the application only containing the building itself which is located within the larger retirement village.
- 4.45 Hersham Village and Green (Sub-area HER01) has the second highest density for permissions granted in Hersham. One of the permissions had a density of 140dph for a detached five storey building incorporating 14 flats following demolition of the existing building (see figure 7). The other permissions in this sub-area consist of changes of use and part conversions / extensions of offices and retail units. These are relatively small scale and generally result a net addition of one to five flats.



Figure 14: Cavendish House, 9-11 Queens Road, Hersham, 140dph

- 4.46 Three other sub-areas in Hersham have average densities above 40dph in the permissions granted in their area. This is a result of various large residential schemes being approved. Sub-area HER03 (Molesey Road and Esher Road Environs) include a large residential development comprising two buildings containing 33 apartments and six terraced houses following demolition of the existing buildings. This has a density of 100dph and was allowed on appeal. Sub-area HER04 (West Grove Environs) includes permission for a new part four / part three / part two storey detached block comprising 50 shared ownership/affordable apartments following demolition of existing office building. This resulted in a density of 136dph.
- 4.47 Even though sub-area HER02 (Queensway, Robinsway and Green Lane Environs) has an average density of 43.75dph in granted planning permissions, the highest yielding permission was at Rydens Enterprise School for 296 dwellings, but this development is only at a density of 17.69dph¹⁰. This is because the total site including the school and playing fields has been included in the calculation. In contrast, in the same sub-area another planning permission at 100dph only yields one additional dwelling on a very small 0.1-hectare site. This highlights the limitation of a density focused solution as high density development does not necessarily result in large housing numbers. Therefore, solely seeking high densities may not in itself result in a significant increase to the Borough's future housing supply.
- 4.48 The lowest average density in planning permissions is in sub-area HER05 (Burwood Park). This is due to it being a special low-density area, which restricts its potential to deliver more dwellings. Permission is not normally granted for additional dwellings within this estate but in 2015, an appeal was allowed for an additional dwelling within the private estate. Due to the

¹⁰ If you exclude the playing fields the gross density on the former Rydens Enterprise School site (5.04ha) is some 58dph.

size of plots, this still only reached a density of 4.76dph. However, it does demonstrate that perhaps the private estate could accommodate some additional housing if it is in keeping with the character of the area and the areas legal requirements.

Site visit observations

- 4.49 Hersham does have some three-storey commercial and residential buildings in and around the green and District Centre but has no high-rise flats or residential estates that are of particularly high density.

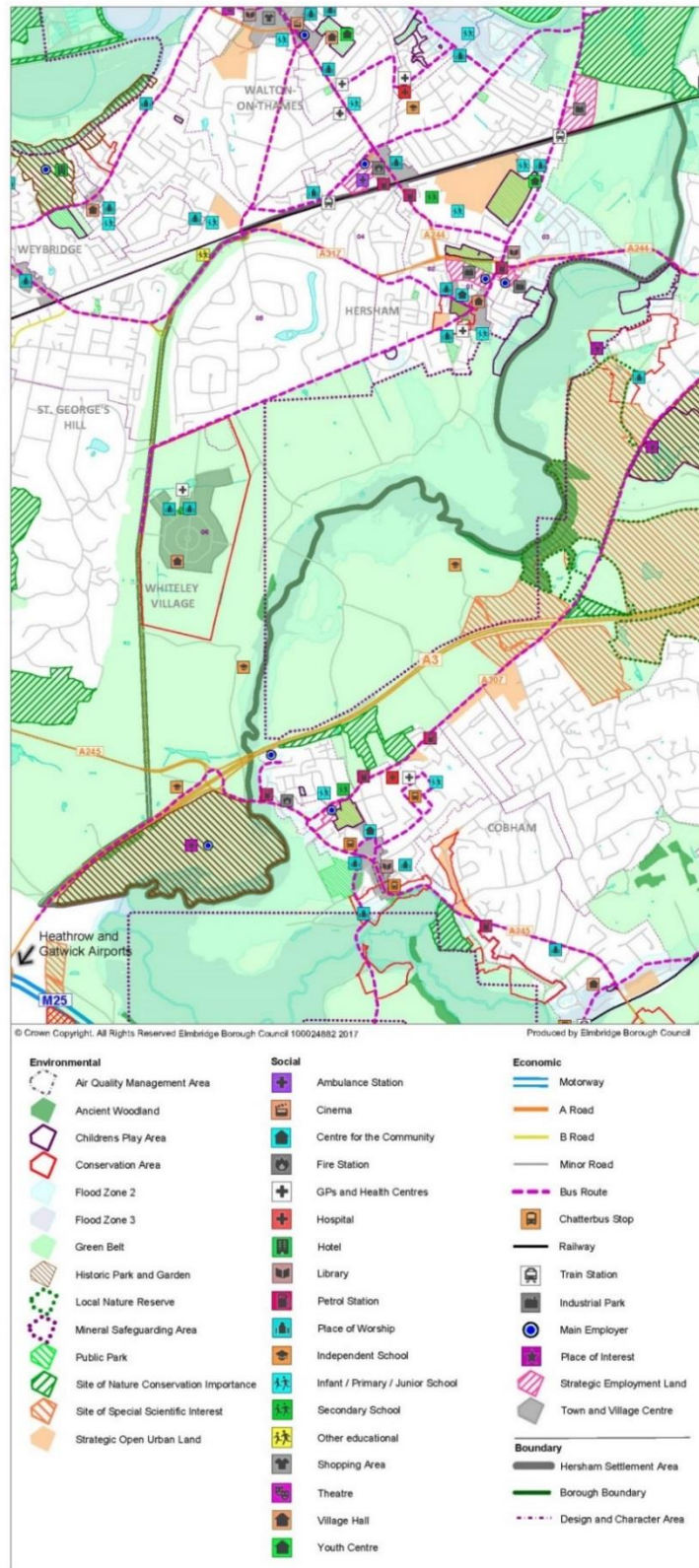


Figure 15. Policy layers for Hershams, St Georges Hill and Cobham

Sustainability

4.50 Sub-area HER01 (Hersham Village and Green), is the most sustainable sub-area within the settlement as it contains many of the local services, bus routes and shops required for day to day goods. The train station is not located in the centre but does provide direct rail services to London which is in walking distance for residents in sub-areas HER02 and 04. The A244 and A317 provide access across the settlement and beyond to the A3 and M25. Although there is a large employer in sub-area HER01, the local economy is limited which impacts on local job opportunities.

Opportunities for higher densities

4.51 Burwood Park maybe able to accommodate further replacement dwellings especially considering the Planning Inspectorate's decision as discussed above. The District Centre and sub-area HER02 and HER04 near the rail line could accommodate greater flatted development whether in higher rise buildings or conversions to residential properties to protect the character of the area.

4.52 As Hersham already contains established residential roads and there is limited urban land available, more creative solutions such as conversions and sub divisions will need to be investigated if higher densities and greater housing numbers are to be achieved.

East and West Molesey

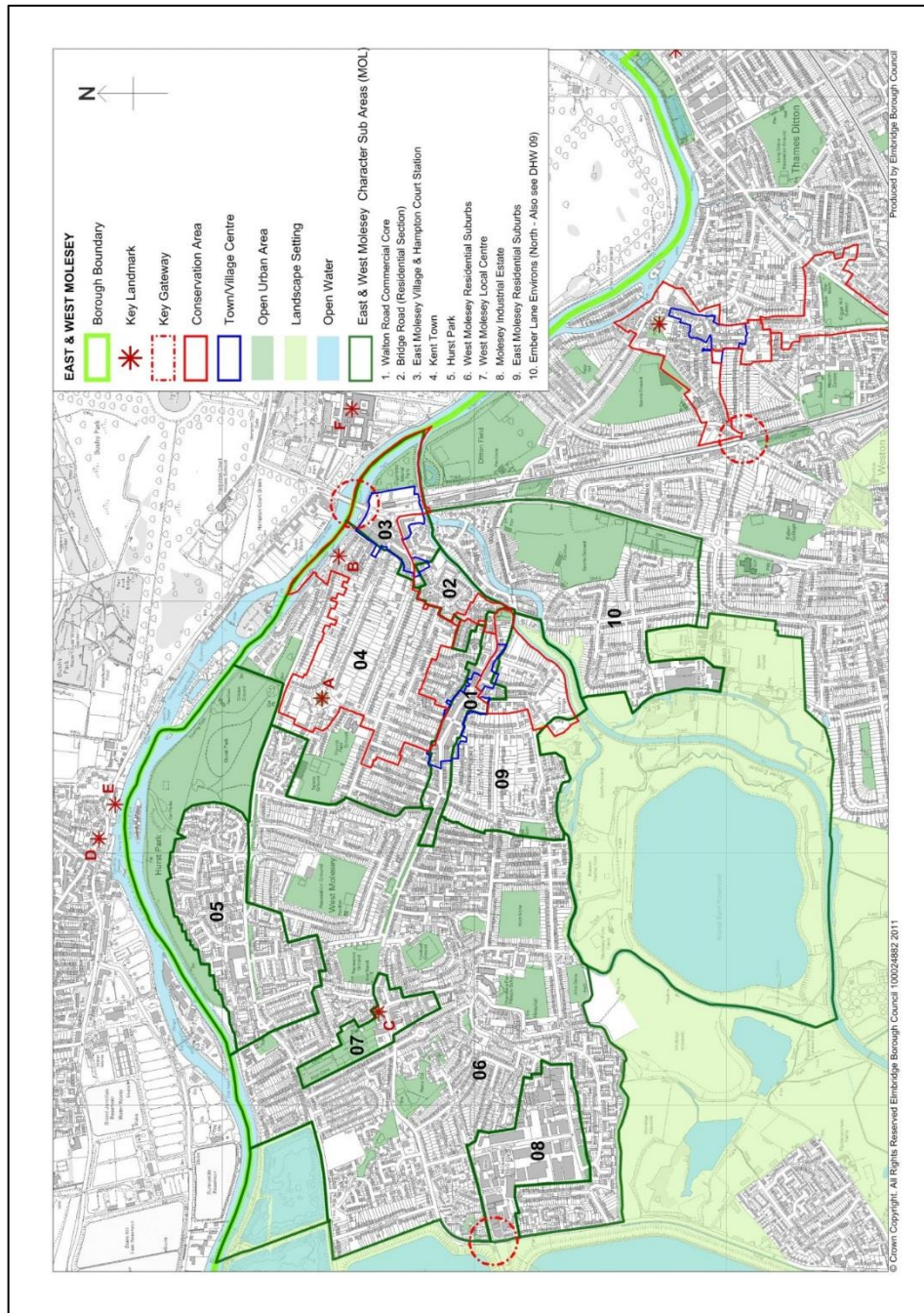


Figure 15. Policy layers for East and West Molesey

Table 9 – East and West Molesey Density figures: **Highest Density/
Lowest Density**

