

Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan - Local Economy – Topic Paper

Background

The estate, manor or parish of Tatsfield was recorded in the 11th century Domesday Book with a population of around 100 – 150 in 14 houses constituting a scattering of farms rather than a ‘village’, followed by the building of a church on the top of the downs. It was basically an agricultural economy with farmers leasing land from the lord of the manor, primarily for sheep farming on the downs. In the 1891 census recorded a population of 380 living in 81 houses with eight working farms.

It is interesting to follow the trends in work outside farming. In 1855 there were two landlords at the Ship and the Grasshopper and two shopkeepers. By 1890 there were eight tradesmen and ‘provisioners’ to service the village as recorded in Kelly’s Directories. In 1913 there were 17 businesses recorded including over a dozen shops.

With limited public transport to local towns like Westerham and Oxted, the village was quite self-contained and needed to provide services within the community. The numerous proposals to link Tatsfield by rail to London and other nearby towns that were launched between the 1860s and 1920s never came to fruition. Transport links still remain an issue for the local economy.

Current context

In recent years the employment profile for the Parish has changed:

- Census returns for 2011 show residents aged over 65 years had increased to about 21% and the 21 to 65 age group stood at 55%.
- Those in employment increased from 69% in 1991 to 71% in 2001 and 73% in 2011.
- The 2013 Village Appraisal indicated a significant number of residents work locally and many of those are home-based (18% of respondents stated they were self-employed).

Census data

Tandridge Settlement Hierarchy (2015) and Update (2018)

The Tandridge District Settlement Hierarchy reviews the role and function of the district’s settlements, assessing how well they are served by services and facilities and reviews their general sustainability. Tatsfield is defined in the settlement hierarchy as a ‘Rural Settlement’ and recognises that the village only has a basic level of services, local shops and education provision and that the majority of services, facilities (including employment) are accessed outside of the settlement.

Policy Framework

National and local planning policies seek to ensure that communities are supported by appropriate levels of social infrastructure, services and facilities. In particular, Core Strategy policy 13 seeks to retain and encourage new community facilities and services and DP3 and DP4 of the Detailed Policies Plan similarly give protection to local shops, services and employment sites and so a level of protection already exists. National policy and guidance encourages Neighbourhood Planning groups to plan positively to meet local development needs (which may include the needs of local businesses) and to introduce locally specific policies. However, in May 2013 the Government introduced new permitted development rights allowing the change of use of offices to residential, subject to certain limitations and conditions

National Policy - National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

Paragraph 81 of the NPPF advises that planning policies should:

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- a) set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth
- b) set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
- c) seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment; and
- d) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that “*planning policies and decisions should enable:*

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

Paragraph 84 continues...“*Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist”.*

Paragraph 112 of the NPPF – “*Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth”*

Paragraph 145 of the NPPF sets out a number of exceptions to Green Belt policy including:

- buildings for agriculture and forestry
- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building
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Tandridge District Core Strategy (2008)

The Core Strategy makes it clear that any demand for new employment development will be met through the re-use of existing sites, either by way of redevelopment or where appropriate, more intensive use of existing sites.

CSP 22 – seeks to develop a sustainable economy by:

- a) Seeking to make best use of existing commercial and industrial sites, especially those suitable for occupation by small businesses;
- b) Allowing buildings in the Green Belt to be used for commercial purposes subject to environmental, farm viability, traffic and amenity considerations, (the Council’s preference for the re-use of such buildings is for economic development purposes).

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Rural Strategy - The strategy for the rural areas is to promote a sustainable rural economy, to eliminate any social disadvantages whilst at the same time conserving the character and environment of the countryside and villages. The Strategy seeks to retain existing employment spaces in rural areas, supports the tourism and agricultural sector and agricultural diversification subject to Green Belt Policy.

