

Application: 2025/753

Location: Land off Northwest side of Rook Lane, Chaldon, Surrey, CR3 5BN

Proposal: Residential development of six new dwellings (Permission in Principle).

Ward: Chaldon

Decision Level: Chief Planning Officer (delegated decision)

Constraints – Green Belt, Ancient Woodland within 500m, Area of Special Advertisement Consent, B Road Classification, Source Protection Zone 2 and 3

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE

Summary

As an application for permission in principle only the location, land use, and amount of development can be considered. The site is undeveloped and free from development. The site is not considered to constitute previously developed land and therefore does not meet any exception under paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). An assessment has been made against paragraph 155 of the Framework; it has been concluded that the site comprises grey belt land. However, it is considered that the site would not meet the requirements of paragraph 155 c) as the development would not be in a sustainable location. The proposal is therefore unacceptable in this regard. As such, the recommendation is for refusal.

Site Description

The site is located on the north side of Rook Lane within the Green Belt area in Chaldon. The site is currently an undeveloped field, open in nature surrounded by a combination of residential sites and other open undeveloped fields.

Relevant History

2024/512 - Infill residential development of 2-3 dwellings (Permission in Principle) – Refused 14.06.2024 – Allowed on Appeal 19.02.2025 (Field Between 84-90 Rook Lane, Chaldon, Surrey)

Key Issues

On 1 June 2018 a new route for obtaining planning permission via an application became available for most small, housing-led developments: an application for Permission in Principle (PIP) followed by an application for Technical Details Consent (TDC).

A PIP application cannot be submitted for a development that is major, householder, has habitats implications or is a Schedule 1 EIA development.

A PIP application can be submitted to establish whether a site is suitable in-principle for residential led development i.e. minor development that is less than 10 dwellings. The scope of any PIP, and therefore consideration of it, is limited to location, land use and amount of development; conditions cannot be imposed.

The requirements of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 apply in that the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

This application is submitted for a permission in principal stage and therefore will only consider matters of Location, Land use, and amount of development with technical details reserved until stage 2. The site lies within the Green Belt and therefore this will form part of the consideration of the principal of development. In this case, indicative plans have been submitted with the application outlining the proposed location and site arrangements to accommodate between 6 and 9 dwellings.

Proposal

Residential development of six new dwellings (Permission in Principle).

Development Plan Policy

Tandridge District Core Strategy 2008 – Policies CSP1, CSP12, CSP18, CSP21

Tandridge Local Plan Part 2 – Detailed Policies 2014 – Policies DP1, DP5, DP7, DP10, DP13, DP18

Caterham, Chaldon and Whyteleafe Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – Policy CCW1, CCW2, and CCW4

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) and non-statutory guidance

Tandridge Parking Standards SPD (2012)

Tandridge Trees and Soft Landscaping SPD (2017)

Surrey Design Guide (2002)

National Advice

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Design Guide (2019)

Consultation Responses

County Highway Authority – “The proposed development has been considered by THE COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY (CHA) who has assessed the application and recommends the proposal be refused on the grounds that:

1. The proposed development is in an unsustainable location, without adequate safe access to amenities by sustainable modes of transport and lacking appropriate public transport provision, including limited bus service frequency and the absence of suitable access to these services in terms of footways, crossings and waiting areas. This is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 paragraphs 115 and 117, to the Tandridge Local Plan Policy DP5 and the objectives of the Surrey Local Transport Plan 4.

Please note that this response is on the basis of the site location and scale only and does not consider matters of highway access as these details are not assessed in Permission in Principle applications. Should the proposals be granted permission against the above recommendation, further consideration will need to be given before

the proposals could be permitted to commence in terms of safe access to the public highway and suitability of onsite turning and parking provision. The above sustainability objection could potentially be overcome with improvements to pedestrian infrastructure and public transport facilities; however, given the scale of development and limited availability of highways land it is not considered likely that this could be achieved to a suitable degree. In the context of the above sustainability issues and uncertainty over whether acceptable and safe highway access could be provided for the proposed development, it is recommended that permission in principle should not be granted, and a full planning application should be made so that the proposals can be considered in greater detail.”

Chaldon Parish Council – None received.

