

GVG Proposals for Policy S3

Policy S3: Delivery of development and regeneration within the Town Centre and urban areas

Introduction

4.1.12 The Council is committed to ensuring that where the policies and allocations within the Local Plan have been accounted for in the delivery figures in the land availability assessments, they are deliverable, and the Local Plan's objectives are realised over the plan period.

4.1.13 The Council is enabling this delivery of development through a range of proactive measures. These include:

Taking steps to enable infrastructure for development of the Slyfield Area Regeneration Project / SARP, A24; North Street, A6; Guildford Park Road and Bright Hill car parks, A11 and A12;

Playing a lead role in catalytic infrastructure interventions that realise growth and regeneration opportunities (such as the Sustainable Movement Corridor, new railways stations at Guildford West (Park Barn) and Guildford East (Merrow) and the new road bridge and footbridge over the rail line near Ash Station;

4.1.14 The Evidence Base for the Local Plan (notably the Settlements Hierarchy Report and the Sustainability Appraisal) identifies the primary focus for development must be in Guildford Town Centre (Tier 1), the Guildford Urban Area (Tier 2), and Ash & Tongham Urban Area (Tier 3) sequentially in that order.

4.1.15 *The Council has worked on and consulted on various plans for Guildford Town Centre and is committed to bringing forward a master plan or master plans for the town centre that build on the work of the Council and the wider community and its community groups.*

In order to facilitate that process, the Council is setting an open mix of uses in the area covered by the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy, with a focus on environmental, traffic and transport improvements, the provision of other enabling and necessary infrastructure, delivery of well-designed communities of housing, employment and retail space.

4.1.16 *The Council will bring forward a master plan for the town centre that it intends will have planning status (either as a Supplementary Planning Document, facilitated by the relaxation of strict allocations on specific sites, or, if necessary, as a Development Plan Document or Local Development Document).*

4.1.17 *The Council will facilitate the ambitious regeneration of the non-heritage areas of the town centre by advancing and collaborating on key regeneration opportunities as part of the Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and subsequent adopted master planning documents, including leveraging its own landholdings as part of efforts to promote mixed use and higher density development supporting the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.*

- 4.1.18 *The Council will work on strategies to regenerate areas of the Guildford Urban Area which, by their nature, may not be able to be brought forward during the Plan Period, but which should form part of the land availability assessments for subsequent Local Plans.*
- 4.1.19 In undertaking and further to these actions, the Council will explore the use of a range of mechanisms at its disposal to support regeneration and the accelerated development of housing and mixed-use schemes. These include using, where appropriate, compulsory purchase powers, granting permission in principle, assisting in land assembly and playing a coordinating role with its development partners around development opportunities.
- 4.1.20 The borough's town centre and urban areas will form the key focus for these measures to support and accelerate growth in these sustainable locations and maximise the use of previously developed land. This will occur with careful attention to the Local Plan's design policies, Development Management policies, the provisions of any possible future Area Action Plan, as well as relevant SPDs including guidance on strategic views into and out of the town centre which will help to guide the appropriate location, form, scale and massing of development in the town centre and urban areas.
- 4.1.21 *In undertaking and further to these actions, the Council will explore the use of a range of mechanisms at its disposal to support regeneration and the accelerated development of housing and mixed-use schemes.*
These include using, where appropriate, compulsory purchase powers, granting permission in principle, assisting in land assembly and playing a coordinating role with its development partners around development opportunities.
GBC will set up a Developments Corporation or other delivery vehicle to facilitate the regeneration of the town centre.
- 4.1.22 *The borough's town centre (and urban areas) will form the key focus for these measures to support and accelerate growth in these sustainable locations and maximise the use of previously developed land.*
- 4.1.23 *This will occur with careful attention to the Local Plan's design policies, Development Management policies¹, the provisions of any possible future Area Action Plan, as well as relevant SPDs including guidance on strategic views into and out of the town centre which will help to guide the appropriate location, form, scale and massing of development in the town centre and urban areas.*

¹ The Development Management DPD has not yet been published in its first draft for consultation and the NPPF 153 notes that: "153. Each local planning authority should produce a Local Plan for its area. This can be reviewed in whole or in part to respond flexibly to changing circumstances. Any additional development plan documents should only be used where clearly justified." It cannot be appropriate to have a policy and verbiage in the Local Plan that refers substantially to a future DPD that has not formed part of the Local Plan but that is signposted in the Plan.

Coordination of development in the Town Centre

- (1) Non-allocated sites in the Guildford Town Centre are being washed over with a wider planning status that allows for a mix of uses, including residential uses (whilst restricting most retail to active frontages and the prime retail area).
- (2) The Council expects multiple sites to be master-planned to optimise streetscapes, roofscapes, scale, bulk and massing, and to ensure that the public realm is of high quality and works effectively and beneficially with the heritage and riverside assets in the Town Centre.
- (3) Enabling infrastructure will be supported in the Town Centre where it helps to relieve existing problems, enable development and improve the environment in the town centre by reducing or removing vehicles.
- (4) Development proposals will be encouraged to seek opportunities to enable the future development potential of adjacent sites. In this regard:
 - a) Submissions for planning permission will be required, where appropriate, to demonstrate consideration of surrounding properties and their development potential as part of reflecting on the wider design context of the scheme;
 - b) Where proposals undermine such development potential, they will be refused.
- (5) The Council recognises that the Exceptional Circumstances required to release sites in the Green Belt [specify these?] and will bring forward a Town Centre SPD to demonstrate the amount of unmet need to be accommodated in the Green Belt, taking full account of its duty to co-operate with other authorities, agents, stakeholders and community groups.

Coordination of development in the rest of the Guildford Urban Area

- (6) Non-allocated sites in the Guildford Urban Area (excluding Guildford Town Centre), where the Government-published Indices of Multiple Deprivation show there are specific needs that can be met through positive planning, master planned development of sites exceeding 1Ha will be encouraged for a mix of uses to heights up to five stories, principally residential, where it can be shown that those uses will contribute to resolving the identified issues.

More efficient use of land and the acceleration of housing delivery

- (7) The inclusion of residential development as part of mixed-use schemes will generally be supported.
- (8) Schemes that seek to make more efficient use of land for housing development, including as part of mixed-use schemes, will generally be supported. Active ground floor uses will be encouraged on busier streets.

To ensure vibrancy in the town centre all opportunities will be taken to increase Dwell times in the centre by provision of leisure opportunities e.g. Art Galleries, Cinema etc.

- (9) In seeking to achieve more efficient use of land and/or accelerated housing delivery, the Council will where appropriate utilise mechanisms such as its compulsory purchase powers.

Reasoned justification

4.1.24 Our Corporate Plan (2018-2023) identifies regenerating and improving Guildford town centre and other urban areas as one of three strategic priorities supporting its “Place Making” theme. Key projects to support this and the delivery of the Local Plan include:

- (a) Facilitating the delivery of a major new mixed development in North Street
- (b) Implementing the vision of the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy
- (c) Improving the public realm, including surfaces, in key town centre areas

4.1.25 Whilst the Council will play a key coordinating role aimed at achieving delivery of development and regeneration, the private sector is central to this process. It is important that schemes that seek planning permission are conceived and designed in a manner that considers regeneration opportunities beyond the boundaries of the site. Collaboration between adjacent and surrounding property owners in the Guildford town centre, including efforts that seek to maximise regeneration opportunities through mutually supportive design elements, uses and access arrangements are supported.

4.1.26 *Where the private sector does not or will not bring forward schemes that make the most of opportunities to regenerate both places and spaces, the Council will, where appropriate, use its statutory powers to bring about master-planned development.*

4.1.27 *The delivery of housing in the town centre adds to its vitality and vibrancy. The Council regards the town centre as critical in terms of meeting needs for main town centre uses. However, the creation of new housing opportunities in this location (and*

in urban areas more generally) is also regarded as desirable. Whilst the Local Plan has allocated sites for a wide variety of homes, as part of regeneration efforts more housing is likely to come forward over the plan period. It is important that this occurs in a manner that makes the most of its central location and is thus developed at a density that is appropriate, bearing in mind heritage, design and flooding considerations. Consistent with the masterplan.

- 4.1.28 Furthermore, mixed use development, which may retain or re-provide retail, leisure and employment uses in the town centre, in line with Local Plan policies, holds the potential to increase the intensity of development on sites. Including housing as part of careful redevelopment presents an opportunity to enhance the vitality of the town centre and increase delivery of homes in sustainable locations.