East and West Molesey						
Sub-area no.	Sub-area name	No. of dwellings	Density of sub-area		Density of sub-area excluding open green spaces and other specified areas	
			Units	Area (Ha)	Dph	Area (Ha)
MOL01	Walton Road District Centre	366	9.09	40.22	8.85	41.33
MOL02	Bridge Road (Residential section)	194	5.96	32.53	5.92	32.77
MOL03	East Molesey Village and Hampton Court Station	280	11.76	23.8	9.73	28.78
MOL04	Kent Town	988	64.51	15.32	57.8	17.09
MOL05	Hurst Park	985	32.10	30.68	31.39	31.37
MOL06	West Molesey Residential Suburbs	4463	187.87	23.76	162.12	27.52
MOL07	West Molesey Centre	120	7.47	16.06	4.07	29.43
MOL08	Molesey Industrial Estate	125	18.06	6.92	3.38	36.98

MO L09	East Molesey Residential Suburbs	340	29.34	11.58	29.34	11.58
MO L10	Ember Lane Environs (North- also see DHW 09)	596	54.80	10.86	36.96	16.12
Settlement average density		8457	420.96	20.08	349.56	24.19

Existing densities in East and West Molesey

- 4.53 Three sub-areas in this settlement are over 30dph with and without open green spaces and other specified areas. The highest density is in the MOL01 sub-area which is the main district shopping area for East and West Molesey. This is likely to be due to the concentration of flats over shops set within a small sub-area. MOL02 is also over 30dph and this could be due to its flatted developments and fine grain. As the Design and Character SPD points out, this area is diverse and contains a range of different properties even though some of the sub-area is within a Conservation Area. Hurst Park (MOL05) is also over 30dph and is largely due to high rise flats to the north of Victoria Road and the medium to high density estate built in the 1970s consisting largely of terraced housing.
- 4.54 Molesey Industrial Estate sub-area MOL08 is over 30dph once the industrial estate (14.68ha) has been excluded as the 125 residential units that surround the estate are mainly flatted or terraced dwellings on small plots. It then becomes 36.98dph if just considering the residential roads.
- 4.55 In terms of excluded sites, St Lawrence Church of England Aided Junior School and the Pavilion Sports and Fitness Club (4.93ha) have been omitted from MOL4 (Kent Town). Despite this, densities are still very low in this sub-area. This is due to the prominence of large detached villas set in generous plots.
- 4.56 MOL6 is a large sub-area, which is predominately residential and laid out on a series of grid plan roads between Island Farm Road, Walton Road and Hurst Road. The sub-area contains a high degree of public spaces. As well as the sub-areas open spaces, Chandlers Field Primary School and Molesey Hospital (4.91ha), the recreation ground on Walton Road neighbouring Abbey Walk (1.9ha), Hurst Park Primary School (1.83ha) and Cobham Free School (13ha) have been excluded. Once these areas have been excluded, this sub-area is close to 30dph at 27.52dph. This is likely to be due to the grid like road system consisting smaller semi-detached and terraced housing.

4.57 The sub-area with the lowest density is MOL10 Ember Lane Environs. The density rises slightly to 16.12dph with the exclusion of the pavilion and sports ground (12ha) and Imber Court Trading Estate (3.07ha). However, the residential properties in the sub-area are mainly two-storey detached and semi-detached properties with a medium sized plots and gardens.

**Table 10 – East and West Molesey Density figures: Highest Density/
Lowest Density**

East and West Molesey Average Permitted Densities		
Sub-area no.	Sub-area Name	Average density permitted since July 2011 (Net density based on site area)
		DPH (number of applications)
MOL01	Walton Road District Centre	149.24 (10)
MOL02	Bridge Road (Residential section)	46.73 (3)
MOL03	East Molesey Village and Hampton Court Station	56.6 (3)
MOL04	Kent Town	21.74 (10)
MOL05	Hurst Park	-
MOL06	West Molesey Residential Suburbs	57.5 (15)
MOL07	West Molesey Centre	100.00 (1)
MOL08	Molesey Industrial Estate	60.88 (3)
MOL09	East Molesey Residential Suburbs	30.05 (2)
MOL10	Ember Lane Environs (North-also see DHW 09)	35.67 (2)

Average permitted densities

4.58 Nearly all sub-areas in the settlement of Molesey have averages of over 30dph for additional dwellings permitted from July 2011 to July 2017. There is only one sub-area where planning applications averaged under 30dph which was Kent Town (MOL04) at 21.74dph. The highest density achieved in this sub-area was a planning permission for one additional unit on a 0.03ha plot which achieved 33.33dph. However, this was an exception and many of the permissions granted were on larger plots over 0.1ha which

4.59

lowers the density figure. These lower average densities could be a result of the sub-areas character and Conservation Area status.

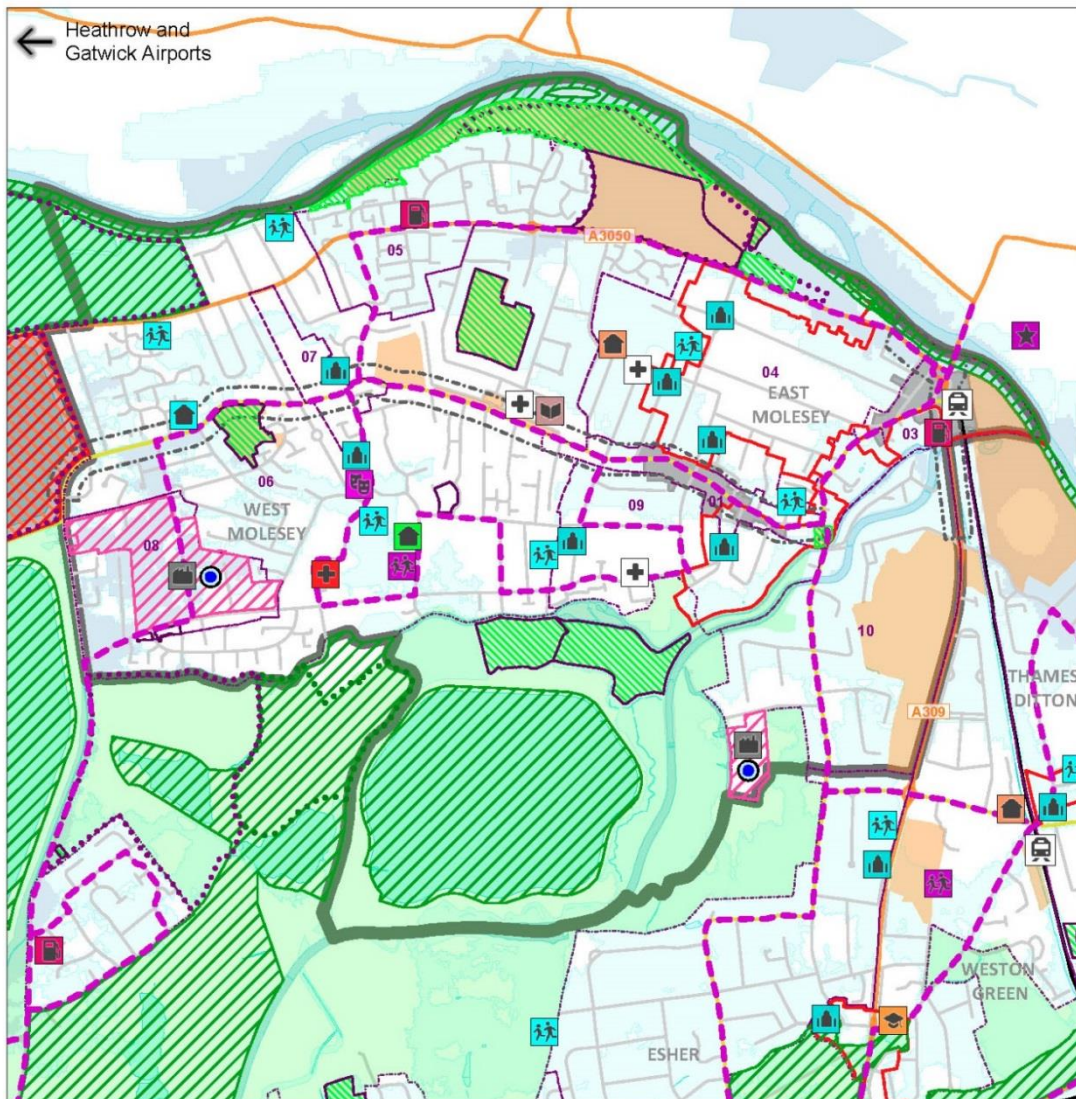
- 4.60 MOL1-Walton Road District Centre has the highest average densities permitted at an average of 149.24dph. One application in this sub-area for four flats was 400dph due to the plot being small at 0.01ha. Like other settlements across the Borough, this sub-area contains the main High Street and has had a number of conversions and change of use permissions which cover small plots and hence density increases.
- 4.61 MOL07- West Molesey Centre had one planning permission at 100dph. This was for an extension to an existing retail unit and the provision of two flats. Again, this development was located within the local shopping parade and achieves a high density due to its small plot size as opposed to there being a large quantum of development.
- 4.62 Interestingly, Molesey Industrial Estate (MOL08) has seen an average dph of 60.88 for three planning permissions. This is due to a number of flatted developments being permitted on the road opposite the industrial estate entrance and a development on the edge of the estate itself. For example, 125dph was achieved on Island Farm Road for 20 flats following the demolition of the existing public house (figure 8).



Figure 16: Matham Court and Prior Court, Island Farm Road, Molesey, 125dph

Site visit observations

- 4.63 Across this settlement area there is a great amount of variation in terms of dwelling type, age and tenure. Despite this difference in style, there is no high rise flatted development and housing is predominately low rise throughout. There is a large amount of open green space in the settlement which includes recreation / sports grounds, parkland and allotments.



