



Urban Capacity Study

Elmbridge Borough Council:

Final Report

April 2018

ELMBRIDGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Urban Capacity Study

Zoe Belton

PlanningPolicy@elbridge.gov.uk



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Contact information:

Jon Herbert, BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Director, Troy Planning + Design

Aldwych House

71-91 Aldwych, London WC2B 4HN

jherbert@troyplanning.com

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Contents

CONTENTS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	6
2. DEVELOPING THE METHOD	11
3. IDENTIFYING THE CAPACITY.....	14
4. UNCONSTRAINED CAPACITY	17
5. SITE DISCOUNTING.....	27
6. CAPACITY ESTIMATES AND MONITORING.....	46
7. CONCLUDING COMMENTS	50
APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION LETTER - RESIDENTS.....	53
APPENDIX B: CONSULTATION LETTER - 'DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY'	56
APPENDIX C: METHOD SUMMARY FOR CONSULTATION WITH DTC BODIES.....	62
APPENDIX D: EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DENSITIES.....	70
APPENDIX E: HOUSE PRICE INFORMATION.....	75

Executive Summary

As part of its plan-making process, Elmbridge Borough Council's Planning Policy Team commissioned Troy Planning + Design to prepare an Urban Capacity Study with the aim of assessing the potential to accommodate new housing development within the defined urban areas across the Borough.

The study involved forensic assessments of key focus areas, comprising the walking catchments around the railway stations, town, district and local centres. A less forensic but still systematic review of other areas was also undertaken, involving a review of mapping, site information held by the Council, and visits to each area.

The study took a 'policy-off' approach in the early stages to identify as many opportunities as possible, with the suitability of sites then discussed with Council Officers. Estimates of site capacity were generated through the use of density multipliers reflecting the character and built-form of different parts of the Borough. The viability of sites was then considered and phased into delivery periods, each of five years. Those sites considered to have limited development prospects were discounted from the study.

It should be noted that this study is not a statement of Council policy. Rather, it is a technical document that comprises part of the evidence base assisting in production of the new Local Plan for Elmbridge Borough Council. The study identifies land and buildings where the potential may exist for new housing development in the new Local Plan period. Inclusion of a site within the study does not constitute an allocation nor influence planning applications.

This document is just one of a suite of technical reports that have been prepared by the Council to inform the new Local Plan. Other studies include, for example, infrastructure delivery, open space, employment and retail provision. These need to be considered together to help inform policy decisions, and could affect both the estimated capacity of a particular site, or the total capacity for a settlement or the authority area.

The study involved initial consultation with the Council's duty-to-cooperate bodies, the development industry, the Council's Asset Management Team, residents and Council Members.

Our findings are presented in Section 6 of this report. In short, **we estimate that the potential exists to accommodate approximately 5,454 new dwellings in the existing built-up areas across the Borough over the next fifteen years.**

Any assessment of urban capacity is, by definition, a snapshot in time. Although the study can be used as a proactive tool by the Council to help bring forward land for development, some sites will not come forward for whatever reason. Some other unidentified sites will though. These will generally balance themselves out. It is therefore important that the findings of the study are regularly reviewed, testing the assumptions underpinning the estimates and monitoring the progress of identified sites over time.

1. Introduction

Purpose of the Study

- 1.1 Elmbridge Borough Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan. Consultation drafts of this indicated potential for releasing part of the Green Belt for new housing¹. Responses to the consultation suggested that:

“The Council had not done enough to find sites in the urban areas... it must seek to deliver higher densities in our existing town and district centres”².
- 1.2 This urban capacity study has been commissioned in response to the consultation. The study has explored the potential for accommodating new housing within the existing built-up areas of the Borough, with particular focus on the town and district centres, the catchment areas around these and the train stations in the Borough. There are six town and district centres in the borough³, nine local centres⁴, and ten stations⁵. Perhaps, uniquely, the historic pattern of development in Elmbridge has resulted in stations being located away from the centres. This means that the area of search for additional development is extensive.
- 1.3 Elmbridge is an area where there is very real pressure on land for new development. It is located in close proximity to London, Guildford and Woking, and existing built-up areas in the borough are bounded by Green Belt. Although the Council’s OAHN is for 474 dwellings per annum, figures published by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) suggest that, under the proposed standardised OAHN method, this is expected to increase to 612 dwellings per year over the period 2016 to 2026⁶. Furthermore, recent ONS data shows that Elmbridge is the eighth most popular destination in the country for people to move to from London. In the year 2015/16, more than 4,000 people made this move⁷.

¹ Elmbridge Borough Council, December 2016, Elmbridge Local Plan: Strategic Options Consultation (Regulation 18)

² Elmbridge Borough Council, July 2017, Elmbridge Local Plan: Strategic Options Consultation (Regulation 18); Summary of Consultation Responses

³ Walton-on-Thames is identified in the hierarchy outlined in Policy CS1 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy (July 2011) as a Town Centre. Weybridge, Cobham, Esher, East Molesey and Hersham are designated as District Centres.

⁴ Claygate, East Molesey Bridge Road, Hinchley Wood, Oxshott, Oatlands, Thames Ditton, Walton Terrace Road, Walton Halfway, Weybridge Queens Road

⁵ Thames Ditton, Hampton Court, Esher, Hersham, Walton on Thames, Weybridge, Hinchley Wood, Claygate, Oxshott, Cobham and Stoke D’Abernon

⁶ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals> (accessed January 2018)

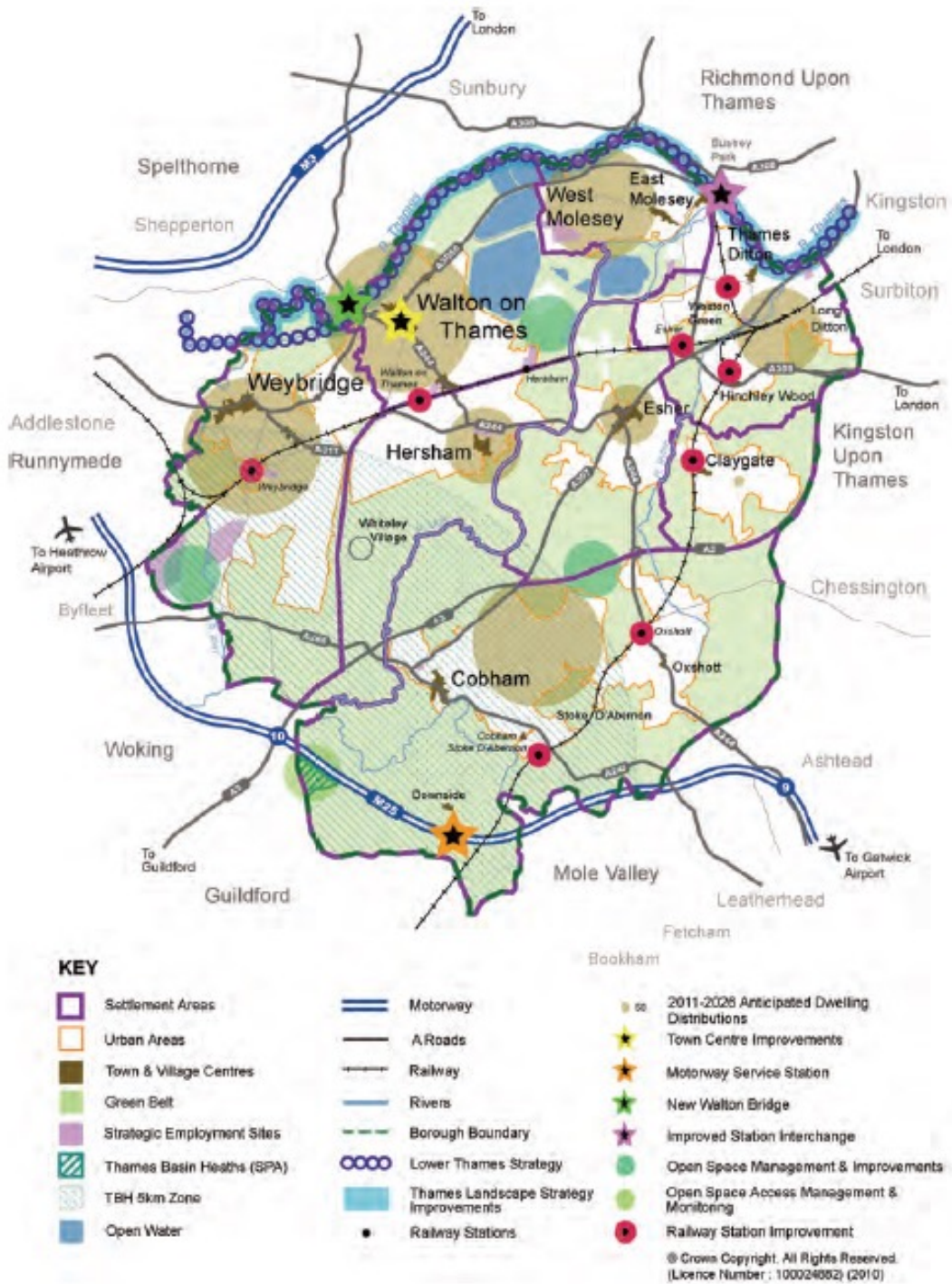
⁷ See information from ONS/Barratt used to inform: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/dec/29/londoners-leaving-capital-for-brighton-birmingham-and-bristol> (accessed January 2018)

- 1.4 It is important that future growth is planned for in a way that makes most efficient use of land and that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development (which is central to the National Planning Policy Framework).
- 1.5 Over the last decade the approach to housing land availability assessment has perhaps underplayed the potential that urban areas afford. This is recognised by MHCLG, who now require Councils to prepare Brownfield Land Registers, and by the Council itself, with the preferred option for the Local Plan looking to optimise opportunities in the existing urban area.
- 1.6 However, opportunities are constrained in Elmbridge: the borough has a high proportion of Green Belt and areas that are prone to flooding. Equally, topography, particularly in the south of the Borough, can represent a challenge for new development. Furthermore, the borough is home to a number of large, low density private estates, including the Crown Estate, where plot sizes and dimensions are controlled through covenants. Because of this, a balance needs to be struck between accommodating new homes in urban areas and responding to local character and context.
- 1.7 The Urban Capacity Study helps identify opportunities for housing potential within the urban area and although it does not represent a statement of policy, it is intended to help inform choices in the new Local Plan. Equally, it will help inform the Brownfield Land Register, the five-year supply of land for housing, and longer-term opportunities.

The Study area

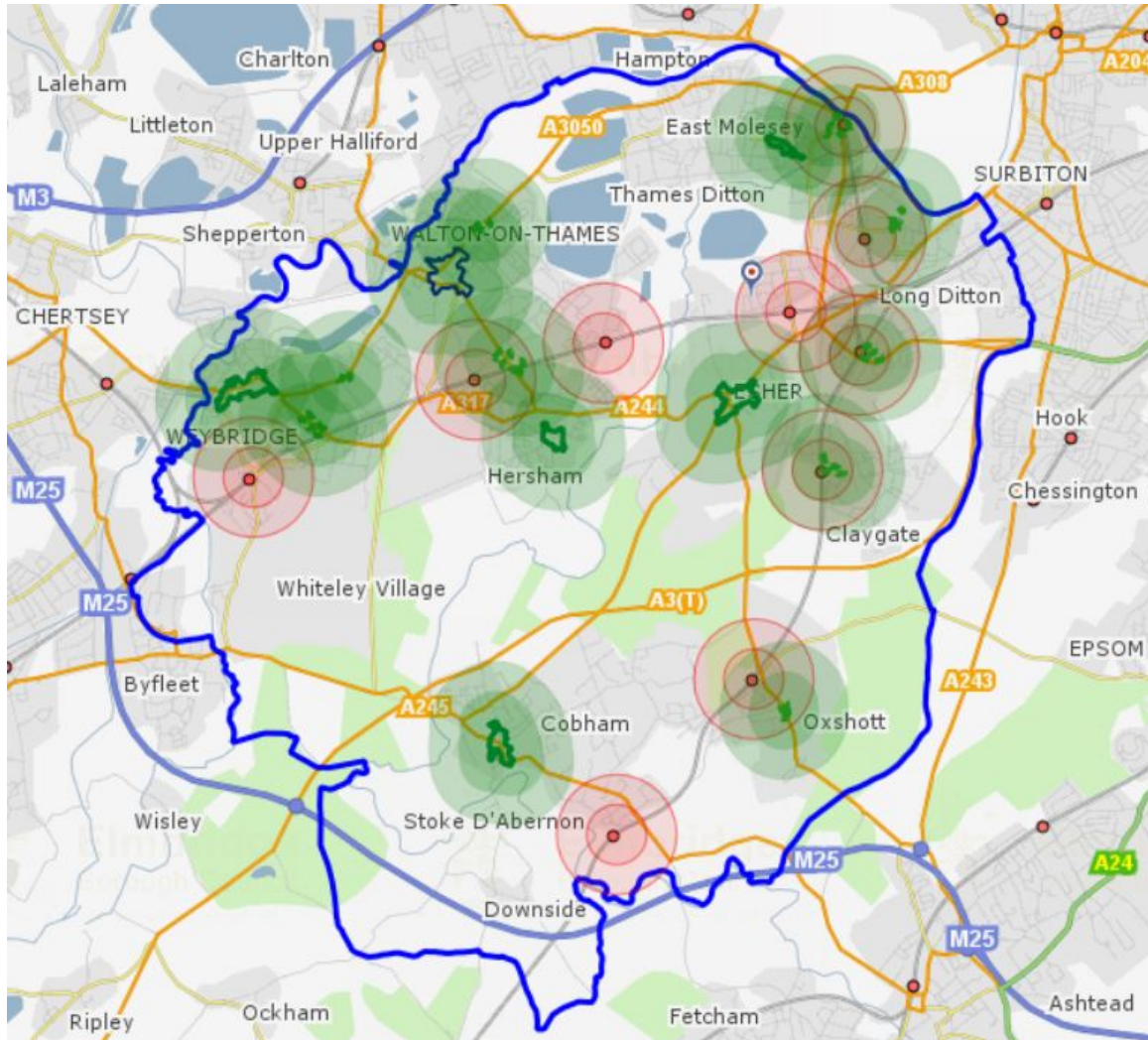
- 1.8 The study has looked at all the built-up areas within the Borough, excluding any areas within the Green Belt (Figure 1). To assist with surveying and recording information the Borough has been split into the following settlement areas:
 - Claygate.
 - Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon.
 - The Dittons (comprising Long Ditton and Thames Ditton).
 - Esher Station (that part of Esher to the north of the railway line and Sandown race course).
 - Esher Town.
 - Hinchley Wood.
 - Molesey (East and West).
 - Oxshott.
 - Walton-on-Thames (inc. Hersham).
 - Weybridge (inc. Brooklands).

Figure 1: The adopted Elmbridge Core Strategy Key Diagram, showing the built-up areas within the borough



1.9 The extent of town, district and local centres have been mapped (as defined in the Core Strategy) and catchment areas drawn around these (Figure 2) 800m around town and district centres, equating to a ten-minute walk, and 400m around local centres, equating to a five-minute walk. All railway stations have also been mapped and an 800m catchment area drawn around these. These catchment areas form the basis of the study, though all areas outside these have also been surveyed.

Figure 2: Plan showing broad catchment areas around the railway stations, town, district and local centres in Elmbridge



Structure of this Report

- 1.10 Following this introductory section the report is presented according to the various stages of work, providing an explanation of the approach followed and a summary of findings. The report sections are:
- Section 2; which presents an overview of the method and consultation on this.
 - Section 3; which presents the approach to identifying potential development sites for housing in the built-up areas within Elmbridge.
 - Section 4; which presents the approach to estimating the development capacity of the identified sites, as well as considering the potential from non-physically identifiable sources (e.g.: reusing empty space above shops for new housing).
 - Section 5; which presents the approach to discounting and phasing sites, based on an understanding of viability matters. This section also considers the potential for new housing that might derive from small sites (i.e.: those which might generate fewer than five new homes).
 - Section 6; which presents the summary findings of the study and introduces a development pipeline model to assist with the monitoring of sites and potential over time.
 - Section 7; which presents a series of concluding comments and thoughts which should be considered through an approach to optimising the potential for development for new housing in existing built-up areas.
- 1.11 Beyond these sections the report is supported by a series of appendices, including copies of consultation letters and examples illustrating different residential densities that might be appropriate for the Elmbridge context.
- 1.12 Furthermore, the information sitting behind this study, including site schedules and mapping (presented on a settlement-by-settlement basis), has been provided to the Council in electronic format.

