



Vision for Guildford Ltd

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Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP

22nd April 2019

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

House of Commons

London SW1A 0AA

Dear Secretary of State

Guildford Local Plan – Request for a Holding Direction

On the 18th April 2019 Ockham Parish Council and the Wisley Action Group wrote to you requesting you consider a holding direction related to the Guildford Borough Local Plan.

We are writing to endorse this request.

Guildford Vision Group is a local group focussed on improving the Built Environment in Guildford Town centre. It has a high proportion of professionals who have worked in Architecture, Planning and Development both in the UK and Overseas. Our group recognises that Guildford needs to support growing economic activity and population, but this needs to be achieved in a sustainable way whilst enhancing our poor Town Centre environment.

We have taken a close interest in the Local Plan during its development and have tried to contribute our experience to council deliberations including showing Guildford Borough Council how the town could accommodate thousands more homes than shown in the plan. We particularly showed how to deliver housing need on brownfield land in the centre would avoid incursion on Greenfield and Greenbelt sites.

Ockham Parish Council and the Wisley Action Group have highlighted issues with the oversupply of housing and impact on the greenbelt as it applies to Wisley. The plan, found sound by the inspector, approves for the whole borough an additional oversupply buffer of 37% of the total figure to 2034 as opposed to normal oversupply/buffer in plans of 20% for first 5 years. This has led to over-provision for a further 3924 homes all of which fall on greenfield/greenbelt land.

The plan fails to demonstrate government requirements of Exceptional Circumstances for removal of land from the Greenbelt for reasons that have been laid out clearly in the Ockham Parish Council and the Wisley Action Group letter.



Guildford Vision Group has a particular concern that gross overprovision provides no incentive, either in this plan period or in the future, to properly use sustainable Brownfield Sites particularly in the town centre. The fifth element of Greenbelt policy is 'to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land'. The local plan, despite documenting a policy of Brownfield first (Para 3.1. Spatial Vision Local Plan) brings forward too little Brownfield land for development. Guildford Vision Group believes this lack of ambition in relation to Brownfield sites has led to lack of robust policies to rectify issues in the Town Centre including Infrastructure Deficit.

The lack of draft Area Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Policies which, as other Local Plans have demonstrated, are normally available is an additional concern.

Guildford Vision Group strongly believes that a Holding Direction is required so that a final review of housing numbers across the borough can be conducted to prevent Greenbelt land being unnecessarily released.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Rigg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

J.R Rigg FRICS Chairman – Guildford Vision Group

C.C.

Anne Milton MP – Guildford

Sir Paul Beresford MP - Mole Valley

Mary-Claire Travers - Chair Ockham Parish Council

Helen Jefferies - Wisley Action Group