



Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan

VIABILITY ASSESSMENT HOUSING TYPE AND MIX POLICY LNP3



INTRODUCTION

To sustain a mixed and balanced community in Limpsfield Parish, requires the provision of a variety of housing of various types to meet the different needs of the community, as identified by the household survey.

In addition to responding to market demand, this will include providing smaller homes that may be affordable for households on moderate and lower incomes, homes for families with children, homes for those wishing to “downsize” couples, single person households and homes designed to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities. In applying this policy, it is expected that each site will contribute meaningfully towards achieving a suitable housing mix for the Parish as a whole and is the starting point for considering provision on individual sites.

The size, nature and location of the site, and form of housing proposed, will be considered to secure a housing mix that both contributes to achieving a suitable plan area mix, and that is contextually appropriate for the proposed location.

The draft Tandridge Local Plan suggests a need for a proportion of new stock to be smaller-to-medium-sized homes (drawing the evidence from Tandridge’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment). Larger homes will continue to form part of future new home supply and turnover of the existing stock will continue to be the main source of supply for meeting future demand for larger homes.

While it is acknowledged that house prices in Limpsfield may be prohibitively high for ‘entry level’ households, smaller homes may help to meet the needs of those households who are looking to move to the next step in the housing market, including those not eligible for affordable housing.

Smaller homes should be designed to be attractive to newly forming households, or similarly attractive to ‘down-sizers’ when they no longer need their family home.

Provision of smaller homes could also include homes designed for private rent in appropriate locations, as private rented homes play an important role in meeting needs for lower cost market housing for lower income residents who are unlikely to qualify for affordable housing and are unable to purchase a home locally.

Policy LNP3 in the draft Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan

The current proposed policy on housing type and mix (LNP3) in the Limpsfield Neighbourhood plan is:

The type and mix on an individual site should have regard to:

- I. The character of the surrounding area.
- II. The accessibility of the location and availability of existing and proposed local services, facilities and infrastructure.
- III. The evidence of housing need and demand from Housing Market Assessments and other relevant evidence sources. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how these matters have been addressed within the proposed dwelling mix.

All new housing developments should provide a mix of house sizes. In developments of three dwellings at least one dwelling should have three bedrooms or less; in developments of four or more dwellings, at least 50% of the dwellings should have three bedrooms or less. In order to help maintain the supply of smaller dwellings, planning permissions for new housing will be subject to conditions requiring the prior consent of the local planning authority for extensions or alterations which provide additional accommodation at first floor level or above.

In assessing the proposed dwelling mix within the built-up area of Limpsfield, due regard should be made of the prevailing densities set out in each character area defined in Policy LNP4 and may require the mix to be modified in exceptional circumstances.

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Future Housing need in Limpsfield Parish

Whilst the future need for housing in Limpsfield parish was generally felt by residents to be low, there was a clear signal that in any future housing built, there was a need for smaller dwellings to meet the local need for “downsizing” and those starting out on the housing ladder.

The household survey of the parish which received a 30% response recorded that there were the strongest interests in smaller housing (3 bedrooms or fewer), starter homes, followed by sheltered accommodation with 1 or 3 bedrooms, with interest in larger homes (4 beds or more) the least desired.

