

“Plan 2040 - a new Local Plan for Sevenoaks District” consultation response

Thank you for consulting Tandridge District Council on your emerging Local Plan 2040. We note your proposed development strategy, which focusses initially on optimising density and utilising brownfield land in your settlements (step 1), before considering the ability of neighbouring authorities to assist with housing need that cannot be met in Sevenoaks own settlements (step 2) and finally Green Belt release if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated (step 3).

We wish to comment directly in response to step 2. As you aware from previous Duty to Cooperate discussions, and as acknowledged in your consultation plan (paragraph 1.19 and Figure 1.5), Tandridge District is subject to significant strategic environmental constraints.

In particular, Green Belt, which covers 94% of the District, Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which runs from east to west covering much of the northern part of the District and High Weald AONB, which covers the south-eastern corner of the district. Natural England is undertaking a formal review of the Surrey Hills AONB boundary and as part of this review expansion within Tandridge District is under consideration.

The District is also subject to significant infrastructure constraints, particularly around the capacity of strategic road network and the M25 J6. Work undertaken as part of our own Local Plan examination has revealed that any significant growth in our district is dependent on improvements being undertaken to J6 and to date, no available funding has been identified.

Based on these two factors alone, Tandridge District is facing significant difficulties meeting its own future housing need. Therefore, in these circumstances the Council can offer no capacity to Sevenoaks District to accommodate your unmet housing need.

Tandridge District Council will continue to engage with Sevenoaks District Council as part of the Local Plan development and consultation process to discuss cross boundary and strategic issues. If you have any questions on our above response, we would be happy to assist.