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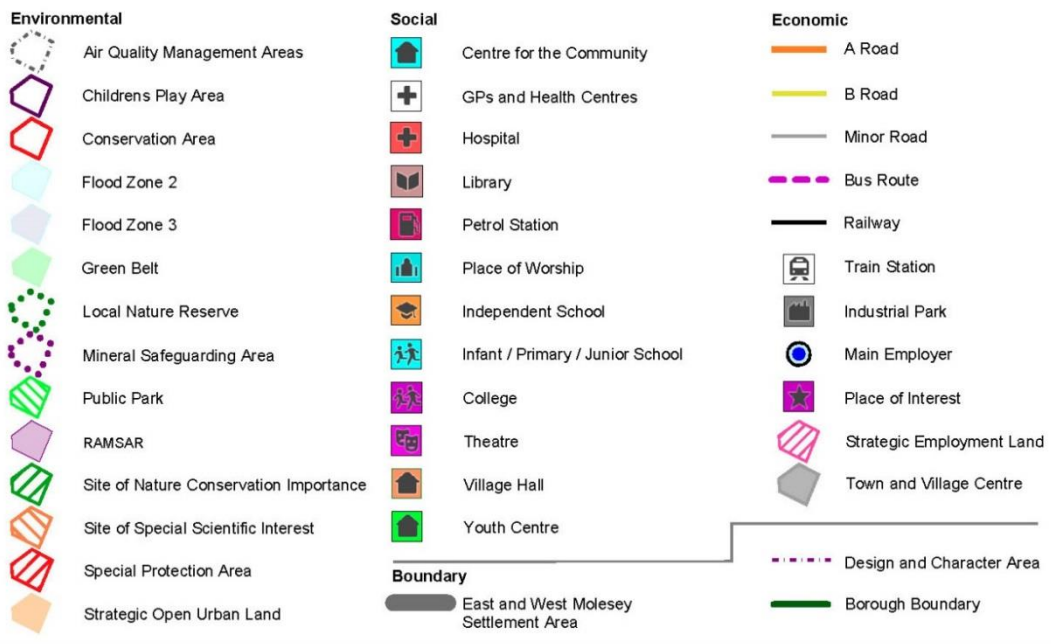


Figure 17. Policy layers for East and West Molesey

Sustainability

- 4.64 Sub-areas MOL04 and MOL9 are likely to be the most sustainable due to them neighbouring the settlement's town and village centre in sub- area MOL01 and train station in sub-area MOL03 at Hampton Court. MOL01 also includes a GP and health centre, pharmacy, supermarket and school.
- 4.65 There are other schools, GPs, open green spaces, a hospital and library located across the settlement in various sub-areas and many of these are accessible by a local bus system. These provide services to locations outside the Borough e.g. to regional shopping centres such as Kingston, Staines, Kew and Richmond as well as services to local hospitals such as St Peters, Chertsey. Bus routes also include local destinations such as the Borough's secondary schools and Hampton Court train station. Two main 'A' roads provide access to the A3 and M25 allowing easy access to Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

Opportunities for higher density developments

- 4.66 There is limited urban land available for development and hence high-density development will largely take the form of flatted development. Higher density flatted development could be accommodated at the key gateway to the settlement where the train station provides rail services to London.

Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green

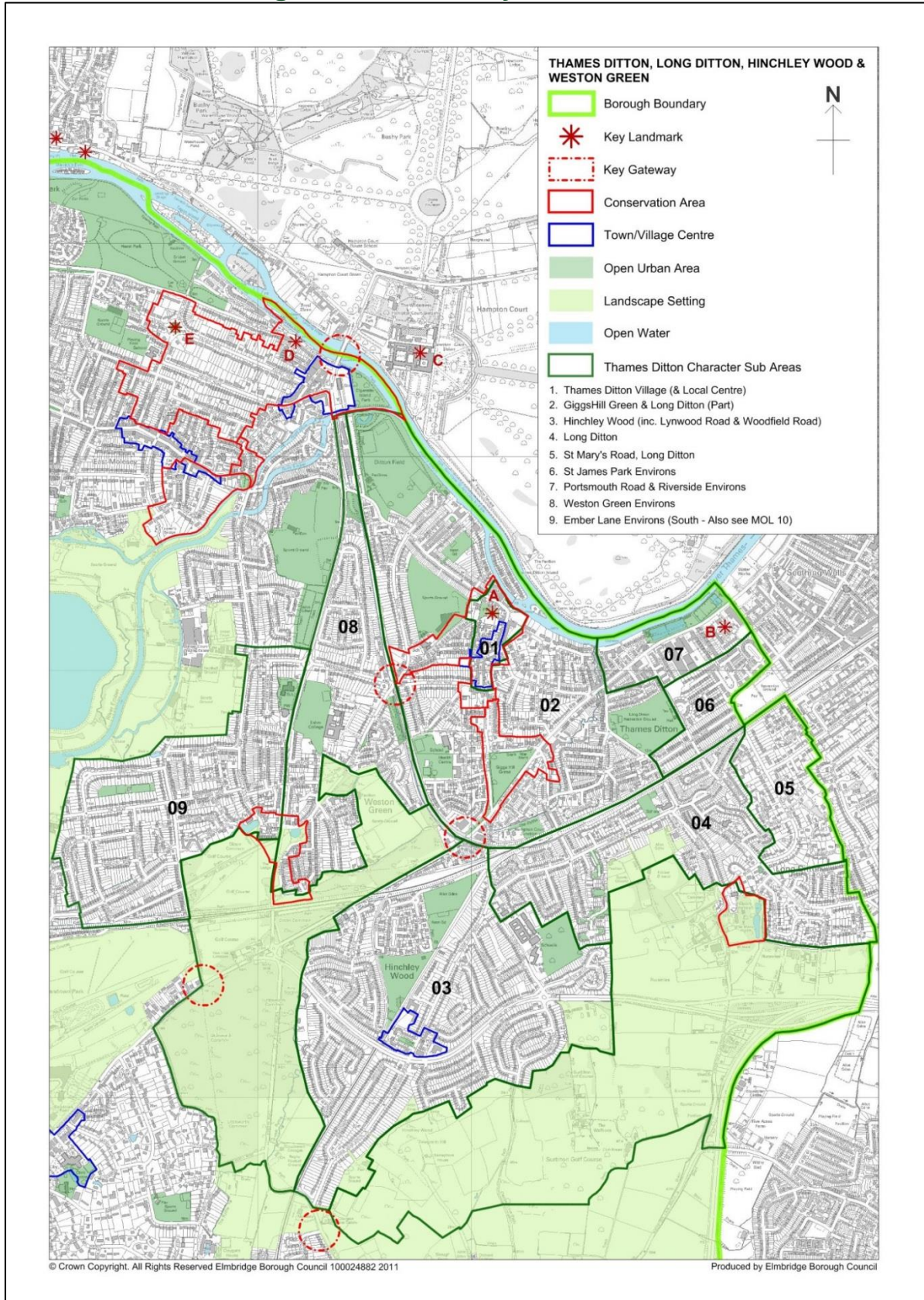


Figure 18. Policy layers for Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green

Table 11 – Dittons Density figures: **Highest Density/** **Lowest Density**

Dittons						
Sub-area no.	Sub-area name	No. of dwellings	Density of sub-area		Density of sub-area excluding open green spaces and other specified areas	
			Units	Area (Ha)	Dph	Area (Ha)
DHW01	Thames Ditton Village (& Local Centre)	158	7.69	20.53	5.76	27.43
DHW02	Thames Ditton, Giggs Hill Green & part Long Ditton	2193	150.20	14.6	119.6	18.32
DHW03	Hinchley Wood (inc. Lynwood Road and Woodfield Road)	1979	143.51	13.79	124.8	15.84
DHW04	Long Ditton	1250	75.8	16.49	46.7	26.71
DHW05	St Mary's Road, Long Ditton	254	25.49	9.96	25.49	9.96
DHW06	St James Park Environs	454	15.90	28.55	15.85	28.63

DHW07	Portsmouth Road & Riverside Environs	392	19.08	20.54	14.1	27.08
DHW08	Weston Green Environs	888	69.00	12.87	59.6	14.87
DHW09	Ember Lane Environs (South-Also see MOL 10)	1028	77.04	13.34	75.6	13.59
Settlement Average Density		8596	583.76	14.72	487.5	17.63

Existing Densities in the Dittons

- 4.67 The Dittons settlement has an average density of 14.72dph and 17.63dph excluding open green spaces and other specified areas. No sub-area across Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green has an existing density of over 30dph. Even when excluding open spaces and other specified areas no sub-area is 30dph or above. The closest sub-area to have a density of 30dph is St James Park Environs DHW06 at 28.55dph. This increases only slightly when excluding any open spaces to 28.63dph. The higher density could be due to the sub-area containing a late 20th century housing development, which includes many terraced town houses and properties on small plots.
- 4.68 Portsmouth Road and Riverside Environs DHW07 has the second highest existing density at 20.54dph and this increases to 27.08 dph with the exclusion of the Strategic Employment Land at Kingston House Estate (2.45ha) as well as the marina at 2.52 hectares. This higher density again is due to the terraced properties located on much smaller plots. The local centre in this settlement has a density of 20.53dph and this rises to 27.43dph after excluding open spaces, the Home of Compassion and the Ferry Works (1.5ha). The residential density increases due the area's fine grain and mix of smaller dwellings including some above retail units.
- 4.69 Another sub-area where density increases once the open spaces have been excluded is DHW04 (Long Ditton). The pavilion and sports ground (25ha) at the back of Sugden Road has also been excluded from this sub-area. The area is generally developed at a low density with most properties being two-storey semi-detached or detached properties set back from the roadside.

- 4.70 St Mary's Road, Long Ditton (DHW05) has the lowest density at 9.96dph and no open spaces or other areas are present to be excluded. This sub-area predominately consists of large detached properties on spacious plots, which explains the low density.
- 4.71 In terms of other specified areas that have been omitted from the density figures (apart from those already mentioned above), the sports ground on Speer Road (6.95ha) was omitted as well as Ditton Field (9.29ha) from DHW02. DHW03 omitted Lynwood Road field (3.29ha), Hinchley Wood Primary and Secondary School (7.33ha) and Sports Ground at Manor Road South (1.87ha). DHW08 excludes the industrial units (1.07ha) to the north of the sub-area and Esher College (5.24ha). Our Lady Lourdes Church and neighbouring St Paul's Primary School has been excluded from DHW09 (1.3ha).

Table 12 – Dittons Density figures: Highest Density/ Lowest Density

Dittons average permitted densities		
Sub-area no.	Sub-area Name	Average density permitted since July 2011 (Net density based on site area)
		DPH (number of applications)
DHW01	Thames Ditton Village (& Local Centre)	65.97 (4)
DHW02	Thames Ditton, Giggs Hill Green & part Long Ditton	42.88 (16)
DHW03	Hinchley Wood (inc. Lynwood Road and Woodfield Road)	43.98 (4)
DHW04	Long Ditton	23.90 (8)
DHW05	St Mary's Road, Long Ditton	25.00 (1)
DHW06	St James Park Environs	40.00 (1)
DHW07	Portsmouth Road & Riverside Environs	-
DHW08	Weston Green Environs	27.09 (13)
DHW09	Ember Lane Environs (South-Also see MOL 10)	15.92 (7)

Average permitted densities

4.72 Thames Ditton Village and Local Centre (DHW01) has the highest average densities for planning permissions granted from 20 July 2011 to 20 July 2017 at 65.97dph. A planning permission was granted at appeal for an erection of a three-storey townhouse. This reached 100dph because of the 0.01ha plot size (see figure 9). Planning permissions at 75dph and 66.67dph were granted for different schemes on the same site which was located at the rear of the High Street. Density increases on the smaller the plot size and not necessarily the number of dwellings permitted as the above planning permissions indicate. Despite high densities, they only yield the addition of two and three net dwellings.



Figure 19: Land to the south west of 55 High Street, Thames Ditton, 100dph

4.73 Three other sub-areas across the Dittons have average densities of over 30dph. This again is mainly due to additional dwellings being granted on smaller sites. There are two notable permissions that yield over 10 dwellings. These are in sub-area DHW02 and DHW03. Both these applications are located on the Portsmouth Road which is one of the Borough's main 'A' roads and is located between Kingston and Cobham. Both applications involve the demolition of an office building. However, one creates two terraces containing five dwellings each (10 in total) and the other is for an erection of a building containing 14 flats. These schemes have densities of 43.29dph and 107.69dph respectively (see figure 10 and 11 below).