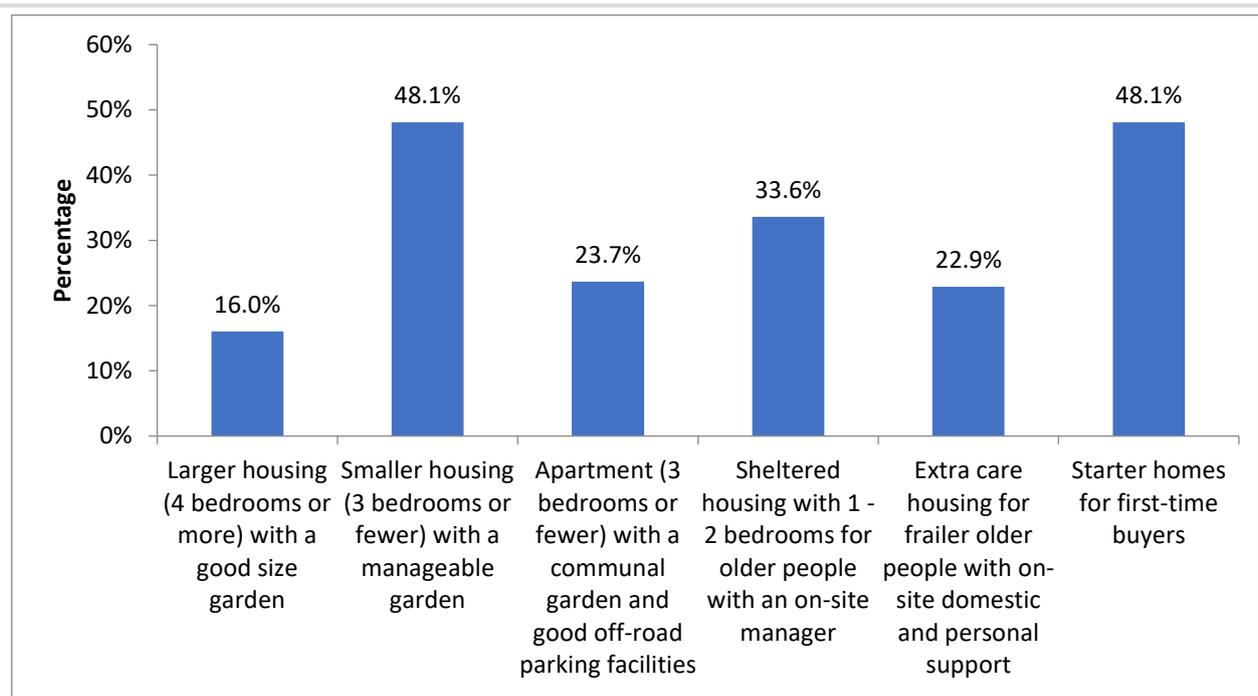


Figure 1. What type of housing is required? (Base: 131) – PRODUCED BY AECOM

Evidence of recent Developers proposals compliant with Policy LNP3

- (1) Planning Application 2014/290 - 4 houses all of 3 bedrooms
- (2) Planning application 2014/1779 - 3 flats all of two bedrooms
- (3) Planning application 2016/1639 - 11 flats all of two bedrooms
- (4) Planning Application 2014/361 - 3 flats - 1 of 2 beds, 1 of 3 beds, and 1 of 4 beds

We clearly cannot be expected to assess what future applications might be but clearly the evidence is that developers can readily comply with policy LNP3 as drafted as nothing in the Local Plan has changed this.

National Planning Policy Framework

The previous NPPF, which will be applied to the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan as the submission document will be put forward before 24 January 2019, states:

Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community.

The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood Plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.

Policy LNP3 promotes housing development in line with the Local Plan.

For future proofing, the revised NPPF, which is now in force, states that ... **"the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies"**

Policy LNP3 seems to be in direct accord with this in that it is responded to the needs expressed by local residents.

National Planning Practice Guidance on Viability

This states that:

The role for viability assessment is primarily at the plan making stage. Viability assessment should not compromise sustainable development but should be used to ensure that policies are realistic, and that the total cumulative cost of all relevant policies will not undermine deliverability of the plan.

It is the responsibility of plan makers in collaboration with the local community, developers and other stakeholders, to create realistic, deliverable policies. Drafting of plan policies should be iterative and informed by engagement with developers, landowners, and infrastructure and affordable housing providers.

Policy requirements, particularly for affordable housing, should be set at a level that takes account of affordable housing and infrastructure needs and allows for the planned types of sites and development to be deliverable, without the need for further viability assessment at the decision-making stage.

It is the responsibility of site promoters to engage in plan making, take into account any costs including their own profit expectations and risks, and ensure that proposals for development are policy compliant. The price paid for land is not a relevant justification for failing to accord with relevant policies in the plan.

Assessing the viability of plans does not require individual testing of every site or assurance that individual sites are viable. Plan makers can use site typologies to determine viability at the plan making stage. Assessment of samples of sites may be helpful to support evidence. In some circumstances more detailed assessment may be necessary for particular areas or key sites on which the delivery of the plan relies.

There has been considerable engagement with stakeholders and work done to assess that developers can and do put in proposals across the Parish which easily comply with policy LNP3. This demonstrates that this policy is in no way restrictive to development, and properly reflects local need.

Tandridge District Local Plan Policy on Viability

The draft Tandridge Local Plan states

TLP05: Development Viability - The Council will expect all policy requirements, including affordable housing provision and infrastructure delivery, to be fulfilled as is relevant to each development in accordance with the policies of Our Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

In addition, all major applications and those where the applicant consider policy requirements cannot be met must be accompanied by development viability assessments during pre-application and/or at the point of submitting their application.

The Council will require viability updates after planning permission has been granted, and any cost incurred by the Council in having Viability Assessments inspected independently, will be met by the applicant. The Council will work actively with applicants to establish whether any additional stream of funding may be available and work to assist in facilitating and securing delivery, where possible.

This Viability Assessment for policy LNP3 is in line with the draft Local Plan Policy on housing viability.

Conclusion

Having looked at the NPPF which will be used to be the framework under which the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan is examined, and the future direction of both the Tandridge Local Plan and the NPPF, it seems clear that the policy LNP3 as drafted as above is fully viable for developers.