

REPRESENTATION BY ANDREW PROCTER IN RESPECT OF INSPECTOR'S MATTERS AND ISSUES IN RELATION TO GUILDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

6 May 2018

Concerning my background and status and representations to date

1. On matters of property research, development, planning and valuation I have relied on my own experience over 40 years as a former Chartered Surveyor and Management Consultant specialising in property strategy and research in the public and private sectors.
2. I was the former District Valuer of North Surrey and subsequently I was a management consultant holding the position as Head of Property Consultancy at KPMG for 10 years. I was also the former principal of Actium Consult, a niche property research practice.
3. I have been a resident of Send for 12 years.
4. I was the founding member of the Save Send Action Group which has 500 followers and who have been a very large contributor to the 41,500 valid objections to the local plan.
5. I have served as a committee member of the Guildford Green Belt Group (GGG)
6. I have limited this representation to 5000 words and to the Inspector's Matters and Issues for Examination.
7. I ask that my objections dated 2016 and 2017 should also be considered.

Are the calculations in the SHMA an appropriate basis for establishing the OAN?

1. I do not believe the calculations are appropriate as a true reflection of need.
2. A detailed and comprehensive professional review of the SHMA dated June 2017 by NMSS an independent expert firm dealing with housing and demographics procured by Guildford Residents Association (GRA) has concluded that the OAN figure should be revised down from 560 homes per annum to 400 homes per annum.
3. The report shows that an indication of the scale of the problem can be obtained directly from the ONS's own data. Their estimates of births, deaths and population flows into and out of Guildford suggest that the population should have grown by 15,000 between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. The censuses, however, record a population growth of only 7,800. The discrepancy is over 90% of the population change indicated by the censuses.
4. The analysis in the NMSS report demonstrates that the errors must be in the population flows in age groups in which there are significant numbers of students. They are almost certainly the result of the under-recording of the numbers of students leaving Guildford each year.

Is the spatial strategy set out in Policy S2 sufficient to explain the plans approach to the overall distribution of development?

1. I am concerned that GBC have adopted the OAN of 12,426 homes as the housing target without any application of constraints as required under the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Policy Guidance.

2. 70% of the sites put forward in the Local Plan are still in the Green Belt which flies in the face of current government planning policy.
3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Policy Guidance and case law make it clear that Green Belt is an absolute constraint on housing supply. Exceptional circumstances need to be shown to adjust boundaries.
4. Other constraints under the NPPF include assessments of sustainability, strategic flood risk assessment, physical constraints on land use and infrastructure constraints (this can include road congestion, schools, drains, power supply and medical requirements).
5. The framework makes clear that once established Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances and should take into account any constraints such as Green Belt, which indicate that development should be restricted and which may restrain the ability of an authority to meet its need.
6. In my opinion a constraint of 50% should be applied to an adjusted OAN 400 as recommended by NMSS. This would result in a housing target of 200 homes per annum which over a 20-year period would be 4,000 homes.
7. These homes could be built in existing urban brownfield areas.

In meeting Employment Needs does the plan provide an appropriate amount of land and floorspace?