Figure 20: Portland Place, Portsmouth Road, Thames Ditton, 108dph

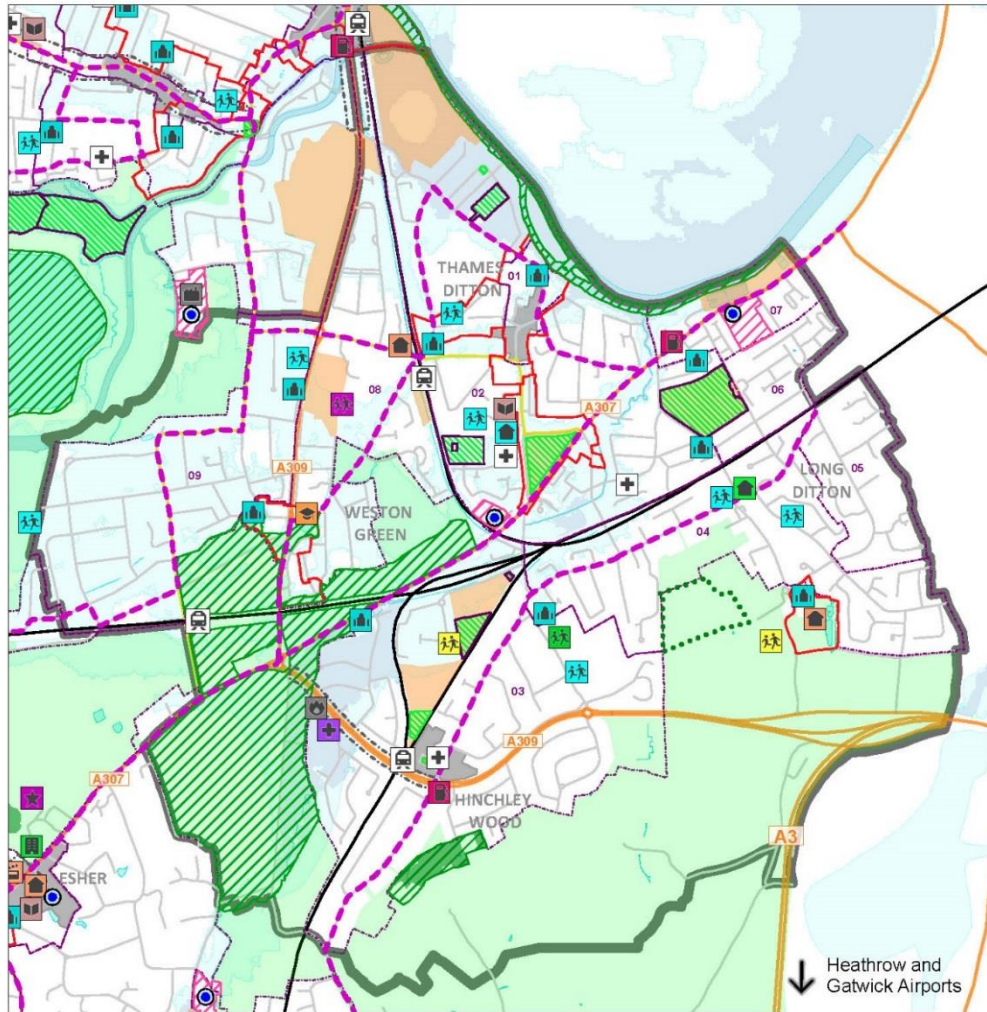


Figure 21: Royal Thames Place, Portsmouth Road, Thames Ditton, 43.3dph

4.74 The lowest average density was recorded in sub-area DHW09 Ember Lane Environs at 15.92dph. The seven permissions granted in this sub-area are on large plots, with one at 0.2ha. Five of these permissions result in just one net dwelling while two other permissions provide two net dwellings. These are not high yielding permissions and are located on larger plots, which therefore results in low average densities. The sub-area contains large semi-detached and detached houses and hence permissions have been granted that are in keeping with the character of this low to medium density area.

Site visit observations

4.75 Bordering the River Thames to the north and neighbouring the London authority of Kingston-Upon-Thames to the east, this settlement consists mainly of large semi-detached and detached properties with some pockets of smaller terraced and semi-detached housing. There are tightly enclosed townscapes in some areas such as the High Street in Thames Ditton, but there is limited flatted development within this settlement. There are no high rise residential properties although there are some taller commercial buildings on the Portsmouth Road, towards Kingston.



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Environmental	Social	Economic
Air Quality Management Area	Ambulance Station	A Road
Ancient Woodland	Cinema	B Road
Childrens Play Area	Centre for the Community	Minor Road
Conservation Area	Fire Station	Bus Route
Flood Zone 2	GPs and Health Centres	Railway
Flood Zone 3	Hotel	Train Station
Green Belt	Library	Industrial Park
Local Nature Reserve	Petrol Station	Main Employer
Public Park	Place of Worship	Place of Interest
Site of Nature Conservation Importance	Independent School	Strategic Employment Land
Strategic Open Urban Land	Infant / Primary / Junior School	Town and Village Centre
	Secondary School	
	College	
	Other educational	
	Village Hall	
	Youth Centre	
		Boundary
		Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green Settlement Area
		Borough Boundary
		Design and Character Area

Figure 22. Policy layers for Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green

Sustainability

- 4.76 There does not appear to be one core centre in this settlement. The train station at Hinchley Wood is next to a Local Centre with a small range of local shops and a GP service. This is a sustainable location for those residents living in the adjoining streets (sub-area DHW03) who can access these services on foot. This is the same for residents living close to the Thames Ditton Local Centre in sub area DHW02 and the train station on the borders of sub area DHW08. Both stations provide train services to London Waterloo, Woking and Guildford. There is no large supermarket in the settlement and residents must travel to Esher or Surbiton/ Kingston to access these and further retail and other services.
- 4.77 There are a number of infant, primary and junior schools across the settlement and a secondary school located in sub-area DHW03. Bus services provide public transport to destinations outside the Borough such as Kingston and Guildford. Local routes include buses services to local schools and other key towns in Elmbridge such as Molesey and Cobham. The settlement contains key road links allowing easy access to the A3 and M25.

Opportunities for higher density developments

- 4.78 Higher density development is likely to continue to be built in the settlements Local Centres due to the opportunities for smaller units over shops and conversions of offices. As indicated above, this has resulted in high densities but not necessarily high numbers of dwellings being built.
- 4.79 In line with the Government's objectives set out in the Housing White Paper, higher density development should be encouraged around key transport hubs¹¹. Carefully designed flatted development should be encouraged around the Hinchley Wood and Thames Ditton rail stations.
- 4.80 As the character of this settlement is low rise, it is unlikely that tall buildings or high rise flatted development will be built. Instead, opportunities for higher densities could be achieved by the conversion or rebuild of single dwellings into flatted developments that appear to look like larger dwellings. This will be particularly important on roads such as the Portsmouth Road (A309) due to its bus routes and accessibility to Kingston and Cobham (M25).

¹¹ DCLG, Housing White Paper, p32 and p88

Cobham, Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon

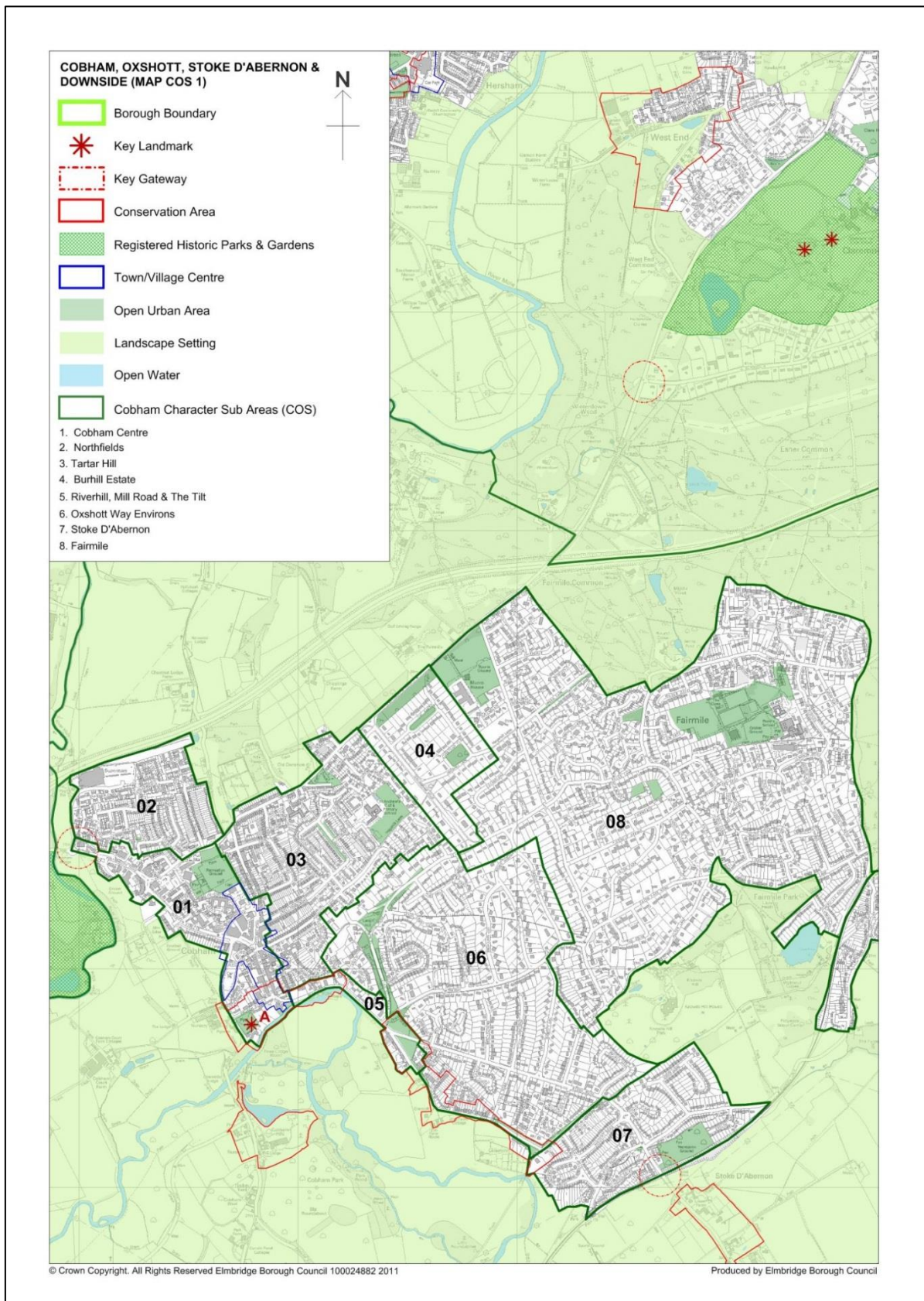


Figure 23. Policy layers for Cobham, Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon

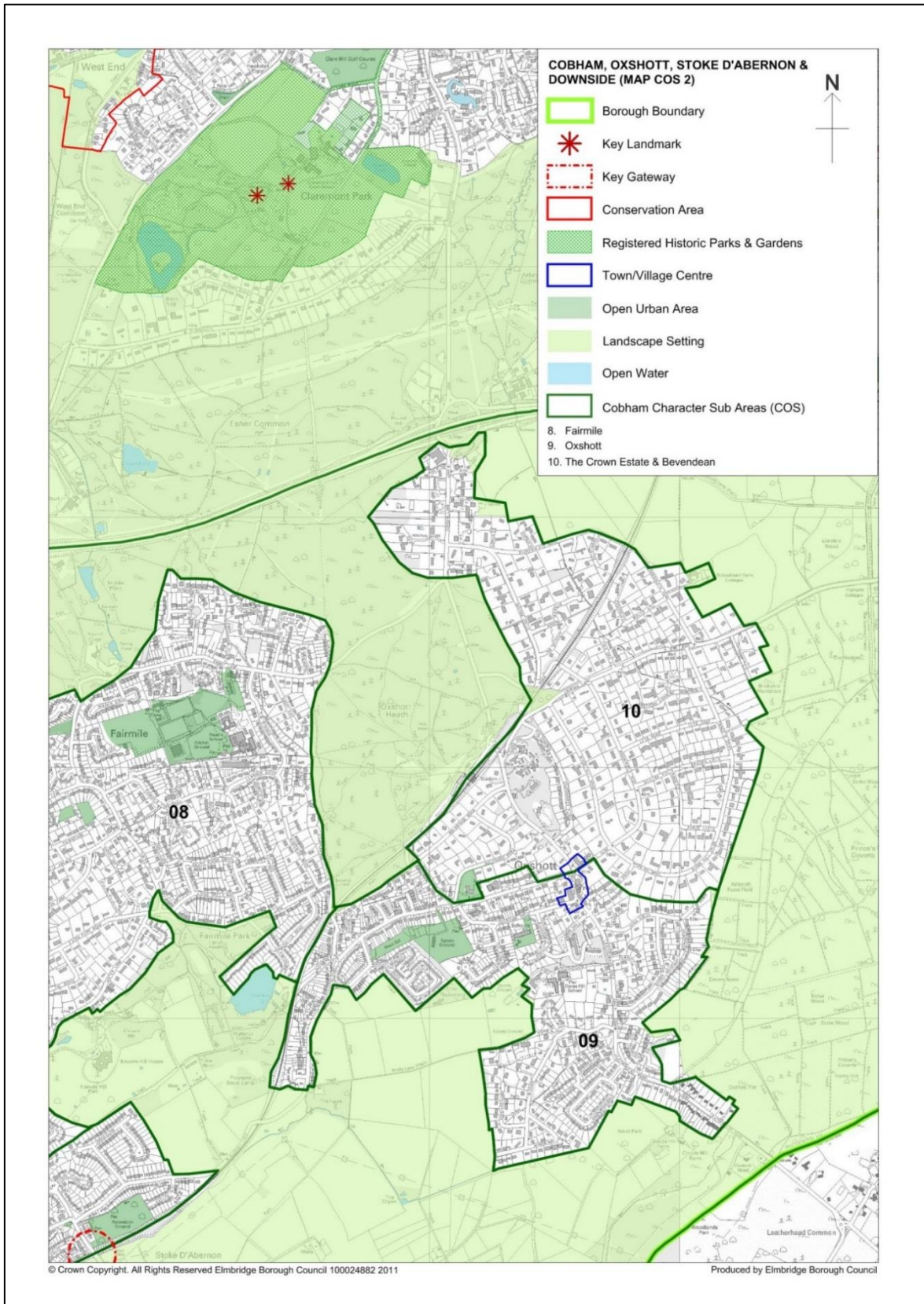


Figure 24. Policy layers for Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon

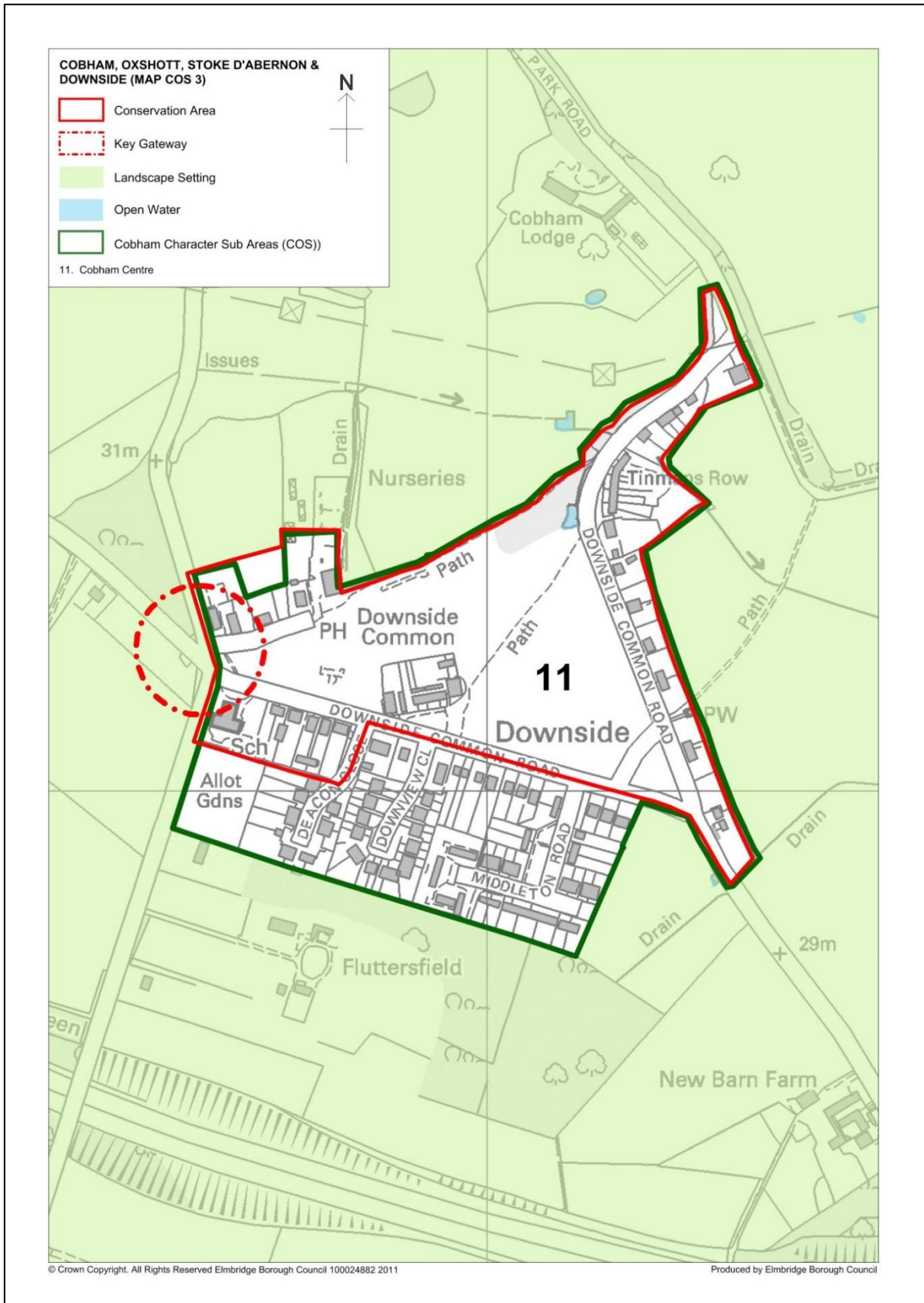


Figure 25. Policy layers for Cobham Downsides

Table 13 – Cobham Density figures: **Highest Density/** **Lowest Density**

Cobham						
Sub-area no.	Sub-area Name	No. of dwellings	Density of sub-area		Density of sub-area excluding open green spaces and other specified areas	
			Units	Area (Ha)	Dph	Area
COS01	Cobham District Centre	636	34.05	18.68	30.03	20.98
COS02	Northfields	687	26.63	25.79	22.33	30.76
COS03	Tartar Hill	1205	58.06	20.75	53.57	22.49
COS04	Burhill Estate	81	25.48	3.18	23.03	3.52
COS05	Riverhill, Mill Road & The Tilt	173	13.65	12.67	11.56	14.96
COS06	Oxshott Way Environs	725	112.94	6.42	107.67	6.73
COS07	South of Stoke Road	485	32.17	15.07	31.67	15.31
COS08	Fairmile	1465	242.00	6.06	220.74	6.63
COS09	Oxshott	985	111.45	8.84	104.92	9.38

COS10	The Crown Estate & Bevendean	568	162.08	3.5	161.59	3.52
COS11	Downside	139	15.78	8.81	9.89	14.05
Settlement Area Average		7150	834.32	8.56	777	9.20

Existing densities in Cobham, Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon

- 4.81 There is no sub-area in Cobham that is currently over 30dph (including open spaces etc.) and only one sub-area that is just over 30dph once the open spaces and other specified areas are excluded. This is sub-area COS02 Northfields, which includes a late 20th century housing development consisting smaller properties on much smaller plots. The Sainsbury's superstore (4.1ha) has been excluded from this sub-area and this takes the density up to 30.76dph. COS03 (Tartar Hill) has the second highest density at 20.75dph. This is due to its tight network grid of streets with terraced properties and semi-detached houses with small front gardens and lesser plots sizes. The sub-area density increases to 22.49dph once the open spaces as well as St Andrew's primary school has been excluded.
- 4.82 Burhill Estate (COS04) has the lowest density across the settlement at 3.18dph and 3.52dph once the open spaces have been excluded. This is a small sub-area consisting of four private roads. The properties are all detached houses situated on large spacious plots and hence the density is very low.
- 4.83 Sub-area COS10 'The Crown Estate and Bevendean' also has a low density of 3.5dph and 3.52dph once the open spaces have been excluded. This is due to the sub-area containing the third exclusive private estate in the borough which was previously protected from density increases by the 'Special Low Density Residential Area' designation and policy featured in the former Local Plan (see Appendix 1). As well as this policy and designation, all purchasers of properties also must become members of the estate company and abide by certain terms. One of the objectives of the company is to preserve and improve where possible the existing amenities and character of the Estate as a first-class residential private estate. Properties in this estate are subject to legal covenants that protect the low-density character of the area.
- 4.84 Apart from the areas already mentioned above and all open spaces, there are other areas that have been excluded from two other sub-areas. Munro House (7.1ha) and Reeds School (12ha) has been excluded from sub-area COS08 Fairmile. Additionally, Oxshott Village Sports Ground (2.8ha) and Danes Hill School and Pavilion (2.5ha) have been omitted from COS09 (Oxshott).