Public Representations/Comments

Third Party Comments –

- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Harm to openness
- Overdevelopment and excessive density
- Landscape and visual harm
- Access and infrastructure concerns
- Ecological and drainage impact
- Proposal fails golden rules
- Significant intensification
- Chaldon is not a sustainable location
- Inadequate vehicular access
- Harmful to character of site unsuitable location for development
- Concerns over flooding
- No access to pavement
- Loss of agricultural land
- Inadequate mix of housing
- Inadequate parking
- Existing TPO near the site
- Harm to open rural character of site
- Lack of infrastructure
- Detrimental effect on historic village of Chaldon
- Density is out of character
- Cycling is not feasible locally
- Lack of evidence that scheme does not cause harm
- Housing need does not justify loss of Green Belt
- Road Safety concerns

Assessment

The PPG makes clear – paragraph ref. 58-012-20180615 – that the scope of an application for permission in principle “is limited to location, land use and amount of development.”

Principle of development on the site

Core Strategy Policy CSP1 sets out that in order to promote sustainable patterns of travel and in order to make the best use of previously developed land that development

will take place within the existing built-up areas – identified as category 1 settlements and to be located where there is a choice of mode of transport available.

The policy further outlines that development appropriate to the needs of rural communities will be permitted in Larger Rural Settlements and Green Belt Settlements via infilling and on sites allocated for affordable housing. It advises that no changes would be made to Green Belt boundaries unless sufficient land within the built-up areas. It goes on to state that within the Green Belt the settlements can accommodate infilling and small-scale redevelopment.

Moreover, that the principle of redevelopment for residential purposes can be supported subject to all other matters relating to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the amenities of neighbouring residents, landscaping, biodiversity, highways and parking provisions, renewable energy and flooding.

The application site does not lie within a defined settlement and forms part of the Green Belt. It therefore remains to be considered whether the development would be acceptable in principle within the Green Belt.

Green Belt

The NPPF 2024 supports the protection of Green Belts and the restriction of development within these designated areas. Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the essential characteristics of the Green Belt being its openness and permanence.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out a number of exceptions for new development in the Green Belt none of which apply to the proposed development. Whilst there is a small structure noted on site; it is not considered that the site would benefit from being considered previously developed land given the limited extent of the existing built form. As such, the proposal does not accord with paragraph 154 of the NPPF. An assessment against paragraph 155 has been outlined below.

The Framework at paragraph 155 states that the development of homes in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate where:

- a) The development would utilise Grey Belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- b) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;
- c) The development would be in a sustainable location and
- d) Where applicable, the development would meet the Golden Rules.

These will be assessed in turn.

The development would utilise Grey Belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan (a. of paragraph 155)

The NPPF defines grey belt as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

Planning Practice Guidance (the Guidance) states that, when making planning judgements about whether land is grey belt in relation to purpose (a), villages should not be considered large built-up areas. At purpose (b), the Guidance also states that this purpose relates to the merging of towns not villages. It is therefore important to establish if Chaldon is considered a village or not. Neither the Framework nor the Guidance provides a definition of “large built-up area” or “village.” The question of whether the area is a village, and therefore not a large built-up area, is a matter of planning judgement.

Chaldon is located beyond the built-up area of Caterham where this specific site is located within the Green Belt. As such, the site is not located within a large-built up area for the purposes of the Guidance.

The application site cannot contribute strongly to purpose (a), (b) or (d) because Chaldon is not a large built-up area. For the reasons given above, the land could be considered as grey belt land. There are no footnote 7 reasons (other than Green Belt) which provide a strong reason for resisting the development.

Criteria a) of paragraph 155 requires the development to not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan. The lack of built form on the site and its open nature comprising grass, bushes and trees results in the site having a rural feel and an openness that is characteristic of the countryside. However, looking beyond the boundaries of the site, the wider area is developed with pockets of development to the north, south, east and west, mostly residential. The site is therefore effectively screened from the wider countryside and Green Belt. As such, even though the development of the site would encroach onto undeveloped land, the site is well screened, and the development would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the plan when taken together.

There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed (b. of paragraph 155)

In terms of the demonstrable need, as Tandridge does not have a 5-year housing land supply the proposal would therefore meet exception b).

The development would be in a sustainable location (c. of paragraph 155)

Planning Practice Guidance confirms that, where grey belt land is not in a location that is or can be made sustainable, development on this land is inappropriate. Local context and site or development-specific considerations are relevant, together with opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions. With reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of the Framework key considerations include the ability of the location to limit the need to travel, offer a genuine choice of transport mode and safe access for all users.

In terms of whether the site is in a sustainable location, paragraphs 110 and 115 of the Framework promote sustainable transport in terms of managing patterns of growth to support this objective. The site is located within Chaldon, which is considered a village.