1. I believe the plan provides an exaggeration of the correct amount of land and floorspace for business purposes in terms of current and future projections of market demand.
2. The plan is ill-informed in clustering all B classes in terms of the clarity of market evidence required to inform effective planning and fails to provide a clear understanding of business needs required under Section 160 of the NPPF.
3. The research undertaken on behalf of GBC by Aecom in the ELNA 2017 is generally superficial and lacks analysis between different supply and demand dynamics of office, research and development, light industrial, general industrial and warehousing and distribution floor space.
4. No proper analysis has been made in the ELNA 2017 of data held by GBC in respect of different B classes in terms of planning applications granted or evidence gathered by the economic development function at GBC and no robust assessment of local market demand apart from fairly brief references to freely available "marketing" research undertaken by Lambert Smith Hampton covering a much wider area.
5. The plan deserves a much clearer understanding of current and projected future demand for B class uses. Any plan should be firmly based on detailed property market research but this appears completely lacking.
6. The Employment Land Needs Assessment update 2017 (ELNA) states "that the pipeline for employment floorspace defined by planning permissions yet to be implemented and prior approvals suggests the potential for an additional 33,607sqm of B use class floorspace to come forward. This figure comprises a net loss of 4,750sqm of B1a use class floorspace from the previous ELNA and a net gain of 38,357sqm in B1c, B2 or B8 use class space."
7. 38,357sqm of B1c, B2 or B8 use class is a quite sufficient supply for the plan period and does not justify the need for new development of industrial space on the Green Belt in such areas as Burnt Common or an expansion of Surrey Research Park.
8. The ELNA states "that a large proportion of the net additional floorspace and land requirements for both office/R&D and industrial/storage uses could be met through the permissions which have been consented but which have yet to be implemented. However,

there is the possibility that some pipeline developments may not come forward.” This is a weak argument for more development.

9. Exceptional circumstances clearly do not exist to justify amendments to Green Belt boundaries as part of the Local Plan process.

Is the plan justified in the extent to which it protects employment land and floorspace?

1. The plan is not justified in maintaining employment capacity in areas where property market demand is changing. This type of policy is out of touch and out of date.
2. The ill-informed policy of resisting change of use from B1a to residential flies in the face of positive property market solutions for the regeneration of brownfield land. It is also contrary to current government policy which has recently been reaffirmed and permits a change of use from B1a (offices) to C3 (residential).
3. Many office buildings reaching an age of more than 30/50 years become redundant in terms of energy compliance making them illegal to occupy for employment purposes and the cost of refurbishment makes them redundant and uneconomic.
4. The reality of market demand is that the gross development value of refurbished residential space is in excess of the gross development value of refurbished old office space in many locations.
5. To resist change from B1a to C3 is contrary to the concept of brownfield first for residential development schemes.
6. The feared loss of employment will be marginal and impractical to resist. Empty office blocks are not the answer.

Is the plan’s approach towards Guildford Town Centre realistic and effective having regard to changing retailing patterns?

1. I am of the opinion that the policy for the town centre is fundamentally ill-informed and there is insufficient evidential support to objectively assess the capacity of the existing town centre to accommodate appropriate new development.
2. The local plan policy for the town centre is an aspirational voice from the past. There is no reliable evidence provided that the retail core of the Town Centre can be expanded by 41,000 sq m of retail space at North Street.
3. Recent press reports concerning the challenges besetting two of Guildford’s major stores Debenhams and House of Frazer (who have recently called in KPMG to assist a rationalisation) do not inspire confidence. John Lewis’s requirement for a 4 year rent free period persuaded Land Securities turn their back on Guildford 2 years ago is not an encouraging picture.
4. Previous retail studies procured by GBC in 2015 and 2016 which attempted to analyse actual local supply and demand were significantly flawed and contained numerous errors. They have been withdrawn but they have been replaced by a broad brush national retail capacity forecasting model which is not evidenced based.
5. The recent Carter Jonas Study Retail Study 2017 update predicts total demand for Guildford Town Centre by 2020 at only 3,313 sq m and only 34,811 sq m by 2036. We have now been waiting some 15 years + for demand to catch up to enable development of North Street where the old consent for some 40,000 sq m of retail had to be renewed because it was getting out of date. This analysis implies a wait till 2036 for demand to get to the point to enable development of North Street.
6. The Carter Jonas report is based on broad brush retail capacity forecasting derived from work by Experian which is very far from site or location specific and as a retail supply and

demand assessment in my view is totally unreliable. The source is not even Guildford specific or even Surrey specific.

7. The reality is that the town centre has quite enough retail floor space. If more is introduced it will result in the closure of existing shops. What Guildford needs is additional centralised housing and a new focus on speciality high quality comparison shopping supported by a revival of Guildford's attractive heritage core which is easily accessible to residents.
8. If the existing policy under E7 is adopted the North Street site will remain empty for the plan period of 20 years.