2. Developing the method

Stage 1 of the study sought to refine and develop the method, involving consultation with the 'duty-to-cooperate' bodies and the 'development industry'. The method is summarised below, along with comments received during the consultation process.

Summary method

2.1 Work on the UCS involved four main stages:

Stage 1: Method development and consultation

2.2 This stage involved developing and refining the method in consultation with the duty-to-cooperate bodies and the development industry. Letters were sent to both outlining the approach and seeking feedback. Copies of the letters are included within Appendix B and C of this report.

Stage 2: Identifying capacity sources

2.3 This stage involved a desk-based review of mapping and documentation in addition to site surveys to identify as many future development opportunities as possible. This involved surveys on a street-by-street basis of the town and district centres in the borough, the principal transport hubs (railway stations) and the catchment areas around these. All other areas and sites identified through the desk-based review were also visited, and any other opportunities identified during these visits also recorded.

Stage 3: Assessing capacity

2.4 The use of density multipliers forms the basis for estimating the housing capacity of individual sites identified through the survey work. Appropriate multipliers have been informed by a review of the character of the area, the mix and type of development, including schemes that have recently been granted planning permission. The assessment of capacity reflects appropriate densities that optimise the potential for land and development in the built-up area. More information on the approach taken is presented in Section 4 of this report.

Stage 4: Discounting capacity yields

2.5 Following the assessment of capacity this figure was then discounted to give an informed assessment of the amount of housing that might be brought forward within the time horizon being considered in the emerging Local Plan. More information on the approach taken is presented in Section 5 of this report.

Underlying principles

- 2.6 The methodology for the UCS recognises the fundamental importance of:
- Relating the analysis of urban housing and other development, e.g. employment and retail potential, to proximity and access to local facilities and public transport, reflecting opportunities for sustainable patterns of development and optimal use of land.
 - The need for forensic surveys in the most sustainable locations and taking a 'policy-off' approach in early stages to capture as many opportunities as possible, taking a longer-term view of site potential.
 - A clear and transparent approach to site assessment which strengthens the robustness of findings.
 - Reflecting local character and context within estimates of capacity.
 - Engaging with Council officers to review and agree the potential opportunities.
 - Provision of clear and easy-to-use data which can inform other studies (e.g.: Brownfield Land Register) and be updated by the Council.
 - Input from the development industry to help inform viability and site delivery assumptions, as well as providing an opportunity to submit sites for consideration.

Comments received through consultation

- 2.7 Comments on the draft method were received from the following 'duty-to-cooperate' bodies:
- The Highway Agency.
 - Surrey County Council.
 - Spelthorne Borough Council.
 - Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
 - Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
- 2.8 Comments were generally supportive of the Council's decision to undertake an urban capacity study and explore the potential for accommodating new housing in existing built-up areas through an approach that optimises land and development densities. However, some respondents suggested that, where density multipliers are used, these should not just reflect existing forms of development, but also look at how additional housing might be accommodated through use of different typologies of development.

- 2.9 A limited number of comments were also received through consultation with the development industry. In summary, these suggested that:
- The use of density multipliers can be 'crude'.
 - The study should consider the potential for the release of employment land for housing.
- 2.10 As with the duty-to-cooperate bodies support was expressed for the study.
- 2.11 The study was not changed following the comments received. However, further investigation has been undertaken regarding the character and density of the Borough, and different parts of it, as well as reviewing recent developments in the Borough and elsewhere, to help inform a finer grained approach to creation of density multipliers for application in different locations.
- 2.12 In addition to the consultation outlined above a presentation was made to Council Members, acting as an introduction and briefing to the study.

3. Identifying the capacity

Stage 2 of the study sought to identify potential sites across the borough. This involved a review of existing information, desk-based research, a 'call-for-sites', and site visits. All identified sites were recorded and discussed with Council Officers at a 'stocktaking workshop' to determine whether a site would be acceptable, in principle, for housing or not. The approach and findings from this stage are summarised in this section of the report.

Call for Sites

- 3.1 Letters were sent both to the development industry and to residents who had previously responded to consultation on the Local Plan. The letters invited respondents to submit sites for consideration in the urban capacity study.
- 3.2 Through this process 33 specific sites were submitted. All those sites falling within the urban area were mapped, visited and considered. Further to this, seventeen general areas were suggested as opportunities for development. These areas included town centres, employment sites and areas within close proximity to railway stations. All were visited and reviewed, with many of them coinciding with the main areas of focus for the study.
- 3.3 In addition, a meeting was held with the Asset and Management team at Elmbridge Borough Council to review the Council's landholdings and the development opportunities presented by these.

Desk-based review

- 3.4 All sites submitted through the Call for Sites were mapped on to a GIS database alongside other mapping including:
 - Sites from Land Availability Assessments (LAA) studies.
 - Live and lapsed planning permissions.
 - Public land ownerships (where known).
 - Employment areas.
- 3.5 A review of the mapping and associated aerial photography was also undertaken to identify other potential opportunity areas and sites not identified or grouped within one of the categories outlined above. This included, for example, areas of parking.
- 3.6 The early stage of the study purposely took a 'policy-off' approach to site identification, explicitly avoiding rejecting and discounting sites during the survey process. Policy layers and constraints were thus 'hidden' for the purpose of this stage, except for the boundaries of the Green Belt and built-up areas, which define the limit of the areas of search. This allowed for as many opportunities to be identified as possible, allowing for a longer-term view of site potential to be considered. The

stocktaking workshop, as outlined below, then considered the suitability of identified sites in policy terms.

- 3.7 This desk-based stage also involved mapping the catchment areas around town and district centres, and railway stations.
- 3.8 The desk-based review was not constrained by a particular size threshold. This allowed small sites, which may have potential to accommodate higher density development, to be tested and included as appropriate.

Site visits

- 3.9 Site survey work was undertaken to view and record the sites identified through the desk-based review, as well as providing opportunities to identify other potential development sites for consideration.
- 3.10 The site visits involved:
 - 1. Detailed, forensic surveys on a street-by-street basis of key opportunity areas and sustainable locations, comprising:
 - a. Town, district and local centres and their catchment areas.
 - b. The catchment area around train stations
 - 2. A review of key sites and landholdings, including Strategic Employment Land, and public-sector land ownerships.
 - 3. A systematic analysis of other areas, including visits to each of the sites identified during the desk-based review of mapping and information together with a general examination of other areas.
- 3.11 All information was entered into the site schedules, ordered on a settlement by settlement basis and including basic site information, such as location and area (measured in hectares). Any additional sites identified through the site visits were mapped and added to the GIS database and associated schedules.

Stocktaking workshop

- 3.12 Deciding which of the identified sites should be taken forward for assessment in the capacity work was a crucial stage in the study.
- 3.13 As the proposed method for the survey work adopted an inclusive approach to site identification and buildings with potential for housing it inevitably resulted in the identification of some sites where housing was not considered desirable. The purpose of the stocktaking process was to sieve these sites out, removing those sites where it was considered that housing development would be undesirable in policy terms. A stocktaking workshop was held with Council officers to review and refine the list of sites.

Summary of stage findings

3.14 In total, 692 sites were identified for consideration. This was reduced through the stocktaking process to a total 389 sites. This is broken down, by area, in Table 1.

Table 1: Total sites identified by the urban capacity study

Location	Total sites identified	Sites removed through stocktaking process	Sites carried through to next stage of study
Claygate	37	15	22
Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon	76	27	49
The Dittons	54	23	31
Esher Station	14	3	11
Esher Town	44	24	20
Hinchley Wood	39	20	19
Molesey	103	30	73
Oxshott	13	5	8
Walton-on-Thames (inc. Hersham)	186	93	93
Weybridge (inc. Brooklands)	127	64	63
Total Sites	692	303	389

4. Unconstrained Capacity

Stage 3 of the study process involved estimating the capacity of the sites identified and considered 'acceptable' through the stocktaking exercise. The approach to this stage, and the outcomes, are presented in this section of the report.

Physically identifiable sites

- 4.1 The development capacity of identified, acceptable sites was estimated through application of (1) gross to net ratios to consider the amount of land that might be suitable for housing on any one site, and (2) use of standard density multipliers applicable to the location. The ratios and multipliers used, and the reasons for their use, are outlined below:

Gross to net ratios

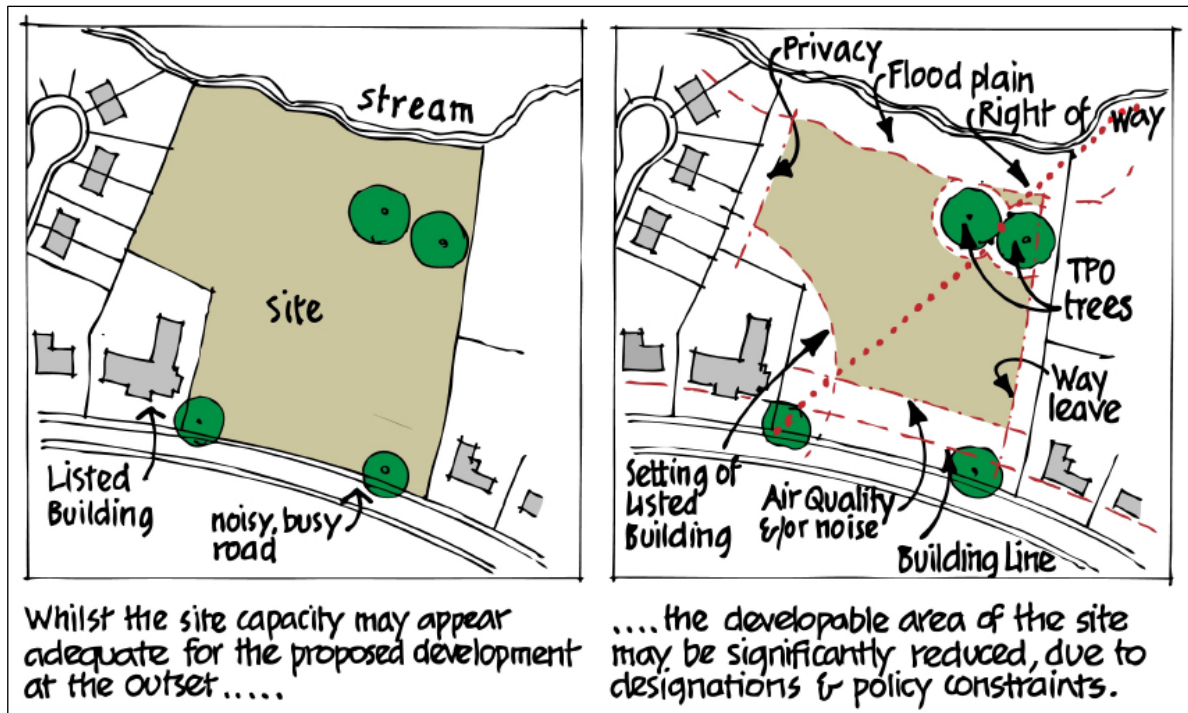
- 4.2 The Councils Land Availability Assessment (LAA) Methodology⁸ explains that the whole of a site identified as having potential for development will not always be developable. This is because site constraints and infrastructure requirements need to be factored in and thus reduce the developable area. This is well illustrated in the Council's Design and Character SPD⁹, with Figure 3 below showing how the developable area of a site reduces once various designations and policy constraints are considered.
- 4.3 A range of gross to net ratios are used in the Urban Capacity Study to estimate the developable area of each site, to which density multipliers are then applied to estimate site development capacity. As the site area increases, so the need for additional infrastructure is likely to increase, making allowance for increased areas of play space and educational needs for example. The gross to net ratios are based on different site areas. The Councils LAA¹⁰ uses two bands; those sites above or below one hectare, with ratios being:
- Site less than 1 hectare: 80% gross to net ratio used
 - Site greater than 1 hectare: 70% gross to net ratio used

⁸ Elmsbridge Borough Council, January 2016, Elmsbridge Local Plan, Land Availability Assessment Methodology 2016

⁹ Elmsbridge Borough Council, April 2012, Elmsbridge Local Plan: Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document

¹⁰ Elmsbridge Borough Council, September 2016, Elmsbridge Local Plan, Land Availability Assessment

Figure 3: Difference between site boundary and developable area



4.4 In recognition that many of the sites identified within the UCS will be less than one hectare a different set of bandings are used in the UCS and gross to net ratios applied. These are reflective of research undertaken and informing former best practice guidance to urban capacity studies and site capacity assessment¹¹. The ranges for each area band have been simplified for application in the UCS, with a 'mid-point' used. The gross to net ratios used are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Gross to net ratios used within the urban capacity study

Site area (hectares)	Gross to net ratio (range)	Gross to net ratio used in UCS (Based on a mid-point)
Site up to 0.4ha	100%	100%
Site between 0.4 - 2ha	75 - 90%	82.5%
Site greater than 2ha	50 - 75%	62.5%

4.5 By way of an example, and using the ratios outlined above, a site of 1ha would be reduced in size to 0.825ha. It is this area that density multipliers are then applied to, to estimate site capacity.

¹¹ See, for example, DETR, December 2000, Tapping the Potential: Assessing Urban Housing Capacity; Towards Better Practice

Approach to density

4.6 It is important to understand development density in Elmbridge as this is used as a measure to estimate the potential development capacity of the opportunity sites identified by the urban capacity study.

4.7 Density, for residential purposes, can be defined as:

A measure of the number of dwellings or people per hectare. This can be expressed as a net figure (the area of development purely devoted to residential and ancillary land uses and related access) or as a gross related to the total area of a site (which may include mixed uses, landscape areas etc).¹²

4.8 For the urban capacity study a net density is used to estimate the potential dwelling capacity of each of the identified sites considered acceptable for residential development through the stocktaking exercise. The measure of density in this study is referred to as dwellings per hectare (dph).

4.9 Density varies according to location, character and development type. The urban capacity study reflects this such that the estimate of development potential is optimised: that is, it reflects the character and opportunity of a particular area, rather than applying blanket assumptions which neither reflect the character of an area nor the different opportunities that exist.

Existing planning policy framework in Elmbridge

4.10 The Core Strategy (2011), together with the Development Management Plan (2015), include policies relating to the density of new development in Elmbridge.

4.11 Policy CS17 (Local character, density and design) of the Core Strategy promotes the best use of land. Three broad residential densities are outlined, being:

- Across the Borough, an overall housing density target of 40dph should be achieved.
- Other than in St George's Hill Estate, Burwood Park, and the Crown Estate, Oxshott¹³, a minimum density of 30dph is required.
- In the town centres, densities should exceed 40dph.

4.12 However, reference is also made to the harm that might be caused to areas of valued character and that, in exceptional circumstances, densities below the minimum outlined above may be considered acceptable. The Development Management Plan (Policy DM2: Design and amenity), along with the Council's Design and Character

¹² Elmbridge Borough Council, April 2015, Elmbridge Local Plan, Design and Character, Supplementary Planning Document

¹³ The Borough's special low density residential areas

Supplementary Planning Document (2012), expand upon this, requiring all new development to achieve high quality design, responding to the character of the area and specific local designations. These include 'Special Low Density Residential Areas'. In the context of the new Local Plan, note of proposed changes to the NPPF is made. With regard to density for example, this seeks to ensure that development makes most optimal use of the potential of each site.

Emerging Local Plan: Strategic Options Consultation

- 4.13 As part of consultation on the new Local Plan (2016-2017), the Council asked whether high densities (above 40dph) should be explored in sustainable locations (such as in town centres and around train stations).
- 4.14 The majority of respondents agreed that higher densities should be explored, but that they should not impact upon local character and that infrastructure must be able to cope with the demands placed upon it. Creative design and mixed-use development schemes above town centre car parks and shops were supported as methods to successfully achieve higher density development. Linked to this is the concern about taller buildings and that such development would detrimentally impact on the character of the Borough. Furthermore, and based upon the consultation exercise, there appeared little support for high density development outside of the town centre and station catchment areas.

Elmbridge Density Study

- 4.15 As part of the new Local Plan the Council has undertaken an assessment of existing densities across the Borough. In draft at the time of writing, this study finds that, on average:
- Existing densities in urban areas are low (below 30dph).
 - In many instances, proposals (and permissions) for new development are exceeding existing densities, with the highest densities achieved in and around town centre and station locations.
 - Most of the area is characterised as relatively low rise (around two-storeys) development, though with some taller buildings in the town centres (three-four storeys). Taller buildings of six-seven storeys are found in Walton-on-Thames town centre. There are very few 'tall buildings' in the borough: there are three ten-storey residential towers in Walton-on-Thames dating from the 1960s.
- 4.16 It recommends that high densities should continue to be encouraged within town centres, but that this approach should also be encouraged around the train stations in the Borough.
- 4.17 With regard to different settlements across the borough, the study finds that for each settlement:

Claygate:

- 4.18 The average density is approximately 16dph, with the highest densities of approximately 30dph found around the station and local centre. Lower densities are found elsewhere, with the Ruxley Heights Estate having a density of approximately 7dph.
- 4.19 Densities on recently permitted schemes exceed 100dph in the centre and around the station (up to 175dph) with other schemes (excluding those in the Ruxley Heights Estate) averaging around 34dph. Schemes in the Ruxley Heights Estate have been more reflective of the existing character of the area, averaging approximately 9dph.