Table 14 – Weybridge Density figures: Highest Density/ Lowest Density

Cobham average permitted densities		
Sub-area no.	Sub-area Name	Average density permitted since July 2011 (Net density based on site area)
		DPH (number of applications)
COS01	Cobham District Centre	68.66 (7)
COS02	Northfields	43.71 (3)
COS03	Tartar Hill	30.32 (5)
COS04	Burhill Estate	9.69 (2)
COS05	Riverhill, Mill Road & The Tilt	18.59 (2)
COS06	Oxshott Way Environs	13.40 (6)
COS07	South of Stoke Road	35.68 (4)
COS08	Fairmile	10.92 (27)
COS09	Oxshott	19.74 (21)
COS10	The Crown Estate & Bevendean	5.72 (17)
COS11	Downside	-

Average permitted densities

4.85 Sub-area COS01 Cobham District Centre has the highest average density across the settlement for planning permissions granted between 20 July 2011 and 20 July 2017 at 68.66dph. One planning permission within this sub-area has a dph of 194.81. This is due to the plot being some 0.02ha in size and the development incorporating an extension to the retail unit and a new dwelling attached to the existing shop resulting in two additional units. The smaller the site size the higher the density (see figure 12).



Figure 26: 21 Anyards Road, Cobham, 194.8dph

- 4.86 There is one application in the sub-area that has a relatively high yield and a high density. This is for 24 units on a plot of 0.2ha resulting in a density of 120dph. This consists of rebuilding the ground floor retail buildings and creating flats above. This type of development is appropriate for a District Centre location and explains the high-density averages witnessed in this sub-area.
- 4.87 Three other sub-areas in Cobham have averages of over 30dph in granted planning permissions. The highest densities were for 57.14dph for two similar planning permissions in COS02. The first was for the erection of a building containing four flats following demolition of garages on a 0.07-hectare site. And the second was granted for four terraced houses after the demolition of garages on another 0.07ha plot (see figure 13).



Figure 27: Gavell Road, Cobham, 56.3dph

- 4.88 Unsurprisingly, sub-areas COS10 and COS04 have low densities permitted and this is largely due to their existing low-density characters. The two applications permitted in COS04 are for one and two net dwellings on sites of 0.13 and 0.5 hectares which results in densities of 4dph and 15dph. This is the same for COS10 however these plots are much larger, so the densities are even lower, ranging from 12.5 to 2.07dph. There are no permissions for additional dwellings within the private Crown Estate and the previous Special Low Density Residential Area.

Site visit observations

4.89 The area generally comprises large houses in semi-rural settings, with large semi-private and private estates. However, the older expansion of Cobham (nineteenth century) and later post-war estates to the north and east of the District Centre do provide some more varied housing including terraced cottages and ex-local authority estates. There is no high rise residential development and only some properties above two-storeys in the District Centre. Generally, the settlement is low rise and low density in character.

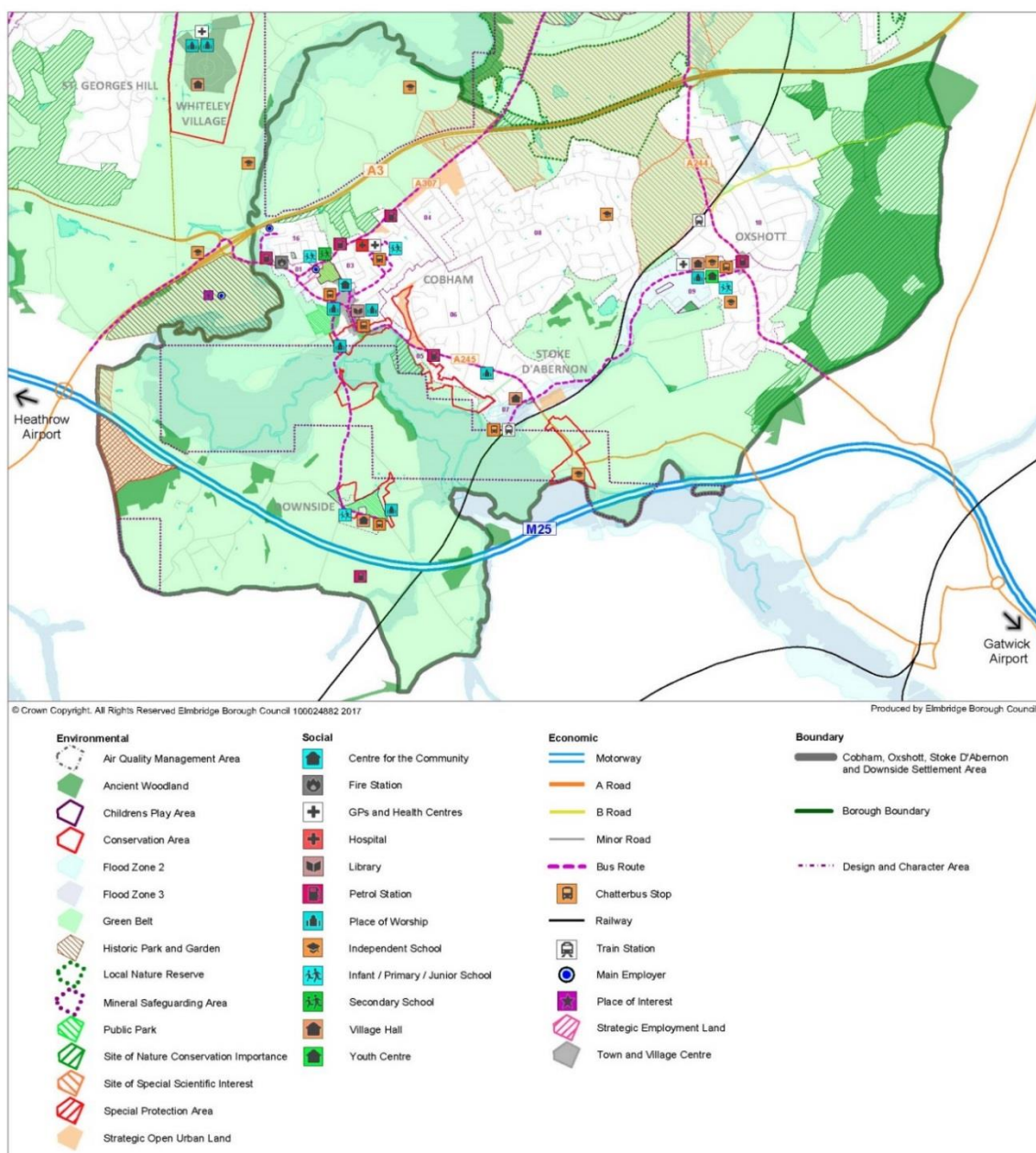


Figure 28. Policy layers for Cobham, Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon

Sustainability of the settlement

- 4.90 Sub-area COS01, Cobham District Centre is the most sustainable area due to the local shops and services. Oxshott Local Centre in sub-area COS09 also contains local shops and services. However, residents in Oxshott would have to travel into Cobham to access a larger supermarket. Residents in this settlement would also use Kingston and Guildford for a wider range of shops and services and could access these from the local bus route or main roads into these two regional shopping centres.
- 4.91 Primary schools are located on the bus route and within the main centres of Downside, Cobham and Oxshott. Both Cobham and Oxshott have medical centres and there is a village hall in each area including Stoke D'Abernon. Cobham has excellent road links to the A3 and M25 allowing easy access to Gatwick and Heathrow. The new Chatterbus has provided an improved local bus service to the retail centre at Brooklands, Weybridge town centre and Cobham health centre.

Opportunities for higher density developments

- 4.92 Like the other settlements of Elmbridge, higher density development can be achieved in the town and village centres in Cobham and Oxshott as there is greater scope for sub division, conversions and flats above shops and offices. As these are often located on smaller plots, the density rises although the number of new homes built will not be necessarily high.
- 4.93 Due to the low rise and low-density character of this settlement, creative solutions will need to be considered. Flats within buildings that look like single dwellings could work and these could be located on main roads into the centres for easy access to services.
- 4.94 The two train stations in this settlement area are located within the Green Belt. Higher density development could be located within a 2-mile radius of the station (in the adjoining urban area) to allow people to walk to the station. A creative design solution would be required to enhance the largely low density suburban character.