Do the plan's policies strike the right balance in terms of housing provision between Green belt Development and urban brownfield?

1. The plan completely fails to maximise the potential for residential development on brownfield. Guildford has the practical capacity for an additional 7,000 homes shown as follows:
 - a. 2,500 homes detailed in the Masterplan 2015 including Woodbridge Meadows which can itself be increased substantially
 - b. 500 homes at North Street
 - c. 1000 homes on current GBC car parks (10 ha) and at the station
 - d. 1000 homes saved in the urban area if 100% of students are accommodated on Surrey University campus on their existing 17 ha of surface car parks with
 - e. 1000 homes at Slyfield on the 40 ha regeneration site
 - f. 1000 windfall infill in the town (50 per annum)
2. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF clearly states that Green Belt serves a key purpose, "to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land and other urban land".
3. Although GBC talk about "brownfield first" in the plan these are empty words. So far GBC have failed to:
 - a. Develop a Brownfield Register which is a government requirement
 - b. Appoint a Brownfield Development Officer
 - c. Develop a "brownfield development policy" as part of the local plan
 - d. Encourage brownfield development by offering CIL incentives
 - e. Encourage and facilitate change of use
 - f. Develop a Town Centre Plan
 - g. Thoroughly investigate the opportunities for increased residential development between numerous brownfield sites between the station and Ladymead
4. No wonder that the only opportunity that GBC can consider in planning terms is to place over 70% of new development in the Green belt.
5. It is not necessary to build comprehensively over Wisley, Gosden Hill, Blackwell Farm and Garlick's Arch. None of the plan's large scale strategic sites are required to deliver a sufficient housing supply for the Borough over the next 20 years.

Having regard to the need for housing does the plan direct it strategically to the right places?

1. The current plan fails to set clear density guidelines for the urban area where there is a clear opportunity for increased densities which would prevent unnecessary development of the surrounding countryside.
2. Currently the density per ha between town and country is at the same level and this is clearly bad planning and a waste of scarce land resources.
3. In the last iteration of the plan all density policies have been removed. Why?

4. This deletion indicates that GBC have no intention of building at a higher density within the existing urban area which is desperately needed and is in accordance with existing government policy.
5. The plan, in my opinion, should have much higher density development in the urban area close to transport hubs and local employment to facilitate modal shift e.g. 20 minutes' walk of Guildford railway station and the town centre. Much of Guildford town could usefully be regenerated with 7/10 storey blocks (there are currently blocks of this size already in the town) at 50/100 homes per ha with landscaping and underground parking, as often seen on the Continent and, recently, in London.
6. To have a plan with no clear density guidelines is irresponsible and effectively bad planning since it fails to exploit the development opportunities that urban areas can afford or realise the benefits of preserving the countryside.

In the provision of “homes for all” are the plan’s policies sound in delivering student accommodation?

1. I object to the change in relation to student accommodation: “About 60 per cent of full time Guildford based on the University of Surrey eligible students population (full time equivalent) are expected to be provided with student bed spaces on campus.”
2. In my opinion the University should provide accommodation for 100% of new first year students and more than 60% of existing students. This would free up ideal affordable family accommodation in the urban area. If all students were accommodated in this way, 2,000 homes would be freed up in town and there would be no need to build on the Hog’s Back. Surrey University has 17 ha of car parks that could provide all the student accommodation required on stilts with parking beneath.
3. In their defence the University have stated that 50% of their students want to live off campus. This is no wonder since the policy of the University and their outsourced suppliers is to make a substantial profit on student rents.

Is the overall amount of land proposed to be released from the Green Belt, and the strategic locations for Green Belt release, justified by exceptional circumstances?