Cobham, Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon:

- 4.20 There are two very-low density residential estates in this area: Burhill and The Crown Estate, Bevendean. Densities at both of these are in the region of 4dph. However, density across the area as a whole is not much higher than this, averaging approximately 9dph. The highest densities are in Cobham district centre and in the residential area to the north of this, averaging between 20-30dph.
- 4.21 More recently, higher densities have been achieved on permitted schemes, averaging almost 70dph in Cobham district centre. Within the low-density residential areas mentioned above, recent schemes have achieved densities between 5-10dph. Elsewhere, densities have averaged around 18dph, though have also exceeded 35-40dph in some locations.

East and West Molesey:

- 4.22 The average settlement density across East and West Molesey is approximately 24dph, with the highest densities (approximately 41dph) in the district centre, and approximately 30dph at the local centre and train station. Elsewhere, densities range between 11 and 37 dph.
- 4.23 Densities achieved on recently approved schemes exceed this. The highest densities have been achieved in the town centre, averaging approximately 150dph, with densities of approximately 56dph achieved on schemes close to the local centre and station. Elsewhere, densities achieved on recent schemes range between 21-60dph.

Esher:

- 4.24 The average density in Esher is low, at approximately 9dph. The highest densities are found in the district centre, though again, these are fairly low, and average approximately 26 dph.
- 4.25 Densities on recently permitted schemes have also been relatively low. Excluding the district centre, these schemes average approximately 17dph. In the district centre higher density schemes have been achieved, averaging approximately 73dph.

Hersham:

- 4.26 Hersham has two very low-density areas (Burwood Park and Whiteley Village) where average densities are approximately 5dph. Outside of these, densities are in the region of 14-28dph.
- 4.27 Densities achieved on recently approved schemes exceed this. Excluding the low-density residential areas, densities of approximately 61dph have been achieved. Elsewhere, they have averaged between 40-44dph.

Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green:

- 4.28 Densities in this area average approximately 18dph. The lowest density area – around St. Mary's Road in Long Ditton – has an average density of approximately 10dph and is an 'outlier', with densities ranging between 14-28dph across much of the rest of the area.
- 4.29 Recent developments in and around Thames Ditton centre have averaged approximately 66dph, with other schemes ranging between 24-44dph, save for land close to Esher station where new development averaging 16dph is very close to the existing density for that area as a whole.

Walton-on-Thames:

- 4.30 Densities across Walton-on-Thames average approximately 23dph, although the Ashley Park Estate (approx. 6dph) brings this average down. Higher densities are found in the Town centre (43dph) and around the station (approx. 34dph). Elsewhere, densities between 10-35dph are found.
- 4.31 Recent developments in and around the area have achieved higher densities, averaging approximately 147dph in the Town Centre, more than 118dph in the area known as Home Field, and densities between 76-80dph in some locations, but typically between 30-50dph elsewhere.

Weybridge:

- 4.32 Average densities in Weybridge are in the region of 11dph, though these are skewed by the presence of the St Georges Hill Estate which accounts for a large part of the area and where the average density only just exceeds 1dph. This area benefits from its own Act of Parliament which provides guidance on development form and plot size. Elsewhere, average densities vary between approximately 15 and 37dph.
- 4.33 Densities achieved on recent schemes vary across Weybridge, averaging around 130dph in the district centre area and 83dph around the Queens Road local centre. Elsewhere, and excluding the St George's Hill Estate, an average density of approximately 37dph has been achieved.

Density multipliers used in the Urban Capacity Study

- 4.34 Based on the above, a range of density multipliers are used to estimate development potential in the urban capacity study. For each location type, a low and high-density multiplier is used, generating a potential development range for each site. Once this is generated, the Urban Capacity Study then calculates a mid-point figure between these. This allows for more detailed design to come forward as appropriate during later stages of the planning process, but recognising that, in some instances, development schemes will come forward at a lower density than estimated, and in other cases, at a higher density. The range applied and use of the mid-point allows for this fluctuation. The density range for use is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Density multipliers used within the urban capacity study

	Location	Low density multiplier	High density multiplier
01	Town centres: Walton, and Walton Road district centre	75dph	150dph
02	District centres: Cobham, Esher, East Molesey, Hersham, Weybridge	40dph	100dph
03	Town and district centre catchments, and within Local centres (inc. Claygate, Hinchley Wood, Oxshott and Thames Ditton)	30dph	70dph
04	Railway station catchments	30dph	70dph
05	Residential areas	20dph	40dph
06	Special low density residential areas	5dph	10dph

Mixed use development

- 4.35 Although the urban capacity study is focused on the potential for accommodating new housing on land within the built-up areas, some of the sites identified and 'accepted' through the stocktaking exercise will be in locations where a mix of uses might be appropriate: in town centres for example, where retail use might be accommodated on the ground floor with residential above.
- 4.36 The urban capacity study allows for mixed use development by estimating how much of the site area might be used for housing and other uses, and reducing the area accordingly. It is then the reduced area that density multipliers are applied to. For example, in a town centre location, the site might be reduced by around 25-30%, allowing for provision of retail or other commercial uses, with appropriate residential density multipliers then applied to the remaining 70-75% of the site area.

Other sources of supply

Homes above the shop

- 4.37 Research published by the Federation of Master Builders¹⁴ suggests that, across the UK, 'there is significant untapped potential to create additional homes above shops, on or near the high street', including 'unutilised space above shops that could be more intensively used or redeveloped into additional housing units'. The research also suggests that realising this potential can do more than just deliver new homes, as 'revitalising our high streets through well planned and designed residential units could help rejuvenate smaller town centres'. However, identifying space above shops for new homes is challenging and the potential is thus difficult to quantify¹⁵. In addition, once identified, there are other complexities to consider, including the creation of suitable access arrangements and the need to satisfy both building regulations and planning policies. Equally, potential may depend on the ability to coordinate development across multiple land ownerships.
- 4.38 Although we believe that potential is very likely to exist for new homes from this source type we have not, for the reasons outlined above, made an estimate of potential within this study. However, we recommend that this source is monitored over time.

Empty properties

- 4.39 Data collected by the Government¹⁶ records that, as of October 2016¹⁷, there were 496 'long-term vacant' properties in Elmbridge, defined as those 'dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over six months'. This equates to less than 1% of the total dwelling stock in Elmbridge¹⁸. The proportion of long-term vacant properties in Elmbridge has remained fairly consistent over the last decade¹⁹. Returning such properties into use can be challenging, and

¹⁴ Lichfields and Child Graddon Lewis for the Federation of Master Builders, December 2017, Homes on our High Streets: How to unlock residential development on our High Streets

¹⁵ Research by Empty Homes, 2016. Affordable Homes from Empty Commercial Spaces, suggests that such spaces are seldom classified as dwellings (even if at one point in history there had been a flat above the shop), and are therefore not readily detected through council tax data which is used by local authorities to record and identify empty homes in their area. They are also not captured by data on empty retail units and offices. It is suggested that there is little alternative than to undertake door-to-door surveys to identify potential empty spaces.

¹⁶ DCLG, Live tables on dwelling stock (including vacants), Table 615: vacant dwellings by local authority district, from 2004, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants> (accessed January 2018)

¹⁷ The most recent set of available data

¹⁸ Based on the total number of Council Tax properties on the Valuation List: DCLG, Council Taxbase 2016 in England, Council Taxbase local authority level data 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-taxbase-2016-in-england> (accessed January 2017)

¹⁹ See DCLG Table 615.

expensive, sometimes requiring enforcement action and or significant investment to make them habitable²⁰.

- 4.40 In all, Government records show that, as of October 2016, there were a total of 1,609 vacant dwellings in Elmbridge²¹: less than 3% of the total dwelling stock. This proportion allows for normal turnover and property market churn, as well as gaps in rental periods and the presence of second-homes. These figures are below the averages for Surrey and England as a whole²².
- 4.41 Although potential is likely to exist to bring some empty properties back into use, the contribution to the dwelling stock is likely to be relatively small²³. For the purposes of this study we have not made an estimate of potential from this source type. However, we recommend that this source is monitored over time.

Office to residential conversions / Permitted Development rights

- 4.42 The Council's LAA²⁴ notes that 4,094sqm of office space has been lost to residential since the General Permitted Development Order was amended to allow such changes through the 'Prior Approval' route. In total, and since the Council's Core Strategy was adopted in 2011, 9,720sqm of office space has been lost to residential.
- 4.43 The Council's Annual Monitoring Report²⁵ notes that there is currently 26,345qm of vacant office space within the Borough. It is likely that recent patterns of change will continue, though the quantum of change is difficult to assess given the short time that the 'Prior Approval' route has been in operation.
- 4.44 The Urban Capacity Study has sought to review all employment sites in the Borough and made a judgement as to whether the sites are considered suitable for housing or not; where they are, then an estimate of capacity has been generated. To avoid double-counting, and any uncertainties through extrapolation of recent trends in office to residential conversions, we have not made a separate, specific allowance for additional housing from this source type. As with the other categories outlined above, it should be monitored over time.

²⁰ Elmbridge BC operates a grant funding programme that encourages owners of empty homes to bring them back into use

²¹ DCLG Table 615

²² Cobweb Consulting for Elmbridge BC et al, June 2016, Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Kingston Upon Thames and North East Surrey authorities

²³ The Council's Annual Monitoring Report (Elmbridge BC, November 2016, Elmbridge Local Plan: Authority Monitoring Report 2015/16) notes that for the period 2015/16, funding was used to deliver one affordable home in Elmbridge through the Empty Homes Acquisition Programme. Similarly, one affordable home was also delivered through this programme in the 2014/15 monitoring period.

²⁴ Elmbridge BC, September 2016, Elmbridge Local Plan: Land Availability Assessment

²⁵ Elmbridge BC, February 2018, Elmbridge Local Plan: Authority Monitoring Report 2016/17

Summary of stage findings

4.45 The study estimates that potential exists for approximately 5,700 dwellings (based on a mid-point) on the sites identified within the urban capacity study. This is broken down by location in Table 4. This shows that the areas of greatest potential are within Walton-on-Thames and Molesey.

Table 4: Estimated 'unconstrained' development potential from the physically identifiable sites

Location	Dwelling potential (low density multiplier)	Dwelling potential (high density multiple)	Dwelling potential (mid-point)
Claygate	112	255	183
Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon	486	1138	812
The Dittons	318	717	517
Esher Station	102	217	160
Esher Town	220	518	369
Hinchley Wood	84	182	133
Molesey	627	1,407	1,017
Oxshott	42	92	67
Walton-on-Thames (inc. Hersham)	1,067	2,306	1,686
Weybridge (inc. Booklands)	444	1,063	754
Total	3,501	7,894	5,697

4.46 For the reasons set out in this section of the report an estimate of potential from the other sources of supply has not been made in this urban capacity study.

5. Site discounting

Stage 4 of the study comprises the discounting process, involving consideration of viability and delivery. It also looked at the size of site identified and whether (a) they are appropriate for inclusion within the supply of land, and (b) within what broad timeframe the site might possibly come forward for development. This section summarises the approach and findings from this stage of the study. It should be noted that work on the UCS was undertaken in advance of the report of the Council's Local Plan Viability Assessment being available, but that upon review, the findings of the studies are in broad alignment.

Introduction

- 5.1 This section represents an important part of the study process. The total housing yield from sites carried through from earlier stages provides a broad indication of the potential suitability of land for development. This has to be fully considered in the context of national policy and guidance for the assessment of housing land. Guidance notes that the future supply of land identified should be *available* and *achievable* to demonstrate the ability to contribute to the requirements for development over the plan period. Addressing the factors of *availability* and *achievability* is therefore necessary at this stage of the process to demonstrate that the final recommendations regarding the potential for development are robust.

- 5.2 In terms of assessing development potential, guidance explains:

The development potential is a significant factor that affects economic viability of a site/broad location and its suitability for a particular use. Therefore, assessing achievability (including viability) and suitability can usefully be carried out in parallel with estimating the development potential.²⁶

- 5.3 Assessments of **achievability** are essentially a view on the economic viability of a site. This should be informed by the view that there is a reasonable prospect of a particular type of development being developed on the site at a given point in time, reflecting the capacity of a developer to complete and sell elements of the scheme over a certain period²⁷. Evidence-based judgement should be informed by relevant available facts and based on a realistic understanding of the operation of the market. This will include factors affecting the costs and value of development in the local area²⁸. The broader exercise of viability assessment within plan-making should

²⁶ NPPG ID: ID: 3-017-20140306

²⁷ NPPG ID: ID: 3-021-20140306

²⁸ NPPG ID: 10-004-20140306

be an iterative process, including collaboration with relevant stakeholders and providing a consistent approach to testing policy requirements for different development types²⁹.

5.4 Whilst it is not necessary to individually test each site relied upon within the Plan, and the use of typologies is appropriate, the plan-making process as a whole will provide a much more thorough indication of development viability outcomes than is possible in the context of this study. This will include specific testing of individual factors such as how individual and cumulative policy requirements affect a range of different development types. It would also include the establishment of detailed inputs for development costs and values (including where abnormal or additional strategic infrastructure costs might apply). Local assumptions on land value are also likely to be central to the assessment of whether development is likely to proceed³⁰.

5.5 Assessments of site **availability** typically rely on information to demonstrate that there are no legal or ownership problems, such as unresolved multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies or operational requirements of landowners. Planning permission itself does not necessarily provide confirmation that a site is available, and any past record of unimplemented consent may be taken into account. Where potential problems have been identified, then an assessment will need to be made as to how and when they can realistically be overcome³¹.

5.6 Within the context of this discounting exercise it is important to recognise that planning practice guidance provides direction for when constraints are identified in the assessment process meaning that sites may not necessarily be regarded as incapable of development:

Where constraints have been identified, the assessment should consider what action would be needed to remove them (along with when and how this could be undertaken and the likelihood of sites/broad locations being delivered). Actions might include the need for investment in new infrastructure, dealing with fragmented land ownership, environmental improvement, or a need to review development plan policy, which is currently constraining development.

5.7 The nature of this study is also important in terms of the way in which guidance is applied. The study estimates potential housing yield from a wide range of individual sites but it is not policy and does not itself confirm support for the principle of development. Assessments are supported by the best information available within the methodology for the study, but it will be necessary to have regard to the

²⁹ NPPG ID: 10-005-20140306

³⁰ NPPG ID: 10-015-20140306

³¹ NPPG ID: 3-020-20140306

evidence base for the development plan as a whole to determine whether individual sites are suitable for allocation.

- 5.8 It is also important to compare and contrast the evidence generated by this Urban Capacity Study against other alternatives endorsed by national guidance. This Study provides an exhaustive assessment of potential development yields across a range of individual sites. By contrast, guidance recognises the role that identifying 'broad locations' can play in establishing future estimates of developable land for housing beyond year six of the plan period. These might include existing areas that could be improved, intensified or changed where there is a reasonable prospect of housing being developed at the point envisaged.
- 5.9 The exercise of 'site discounting' within this context represents a proportionate assessment commensurate with the level of information available for identified sites. The discounting process may result in the removal or reduction in potential yield or indicate development is more likely in later years. This does not represent a specific view on viability or the potential value of a development scheme on individual sites.