Tandridge District Local Plan Part 2 - Detailed Policies (2014)

Policy DP 3 (Local Centres, Other Centres & Villages) recognises the importance of village shops to local communities and resists the change of use from A1, whether in a parade of shops or individual neighbourhood or village shops, unless it can be shown there is no demand for the premises in retail (class A1) use through an effective 12 month marketing exercise. In addition, in the case of a shop that currently provides an essential day-to-day 'top up' retail use (or where such a use existed within the preceding three years), there is another shop of comparable use that is similarly accessible to serve the customers within the same local catchment area.

Policy DP 4 (Alternative Use of Commercial & Industrial Sites) states that proposals for the alternative use of commercial and industrial sites (both premises and land), whether vacant or occupied, will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the site is unsuitably located (i.e. inadequate access or residential amenity) or that the site use is no longer viable (even for an alternative commercial use, or as part of a redevelopment or mixed-use development scheme) and has been through a minimum 12 month active marketing exercise.

DP 13 largely repeats the exceptions to national Green Belt policy (see paragraph 145 of the NPPF above). It also sets out an exception for the re-use of buildings within the Green Belt (outside the Defined Villages) for industrial, commercial, community or residential purposes, where:

1. The proposal preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
2. The buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, are structurally sound and capable of re-use without major alterations, adaptations or reconstruction;
3. The proposed use can be wholly or substantially contained within the building identified for re-use; and
4. The proposal is not likely to result in the need to construct additional agricultural buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the building to be re-used is no longer suitable for an agricultural use.

Policy DP 12 (Development in Defined Villages in the Green Belt) recognises that development that provides new, or assists in the retention of, community facilities will be permitted within the village boundary.

Policy DP 13 (Buildings in the Green Belt) states that the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation may be permitted within the Green Belt providing it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

DP 17 (Equestrian Facilities) sets out various criteria for the development of equestrian facilities (whether domestic or commercial) in relation to the design, scale, siting, impact on landscape character, Green Belt policy and residential amenity.

Tandridge Local Plan Evidence Base - Economic Needs Assessment Update (2016)

The Tandridge Economic Needs Assessment (ENA) Update provides an assessment of the current commercial property dynamics in Tandridge, considering a range of scenarios for estimating future

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employment land requirements in the district. The assessment also includes a survey of existing businesses and an assessment of the existing employment sites.

The ENA included a Business Survey which identified that the most commonly cited perceived local barrier to growth in Tandridge was the costs of being located in the district (and the South East more generally). Other commonly cited barriers to growth were the availability of a suitably skilled workforce, road congestion, availability of broadband, and the supply of suitable premises.

Overall there is a significant need for office provision in the district which is unlikely to be met through the existing supply. The Council should identify additional sites to meet this demand. The need for B1c / B2 / B8 uses is expected to be met through existing sites and strategic employment allocations.

The sites assessment process identified one site in the parish which is considered to provide high quality employment land – Westerham Road Industrial Estate (see below). The report recommends that this site is protected for employment use and that redevelopment for alternative (non-employment related) uses should be resisted.

Westerham Road Industrial Estate, occupied by Monier Redland, is located in the south of the parish with direct access to the A25. The site is 8.6 ha (2.8 ha of vacant area) and is used for large-scale open storage. The site has good access to the strategic road network and is considered commercially attractive for current B8 and related uses, albeit there is considered to be limited attractiveness for other, more intensive, employment uses. The Economic Needs Assessment identifies the site as a Key Strategic Employment Site, being one of the most important sites for employment uses in the district, and advises that the loss of employment space on the site should be resisted and that the site has the potential for intensification of employment uses.

Balancing Homes and Job Requirements in the Tandridge District Local Plan Report

This report prepared in support of the Tandridge Local Plan explores the relationship between housing and employment requirements and looks at various scenarios to find the 'optimum' balance of homes and jobs in the district taking into account constraints such as the Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, transport and other infrastructure.