1. Policy P2 still completely fails to appreciate the importance and permanence of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Green Belt is intended to check the unrestricted sprawl of built up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; to safeguard the countryside from encroachment and to assist with urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
2. Policy P2 omits any assessment of the Green Belt's value. The Green Belt is not just empty space but is an inhabited, working environment that safeguards a certain stock of natural capital.
3. It is quite incorrect to argue, as GBC do, that the plan would involve the loss of "only" 1.6% of the borough's Green Belt. In reality the figure is nearer 7% when inseting, infilling and settlement boundary extensions are included. More importantly, there is no "acceptable" percentage (in the NPPF or anywhere else) of Green Belt that may be sold.

Does the plan take a sound approach towards the inseting of various villages from the Green Belt?

1. I object to the statement in the Draft Local Plan under Green Belt Policy P2 (4.3.13) which claims that Send and a further list of 13 villages are "now inset from the Green Belt".
2. This statement is untrue as GBC is proposing to "inset" these village. No decision has been made by an Inspector, therefore the villages remain in the Green Belt!
3. I object further to the proposed "insetting" of 15 villages (including Ripley) from the Green Belt, and at "infilling" 12 of the borough's Green Belt villages.
4. I am very concerned at the surreptitious manipulation of planning control in extending settlement boundaries in many rural villages (particularly at Send) and that infilling is also proposed outside the settlement boundaries of 11 further villages.
5. This is uncontrolled and also uncouncted development outside of the OAN.
6. Many Guildford villages are "leggy" in outline, reflecting the effect of ribbon development (often along just one side of existing roads) permitted between the Wars.
7. Send is a good example of villages that should not be removed from the Green Belt. Send provides an important Green Belt buffer between Woking and Guildford. Yes, it is true that Send comprises old ribbon development but this should not mean it can be removed from the Green Belt so that Woking joins up to Guildford. The village and the countryside behind the A247 should all be protected.
8. I object to three particularly vulnerable areas of high quality amenity land being taken out of the Green Belt at Send which include:
 - a. The land behind the schools including playing fields and woodland.
 - b. The land to the right of Cartbridge by the River Wey Navigation up to the new boundary fence with Vision Engineering.
 - c. Land to the left of Cartbridge going up to the old depot on the Wey Navigation.
9. I object to the proposed change that Send Business Park should be inset from the Green Belt due to the fact that:
 - d. It is a non-conforming and previously illegal user in an area of beautiful countryside adjacent to the beautiful Wey Navigation
 - e. It has restricted access along Tannery Lane
 - f. It should not be given the opportunity for further expansion or development

Could the plan be more ambitious in the number of dwellings it might achieve on the following sites? A5 (Jewsons site), A6 (North Street Redevelopment, and A7 (Guildford Station), A9 (Walnut Tree Close) Should site A8 be residential?

1. All densities on these urban sites should be substantially increased as well as the height of proposed development to 10 stories.

2. Site 8 should be residential where there is ready proven demand.

A25, Gosden Hill Farm, Merrow Lane, Guildford In combination with the allocations near the A3 at Send is there a risk of a significant diminution of the Green Belt in this locality? Can the perception of the eastward sprawl of the wider Guildford urban area along the A3, and the encroachment into the undeveloped gaps, be avoided?

1. Gosden Hill should not be developed. It is located entirely within the Green Belt. No exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated for building on this site and therefore development here does not meet paragraphs 87-89 of the NPPF. Furthermore, Gosden Hill performs all five functions of green belt,
2. The site has no provision for foul or surface water sewerage and adjoining sewerage is at capacity.
3. The Green Belt at this point serves the important function of separating West Clandon from the edge of urban Guildford.
4. I object to the proposal for a link road to bring traffic from the Gosden Hill development to the proposed 4 way junction at Burnt Common. This has the potential to generate large volumes of traffic (including commercial vehicles) on the A247 through Send and West Clandon - a road which is already under traffic stress (see below).
5. The volume of traffic will greatly increase air pollution which is particularly critical given the proposal to build two schools.
6. A new on-slip at Burpham would only be 1.8km from the on-slip at Burnt Common which is against Highway England's requirement of 2km.