Value mapping

Overview

- 5.10 House prices in Elmbridge are amongst the highest in the country³². Given that the sales return on private housing are the primary indicator of Gross Development Value on individual schemes this provides an initial view on the strong viability prospects for residential development in the Borough.
- 5.11 Since 2011/12 completions of new residential dwellings have averaged around 250 units per annum. In the seven years prior to this the average was higher at around 400 units per annum but subject to greater annual of fluctuation. Since 31 March 2015 the proportion of housing transactions on new build properties has represented around 5-6% of activity in the total market. This is lower than the average for the south-east region and England as a whole (both around 12% over the same period)³³. This reinforces the commonly-held observation that new build properties are likely to command a development premium upon first sale.
- 5.12 Despite the relatively limited volume of overall new dwelling completions the pattern of delivery across Elmbridge illustrates a relatively diverse mix of different development types. This allows the values achieved to be considered across a

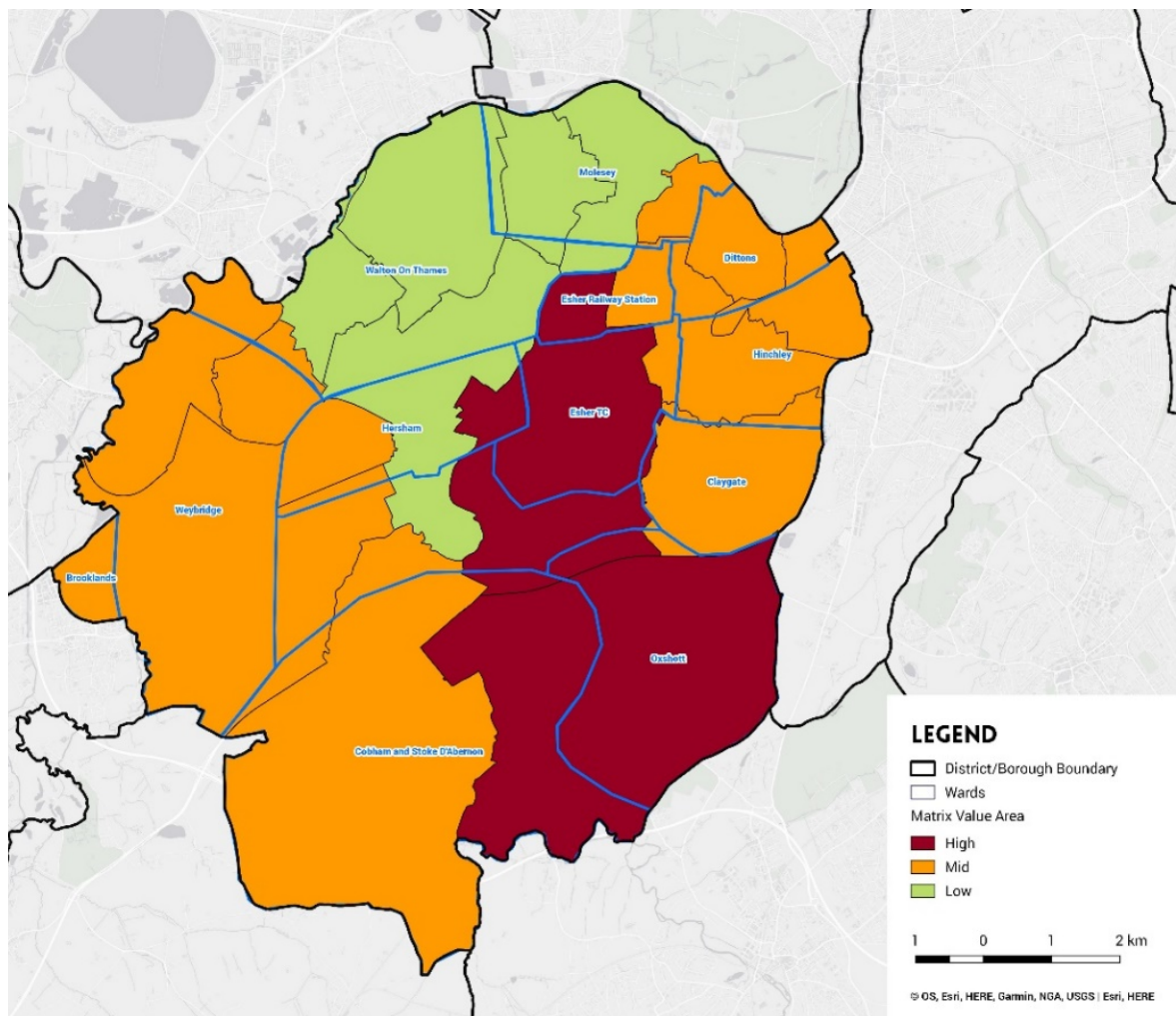
³² See, for example: Elmbridge Borough Council, March 2015, Housing in Elmbridge: Facts & Figures 2015

³³ Source: House Price Statistics for Small Area (HPSSAs) Data Sets 6, 7 and 8 available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housepricestatisticsforsmallareas/yearendingjune2017>

range of sites and locations. Flatted development is particularly well-represented as a proportion of the overall total and there is relatively low representation in the market by the largest housebuilders. At finer geographies (to Ward level) sample size can be more restricted, with examples limited to delivery of very small sites or one-off dwellings that might not be representative of the typologies in this Study.

- 5.13 We have undertaken our own analysis on property values within this wider context. The results of this analysis are set out in Appendix F. Figure 4 below sets out the grouping of 'Matrix Value Areas' used for the purposes of this discounting process overlaid with the locations assessed by the Study.

Figure 4: Matrix value areas used for the discounting process



Commentary

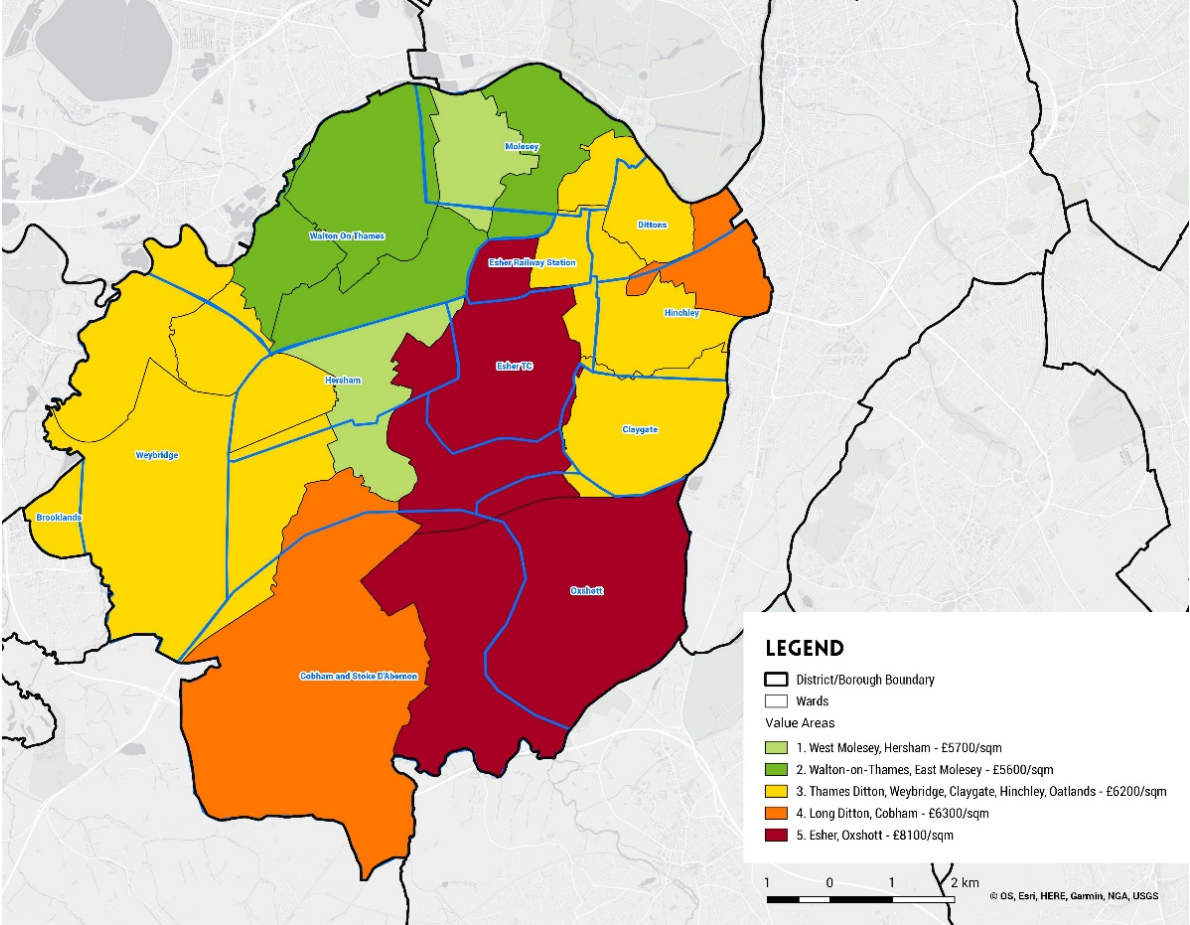
- 5.14 It is important to recognise that Matrix Value Area groupings operate at a high level and there remains variation within and between different geographies and significant differences in the values for individual transactions. In the most part the groupings are consistent with the boundaries for locations assessed in this Study. Unless there is a clear separation in areas of built development within one location then the Matrix Value Area indicator covering the majority of the location is applied.

There are inevitably some overlaps requiring judgement – for example the Cobham and Stoke D’Abernon location includes areas of built development respectively within the ‘Mid’ and ‘High’ Value Areas. The Matrix Value Areas provide a consistent starting point but there is significant scope for judgement in the overall discounting and phasing exercise.

- 5.15 The data for our assessment is provided from individual transaction records from Land Registry ‘price paid’ data. We have used a period of 2013 to 2017 for transactions on ‘new build’ properties and a period 2015 to 2017 for existing properties (given the greater sample size) and have analysed that two sources separately. Prices for earlier months have been adjusted for inflation (by property type), with historic values adjusted to the mean price in the most recent data. Finally, to indicate trends in development type, average floorspace of completed units, and transaction value by £/sqm, we have obtained the ‘Energy Performance Certificate’ to provide floor area data for a sample of the records.
- 5.16 The Council’s evidence base used to support the existing development plan and adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) addresses similar considerations of property values in the local area. The modelling scope in the relevant studies adopts a range of “Value Points” rather than concentrating on the specifics of settlement areas or centres. This reflects that values can vary greatly in any event across small geographic areas (including even the same postcode). The ‘Value Points’ approach for the circumstances that schemes across a wide range could, in fact, be found anywhere within the Borough.
- 5.17 The ability to apply ‘Value Points’ independently of location allows for the most exhaustive testing of different development typologies and to test a range of assumptions for policy requirements (such as affordable housing). The range of ‘Value Points’ (or Value Levels) adopted also has the advantage that the examples considered can be filtered to exclude outcomes on the largest ‘one-off property’ housing developments observed in the area.
- 5.18 The issues with this approach in the context of this study are two-fold. Firstly, the ‘Value Points’ approach adopts a very broad view of values across Elmbridge, with the outcome that the same assumption (in terms of sales values at £/sqm) is applied across a notional range of unit types and sizes. Although admittedly based on a starting point of assumed high property values, this means that an equivalently sized flat or house would achieve the same price. Our dataset indicates that the degree of variation increases when looking at characteristics by house type and size. These differences are likely to be exaggerated in the context of this study based on the development typology expected to deliver the potential yield on identified sites.

- 5.19 Secondly, the purpose of this study is not to complete an exhaustive (or comparative) exercise for how an equivalent scheme might compare across all Value Points. The assessment of total potential yield is drawn on specific characteristics of identified locations that might themselves influence development values. Having identified broad trends in value area geographies across Elmbridge it is appropriate to recognise that these should represent a starting point for considering site-specific assessments and should be reflected in our conclusions on discounting.
- 5.20 We are also aware of the emerging evidence base being prepared to provide a 'Whole Plan' (including Affordable Housing) Viability Assessment to support the new Local Plan. This is at a relatively early stage in terms of the ability to test the implications of specific policy proposals, but indications are that the supporting testing assumptions will adopt a similar approach in terms of identifying 'Value Points'. There is, however, the possibility that this evidence will explore the broad patterns in the variation in average house prices across the geography of the Borough. It is also the case that the potential premium on new build properties will be recognised.
- 5.21 Figure 5 below summarises the information in Appendix F to arrive at the Matrix Value Areas. It illustrates that as Wards were grouped together relatively clear trends emerged to support the approach adopted. It is inevitably the case that some individual Wards (and some locations within each Ward) would traverse the distinction between Value Areas. For example, East Molesey is at the higher end of the 'Low' Value Area grouping. Based on transaction values within Cobham Ward there is a distinction between the areas of Cobham and Downside. However, because the overall discounting and phasing exercise requires judgement rather than being a rigid process these groupings are not determinative of individual outcomes.
- 5.22 Although a matter of judgement on the reasonable prospect of development, this 'discounting' exercise does not consider specific viability outcomes but is designed to be more 'fine-grained' in considering the type, scale and location of development.

Figure 5: Grouping of overall average value (£/sqm) of new build transactions



Factors Affecting Development Viability and Land Availability

- 5.23 The 'discounting' element of the assessment is informed by a range of broad factors that are likely to indicate the availability of land for development and will further govern where a site might be developed at a certain point in time. We briefly summarise these below; the order of importance of these factors is likely to vary on a site-by-site basis

Compliance with Relevant Policies in the Development Plan

- 5.24 It is appropriate that our assessments are informed by the existing policies of the Council's development plan (namely the Core Strategy (2011) and Development Management Plan (2015). National guidance for viability in decision-taking explains that *"where safeguards are necessary to make a particular development acceptable in planning terms, and these safeguards cannot be secured, planning permission should not be granted for unacceptable development³⁴."* Assumptions for development costs and setting an appropriate land or site value for comparison should both reflect the cumulative costs of policy requirements³⁵.
- 5.25 The existing development plan policies are well-established and widely applied across typical examples of development. For example, the development sector has had several years to respond to the requirement for new residential development to accord with nationally described space standards. Compliance with these requirements in itself is unlikely to be a significant factor in the discounting process. Effects are only likely to be observed in combination with other factors considered in this section, and previous evidence has identified an ability for many development typologies to meet increased policy costs. Although we do not speculate on implications for testing of future policies in emerging plans, we would not expect a significant change in the overall relationship.

Contributions to Infrastructure Funding and Relevant Planning Obligations

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 5.26 The Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule in 2013 and applies a rate of £125/sqm of residential development across the whole Borough (adjusted to reflect the BCIS All-In Tender Price). The viability assessment to support the proposed charging rate also considered a residual role for site-specific contributions through planning obligations.

³⁴ NPPG ID: 10-019-20140306

³⁵ NPPG ID: 10-022-20140306 and 10-023-20140306

- 5.27 Having undergone Examination and being in place for a number of years we do not consider that the application of CIL will have a significant impact on any identified sites for the purpose of discounting.
- 5.28 The process of setting the charge established that any lower rate would be no more likely to ensure certain schemes to proceed where viability is challenging. The 2011 CIL Viability Study explains that *“there may be instances of lower value schemes and localities where developments struggle in viability terms, even without any significant CIL contribution. Wider scheme details or costs and obligations / abnormal can render schemes marginally viable or unviable prior to the consideration of CIL.”* This is the position we adopt for the purposes of this process.

Affordable Housing

- 5.29 Policy CS21 of the Council’s adopted Core Strategy seeks contributions towards the provision of affordable housing from all schemes comprising one or more gross dwellings. Notwithstanding updates to national guidance³⁶ following the Written Ministerial Statement of 28 November 2014, the Council’s position is to consider on a case-by-case basis the local circumstances for seeking policy-compliant contributions and the nature of development sites. The weight to attach to a policy within the development plan and to other material considerations, in a given set of circumstances, is a matter of discretion for the decision taker.
- 5.30 The significant pressure on house prices and affordability in the Borough provides clear reasons for the Council’s approach in seeking to apply its existing policies. Statements published by the Council demonstrate a strong record of granting planning permission on policy-compliant sites. The Council’s evidence shows relatively few examples where the evidence submitted by applicants has demonstrated that contributions should be reduced or that development would be rendered unviable.
- 5.31 It is, however, relevant to give some consideration to the application of this policy on sites with a potential yield below the threshold of eleven units set out in planning practice guidance. The summary above indicates that this is unlikely to have any more than a moderate impact on achievability in isolation, but may be relevant alongside other factors such as indicators of land value or potential additional development costs.

³⁶ NPPG ID: 23b-031-20161116

Thames Basin Heaths Mitigation

- 5.32 The Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2012) outlines the approach to achieve appropriate mitigation through seeking contributions towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures on all sites within 5km of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA). This 5km distance only affects sites towards the south west of the Borough. The effect of these obligations on development outcomes is not considered relevant for the purposes of the discounting assessment in isolation and the evidence base for the adopted Core Strategy indicates that these policy costs contribute little to any cumulative impact on viability.

