

Elmbridge Local Plan

Autumn Update

Stoke d'Abernon Residents' Association

October 2018

Timetable

- Now-May 2019: collection and consideration of evidence.
- June 2019: preferred options document published
- Aug-Sep 2019: Regulation 18 consultation
- Autumn 2019: Final Plan document published
- Jan-Feb 2020: Regulation 19 consultation
- March 2020: Submission of plan
- July-Sep 2020: Examination of the plan by the Planning Inspectorate
- Jan 2021: Likely adoption date

Why the delay?

- New National Planning Policy Framework published in July 2018
- 2 key documents not produced by outside suppliers in time: Flood Risk Assessment (Environment Agency), Transport Assessment (SCC) - in turn delaying other work
- Cannot consult during election purdah
- Advantage of not being first mover.

Current situation

- Elmbridge is in a local Strategic Housing Partnership group with Kingston, Epsom & Ewell & Mole Valley
- We compare our housing needs with theirs and consider cross-boundary and common strategic issues.
- Kingston subject to wider London needs
- Epsom slightly ahead of Elmbridge at present

Objectively Assessed Housing Need

- The Government has imposed its own methodology for assessing a planning authority's need for housing.
- Under the 2016 calculation, Elmbridge needed 474 new homes per year for the next 10 years.
- Double the number being built: in 2015-16 only 243 units were built
- Under the new methodology called OAHN **612 new homes per year** required.
- This is the starting-point.

The homes we need

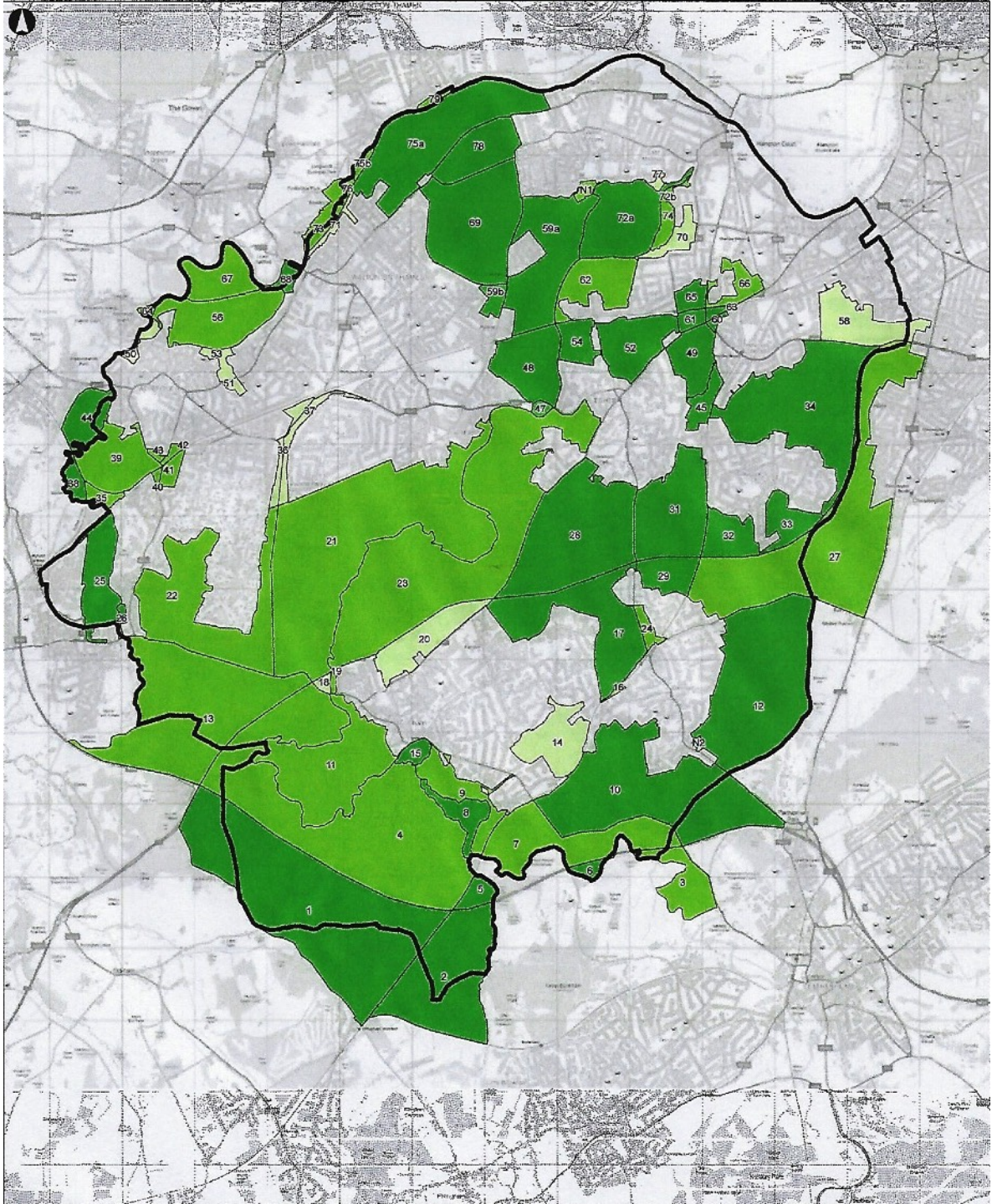
- 28% 1 bedroom
- 42% 2 bedroom
- 29% 3 bedroom
- 1% 4+ bedroom
- 25% open market housing
- 21% affordable (non-social) housing
- 54% social housing
- Source: 2016 SHMA assessment

Urban Capacity Study

- Examines what can be developed within existing settlements.
- Local Cobham & Oxshott councillors were consulted about our own areas.
- Focussed on brownfield sites and sites where the current use could be intensified.
- Likely to involve higher density in built-up areas. But not like Woking or Staines (Spelthorne).
- Elmbridge might achieve about 50% of the OAHN target by increasing urban capacity.