The site is acknowledged to be located close to a primary school and a village hall, and bus services do run along Rook Lane. However, Caterham Railway Station is 3.2 kilometres from the site, and the bus services are limited in frequency. The nearest supermarket is around 1.45 kilometres from the site and Caterham town centre is around 2.25 kilometres away. The nearest doctor's surgery to the site is located 2.6 kilometres from the site or a 30-minute walk.

The proposal has been reviewed by the County Highway Authority, and they have concluded that the site is in an unsustainable location, without adequate safe access to amenities by sustainable modes of transport and lacking appropriate public transport provision, including limited bus service frequency and the absence of suitable access to these services in terms of footways, crossings and waiting areas.

It is acknowledged that a similar PIP application was submitted in 2024 for a site nearby at 'Field between 84 and 90 Rook Lane' which was refused but subsequently allowed on Appeal. This appeal site is located around 67 metres to the west of the current application site.

In that case, the Inspector indicated, amongst other things, that:

15. The appeal site is located close to a primary school, a village hall, and a bus service. Caterham Train station, together with a range of shops and facilities, are accessible either by bus or by bicycle. I note that the bus service is limited in frequency, however, the appeal site is located between several existing houses and is not in any less of a sustainable location than them. Therefore, in the context of a rural location, where the Framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will differ from urban areas, I am satisfied this provides a genuine choice of transport modes. Detailed aspects relating to the access and parking provision, are matters for consideration at the technical details consent (TDC) stage.

And that:

17. In light of the above, the proposal would conflict with Policies DP10, DP12 and DP13 of the TLP. However, the proposal would accord with the grey belt land requirements set out in paragraph 155 of the Framework, and accordingly, would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The question of the impact on openness is therefore not an issue, as any such impact is accepted as being implicitly taken into account in the relevant exception set out in the Framework. Similarly, there is no requirement to consider whether there are any very special circumstances such to justify the development.

However, this Appeal decision was issued before the Government published its Connectivity Tool, the site has a connectivity score of 45, and prior to PINS producing their guidance to Inspector's regarding how to assess the sustainability of development sites. (Webinar; "Sustainable Locations – Transport Considerations in the Light of Revised Framework" – Sheila Holden OBE (May 2025)).

In the light of this additional guidance, it is considered that the proposed location would not be sustainable under the terms of paragraph 155 c).

Where applicable, the development would meet the Golden Rules (d. of paragraph 155)

Part d) of paragraph 155 states that where applicable, the development proposed meets the 'golden rules' requirements. The site area and the number of dwellings proposed, are such that the proposal would not constitute a form of major development. The 'Golden Rules' in paragraph 156 of the Framework are not therefore applicable.

Impact upon openness of the Green Belt

As the proposal is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as per Paragraph 155 of the Framework, an assessment on the effect of the proposals on

the openness of the Green Belt is therefore required. The proposal would relate to the provision of new built development on an open field with no operational development upon it and as such the proposal would result in demonstrable harm to openness through the provision of the new built development and through the associated activities and domestic paraphernalia that would result from the residential use of the site.

In terms of very special circumstances, it is acknowledged that the development would provide 6 new residential units which would provide a minor contribution to housing land supply within the district, but it is not considered that this would demonstrably outweigh the harm to the Green Belt that would result from the development.

Conclusions

For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal would not satisfy all requirements of paragraph 155 of the Framework necessary to demonstrate that it does not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, insofar as is relevant to a Stage 1 application for planning permission in principle.

Location

The site would be accessed off Rook Lane, within the Green Belt area in Chaldon.

The Highway Authority have commented in detail on the locational sustainability of the site. The concerns raised by the CHA relate to both distance to sustainable transport options/local services as well as accessibility due in part to factors such as lack of sufficient pavements. A fundamental part of being able to deliver sustainable development is for a site to be served by good access by modes of transport other than the private car to employment opportunities and other services. It is important to ensure, particularly in the more rural parts of the district, that sites are served by safe and secure road infrastructure including footways.

The principle of a housing development in this location is therefore considered to be unacceptable in locational terms.

Housing supply

The indicative local housing need for Tandridge District, calculated by central government following the introduction of a new standard method in December 2024, amounts to 843 dwellings per annum.

Tandridge District has major policy constraints, including Green Belt covering 94% of the district, two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscapes), and extensive areas subject to flooding, as well as significant infrastructure capacity constraints (for example around the M25 J6 and other parts of the strategic road network), all of which can reasonably be expected to significantly reduce the housing requirement.

Such a reduction was accepted at the Examination for 'Our Local Plan 2033'. A final conclusion on Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) was not reached due to the cessation of the Examination, however OAN was calculated as ranging between 266 and 470, depending on the choice of annual population projections, substantially less than the estimated Local Housing Need – at the time – of 639 resulting from the standard method. The Inspector concluded that the housing requirement should be less than OAN, as defined in the 2012 NPPF, due to a number of factors, including the degree of major policy constraints within the district:

'It is clear to me that there are specific policies of the Framework which indicate that development should be restricted in Tandridge and that in principle, the Plan would be sound in not meeting the OAN in full.' (Inspectors Report, Annex 1 - ID16, paragraph 44)

Whilst subsequent revisions to the NPPF have introduced the concept of local housing need, the Council nevertheless fully anticipates that the likely future housing requirement will similarly be lower than the local housing need due to the presence of the constraints outlined above.

The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance set out how Councils should calculate their five-year housing land supply (5-YHLS). This requires that where strategic policies are more than five years old, as is the case for Tandridge District, that the 5-YHLS calculation uses the unconstrained local housing need figure calculated using the standard method.

When this unconstrained local housing need figure is used, the Council accepts that it does not currently have a 5-YHLS. However, for the reasons set out previously regarding the housing requirement, a 5-YHLS figure based on the unconstrained local housing need figure is not considered appropriate in the case of Tandridge District.

Whilst the Council seeks to prepare and adopt a new Local Plan to enable it to establish a robust basis for the planning of the district as quickly as possible, including having an agreed 5-YHLS, it remains committed to bringing forward new housing sites. It is seeking to do this in line with the criteria set out in its Interim Policy Statement for Housing Delivery, which was adopted as part of the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (2022).

The NPPF states that a presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF further states that for decision making, this means that "where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are the most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission" (also known as the 'tilted balance') unless:

- the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.

Footnote 7 elucidates that the policies referred to are those in the NPPF (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and proposed habitats sites) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-YHLS and the delivery of housing has been below 75% of the housing requirement for the past three years. Therefore, for residential applications the 'tilted balance' will be applied within the district, unless a strong footnote 7 reason for refusal is identified.

Conclusion

The location, land use and amount of development proposed would not be acceptable within the Green Belt. As such the development proposal would not be compliant with the provisions of policy CSP1 of the Core Strategy and policies DP1, DP7, DP10 and DP13 of the Local Plan - Detailed Policies.

The recommendation is made in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). It is considered that in respect of the assessment of this application significant weight has been given to policies within the Council's Core Strategy 2008 and the Tandridge Local Plan: Part 2 – Detailed Policies 2014 in accordance with the NPPF 2024. Due regard as a material consideration has been given to the NPPF and PPG in reaching this recommendation.

All other material considerations, including third party comments, have been considered but none are considered sufficient to change the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse for the following reasons:

1. The proposal would comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt by reason of the impact on openness. There are considered to be no very special circumstances that clearly outweigh this and other harm arising from the proposal. As such, the proposed development would be contrary to the NPPF (December 2024), Policy CSP1 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy 2008 and Policies DP1, DP10 and DP13 of the Tandridge District Local Plan: Part 2 – Detailed Policies (2014).
2. The proposed development is in an unsustainable location, without adequate safe access to amenities by sustainable modes of transport and lacking appropriate public transport provision, including limited bus service frequency and the absence of suitable access to these services in terms of footways, crossings and waiting areas. This is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 paragraphs 115 and 117, Policy DP5 of the Tandridge District Local Plan: Part 2 – Detailed Policies (2014) and the objectives of the Surrey Local Transport Plan 4.

Informatives:

1. The recommendation is made in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). It is considered that in respect of the assessment of this application significant weight has been given to policies within the Council's Core Strategy 2008 and the Tandridge Local Plan: Part 2 – Detailed Policies 2014 in accordance with paragraphs 218 and 219 of the NPPF. Due regard as a material consideration has been given to the NPPF and PPG in reaching this recommendation.
2. The development has been assessed against Tandridge District Core Strategy 2008 – Policies CSP1, CSP2, CSP3, CSP7, CSP12, CSP14, CSP15, CSP17, CSP18, CSP21, CSP22, Tandridge Local Plan: Part 2 – Detailed Policies 2014 – Policies DP1, DP4, DP5, DP7, DP8, DP10, DP 12, DP13, Caterham, Chaldon and Whyteleafe Neighbourhood Plan CCW1, CCW2 and material considerations.
3. This decision relates to the following drawings and information:

- Location Plan received 24th June
- 925:1188/Pre101 received 24th June

	Signed	Dated
Case Officer	PL	02/02/2026
Checked ENF		
Final Check	FN	11.02.2026