Land Values – Including Existing Use Value and Alternative Use Value

- 5.33 National policy in Paragraph 173 of the NPPF explains that in assessing viability and taking account of development costs and values, schemes should *“provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.”* Typically this is determined by comparing the residual value of a scheme (gross development value less total costs (excluding land)) with the ability to pay a suitable price for the site itself.
- 5.34 Aligned with residential values across the Borough, previous evidence has identified that *“due to highly variable potential existing and alternative use values of sites, it is simply not possible to provide the Council with definitive “cut-off” points where viability will be compromised to the degree that development may not take place.³⁷”* General comparisons looked at the residual value of potential schemes as a percentage of Gross Development Value. It was found that in many cases this ratio exceeded 40% and would provide amounts available for land values sufficient to absorb the impact of development plan policies. The land value assumed at these ratios would exceed comparisons for industrial and commercial uses.
- 5.35 It is more difficult to compare potential outcomes alongside average values for residential land. Examples drawn from the market and government VOA data may not be consistent with particular planning obligations expectations, including on affordable housing, as well as with other current locally applicable assumptions. Acceptable benchmarks can often be significantly below the value at which land actually transacts on the open market.
- 5.36 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Viability Assessment (2011) explained in more explicit terms the need to consider indicators for comparison of land values within specific contexts:

³⁷ Elmbridge Borough Council Local Development Framework: Viability Study (May 2009) (Prepared by Adams Integra on behalf of Elmbridge Borough Council)

Essentially this approach leads to the comparison of the RLV results in £s per hectare (having taken into account all values and costs including varying levels of CIL) to a range of potential land values representing various greenfield, previously developed land (e.g. former commercial uses) or existing residential (residential intensification) benchmark land value indications.

5.37 The values assumed for comparison in the 2011 CIL Study were:

- Greenfield Enhancement Value c.£200,000/ha - £750,000/ha
- Non-Residential Benchmark (Industrial / Commercial) c.£750,000/ha - £2,000,000/ha
- Residential Intensification: c.£2,000,000/ha – c.£4,000,000/ha

5.38 For the purposes of testing different potential impacts of CIL Charging strong results were shown against all three benchmarks to justify the adopted rate of £125/sqm. This is particularly true for greenfield enhancement, where the upper end of the range for comparison was achieved at all but the lowest 'Value Points'. For non-residential uses the residual value for comparison rarely fell below the lower end of the range, but within the lower half of 'Value Points' the amount available to pay for land was often between the £750,000 - £2,000,000 figure. This applied to a greater number of scenarios tested for a mix of dwelling types (i.e. higher density schemes assuming a mix of flats and houses) but rarely would these be regarded as unviable.

5.39 It would be prudent to recognise that the non-residential range for comparison covers a potentially wide variety of uses. Commercial values (particularly for retail, leisure or office space) and likely to be at the higher end, with some scope for these to have increased since 2011. Industrial values, depending on the exact characteristics of the site, are more likely to fall at the lower end of the range. It is appropriate for us to take these factors into account, particularly where the identified yield might comprise a mixed-use scheme or alternatively where development would more realistically be achieved following replacement of existing commercial uses.

5.40 Residual values for comparison are most likely to fall at or marginally below benchmarks for residential intensification on existing sites. The CIL Viability Assessment found this was true for a range of typologies up to 'Value Point' 4 of 7, with outcomes at the lower end of the range seen slightly more often on mixed residential typologies. This does not mean that schemes should be regarded as unviable or that a slight flux in land or development value would provide a reasonable prospect of development.

- 5.41 Associated benchmarks for residential intensification are likely to have risen commensurate with house prices since 2011. It is appropriate that the discounting process for this study has regard to sites where the yield relies upon the acquisition of existing residential property, particularly where the gross capacity is more limited, or acquisition of multiple properties is involved. This does not necessarily mean that development may not proceed, and it is important to have regard to the condition of existing property and make allowances for risks to be acknowledged by the developer when comparisons are based on residential intensification.

Availability including Relocation of Existing Uses and Land Assembly

- 5.42 In addition to consideration of potential land value comparisons, judgement is applied following site visits and desk-based assessment regarding the characteristics of existing uses. Factors such as existing policy designations and the performance of existing industrial or commercial areas have already been considered to some extent at the stocktaking stage. Phasing considerations are particularly important where the availability of a site for development is likely to rely on the relocation of existing operators or the availability of sites in combination to assemble land and realise potential yields. Impacts may be greater where there are a range of uses or operators across a given site, with leases expiring or the incentive to develop arising at different points. Only in the most complex configurations or combinations is this likely to mean that the discounting process arrives at removing the potential yield from the gross total - such as potential issues of 'ransom' over access.

Site Preparation including Infrastructure and Abnormal Development Costs

- 5.43 The assessment process in this study allows site-specific consideration of these factors in more detail than might be considered in a wider viability exercise, although it is not possible to come to a definitive view on the effect on achievability. Following the site visits and desk-based assessment it is possible to identify physical attributes that may affect the achievability of sites and introduce abnormal costs. These might include unfavourable topography or where we anticipate the potential significant remediation depending on the characteristics of industrial or redundant brownfield land.

- 5.44 The identification of these factors does not automatically preclude the reasonable prospect of development in locations such as Elmbridge. Potential outcomes should be considered in combination with other factors affecting indicative development values, such as the typology used to derive yield, as well as applicable policies. It is important that judgement is proportionate, particular because national guidance explains that *"for brownfield sites, assumptions about land values should clearly reflect the levels of mitigation and investment required to bring sites back into use³⁸."*
- 5.45 The potential for discounting capacity would more often be in lower value schemes but may fall under any identified site where the combination of assumptions acts against development viability and may compromise outcomes or affect meeting policy requirements.
- 5.46 Development costs associated with the provision of typical on-site infrastructure necessary to typically make land suitable for development are not considered to have a significant role in terms of the discounting assessment. It is also not appropriate to speculate at this stage on the potential relationship between sites and strategic infrastructure requirements. This reflects the Council's established mechanisms for securing planning obligations and the characteristics (i.e. generally smaller or 'non-strategic' in terms of type and scale) of the sites identified. Where the evidence base for the adopted Local Plan considered potential instances of increased costs these were not typically found to have a significant impact on the prospects for development.

³⁸ NPPG ID: 10-025-20140306

Application of Matrix Assumptions to Identified Sites

- 5.47 Having set out a broad framework for factors affecting availability and achievability the following section shows how these have been considered as consistently as possible within the study context. This leads to the application of a 'matrix' of assumptions applied to individual sites and the context of Elmbridge.
- 5.48 The 'matrix' approach provides conclusions on whether there is, overall, a reasonable prospect of the identified yield being achieved. In accordance with national policy and guidance it also allows for an assessment of 'phasing' to determine when a site might reasonably be developed depending on the factors considered.
- 5.49 The matrix considers availability and achievability factors across two broad domains. The columns of the matrix represent physical characteristics of identified sites and their surroundings that may affect the capability of development or lead to increased costs – for example topography, remediation for contamination or the need to reconfigure multiple landholdings to provide access.
- 5.50 The rows of the matrix represent our judgment on those indicators likely to govern the outcomes of any identified site in terms of viability. Specifically, this might look at indicators of potential land value depending on existing uses, the development typology used to derive total potential yield and the possible impact of cumulative policy costs. In relevant circumstances this may also require judgement on whether there is a reasonable prospect of mixed-use development on an identified site.
- 5.51 Considering 'discounting' in this way means that factors affecting availability or achievability will not necessarily be limited to either the respective rows or columns of the matrix. As an example, a site identified within a well-performing industrial area would require judgement surrounding the land value associated with the existing function (row), any potential remediation costs associated with redevelopment (column 1 and 2) and the potential timescales over which the site might become available (last column).
- 5.52 Three separate iterations of the matrix have been developed based on whether the assumptions are applied to sites with a forecast development of 'high' (Table 5), 'medium' (Table 6) or 'low' (Table 7) based on the mapping of value areas in Figure 4 above. It is important to note that, as we have highlighted, overall mapping of value areas is only a starting point in the Elmbridge context. The potential for exceptionally high development values exists across virtually all points of the Borough. The rows assessing 'weak' to 'strong' prospects of viability outcomes allow a more refined view to be taken on individual sites.

Copies of Matrices Used for Discounting and Phasing Assessment

Table 5: Phasing and discounting matrix for sites in 'High' value areas

Forecast Development Value			High
Development Constraints Viability Indicator	<i>Significant Barriers to Development or Availability</i>	<i>Modest Barriers to Development or Availability</i>	<i>Limited Barriers to Development or Availability</i>
Weak	Development Capacity Discounted	11-15 Years	6-10 Years
Moderate	11-15 Years	6-10 Years	0-5 Years
Strong	6-10 Years	0-5 Years	0-5 Years

Table 6: Phasing and discounting matrix for sites in 'mid' value areas

Forecast Development Value			Mid
Development Constraints Viability Indicator	<i>Significant Barriers to Development or Availability</i>	<i>Modest Barriers to Development or Availability</i>	<i>Limited Barriers to Development or Availability</i>
Weak	Development Capacity Discounted	11-15 Years	6-10 Years
Moderate	Development Capacity Discounted	6-10 Years	0-5 Years
Strong	11-15 Years	6-10 Years	0-5 Years

Table 7: Phasing and discounting matrix for sites in 'low' value areas

Forecast Development Value			Low
Development Constraints Viability Indicator	<i>Significant Barriers to Development or Availability</i>	<i>Modest Barriers to Development or Availability</i>	<i>Limited Barriers to Development or Availability</i>
Weak	Development Capacity Discounted	Development Capacity Discounted	11-15 Years
Moderate	Development Capacity Discounted	11-15 Years	6-10 Years
Strong	11-15 Years	6-10 Years	0-5 Years

Small sites

- 5.53 The discounting stage also considers small sites – those generating fewer than five dwelling units. Although the study did identify some small sites, it is not possible, by their very nature, to identify all opportunities. Instead, these sites are discounted from the study and instead, an element of windfall allowed to cover this supply of sites. Discounting at this stage removes the potential for double-counting within the estimates of capacity.
- 5.54 The Council's Land Availability Assessment³⁹ (LAA) report outlines the current approach to small sites and windfall development in Elmbridge. This notes that over the period 2006-2014, 1,019 units were delivered on small sites, equating to an average of approximately 127 units per year. Looking forward, the Council anticipate delivery of approximately 86 units per year from small sites. However, the LAA states that delivery from these sites is not relied upon in the first five years of the Local Plan period, and thus it rolls contributions from years one to five into later periods, consequently increasing the annual average from year six onwards to 116 units per annum.
- 5.55 For the purposes of this study we follow the approach taken by the Council and have not made an allowance for small sites within years one to five, but do recognise the potential for longer term delivery in later years. To avoid double-counting, any sites identified within the site surveys, and estimated to have a dwelling potential fewer than five units, have been removed (i.e.: discounted) from our schedules and estimates of capacity from the physically identifiable sites. The site survey work identified 96 sites with an estimated development potential of one to four dwellings. This demonstrates that potential for development from this source type does exist.

³⁹ Elmbridge BC, February 2015, Land Availability Assessment 2014. This approach is retained in the 2016 LAA, see: Elmbridge BC, January 2016, Elmbridge Local Plan, Land Availability Assessment Method 2016

Summary of stage findings

Discounting process

5.56 Through the discounting process the overall number of sites carried through the UCS reduced from a total of 389 sites considered acceptable, in principle, to a total of 235 (see Table 8). Of those discounted, almost two thirds (96 sites) were because the estimate of site capacity was less than five units and considered small sites which are removed to avoid double counting. A total of 58 sites were discounted for viability and delivery issues. The greatest number of potential urban capacity sites are found in Walton-on-Thames.

Table 8: Sites discounted through the UCS, broken down by area

Location	Sites subject to discounting process	Sites discounted due to viability / delivery issues	Sites discounted as small sites to avoid double counting	Sites remaining after discounting process
Claygate	22	2	7	13
Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon	49	4	9	36
The Dittons	31	8	5	18
Esher Station	11	1	2	8
Esher Town	20	1	2	17
Hinchley Wood	19	4	9	6
Molesey	73	14	25	34
Oxshott	8	0	3	5
Walton-on-Thames (inc. Hersham)	93	14	21	58
Weybridge (inc. Brooklands)	63	9	14	40
Total	389	58	96	235

Phasing

5.57 All sites accepted through the discounting stage were placed into one of three phasing periods, each of five years in length, with the most reasonable prospects in the first five years, and more complex sites in later periods (years eleven to fifteen). The total number of sites in each phasing period, and the estimated capacity generated from these are shown in Table 9 and Table 10 respectively. This shows that, based on a mid-point, potential exists for almost 4,300 dwellings on sites identified within the urban capacity study, with the majority of numbers phased from years six onwards. The greatest area of potential is Walton-on-Thames.

Table 9: Number of potential sites within phasing period, by area

Location	Total sites remaining after discounting process	Sites in Years 1- 5	Sites in Years 6 - 10	Sites in Years 11 - 15
Claygate	13	6	3	4
Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon	36	12	15	9
The Dittons	18	2	13	3
Esher Station	8	2	5	1
Esher Town	17	6	4	7
Hinchley Wood	6	1	5	0
Molesey	34	5	8	21
Oxshott	5	1	2	2
Walton-on-Thames (inc. Hersham)	58	15	11	32
Weybridge (inc. Brooklands)	40	8	21	11
Total	235	58	87	90

Table 10: Dwelling potential of the physically identified sites by phasing period

Location	Years 1- 5			Years 6 - 10			Years 11 - 15			Total		
	Low	High	Mid-Pt	Low	High	Mid-Pt	Low	High	Mid-Pt	Low	High	Mid-Pt
Claygate	27	61	44	31	71	51	31	71	52	89	203	148
Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon	92	215	154	179	427	303	173	393	284	444	1035	741
The Dittons	10	25	17	165	382	273	45	102	73	220	509	363
Esher Station	24	47	36	42	87	66	5	12	8	71	146	110
Esher Town	46	111	77	23	60	42	130	311	222	199	483	341
Hinchley Wood	8	19	13	30	68	50	0	0	0	38	87	63
Molesey	52	133	92	95	236	166	256	539	399	402	908	657
Oxshott	4	9	6	28	60	44	6	15	11	38	84	61
Walton-on-Thames (inc. Hersham)	82	189	136	148	325	235	556	1,186	870	786	1,700	1,241
Weybridge (inc. Brooklands)	39	95	67	146	356	252	148	356	251	334	807	570
Total	385	904	642	886	2073	1,481	1,350	2,985	2,171	2,620	5,962	4,294

6. Capacity estimates and monitoring

The final stage of the study is to present the final estimates of capacity, on a settlement by settlement basis, and to break these down based upon different categories to help with the future monitoring of the opportunities. This section of the report presents the study findings.

Unconstrained capacity of physically identified sites

- 6.1 Through the UCS 692 sites were identified. Following the stocktaking process this was reduced to a total of 389. Application of density multipliers resulted in an estimate of capacity between 3,501 and 7,894 dwelling units, or a mid-point of 5697 dwellings.

Discounting and phasing the physically identified sites

- 6.2 Through the discounting process the prospect of delivery of individual sites was assessed, considering viability and delivery issues. Those sites considered to have a reasonable prospect of delivery within a fifteen-year period were phased into five-year phasing periods. Small sites (those yielding less than five units) were discounted to avoid double counting (see below).
- 6.3 A total of 235 sites were retained through the discounting stage, generating in an estimate of capacity between 2,620 and 5,962 dwelling units. Taking a mid-point between these results in a capacity estimate of 4,294 dwellings.

Small sites and other sources of potential

- 6.4 Through the UCS a number of small sites were identified where the estimated capacity yield was less than five dwellings. Because of the small nature of these sites it is not possible to identify all of them and they are often dealt with by way of a windfall allowance in the Local Plan. To avoid double-counting with these estimates, all small sites identified in the UCS were discounted. A total of 96 sites were discounted through this process.
- 6.5 Based on the Council's LAA and in consideration of recent delivery, it is assumed that approximately 86 units per year will be delivered on small sites. However, the

Council does not rely on these in the first five years of the Plan, rolling figures into later periods, it is thus assumed that in years one to five of the Plan small sites will not contribute to housing delivery, but in years six to fifteen of the Plan period, will contribute around 116 units per annum. That equates to a total of 1,160 units from small sites.

- 6.6 The UCS has also looked at the potential supply of homes from other sources, including homes above the shop, empty properties and office to residential conversions. These are difficult to quantify and, in the case of homes above the shop and empty properties, difficult to deliver. The stock of empty properties in Elmbridge is also relatively low and, although potential may exist from these sources, it has not been quantified in the study. Equally, whilst there has been some evidence of office to residential conversions in the Borough, the period that the 'prior approval' route has been in operation is relatively short and it is difficult to draw conclusions about future change. The UCS recommends that these sources are monitored over time and an allowance made at a future date should information show these sources are generating additional homes.

Summary of constrained capacity

- 6.7 The UCS estimates that there is potential for approximately 5,454 new dwelling units in the built-up areas within Elmbridge over a fifteen-year period, as presented in Table 11. This figure reflects the mid-point estimates from the physically identifiable sites plus the allowance from small sites.

Table 11: Summary of urban capacity study estimates

Plan period	Source of supply	Dwelling Range	Mid-point estimate
Years 1-5	Physically identifiable sites	385 - 904	642
	Small sites	0	0
	Other sources	0 (to be monitored)	0
Years 6 - 10	Physically identifiable sites	886 - 2,073	1,481
	Small Sites	580 (at 116 per year)	580
	Other sources	0 (to be monitored)	0
Years 11-15	Physically identifiable sites	1,350 - 2,985	2,171
	Small sites	580 (at 116 per year)	580
	Other sources	0 (to be monitored)	0
Total	All sources	3,780 - 7,122	5,454

Towards a development pipeline model

- 6.8 The urban capacity study is, by its very nature, a snapshot in time. Importance is thus attached to on-going monitoring of the sites and the assumptions underlying these. This section presents an approach to monitoring that can be used by the Council.
- 6.9 Current monitoring activity tends to report on dwelling completions, planning permissions and delivery rates. However, this excludes sites that have entered the development pipeline, and which may account for a significant number of units.
- 6.10 We recommend that sites identified within the urban capacity study are considered as part of the wider monitoring of sites in the development pipeline, with the status ordered according to the following categories:

Category 1: Sites in the development pipeline:

- 1A: Completed sites / units
- 1B: Sites / units under construction
- 1C: Sites granted full planning permission
- 1D: Sites granted outline planning permission

Category 2: Sites entering the development pipeline

- 2A: Sites currently subject to appeal (these may move into category 1, or out of the pipeline altogether)
- 2B: Sites subject to a planning application
- 2C: Sites subject to pre-application discussions

Category 3: Other sites identified in the urban capacity study

- 3A: Sites phased within years 1-5
- 3B: Sites phased within years 6-10
- 3C: Sites phased within years 11-15

Category 4: Sites no longer part of the supply:

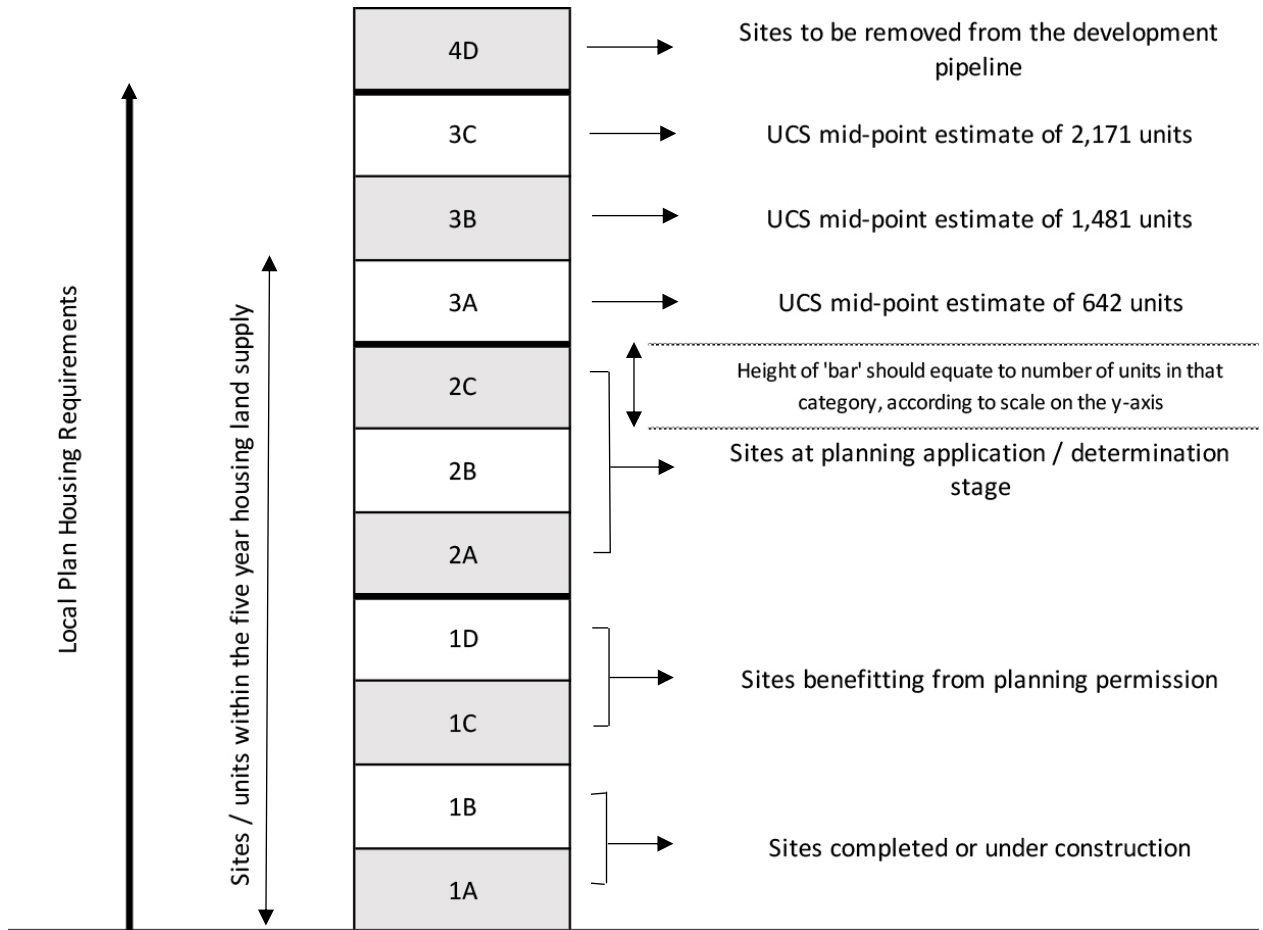
- 4A: Sites where planning permission granted for other uses, or site no longer suitable for residential development

- 6.11 Through this framework it will be possible to track the progress of sites from identification in the urban capacity study through the development pipeline, from the initial decision to grant permission to completion of dwellings, with the category of each site being changed as it moves through the pipeline.
- 6.12 Sites not currently identified within the urban capacity study can be entered into the pipeline model when they come forward, potentially at pre-application stage, and those coming forward for alternative uses being removed. Sites that are taking longer

to come forward than anticipated, or which have come forward earlier than expected, can be moved into different phasing periods, allowing potential to be tracked against Local Plan figures and five-year supply targets.

- 6.13 The chart below (Figure 6) shows a graphic representation of the pipeline model. This will allow completions and the status of physically identifiable source types to be updated over time. Equally, it is important to monitor the supply from other sources and the assumptions with regard to windfall allowances from those.

Figure 6: Outline for potential UCS monitoring framework



7. Concluding comments

Following the study process a series of points for further consideration have been identified. These are presented below.

Potential exists, but does not provide all of the answers

- 7.1 The UCS has found that capacity does exist within the existing built-up areas within Elmbridge for new housing development. Although this will contribute to meeting future housing needs in the Borough it will not provide all of the answers: consideration will likely need to be given to releasing some of the Green Belt for new housing - some of which is within close proximity to railway stations, town and district centres, and thus which may comprise 'sustainable' locations for growth.

7.2 **Exploring 'land swaps'**

Through the work on the UCS a number of sites have been identified within the boundaries of the existing built-up area (but close to the edge of the built-up area) and which comprise use types that might be considered suitable for relocation into areas of Green Belt, thus freeing up land within the built-up area for housing and other supporting mixed uses. Such uses include for example sports clubs and associated facilities. It is important to recognise that many of these play an important role and function and whilst loss of these is not promoted within the study, the potential for relocating these a short distance (though still within relatively close distance of the areas they serve) is worth considering as a policy choice that needs to be made to help meet the housing needs of the Borough.

Reconsidering employment land

- 7.3 The study has identified that significant potential exists through the redevelopment of employment land within the Borough. The Council will need to make decisions about how best to use this land: by its very nature much of this use type represents vehicle-dominated activities but, at the same time, much of this land is within close proximity (e.g.: 400m to 800m) to railway stations. There is potential for this land to work harder, but if it was to be released for housing, the question is then how and where employment activities might be relocated, if at all. Equally, it may give rise to thought as to whether preferred locations for employment use can be intensified to allow for activities on other sites to be relocated. Examples of ways in which employment land might be intensified are illustrated in the draft London Plan⁴⁰. It may be that a similar approach, though adapted to respond to local character and

⁴⁰ See Figure 6.3 of: Mayor of London, December 2017, The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London; draft for public consultation

context, could be explored within Elmbridge. Land at Brooklands is the prime employment area in the Borough, benefitting from excellent proximity to the strategic highway network. The Council may wish to explore whether opportunities exist to intensify employment use in this area to help facilitate change elsewhere.

Rationalising car parking

- 7.4 There are numerous areas of surface car parking in and around the town, district and local centres across the Borough. Whilst these have been identified and considered through the study, and indeed informed by current levels of use, it might be possible to further refine this through on-going assessment of car park utilisation and different models of provision over time: e.g.: provision of decked parking in one location may allow for the release of other sites for housing. This should perhaps go hand-in-hand with an approach to active travel that looks to promote a mode-shift to an increase in walking, cycling and public transport (bus) use across the Borough, including delivery of safe and direct cycle routes that make this an attractive and viable proposition for residents in the Borough.

Making the most of public sector assets

- 7.5 The UCS has, in some locations, identified clusters of social and community uses, including for example health centres, community and youth centres, which could potentially be amalgamated to bring benefits in terms of shared facilities and parking, as well as reduced maintenance costs. Where such amalgamation does take place, it could free up land for housing. However, if such an approach were followed, it should not result in a loss of service provision, nor a shortfall in local infrastructure.
- 7.6 The study also identified a large number of garage courts across the Borough, most of which represent small sites but, which, nevertheless, might present a fairly substantial supply over time. This type of site can and does come often forward, providing new affordable housing in the Borough⁴¹. Further investigation of garage useage may help identify those which are under-used and that might provide opportunities in the short to medium term.

⁴¹ See, for example: <http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/housing/affordable-housing/> (accessed January 2018)

Further exploring potential through design

- 7.7 The application of gross to net ratios and density multipliers within the UCS has provided a broad estimate of site capacity. But the true potential of a site will not be known until further site-specific assessment, including design analysis, has been undertaken. Design analysis would allow the particular characteristics and site context to be investigated and may demonstrate the potential for higher density development that is appropriate to location, reflecting local character, scale and type of development.

Unblocking the potential

- 7.8 The UCS identifies a large number of sites, some of which might not be deliverable in the short-term, but which do offer longer-term potential subject to other factors, such as reviewing policy designations and current use types. The approach to the UCS is purposely proactive, seeking to explore as many opportunities for new development as possible. Bringing these forward may involve a proactive approach to planning and development. The Council could, where appropriate:

- Facilitate discussions between landowners.
- Create site specific development briefs.
- Market land for development.
- Use powers to acquire land and develop existing public sector land for new public sector housing across a variety of tenure types.

Area-wide masterplan approach to areas of opportunity

- 7.9 The urban capacity study has identified some locations where there are multiple land owners and active uses, but where the opportunity exists to intensify land use, or where relocations might assist in the delivery of new housing. The viability of such opportunities is difficult to assess through the urban capacity study given the complex ownership arrangements and warrant more detailed investigation, with a masterplan-led approach to change helping to realise the potential and the key steps and strategies required to facilitate change, including how and where measures for green infrastructure and, as appropriate, flood mitigation might be built-in to a scheme. Such areas include the centre at Rydens, along Hersham Road, land around the junction of the A224 and Molesey Road, and the Molesey Industrial Estate SEL, located along Central Avenue, Island farm Road and Molesey Avenue.

Appendix A: Consultation letter - Residents



Elmbridge Borough Council

... bridging the communities ...

Civic Centre
High Street, Esher
Surrey KT10 9SD
01372 474474
contactus@elmbridge.gov.uk
elmbridge.gov.uk

contact: Planning Policy
direct line: 01372 474474
direct fax: 01372 474910
e-mail: planningpolicy@elmbridge.gov.uk
my ref: UCS2017/18
date: 13 November 2017

Dear Sir / Madam,

Further to the letter sent to you in August 2017 thanking you for submitting comments to the **Local Plan: Strategic Options Consultation**, we are now writing to provide you with an opportunity to help in the next steps of preparing the Local Plan.

What is happening now?

Through the consultation, held earlier this year, a number of our residents suggested additional sites that could be available for development and provided details about these. However, many respondents stated that there were alternative sites but did not provide any addresses / locations.

In response to the consultation, the Council is now starting an additional piece of work to identify new opportunities for development in the urban area. This work is called an Urban Capacity Study (UCS) and will build on the [Land Availability Assessment \(LAA\)](#) seeking to fully understand how much of the Borough's housing need can be met within our existing settlement areas. Those sites already suggested will be assessed in the UCS.

How you can help

We know that our residents have an extensive knowledge about their local area. Therefore this is your opportunity to tell us if you know of any additional site(s) that you think could provide a development opportunity.

If you know of any additional sites / buildings in the urban area that could accommodate future residential dwellings and you wish to share this with us for further consideration, please write to the above address or email planningpolicy@elmbridge.gov.uk with:

1. The exact address and location description (a location plan would be useful).
2. The reasons why you consider it may be available for development? For example, it is derelict, vacant, run down or its lease is about to run out.

Please do **not** send us any sites located in the Green Belt. A map showing the extent of the Green Belt can be found [online](#).

All suggestions must be received by **5pm on Monday 4th December 2017**.

This engagement exercise is different to the previous consultation on the Local Plan in that we will not publish the names or any details of those who have submitted sites to us. We may however contact you for further information and the sites suggested will be made public.

What happens next?

All submissions will be considered in terms of their potential for development. Where appropriate, sites will be taken forward through the UCS for further investigation.

The UCS will form part of the Council's updated Local Plan Evidence Base, with the additional information / studies published in due course.

If you have any queries regarding this work please contact us on **01372 474474** or email the Planning Policy Team via the email address provided above.

Your help and assistance with this is much appreciated. We will continue to keep you updated and informed of progress on Local Plan preparation.

If you would prefer not to be contacted by Planning Services about planning policy information / consultations in the future, please let us know by emailing / telephoning / or writing to us using the details above.

Yours faithfully,

Suzanne Parkes

Suzanne Parkes
Acting Planning Policy Manager

Appendix B: Consultation letter – ‘Development industry’

contact: Zoe Belton
Senior Planning Officer
direct line: 01372 474474
e-mail: planningpolicy@elmbridge.gov.uk
my ref: UCS2017/18

13th November 2017

Dear

Urban Capacity Study for Elmbridge Borough Council

Consultants Troy Planning + Design has been commissioned by Elmbridge Borough Council to prepare an Urban Capacity Study (UCS).

The purpose of this study is to assess the potential to accommodate new housing development within the defined urban areas by reusing previously developed land (i.e: brownfield land) and making better use of existing land and buildings. The work will help inform emerging policy decisions in the new Local Plan as well as feed into the new Brownfield Land Register, which the Council is required to prepare and update on an annual basis.

This letter is to inform you of the study, to welcome comment on methodological aspects, and to provide you with an opportunity to identify and suggest any land and buildings which you consider may have the potential for development within the existing built up areas up to 2035.

A summary of our method statement is attached. Should you have any comments or suggestions please reply by Friday 15 December 2017 so that any information received can be fed into the study timetable.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Council if you have any queries regarding the UCS.

We look forward to receiving and comments or suggestions you wish to make.

Yours sincerely,

Z. Belton

Mrs Z Belton
Senior Planning Officer

Summary Method Statement

The UCS will provide supporting technical evidence to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. The proposed method for this work comprises five main stages as outlined below:

Stage 1: Method development and consultation

This stage will see the method refined in light of discussions with officers and comments received from Council Members, through discussion with neighbouring authorities under the Council's 'duty to cooperate', with the 'development industry' and others. This letter forms part of that process.

Stage 2: Identifying capacity sources

This will involve a desk-based review of mapping and documentation in addition to site surveys to identify as many future development opportunities as possible. This will involve surveys on a street-by-street basis of town and district centres, the principal transport hubs (railway stations) and the catchment area around these. We will also visit each of the sites and areas identified from the desk review of mapping together with a general examination of other areas.