Walton-on-Thames

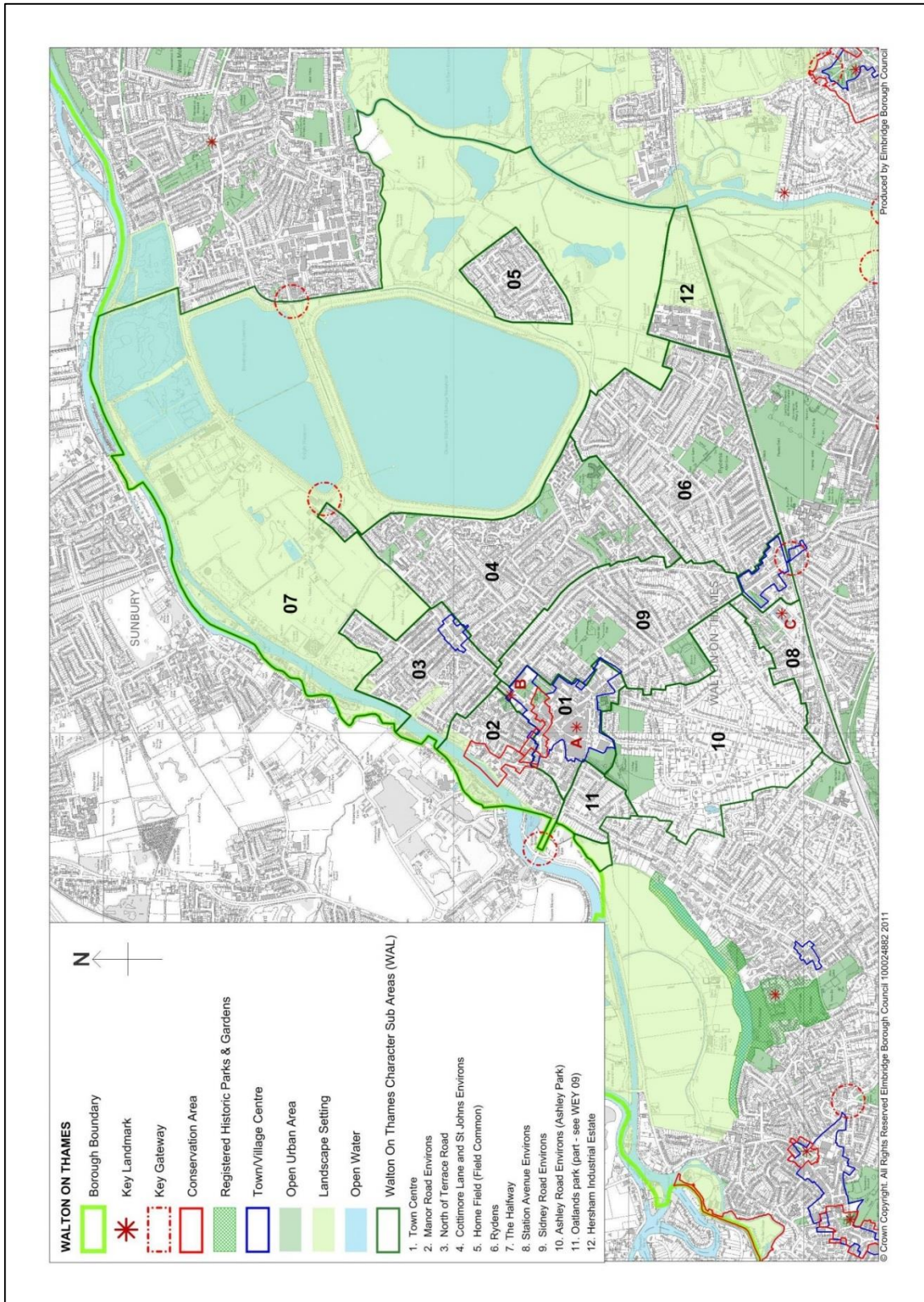


Figure 29. Policy layers for Walton-on-Thames

**Table 15 – Walton-on-Thames Density figures: Highest Density/
Lowest Density**

Walton on Thames						
Sub-area no.	Sub-area name	No. of dwellings	Density of sub-area		Density of sub-area excluding open green spaces and other specified areas	
			Units	Area (Ha)	Dph	Area (Ha)
WAL01	Town Centre	1156	29.72	38.89	27.10	42.64
WAL02	Manor Road Environs	694	30.44	22.8	28.59	23.71
WAL03	North of Terrace Road	1147	39.68	28.91	38.09	30.11
WAL04	Cottimore Lane and St Johns Environs	3042	96.12	31.65	84.68	35.91
WAL05	Home field (Field Common)	581	20.49	28.34	20.49	28.34
WAL06	Rydens	1896	93.38	20.3	87.84	21.58
WAL07	The Halfway	92	8.47	10.86	5.83	15.76
WAL08	Station Avenue Environs	562	20.42	27.52	15.56	34.18

WAL 09	Sidney Road Environs	1164	67.93	17.13	62.20	18.71
WAL 10	Ashley Road Environs (Ashley Park)	509	93.14	5.46	86.24	5.90
WAL 11	Oatlands Park (part-see WEY 09)	128	11.55	11.08	11.46	11.17
WAL 12	Hersham Industrial Estate	36	21.32	1.69	3.32	10.84
Settlement Area Average		11007	532.70	20.66	471.4	23.34

Existing Densities

- 4.95 Only two sub-areas in the Walton-on-Thames settlement area over 30dph. One of these sub-areas is the town centre WAL01 at 38.89dph. This increases to 42.64dph after excluding the natural greenspace at Church Street. The higher density is largely due to 'The Heart', a mixed-use development that developed at 300dph. The second sub-area to be over 30dph in Walton is WAL04 Cottimore Lane and St John's Environs at 31.65dph. This increases to 35.91dph after excluding open spaces and other specified areas such as Grovelands School (1.7ha), Walton Oak School and the hospital (3.5ha). This is largely due to its medium to high density inter-war and post-war houses and flats.
- 4.96 Station Road Environs (sub-area WAL08) also has a current density of over 30dph when excluding open spaces and the Birds Eye (Walton Court) office building leading to the station (4ha). This is largely due to the sub-area consisting of flatted developments, maisonettes and smaller terraced properties. The density at sub-area WAL03 increases from 28.91 to 30.11dph once the open space at Felix Road is excluded. This sub-area is characterised by its fine grain and consistency of plot size and ratio. It also contains a flatted development at Thamesmead, flats over shops in its local parade and includes many terraced houses located in grid-like streets. These all contribute to a higher density.
- 4.97 The lowest density sub-area is WAL12 (Hersham Industrial Estate). This is because the area is 21 hectares in size and there are only 36 residential properties within it. Once the Strategic Employment Land at the trading estate and neighbouring sewage works (18ha) have been excluded, the sub-area achieves 10.84dph. The lowest density, once open spaces have been excluded, falls within sub-area WAL10 Ashley Road Environs. This sub-area consists of a private estate containing large detached houses set in regular generous plots which explains the low density.

- 4.98 Other than those already mentioned above, other specified areas that were excluded from the sub-areas are as follows: the fire station, ambulance station, Fernleigh Day Centre the offices at 42-50 Hersham Road and the depot, works and Peugeot garage at the Halfway (2.16ha in total) were excluded from sub-area WAL07. Additionally, the Pavilion (2.21ha) and Ashley Church of England School field (2.14ha) were omitted from WAL10 Ashley Road Environs (Ashley Park).
- 4.99 The average density of properties in Walton on Thames is 20.66dph without excluding any open spaces, commercial or industrial land.

**Table 16 – Walton-on-Thames Density figures: Highest Density/
Lowest Density**

Walton-on-Thames average permitted densities		
Sub-area no.	Sub-area Name	Average density permitted since July 2011 (Net density based on site area)
		DPH (number of applications)
WAL01	Town Centre	147.06 (14)
WAL02	Manor Road Environs	36.03 (2)
WAL03	North of Terrace Road	76.56 (8)
WAL04	Cottimore Lane and St Johns Environs	79.96 (9)
WAL05	Home field (Field Common)	118.29 (9)
WAL06	Rydens	42.35 (4)
WAL07	The Halfway	195.24 (2)
WAL08	Station Avenue Environs	50 (1)
WAL09	Sidney Road Environs	33.46 (2)
WAL10	Ashley Road Environs (Ashley Park)	7.92 (2)
WAL11	Oatlands Park (part- see WEY 09)	-
WAL12	Hersham Industrial Estate	171.43 (2)

Average permitted densities

- 4.100 10 sub-areas in Walton on Thames have average densities of over 30dph for planning permissions granted between 20 July 2011 and 20 July 2017. Three of these sub-areas had average densities over 50dph and four had over 100dph. The highest average density seen was 195.24dph for two permissions in sub-area WAL07 (The Halfway). Both applications are not for particularly high yielding developments only providing two additional net dwellings each. However, one involves the conversion of two existing flats to four flats in total and one is an extension of an existing property to provide two flats and hence these small plot sizes result in densities of 190.48dph and 200dph.
- 4.101 The density is also high for sub-area WAL12 (Hersham Industrial Estate). This is due to one of the applications being at 500dph as it involved the demolition of a bungalow and the erection of a building containing 5 flats. Again, the development size is small at 0.01ha and hence density increases greatly. Densities are also high for sub-area WAL01 (Town Centre) at 147.06dph. Once more, this is due to the nature of development and the small site sizes. The highest density at 453.85ha involves the creation of 59 sheltered units after the demolition of an existing office building (See figure 14 below). Much of the development in this sub-area consists of changes of use from offices to residential, conversions and sub divisions, which contribute to its high average density.



Figure 30: Ash Lodge, 15 Churchfield Road, Walton-on-Thames, 453.8dph

- 4.102 Sub-area WAL05 also achieved a high density of 118.29dph in granted planning permissions. One application achieved a gross density of 690dph however it only yielded three additional dwellings. Other permissions include the demolition of garages and garage blocks and the erection of six and four new dwellings. These achieved densities of 40dph and 63.49dph respectively.
- 4.103 The lowest average density was for two permissions in sub-area WAL10 Ashley Road Environs (Ashley Park) at 7.92dph. These were for additional dwellings at 3.33dph and 12.5dph. These lower densities are in character with the sub-area's residential environment. Sub-area WAL11 Oatlands

Park did not have any planning permissions granted that resulted in a net increase in dwellings between July 2011 and July 2017. This could be due to the very tightly arranged roads and small plots which do not easily allow for additional dwellings or sub division of plots.

Site visit observations

- 4.104 This is the only settlement in Elmbridge to feature high rise residential tower blocks. Located in Wellington Close, three high rise towers (at 10 storeys high) contain between 35 to 44 flats in each tower block; 132 flats in total. They were built in the 1960s and need regeneration. 'The Heart' development, built in 2004, is also high rise extending to seven storeys in some places and containing 279 flats.
- 4.105 Other than in the town centre, residential roads are predominately low rise with a variety of different housing types from the detached properties in Ashley Park to terraced housing at Cottimore Lane and St John's environs.

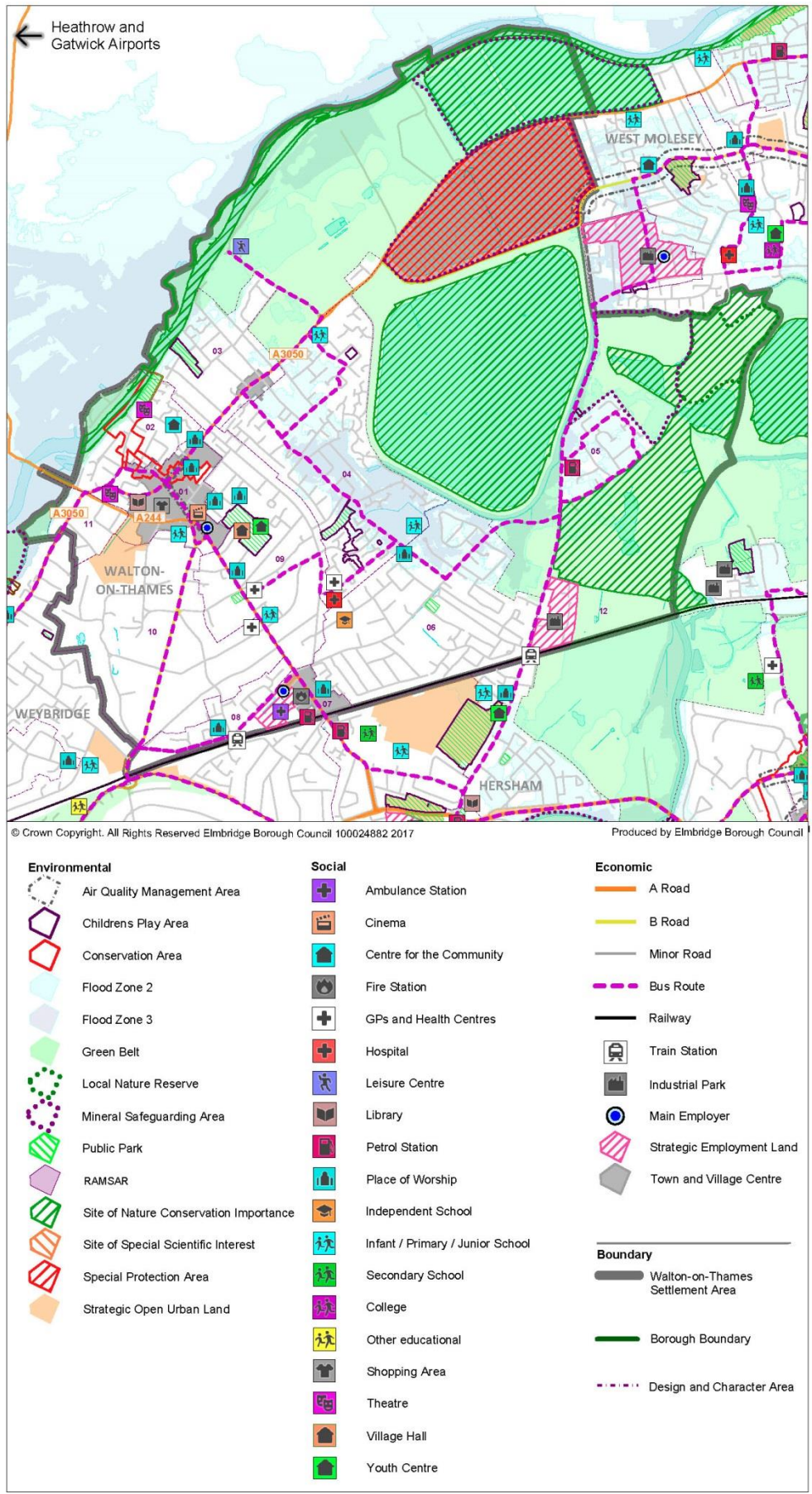


Figure 31. Policy layers for Walton-on-Thames

Sustainability

- 4.106 The settlement's train station is in sub-area WAL08 (Station Avenue Environs) providing transport into central London and Guildford for Walton and Hersham residents. There are eight bus services available across the Borough providing transport into Staines, Kingston and Chertsey. This includes important places such as Ashford Hospital, St Peters Hospital, Heathrow Airport, the Xcel leisure centre and local schools. Two major 'A' roads run vertically and horizontally across the settlement providing private motorised access to the M3 and A3.
- 4.107 The settlement of Walton has three primary schools, no secondary school and two independent schools at primary level. Walton Town Centre (WAL01) provides the retail and leisure facilities. The Xcel centre is located to the north of the Borough and not within an urban sub-area, but this is accessible by bus and car. Local employment opportunities are available in the town centre and industrial units at the Halfway and Hersham Trading Estate. There are five doctor's surgeries located within the settlement and a community hospital.

Opportunities for higher density developments

- 4.108 The existing residential area is established and therefore future high-density development is likely to be through conversions, sub-divisions and new flatted development. As the Town Centre has many local services and good bus routes, further high-density housing could be supported here. Sub-area WAL08 could also accommodate higher rise development due to its location close to the train station offering fast services into London and Guildford.

Overall Findings

- 5.1 Existing densities across Elmbridge are low and none of the eight settlements has an existing density of over 30dph. There are only three high rise tower blocks in the Borough located in Walton-on-Thames. Overall high-rise development is not characteristic and low density, low rise developments prevail, and this is particularly obvious in the Borough's three special low-density areas.

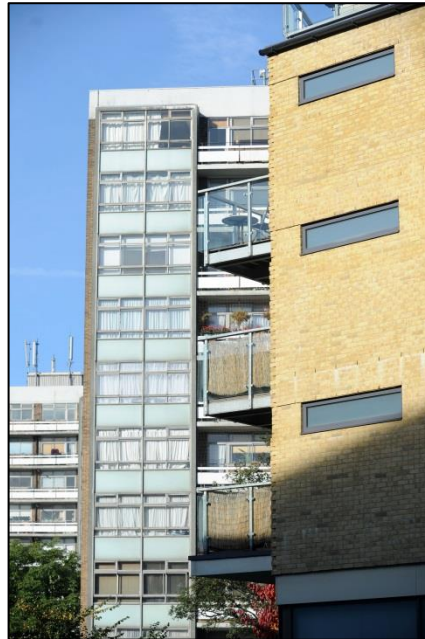


Figure 32: Ten Storey high flats at Wellington House, Walton-on-Thames



Figure 33: Typical detached house in a low-density residential area in Cobham

- 5.2 In line with Core Strategy policy CS17, planning permissions are being granted for densities over 40dph in the Boroughs town and village centres. As the data does not include prior notification applications, this has not been a result of the permitted development changes in 2015. This is mainly due to the type of developments being built such as conversions, subdivisions and flats above shops. Plot sizes are usually smaller and hence densities increase. The assessments have confirmed that the minimum target is being exceeded for these town and village centre locations and hence the density policy has been successful.
- 5.3 However, this is not the case for planning permissions within suburban areas. These densities are varied with some exceeding minimums but many still being granted for densities under 30dph. The character of the area plays a part in this as does the market drive for single additional dwellings on larger plots. However, the study has shown examples where sympathetic alterations can be made to existing dwellings to allow for flatted development.
- 5.4 The assessment has highlighted the fact that densities can be high, but this does not necessarily result in high numbers of housing units being built. This presents the conundrum that the promotion of high density may not help in the supply of housing.
- 5.5 Each settlement has similar sustainability factors with good access to the road network, train stations and local shops and services. Many of the Borough's train stations are located away from the shopping centre and often in the Green Belt which prevents housing development around the key transport hubs, which is what the Government are promoting.
- 5.6 Residential areas are well-established in all the settlements and land for large housing development is scarce. This presents a challenge and means more creative solutions are required to accommodate more housing in the urban area. It is likely that flats and apartments will be key to increase density and housing numbers in the urban area.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- 6.1 This study has provided a detailed view of each of the Borough's settlements in terms of its current density, average densities of planning permissions and whether certain sub-areas in the settlement could potentially accommodate higher density development without impacting on the character of the area. This provides crucial information to help assess and support densities being optimised across the Borough within the urban areas in line with national policy

How will this work be used?

- 6.2 The information contained in the study has already informed the Urban Capacity Study (UCS), which is another key evidence base document. This document identifies land and buildings where the potential may exist for new housing development within the defined urban areas. It used each of the settlements assessment and findings to create a range of density multipliers that have been used to estimate development potential across the Borough, which is a key stage in the methodology of this document.
- 6.3 As well as supporting other evidence work, the information collected in this study will help with the formation of a new local density policy. In response to the Government's recent planning reforms and revised national policy, Elmbridge Borough Council needs to make efficient use of land and avoid building homes at low densities. Each settlement area has identified the opportunities for higher densities and this will inform a local density policy for Elmbridge.
- 6.4 The information collected in the study will help to identify where minimum housing densities would be appropriate. It will be helpful when setting out a range of densities to reflect the characteristics of different areas rather than having one broad density range. This is in line with the NPPF 2019.
- 6.5 In addition to local plan preparation, decision makers including planning officers and Councillors will need to use this information and national planning policy as a material planning consideration when assessing planning applications. When reaching a balanced decision greater weight may be attributed to the need to deliver new homes subject to conformity with other relevant policies. This study provides the evidence needed to justify future decisions where density can be and must be optimised.

Appendix 1 – Former Local Plan 2000 policy now replaced

Special low density residential areas

Policy - Hsg17:

In the special low density residential areas of St. George's Hill Estate, Burwood Park and the Crown Estate, Oxshott, as identified on the proposals map, in order to protect their distinctive very low density characteristics, mature landscape setting and cohesiveness of the original design concept, proposals for redevelopment, infilling, extensions and ancillary buildings will only be permitted if: -

- (i) the resulting dwelling plot/plots are no smaller than those prevailing in the surrounding area;
- (ii) the resulting road frontage of the plot/plots is of a similar width to those already existing in the surrounding area, the resulting dwelling is located centrally within the plot frontage and new plots are not contrived in shape;
- (iii) the proposals are limited to a size that does not dominate the plot, in terms of the distance between existing and proposed dwellings, makes allowance for sufficient distances from all site boundaries to retain the degree of spaciousness and is not out of scale with other dwellings predominant in the surrounding area;
- (iv) no part of a proposed dwelling, including garage, dominates the road frontage or encroaches on the existing building line, where distinct, of the surrounding area; and
- (v) existing landscape features particularly on all site boundaries, which make a significant contribution to the character of the locality, are retained where appropriate.

In the case of St. George's Hill Estate, as identified on the proposals map, the council will not permit any new single dwelling plots to be less than 0.4 hectare in extent, not including any road or verge.

ALL PROPOSALS SHOULD ALSO COMPLY WITH POLICIES HSG16 AND HSG18.

Extracted supporting text of Policy HSG17 below from the former Local Plan

- 4.41. Elmbridge is fortunate in possessing many lower density areas of character and quality but The Crown Estate, Oxshott, St. George's Hill Estate, Weybridge and Burwood Park, Hersham, are all large, well-established residential areas with a distinctive low density, verdant appearance, retaining much of their original design concept and which make a particularly distinct contribution to the urban fabric of the Borough.
- 4.42. Since properties in these areas have large gardens, there is often development pressure to create additional dwelling plots through subdivision. If the proposed plots are smaller than those generally available in the surrounding area, the attractive setting of the original houses and original concept can be swiftly damaged. At the same time, the trees, hedges and shrubs, which contribute greatly to the character and quality of the areas come under threat in order to create additional accesses, increased visibility and hard surfaces for parking and turning. Therefore, the Council considers that these 3 areas should be accorded special protection because development pressures could seriously threaten their unique character. The objective of the Policy is to protect their distinctive, very low-density characteristics, mature landscape setting and original design concept.
- 4.43. The criteria used for selection of areas of special character are: -
- (i) a large, long-established, low density residential area;
 - (ii) a homogeneous identity with a distinctive, identifiable, cohesive character;
 - (iii) the original design concept remains - not having been lost or undermined by new development which has been somewhat unsympathetic to the original nature;
 - (iv) attractive, mainly substantial houses usually with mature trees, gardens and hedges; and
 - (v) a spacious, arcadian landscape setting which often includes grass road verges and street trees of variety and substance.
- 4.44. The Council will consider proposals for redevelopment of dwellings within these 3 areas, against the 5 criteria outlined in the Policy above. Of particular importance is the need to ensure that proposed dwellings do not dominate the plot or road frontage and are not out of scale with other dwellings in the surrounding area. Thus, there needs to be ample space on all sides of the proposed dwelling so as to avoid any feeling of a continuous built frontage, when viewed from the road, or loss of spaciousness. No part of the dwelling or the garage should encroach on the existing building line, if one exists, and existing landscape features, including hedges, which contribute to the particular character of the area, should be retained. In addition, the St George's Hill Iron Age Fort, is an important scheduled monument which extends to 5.5 hectares and any proposed development affecting its site or setting will be subject to the archaeological policies of the Plan, Policies HEN16 and HEN17.

4.45. The Council consider that a plot size within this Policy can only be stipulated with regard to the St. George's Hill Estate. The 0.4-hectare plot size referred to is taken to be the metric equivalent of the former 1-acre standard. A single recommended plot size cannot be applied within the other two areas of the Crown Estate, Oxshott, and Burwood Park, Hersham, because of the original variable densities within these areas. Some further guidance on this issue is contained in the Supplementary Planning Guidance "Low Density Residential Areas".