The Report makes a number of recommendations, including:

- Identifying land to accommodate economic growth
- to continue to support local services and to avoid unsustainable out-commuting.
- Providing a mix of homes within the district to enable workers to live within the district. This includes provision of affordable housing and smaller properties which meet the needs of young couples and families.
- Provision and protection of employment land to safeguard its re-use for housing and other higher value uses.

Current Major employers

As a rural community there are few major employers. The main ones include:

- Westerham Road Industrial Estate (referred to above).
- Clackets Lane Motorway Service Area, opened in 1993 and one of the largest and busiest services on the UK motorway network serving traffic on the extremely busy southern stretch of the M25. The services include fuel, a hotel, restaurants and shops and these national franchises are therefore significant employers. Opportunities in retail and hospitality are available to local residents.
- The Grasshopper: a large restaurant and hotel at the very southern end of the parish on the A25 road between Westerham in Kent and Oxted in Surrey.

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- Parkwood Golf Club: spread over 180 acres of rather poor quality pasture land originally belonging to Park Farm the golf course is now a key feature of the parish and is currently owned by the Orida Group. Future plans for the operation include leisure and accommodation facilities that will offer further employment opportunities.
- Monkey Puzzle and Little Acorns – nursery/ preschool playgroup
- The Bakery: Bar/ restaurant and B&B rooms.
- Tatsfield Garage: Servicing, repair and maintenance, a long established local provision
- The Old Ship: Traditional pub – food and drink.
- Waylands site – small businesses.

Various small businesses

There are several small enterprises within the parish, mainly in the business and service sectors, with 1 centrally located retail unit.

Self-employment is more difficult to analyse but from local advertising and knowledge this includes many professions, consultancies and therapeutic services. These operate from small local business premises, home offices and mobile services.

Local evidence

A SWOT analysis was undertaken by the Local Economy Topic Group to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the parish economy as well as identifying ideas on how to overcome these issues. The SWOT analysis was presented to residents at the community workshop in April 2018 . The feedback from the event fed into the final SWOT and also into this report.

Further Public consultation took place in April/ May 2019 and public comments have also been included in this report.

Parish Survey

A short survey (Appendix A) was circulated to local businesses that had been identified from advertising in the Village Magazine and local press plus local knowledge. (Copy of the survey Appendix A).

Unfortunately only a handful of businesses responded to the survey

The main problematic issues were as follows:

- 1 Limited public transport
- 2 No Post Office services
- 3 Unreliable broadband and mobile phone coverage
- 4 Winter weather problems
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Issues to be addressed

- **The Parish Council should use all efforts to improve mobile phone coverage and broadband speed and reliability. This would include looking favourably at applications for Phone ‘masts’ and broadband infrastructure. Any significant development proposals should include consideration of communication issues.**
- **Any planning applications that have the potential to offer jobs locally should be favourably considered.**

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- All efforts should be made to retain current shops and services. Planning applications for future developments that may serve the community should be favourably considered.

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Appendix A Letter to local businesses

Tatsfield is producing a Neighbourhood Plan which, when completed and adopted, will form part of the formal Tandridge planning process. It will give us the opportunity to represent the preferences and priorities of the village in future developments. The Steering Group working on this plan values local businesses and would welcome any input from you to plan our vision for the Parish over the next 15 years. Further information about the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan can be found on the website: www.surreycommunity.info/tatsfield/neighbourhood-plan.

If you respond to the following questions it will enable us to reflect the views and priorities of the local business community at this early stage. We will let you know our progress over the coming months.

*I agree to complete this survey for the purposes of developing the Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan.

*I understand that the information I provide is will only be used for the development of Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan and will not be used for any other purpose. *Please tick

1.	What are the benefits of your business being based in Tatsfield?
2.	What about being based in Tatsfield causes your business a problem ?
3.	What changes in the future could adversely affect your business?
4.	What changes would help your business grow and prosper ?
5.	Do you currently employ any local workers ?
6.	Are there any circumstances which would enable you to employ more local workers ?
7.	If you work from home would you consider renting space and/or sharing an administration function in the future?
	Any other comments?
	Business name and contact details: