

Compton PC Local Plan Sub-Committee Report - May 2018

1. GBC's response to Planning Inspector's questions

Guildford Borough Council has published its response to the initial questions raised by the Planning Inspector in relation to its submission draft Local Plan. The questions and responses can be viewed here:

www.guildford.gov.uk/newlocalplan/examination (under the heading 'Examination documents').

In summary, the questions focus on:

- the Plan's failure to allow for meeting the housing shortfall in the neighbouring borough of Woking.
- the Plan's failure to improve overall affordability. (NB This question is in line with the Government's latest dictum that in order to make houses affordable, we need to build more of them – an assertion that is disputed by several groups in Guildford.)
- the Plan's failure to deliver a five-year housing supply, and in particular why so many town centre sites, which might provide early delivery of homes, have been allocated to retail/office space.
- The Plan's failure to justify releasing large Green Belt land or to provide exceptional circumstances for releasing specific sites from the Green Belt.
- The Plan's restraint in requiring additional purpose-built student housing to accompany proposals for further higher education.

The Council has defended its position on nearly all of the above points which the Inspector has raised. Meeting objectively assessed housing need is cited as the justification for building on the green belt.

2. Issues and Matters

The Inspector issued his guidance and questions on Issues and Matters on April 23. The deadline for responses was May 10. Green Balance submitted a response on behalf of Compton PC. A further submission was made by Compton Village Association.

3. Public Examination

The Public Examination of the Local Plan will begin on June 5, and the dates on which individual 'Matters' will be discussed will be published later this month. Richard Bate/Green Balance, together with Karen Stevens and Fiona Curtis (Local Plan Sub-Committee members) have been allocated a seat 'at the table' and will oppose the Blackwell Farm site allocation. Richard Bate is also representing Worplesdon Parish Council (which is opposed to Blackwell Farm) on flood-related issues related to Blackwell Farm and the Keens Lane proposed development.

4. Further transport assessment work

Following receipt of RGP's latest Technical Note, which reviewed the Dec 2017 Mott MacDonald (MM) report on junction capacities (part of the Local Plan Evidence Base), the MM report has been updated (just a few weeks ago), and a further correction sheet has also been included: both documents are now up on the GBC website under the 'Evidence Base' for the Local Plan ('further transport documents').

Unfortunately, these changes mean that a further assessment of the Mott MacDonald study would be needed to bring the the RGP Technical Note up to date. The Local Plan Sub-Committee has not yet had the opportunity to ask for a quotation for this additional work (being busy with the Issues and Matters responses), but we will do so this week and don't anticipate that it would take more than a day or two.

Local Plan Sub-Committee recommendation: The PC approves (in principle) funding to commission RGP to update its latest Technical Note to take into account amendments to the Mott MacDonald report. [Nb We will be asking Worplesdon PC to share the costs of the update.]