Green Belt Sub-division study

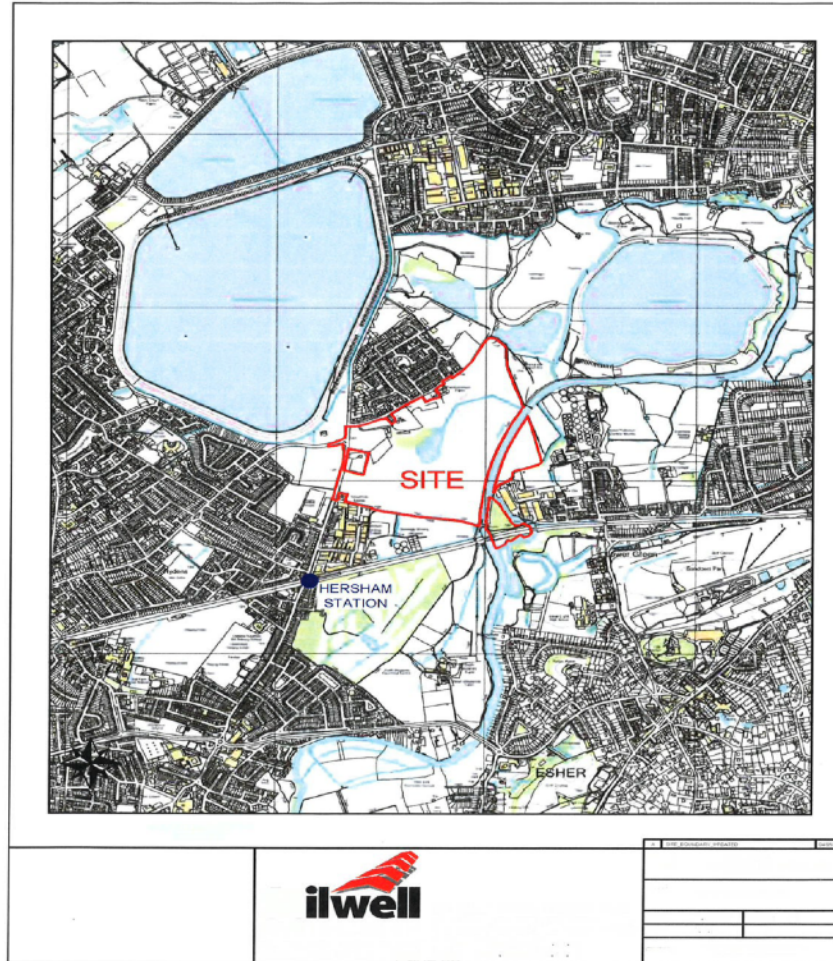
- Carried out by Ove Arup & Partners
- 57% of Elmbridge by area classed as Green Belt
- Examines the current Green Belt boundaries
- Scores plots of land according to whether they are performing “poorly”, “moderately” or “strongly” as Green Belt sites
- Required by the NPPF to review our Green Belt when preparing a new local plan.
- Not include land “which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open”. (NPPF paragraph 139(b))



Green Belt Sub-division study

- 2016 version identified 3 strategic sites, 2 in Cobham / Oxshott: Chippings Farm and Knowle Park.
- Roundly rejected by the public
- Ove Arup have been told they must not repeat the error
- Likely to produce a number of small sites across Elmbridge.
- Cobham cannot expect to be untouched.

Drake Park



Drake Park

- Green Belt site
- 1,024 residential units (50% affordable)
- Supermarket, pub, primary school, offices, doctors' surgery
- Refused permission by planning sub-committee. Developer appealed.
- Public inquiry began in October 2017
- Appeal refused 24th May 2018

Matters considered

- Inspector held that Elmbridge only has 2.65 years' land supply.
- Inspector found that this would not improve in the next 5 years if Drake Park did not proceed.
- He considered it likely that Elmbridge's Green Belt boundaries would be amended as part of its Local Plan preparation.
- The location of the development would cause Walton & Hersham to sprawl.
- Would also affect Esher: the Mole is not a sufficient boundary to compensate for loss of the open land.

Conclusion

- The land being developed is a “strategic arm of Green Belt which is already narrow and fragmented”.
- The benefits of the development do not outweigh the harm caused by the loss of the open space
- Therefore, no “very special circumstances” exist to justify granting planning permission

Lessons

- Lack of a 5 year housing supply makes Elmbridge more vulnerable to appeals.
- The Inspector expects that we will need to amend Green Belt boundaries to meet housing need over the plan period.
- The Green Belt remains a formidable obstacle for developers to overcome.

Our choices

- Do we accept that we must release some Green Belt land from the outset?
- Do we point to our local constraints and refuse to “chase numbers”?
- Some Green Belt land is far from attractive: “brownfield in the Green Belt”.
- But if we offer that up, we might open the floodgates.