

Robert E Beale

Inspector Jonathan Bore MRTPI BA

9th May 2018

Your examination of the Guildford Borough Council New Local Plan

Dear Inspector Bore,

As a property owner in West Horsley for more than 30 years and having earlier lived in East Horsley for more than 17 years, I have shared the widespread local dismay at Guildford Borough Council's (GBC's) plan to indent West Horsley from the Green Belt, ever since the GBC proposal was originally put forward in late 2013. The fact that GBC effectively presented us with a "fait accompli" by arranging for a vote of the Council to agree the removal of all the villages it wanted to remove from the Green Belt, before comment on the first draft of the Local Plan was available, was (I continue to believe) ultra vires.

As you are no doubt aware, the then Leader of the Council, Stephen Mansbridge and his closest lieutenant were subsequently discredited. Before that happened, I wrote to him on 3rd March 2014 stating my opinion expressed above. He replied to my letter one month later, quoting paragraph 86 of the NPPF, mentioning that villages which had an open character should remain in the Green Belt, and "if the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt". While he did not say so, he implied that West Horsley did not have any open character. To my mind this is utterly wrong. West Horsley does have magnificent views to and from the Surrey Area of Natural Beauty (ANOB) through the village, and these should be protected by Green Belt status. I expressed this view in detail in a letter of comment dated 19th July 2017 on the latest Proposed Submission Local Plan: (strategy and sites). As consideration of the new Local Plan has continued there has been no apparent discussion or re-consideration of the possibility of returning West Horsley in whole or in part to the Green Belt; this despite that in 2016 one local councillor for West Horsley (not involved in the original GBC decision) expressing a private view that

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the South part of West Horsley between Lollesworth Lane and the A246 roundabout should be in the Green Belt. This is precisely the area which contains the open character to which I refer earlier. In the map of the local

plan (on page 13 of the latest version), West Horsley in particular, and part of East Horsley stand out as the only areas in the Borough abutting the Surrey ANOB to the East of Guildford which will have no Green Belt protection.

It is fair to say that GBC has reacted to some comments received from the local public, in the sense that they have withdrawn from the plan an earlier site close to the small West Horsley centre conservation area; also site A41 for 90 houses (although they have continued to keep this as a possible site for a school) and reduced the extent of what is now site A39's penetration into Lollesworth Wood.

More recently, it was interesting to read GBC's response to your Inspector's Questions and comments particularly to your question 8. On page 80 (8.85) they say that West Horsley (north) functions as part of East Horsley. While this is not unreasonable in the case of one part of West Horsley north, it only applies to the road East Lane (and the smaller roads off it), which have indeed been the subject of significant development over time, including the recent past.

There is, however another part of West Horsley north along either side of the road Long Reach towards Ockham which contributes very significantly to the openness of the countryside and offers views right up to the border of the Surrey AONB; this needs the continuation of Green Belt protection to ensure that the views in both directions are not lost in future.

It is my strongly-held opinion that, as a minimum, the North Western part of West Horsley and the whole of the Southern part must remain in the Green Belt.

I wish you well with your continuing examination.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Beale