A43, Land at Garlick's Arch, Send Are there local exceptional circumstances that justify the release of this land from the Green Belt? In combination with the allocation at A25, Gosden Hill Farm, (see 11.14 above), is there a risk of a significant diminution of the Green Belt in this locality? Can the perception of the eastward sprawl of the wider Guildford urban area along the A3, and the encroachment into the undeveloped gaps, be avoided? Would the developments proposed in these allocations integrate with the village or would they be separate entities? What steps would be taken to ensure that they promoted sustainable development and sustainable movement patterns?

1. I object to the policy A43 Garlick's Arch for 400 homes and 6 travelling show people pitches.
2. It ignores all the thousands of previous objections made by local people
3. There is no proven demand for travelling show people plots in this location
4. There is no need for putting houses on this site because the local plan housing target is incorrect and inflated and ignores constraints.
5. The allocation of 28.9 ha is an excessive land grab into the Green Belt. If we take a normal density of 30 homes per ha and it is at the end of the day proven that there is a need for 400 homes in this location the land requirement is 13 ha not 28.9 ha which is more than double.
6. Garlick's Arch (A43) is in an unsustainable location. It does not benefit from railway stations within easy walking distance and bus services across rural villages are forever reducing.
7. The A3, M25 and the roads through the villages of Ripley, Send and Clandon already suffer from congestion. Further vehicle movements will result in even more acute congestion and greater pollution. Residents and the environment will suffer as a result.
8. I object to the proposal to remove Garlick's Arch from the Green Belt. National Planning Policy requires there to be an exceptional circumstance for the Green Belt boundaries to be altered, or the development on Green Belt. There are no exceptional circumstances for this land to be taken from the Green Belt.
9. I object to the development at Garlick's Arch because of flood risk. The site at Garlick's Arch is identified on the Environment Agency's flood map as being in a flood Zone 3 from a river. This means that it has a 1 in 100 or greater chance of flooding each year, the highest risk category.
10. I object to the potential loss of Ancient Woodland on the site. The proposed development at Garlick's Arch will have a permanent impact on the character of the Ancient Woodland that surrounds the site on two sides and runs centrally through the site, which includes over 80 ancient oak trees that existed in the year 1600.
11. I object to the lack of proper infrastructure planning for sites (Policy I1). Policy I1 requires the delivery of improvements to infrastructure in conjunction with development. I have grave concerns over the planning of the infrastructure requirements and that the projects identified will be implemented when required, if at all.
12. I object due to the congestion that development will cause to the trunk roads, A3/M25 (Policy I2). There is no certainty that either the A3 or M25 in the borough will be improved to increase capacity and reduce congestion during the Plan period.
13. It is clear that with this site being added at the eleventh hour that no infrastructure planning has been undertaken. The Infrastructure Schedule makes no provision for any infrastructure improvements for this site. How will the local services such as schools and doctors cope, many of which are already at capacity? (Policy I1)

A43a, New North-facing Slip Roads on the A3 . What steps would be taken to ensure that they promoted sustainable development and sustainable movement patterns? What are the anticipated movement patterns arising from the new slip roads in combination with the housing and employment allocation, taking into account the potential for a redistribution of traffic from the strategic road network (notably from the east towards Woking), and what would their effects be on the roads through Send, including traffic flow, noise and air quality?

1. I object to the inclusion of the land for new on/off ramps at Burnt Common (A43a). The addition north facing ramps to the A3 at Burnt Common would be a disaster for local communities. There is no requirement for local traffic to access the A3 to the north, but the addition will draw in a huge amount of 'through' traffic.
2. The route from London/M25 to Woking would now be through Burnt Common and Send. Equally traffic from the east of Guildford (Merrow etc) and the A25 will now go through

Clandon and Burnt Common. This will cause immense damage to the narrow A247 road through Send which cannot be widened due to existing housing along its length.