Stage 3: Assessing capacity

The use of density multipliers will form the basis for estimating the housing capacity of individual sites identified through the survey work. Appropriate multipliers will be informed by a review of the character of the area, the mix and type of development, including schemes that have recently been granted planning permission. The assessment of capacity will reflect appropriate densities that optimise the potential for land and development in the built-up area. Site specific constraints will also be considered.

Stage 4: Discounting capacity yields

Following the assessment of capacity this figure will then be discounted to give an informed assessment of the amount of housing that might be brought forward within the time horizon being considered. Site potential will be broken down into phasing periods, with those in the first five years comprising those considered suitable, available and achievable.

Stage 5: Reporting

Plans, maps and schedules will be prepared setting out the findings of the study and the assumptions underpinning the estimates of capacity. Data from the report will be used to inform the Council's Brownfield Land Register.

General notes

The study will only consider those sites that are located within the built-up areas within the Borough, as defined by settlement boundaries. Please only submit information on sites that meet this criterion.

In addition, any insight which you may be able to provide in relation to housing market conditions in different parts of the Borough would be appreciated. For example, delivery rates, build out periods etc.

Should you wish to make a comment or submit a site for consideration, please complete the proforma overleaf.

This invitation is made without prejudice to the objectives of either party; at this stage it is not possible to foresee the outcome of the study or the emerging Local Plan, nor does it prejudice any decision the Council may wish to take should an application for any site be forthcoming.

ELMBRIDGE URBAN CAPACITY STUDY
METHOD AND SITE OPPORTUNITIES

Please return to:

Zoe Belton
Senior Planning Officer (Policy and Strategy)
Elmbridge Borough Council
zbelton@elmbridge.gov.uk

Section 1: Details

Name:	
Organisation:	
Position:	
Acting on behalf of (if applicable):	
Address:	
Phone:	
E-mail:	

Section 2: Method

Please provide any comments on the study method below, including any information on development types, densities and market values that should be considered within the assessments of capacity.

--

Section 3: Site opportunities

If you would like to suggest a site for consideration in the Urban Capacity Study please supply the following information:

Site address / location:	(please also include a plan, preferably on a scaled OS base, with the site boundary outlined in red)
Site size (hectares):	
Land owners:	
Planning status:	(is it, or has it been subject to proposals in the past)
Potential capacity and development mix:	
Confirm access arrangements to site:	
Confirm that site is deliverable and can be achieved with the next five years:	
Known Constraints e.g, tree preservation orders	

Appendix C: Method Summary for Consultation with DtC bodies

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Elbridge Borough Council has commissioned Troy Planning + Design (TPD) to prepare an Urban Capacity Study (UCS). This will form part of the technical evidence base supporting production of the new Local Plan.
- 1.2 The first stage of the process is to develop and refine the proposed methodology for the UCS. The method is presented in this document for review and comment.
- 1.3 Following this initial method development stage (stage 1), work on the UCS comprises four further stages:
 - Stage 2: Identifying capacity sources
 - Stage 3: Assessing capacity.
 - Stage 4: Discounting capacity yields.
 - Stage 5 Reporting.
- 1.4 The key steps in the process are discussed in more detail in Section 2 of this document.
- 1.5 The proposed approach recognises the fundamental importance of:
 - Relating the analysis of urban housing and other development e.g. employment and retail potential to proximity and access to local facilities and public transport, reflecting opportunities for sustainable patterns of development and optimal use of land.
 - The need for forensic surveys in the most sustainable locations and taking a 'policy-off' approach in early stages to capture as many opportunities as possible, taking a longer-term view of site potential.
 - A clear and transparent approach to site assessment which strengthens the robustness of findings.
 - Reflecting local character and context within estimates of capacity.
 - Engaging with Council officers to review and agree the potential opportunities.
 - Provision of clear and easy-to-use data which can inform other studies (e.g.: Brownfield Land Register) and be updated by the Council.
 - Input from the development industry to help inform viability and site delivery assumptions, as well as providing an opportunity to submit sites for consideration.

2. Proposed Approach

Stage 1: Developing the methodology

Task 1.1: Duty-to-cooperate

- 2.1 This first stage of the UCS process seeks to refine and develop the proposed study method, with neighbouring authorities contacted for comment as part of the Council's 'Duty-to-cooperate'. Comments will be reviewed and the method updated as appropriate.

Task 1.2: Council engagement

- 2.2 Meetings and presentations will be undertaken with:
- Council Members, acting as a briefing to the work, outlining the purpose of the study and process for identifying and estimating capacity.
 - Asset and Estate Management teams, to introduce the study and capture the potential opportunities that might be afforded by public sector land ownerships within the Borough.

Task 1.3: 'Industry' Consultation

- 2.3 A letter will be sent to development industry representatives active in the area, including agents and key stakeholders, outlining the study method and inviting comment on this. The letter will also act as a 'call for sites' for the UCS and, where appropriate, request comment on appropriate development densities in the Borough and different values across the area which will inform the viability of different development typologies. Responses to this will help inform the site identification, discounting and phasing tasks later in the study programme.

The output from 'Stage 1' will be a refined method statement for the UCS
--

Stage 2: Identifying capacity sources

Task 2.1: Desk-based review

- 2.4 Potential UCS sites will be identified and mapped as areas to be visited. These will be linked to a schedule for completing at each stage and which will clearly identify the assumptions informing the capacity exercise.
- 2.5 Information to be mapped at this stage includes:
- Sites from previous Land Availability Assessments (LAA) studies.
 - Live and lapsed planning permissions.
 - Policy layers, opportunities and constraints.
 - The boundary of the built-up area.
 - Catchment areas (800m, equivalent to a ten-minute walk) around town centres and railway stations.
 - Public land ownerships (where known) and through consultation.
 - Sites submitted by the development industry for consideration.
 - Those sites provided by the public through the Strategic Options consultation as well as the additional community consultation letter.
- 2.6 Sites for review and assessment will not be constrained by a particular size threshold. This will allow small sites which may have potential to accommodate higher density development to be tested and included as appropriate. Following the calculation of site capacity estimates in Stage 3 we will then review the schedule of identified sites and agree thresholds for inclusion or exclusion from the study. At this time it is suggested that five units (gross) is a sensible threshold, which is consistent with the threshold for inclusion of sites in the Brownfield Land Register. Sites below this typically comprise 'small sites'. It will not always be possible to pick these up. They include applications for single dwellings and a separate assessment of supply from this source will be made based on historic completions. Removing all small sites identified in the site survey will then help avoid any double counting.

Task 2.2: Site visits

- 2.7 Site survey work will be undertaken to record the sites identified through the desk-based review and to identify other opportunities with potential. The survey work will seek to identify all potential housing, employment and retail sites adopting an unconstrained, 'policy-off' approach, i.e.: explicitly avoiding discounting sites during the survey process.
- 2.8 Identification of sites through visits will be undertaken at three levels:
1. Detailed forensic surveys on a street-by-street basis of key opportunity areas and sustainable locations, comprising:
 - a. Town, district and local centres and their catchment areas.
 - b. Local / neighbourhood parades

c. The catchment area around train stations

2. A review of key sites and landholdings, including Strategic Employment Land, public sector land ownerships and estates owned and managed by RSLs or Housing Associations.
3. A systematic analysis of other areas, including visits to each of the sites identified during the desk-based review of mapping and information together with a general examination of other areas.

- 2.9 The output from this task will be a set of settlement maps recording the identified sites and supported by a schedule setting out basic site information, including site location and area (measured in hectares).
- 2.10 For future use, each site will be given a unique reference code, based on the settlement name.

Task 2.3: Review identified sites / initial stocktaking workshop

- 2.11 Deciding which of the identified sites should be taken forward for assessment in the capacity work is a crucial stage in the study.
- 2.12 As the proposed method for the survey work adopts an inclusive approach to site identification and buildings with potential for housing it will inevitably result in the identification of some sites where housing may not be considered desirable. It is the purpose of the stocktaking process to sieve these sites out, removing those sites where it is considered that housing development would be undesirable in policy terms. Policy justifications for removing sites from the capacity estimates may include (for example) the need to retain land for employment purposes, retention of open space, land and buildings performing a community function etc.
- 2.13 A stocktaking workshop will be held with Council officers to review and refine the list of sites. Reasons for accepting or rejecting sites during this session will be recorded for the purposes of transparency.
- 2.14 This stocktaking session will be restricted to tests of acceptability and desirability so that it does not overlap with questions about viability and other development constraints which will occur in the later discounting task (see Stage 4 below) and which either knocks out or puts back in time those sites where housing is acceptable but where delivery might be impeded by other constraints.

The output from Stage 2 will be a schedule of sites and associated mapping, indicating which sites are considered appropriate for further assessment or, if not, providing clear reasons as to why.

Stage 3: Assessing capacity

Task 3.1: 'Unconstrained' capacity estimates

- 2.15 Estimates of development capacity will be generated through (1) application of gross to net site calculations to consider the amount of land that might be suitable for housing on any one site, and (2) use of standard density multipliers applicable to the location.
- 2.16 Appropriate density multipliers to be used will be informed through discussion with Council officers and a review of recently approved schemes, as well as the character and density of different areas across the Borough.
- 2.17 Estimates of capacity will be recorded on the schedule of sites, along with the density multiplier and net to gross ratios applied to each site.

Task 3.2: Review other sources of potential

- 2.18 The desk-based review and site visits will record the physically identifiable sites. Other 'non-physically' identifiable sources may also offer potential capacity. These include:
- Empty homes.
 - Subdivision of existing housing.
 - Flats above shops.
 - Empty office space.
- 2.19 An assessment of the potential from these sources will be informed by past completions across the Borough, with discounting rates applied in line with best practice assumptions and in agreement with Council officers, but also reflecting acceptable thresholds - for empty homes for example - to allow for turnover and market churn.

The output from Stage 3 will be the initial unconstrained estimate of capacity for review and further assessment.

Stage 4: Discounting capacity yields

Task 4.1: Discounting and phasing

- 2.20 The unconstrained housing capacity estimates generated in Stage 2 will be subject to consideration of the market and viability matters. The underlying aim of this stage is to identify the level of capacity that is likely to be realistically achievable. This principally requires an understanding and demonstration of clear assumptions relating to how demand and viability factors are likely to affect future development potential. It will include understanding of market value areas and viability of different development typologies, informed by recent development in the area and other supporting studies undertaken in support of the Local Plan.
- 2.21 Where relevant, the relationship between these factors and the requirements of the development plan or other guidance (e.g. policies for affordable housing) should be recognised in determining the likelihood of development. At this stage, sites considered unviable and unattractive in market terms will be removed from the estimates of capacity. Those sites generating capacity estimates of less than five units (gross) will also be removed to avoid double counting from other sources.

Task 4.2: 'Constrained' capacity estimates

- 2.22 The site schedules and estimates of capacity will be updated following the discounting process. The estimates of capacity will be presented in phases: the immediate five-year period and subsequent phases of equal periods. Sites mapped on the GIS will be colour coded according to phasing period for ease of reference. A second stocktaking session will be held with Council officers at this stage to review the assumptions and potentially move sites into different periods of deliverability based on more detailed / local site knowledge.

Task 4.4: Establish monitoring framework

- 2.23 The urban capacity study is, by its very nature, a snapshot in time. Importance is thus attached to on-going monitoring of the sites and the assumptions underlying these. A development pipeline model will be prepared showing the status of the identified sites in the study: those with planning permission for example will appear at the top of the pipeline, those where no progress has been made and which are assumed to come forward during later development periods will appear at the bottom of the pipeline. As the status of a site changes its movement through the pipeline can be tracked for monitoring purposes.

The output from Stage 4 will be an estimate of capacity grouped into five-year planning and delivery periods.

Stage 5: Reporting

- 2.24 A draft report for review and comment will be prepared. This will set out the assumptions underpinning the estimates of capacity, the reasons for site inclusion, schedules and associated mapping.
- 2.25 The draft report will be shared with neighbouring authorities for comment as part of the 'Duty-to-cooperate' process and amendments will be made where appropriate.

The output from Stage 5 will be a report and mapping presenting the capacity estimates, with data also supplied for inclusion in the Borough Council's Brownfield Land Register.

Appendix D: Examples of different residential development densities

The density multipliers outlined in Section 4 of this report imply a mix of different development typologies. Examples of built schemes are outlined in this appendix. These are presented to provide an indication of the scale of development achievable at different densities rather than as a start point for discussion of different architectural styles. The examples provided demonstrate that it is possible to higher densities than has traditionally been the case in Elmbridge, but which responds to the existing scale (e.g.: mainly two storeys in residential areas, and mid-rise circa four storeys in town centre locations).

Figure 7: The Avenue, Saffron Walden, Essex: 26dph



Figure 8: Horsted Park, Chatham, Kent: 41dph



Figure 9: Abode, Great Kneighton, Cambridge: 47dph



Figure 10: Newhall 'Be', Harlow, Essex: 52dph



Figure 11: Western Riverside, Bath: 60dph



Figure 12: Moray Mews, Islington, London: 77dph



Figure 13: Wells Street, Chelmsford, Essex: 125dph (plus non-residential town centre uses)



Figure 14: Griffiths Road, Wimbledon, SW London: 177dph



Figure 15: The Scene, Walthamstow, NE London: 180dph (plus non-residential town centre uses)



Appendix E: House Price Information

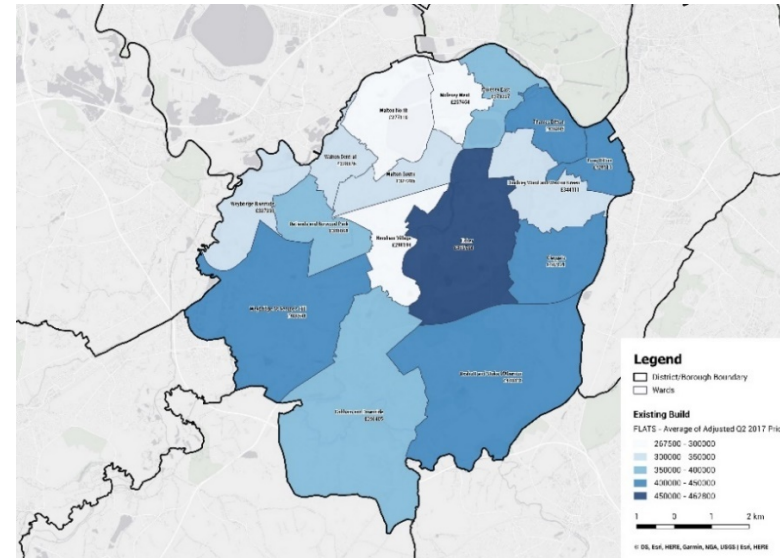
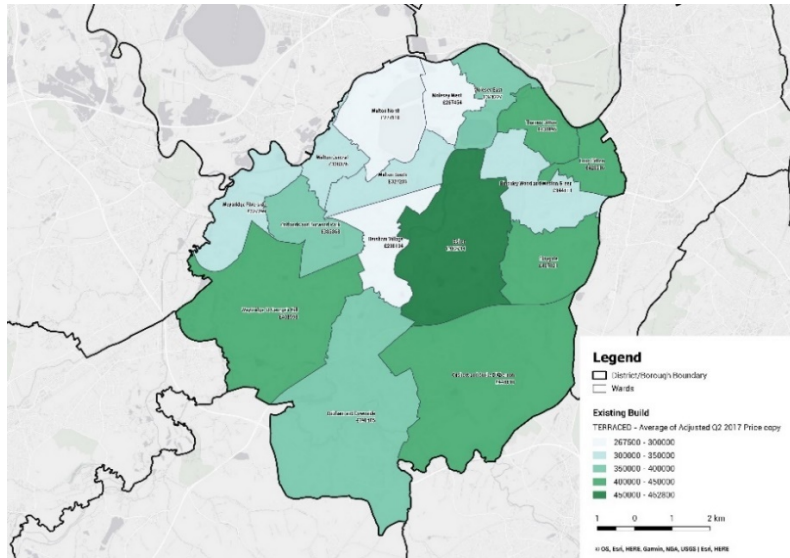
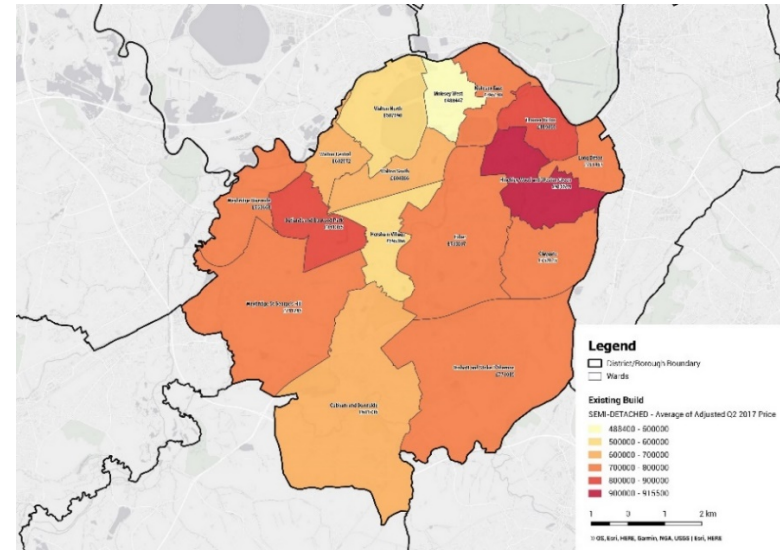
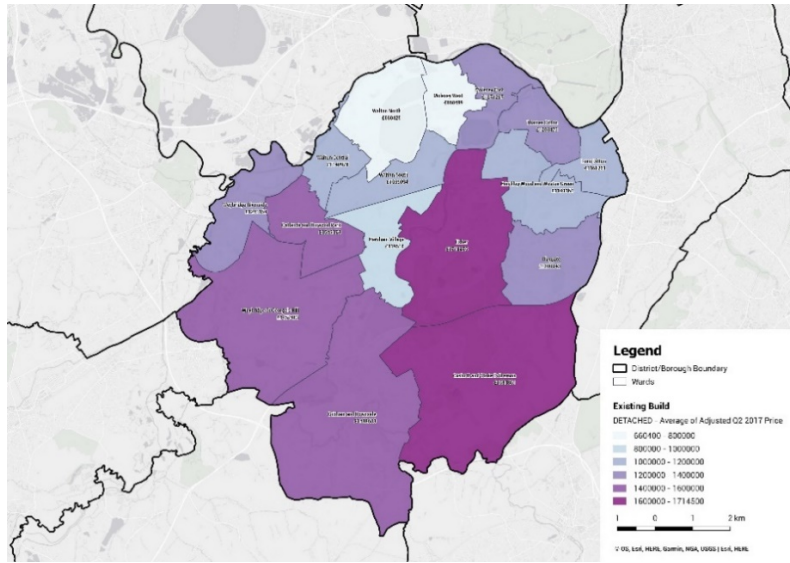
Statistical Data to Inform Matrix Value Areas including House Price Transaction Data