3. I object to the proposed Infrastructure Schedule (Appendix C). The Infrastructure Schedule sets out the key infrastructure requirements on which the delivery of the plan depends. For each of the Key Allocated Sites in the borough it identifies infrastructure projects that are required, except for Garlick's Arch (A43) which is not mentioned. It is clear that the Plan takes no account of the infrastructure required for this site and is therefore not fit for purpose.

A58, Land adjacent to Burnt Common Warehouse, Send. In combination with the allocation at A25, Gosden Hill Farm, (see 11.14 above), is there a risk of a significant diminution of the Green Belt in this locality? Can the perception of the eastward sprawl of the wider Guildford urban area along the A3, and the encroachment into the undeveloped gaps, be avoided? Would the developments proposed in these allocations integrate with the village or would they be separate entities? What steps would be taken to ensure that they promoted sustainable development and sustainable movement patterns?

1. I object to Policy A 58 at Burnt Common and to the proposed inclusion of Burnt Common as an Industrial Strategic Employment Site
2. This previous allocation for B1c, B2 and B8 development was removed from the 2014 draft due to all the objections made previously.
3. The word "minimum" is a change from the previous "maximum" in the 2016 plan and since that time there has been a decline in demand for industrial land. This change alone is unacceptable since even if there was a need to build 7,000 sq m at Burnt Common this development would only require 1.4 ha at a standard plot ratio density of 50% not 9.26 ha. There is no justification for zoning an additional 7.86 ha in the Green Belt.
4. There is in fact no justification for building any more industrial development in the borough particularly at Burnt Common. The current industrial pipeline of granted consents of 38,357sqm in B1c, B2 or B8 use class space is double the 19,000 sq m said to be needed by Aecom in the ELNA.
5. There is certainly no need to build industrial or warehouse development in the middle of the Green Belt when Slyfield and Guildford still have empty sites and industrial units.
6. The 2017 Employment Land Need Assessment shows a reduction in demand to 3.9 hectares for industrial land for the whole borough not a huge over allocation of 9.26 hectares at Send in the Green Belt.
7. The impact on small surrounding roads will create traffic gridlock.
8. It will join up existing villages and defeat the purpose of the Green Belt.
9. The ongoing poor quality of the updated research undertaken by Aecom in the Employment Land Needs Assessment 2017 does not support industrial development on land in the Green Belt at Burnt Common.
10. The potential inclusion of a waste management facility mentioned at paragraph 4.4.23a lacks enough detail for proper consultation and is completely inappropriate.
11. I object that the potential impact of para 4.4.23a on Burnt Common with its over allocation of industrial zoning is subterfuge for a waste management facility which is a dishonest and underhand approach to planning and proper consultation.

A44: Land west of Winds Ridge and Send Hill. What would be the traffic impact of this development on the road serving the site? What would be the effect of the scheme on the

amenity value of the footpath network passing through the site? Are there exceptional local circumstances that justify the release of this site from the Green belt?

1. I object to policy A44 Send Hill
2. There are no local exceptional circumstances to justify the removal of this site from the Green Belt
3. The proposed development is not sustainable because of poor infrastructure. Send Hill is a single track country road and too narrow to provide sufficient access to the site for travellers or accommodate the potential new levels of traffic the proposed development would bring.
4. The site is a high quality green belt amenity area within beautiful surrounding countryside and would be spoilt by the development.
5. The amenity of the footpath on this site would be adversely affected by development.
6. The site was used as a GBC registered landfill site and shown on the 1963-8 Ordnance Survey maps as "refuse and slag heap". It is therefore unsuitable for such a development on health reasons.
7. On the 1971 Ordnance Survey the site is shown as a "refuse tip" prior to when proper licensing/registration was required. The date of the landfill works predates the 1999 EU Landfill Directive regulations. I therefore believe that there is a danger that any disturbance would be health hazard due to the unknown materials.
8. GBC has installed gas monitoring wells on site since July 2000. One well recording methane gas discharge.