Table F1 - Comparison of Average Price Paid Transaction Value (All Properties) (Year Ending June 2017)								
	Median Price (£) ⁴²							
	England	South East	Elmbridge					
All Property	£227,950	£305,000	£568,000					
Detached	£322,500	£480,000	£1,150,000					
Semi-Detached	£199,000	£322,500	£610,000					
Terraced	£180,000	£270,000	£470,000					
Flat	£212,450	£204,000	£330,000					
	Mean Price (£) ⁴³				% Difference Mean and Median			
	England	South East	Elmbridge		England	South East	Elmbridge	
All Property	£292,588	£366,267	£785,599	All Property	28.4%	20.1%	38.3%	
Detached	£397,916	£575,723	£1,419,016	Detached	23.4%	19.9%	23.4%	
Semi-Detached	£248,218	£352,208	£669,403	Semi-Detached	24.7%	9.2%	9.7%	
Terraced	£240,214	£294,440	£525,706	Terraced	33.5%	9.1%	11.9%	
Flat	£296,884	£224,831	£370,510	Flat	39.7%	10.2%	12.3%	

⁴² Source: HPSSA Dataset 9. Median price paid for administrative geographies

⁴³ Source: HPSSA Dataset 12. Mean price paid for administrative geographies

Both available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housepricestatisticsforsmallareas/yearendingiune2017>



Figures F1-F4: Mapping of Average Price Paid Property Transactions 2016-2018 (By Ward and Property Type) (Existing Dwellings)⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Source: Land Registry Price Paid Transactions: <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ppd>

Table F2 – Average Value of Land Registry Price Paid Property Transactions (Existing Dwellings) (Value Area Groupings) (Data as Presented in Figures 1-4)⁴⁵					
	Low Value Areas		Mid Value Areas		High Value Areas
	West Molesey, Hersham	Walton-on-Thames, East Molesey	Thames Ditton, Weybridge, Claygate, Hinchley	Long Ditton, Cobham	Esher, Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon
Detached	£762,720	£1,105,866	£1,294,246	£1,374,797	£1,691,731
(Overall average £1,327,405)					
Flats	£280,802	£332,266	£385,949	£405,048	£460,455
(Overall average £368,839)					
Semi-Detached	£553,362	£627,249	£821,269	£649,090	£748,631
(Overall average £688,137)					
Terraced	£410,787	£468,040	£586,600	£595,910	£650,423
(Overall average £524,152)					

⁴⁵ Source: Land Registry Price Paid Transactions: <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ppd>

Table F3 – Average Value of 2014-2017 Land Registry Price Paid Property Transactions (New Build Dwellings)⁴⁶					
	Low Value Areas		Mid Value Areas		High Value Areas
	West Molesey, Hersham	Walton-on-Thames, East Molesey	Thames Ditton, Weybridge, Claygate, Hinchley	Long Ditton, Cobham	Esher, Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon
Detached	£1,066,811 [2]	£1,025,530 [13]	£1,360,507 [30]	£2,048,439 [7]	£2,661,644 [42]
(Overall average £1,940,520); [sample]					
Flats	£351,625 [55]	£337,797 [140]	£519,307 [129]	£453,905 [20]	£1,298,827 [42]
(Overall average £511,011); [sample size]					
Semi-Detached	£596,347 [17]	£733,353 [49]	£1,425,255 [17]	£913,873 [1]	£2,096,812 [11]
(Overall average £992,425); [sample size]					
Terraced	£612,983 [25]	£565,963 [33]	£1,127,174 [24]	£895,625 [8]	£1,054,440 [5]
(Overall average £773,687); [sample size]					

Table F4 – Average Value (£/sqm) and Average Size (sqm) of (New Build Dwellings)⁴⁷					
	Low Value Areas		Mid Value Areas		High Value Areas
	West Molesey, Hersham	Walton-on-Thames, East Molesey	Thames Ditton, Weybridge, Claygate, Hinchley	Long Ditton, Cobham	Esher, Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon
Detached	£6545 (163sqm)	£5883 (174sqm)	£6243 (204sqm)	£5852 (392sqm)	£6210 (459sqm)
(Average £/sqm and Sqm of New Build)					
Flats	£5726 (74sqm)	£5321 (65sqm)	£6220 (88sqm)	£6744 (74sqm)	£10336 (143sqm)
(Average £/sqm and Sqm of New Build)					
Semi-Detached	£5910 (105sqm)	£6271 (122sqm)	£7130 (195sqm)	N/A	£8404 (236sqm)
(Average £/sqm and Sqm of New Build)					
Terraced	£5348 (112sqm)	£4918 (118sqm)	£5460 (184sqm)	£5925 (154sqm)	£6865 (158sqm)
(Average £/sqm and Sqm of New Build)					
Overall Average £/sqm	£5,723	£5,559	£6,245	£6,288	£8,136

⁴⁶ Source: Land Registry Price Paid Transactions: <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ppd>

⁴⁷ Source: Land Registry Price Paid Transactions: <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ppd> and Energy Performance Certificate Data for Individual Transactions

Table F5 – Percentage Difference Between New Build and Existing Dwelling Price Paid Transactions (Indicator of 'New Build' Premium)

	Low Value Areas		Mid Value Areas		High Value Areas
	West Molesey, Hersham	Walton-on-Thames, East Molesey	Thames Ditton, Weybridge, Claygate, Hinchley	Long Ditton, Cobham	Esher, Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon
Detached	40%	-7.3%	5.1%	49.0%	57.3%
Flats	25%	2%	35%	12%	182%
Semi-Detached	8%	17%	74%	41%	180%
Terraced	49%	21%	92%	50%	62%

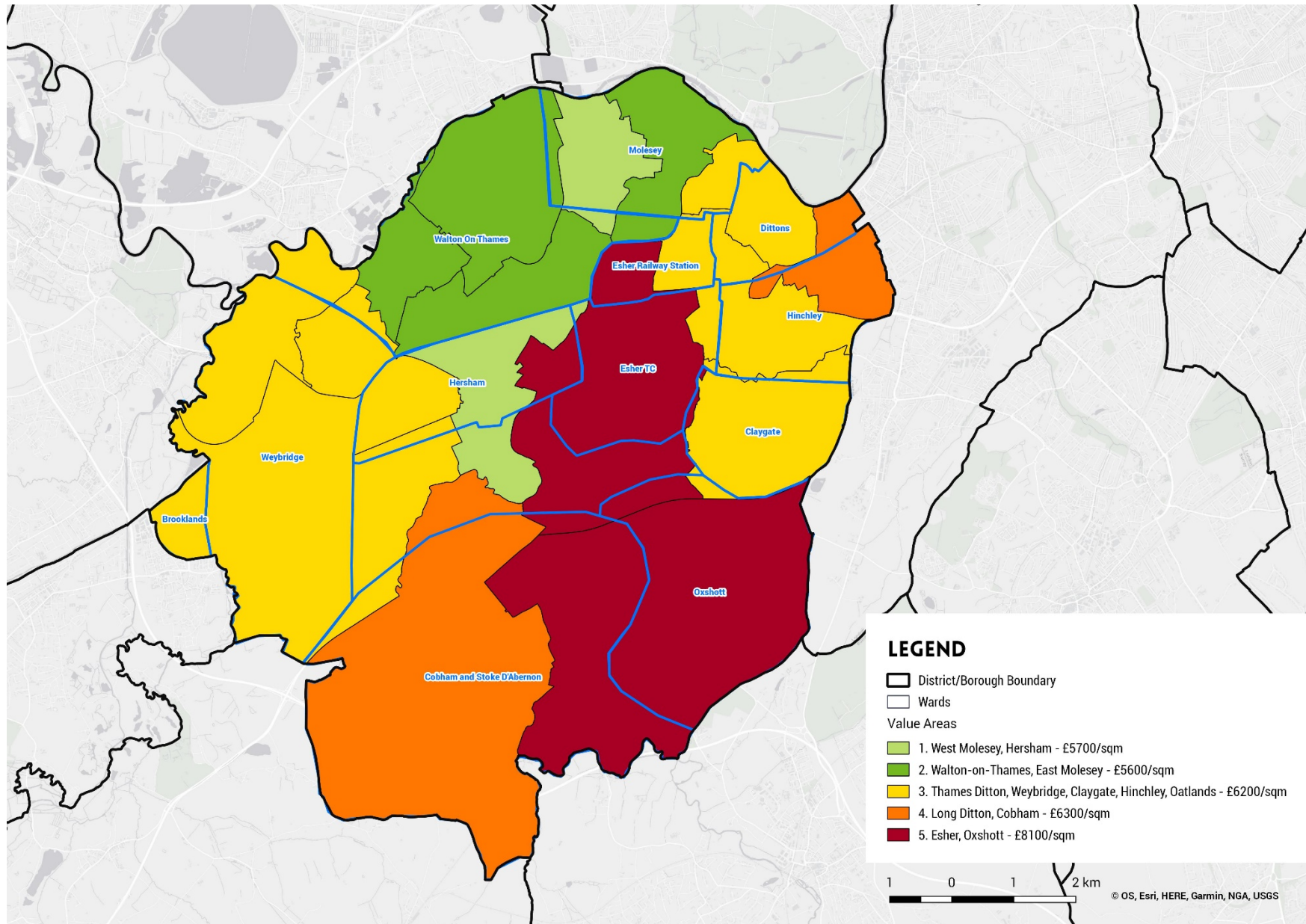


Figure F5: Mapping of Average £/sqm (All Property Types) of New Build Transactions by Initial Ward Groupings

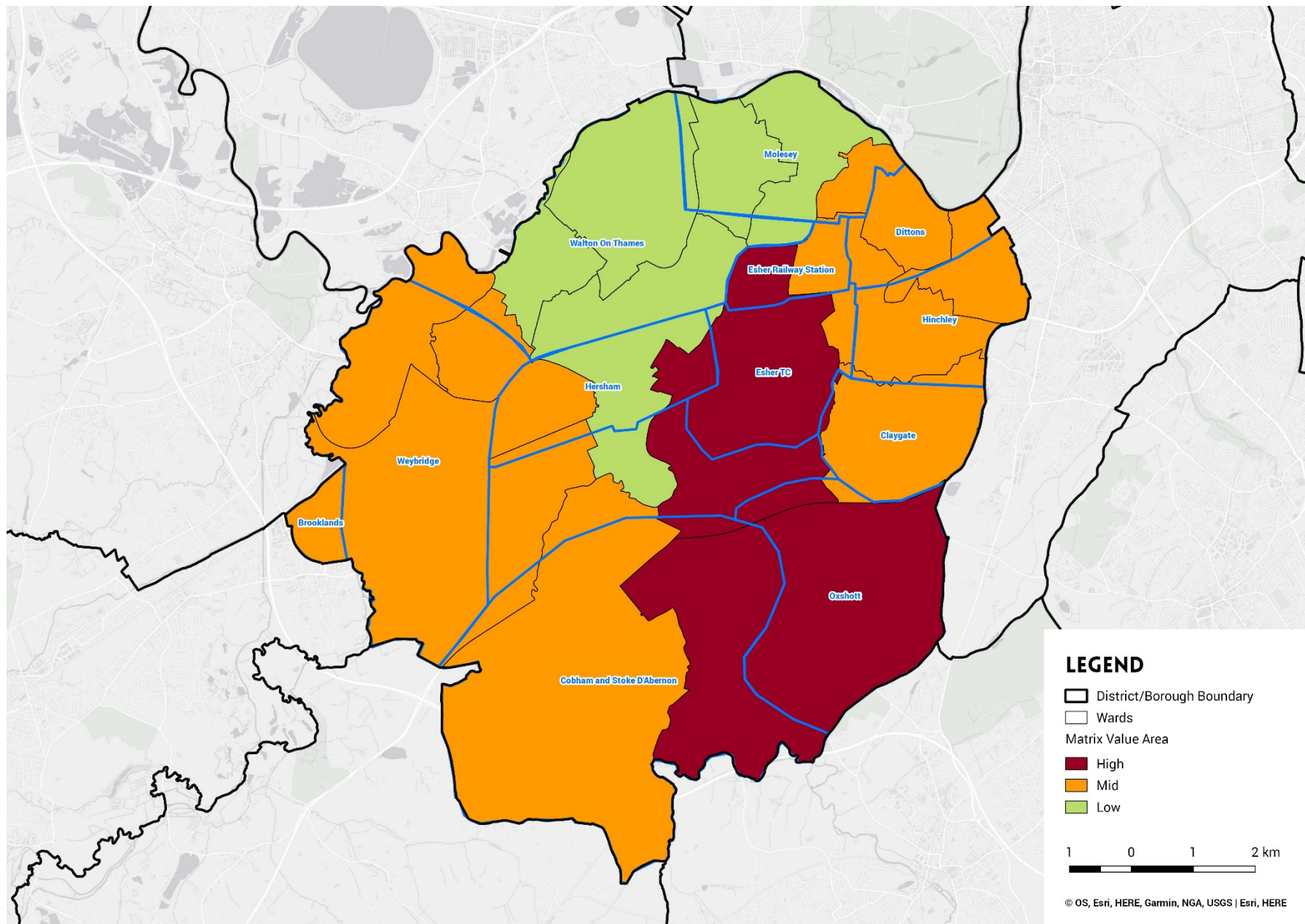
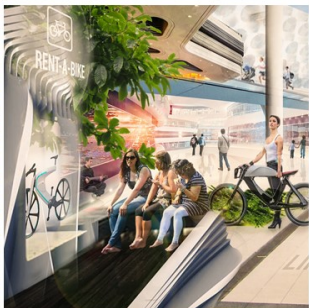
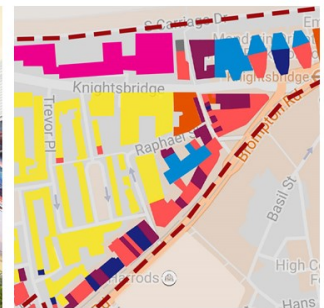
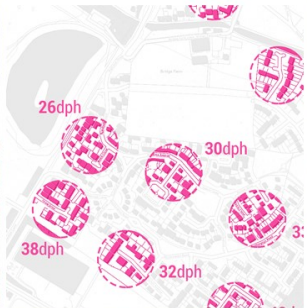


Figure F6: Matrix Value Areas Used for Discounting and Phasing Assessment



TROY PLANNING + DESIGN

www.troyplanning.com

Office: 0207 0961329

Address: Aldwych House,
71-91 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN