



PRESS RELEASE

LOCAL PLAN HEARINGS - PROGRESS BUT STILL CONCERNS

Guildford Friday 6 July 2018: The Guildford Society (GSoc) considers that the Inspector has so far run the Examination in Public in an objective and open way. We have been encouraged that 12 Days of hearings have provided an opportunity for all parties to air their views where they already had standing in the consultation process.

A major positive development is that during the inquiry the Council volunteered a draft policy (S3) to cover the town centre. The Society believes this will be helpful and are supportive of the comments the inspector has made on additions he would like included in the policy.

At the inspector's invitation GSoC have also already contributed views to the council on what should be included.

Julian Lyon, Chair of GSoc, says: -

"We have always known that this Local Plan is not and will not be the best plan for Guildford, but we engaged in the consultation process to try to improve it not kill it. Similarly, we engaged in the hearings where we thought we could add something. We are consequently delighted that the Inspector took on board many of the comments we have been making for the last 5 years, such as on areas of relative deprivation in the Guildford Urban Area, along with our aspiration for master-planned regeneration in the town centre."

GSoc remains concerned that several of the strategic sites in the plan, don't necessarily have compelling reasons to be removed from the greenbelt, and that they each have their own sustainability and transport issues.

As a society we believe all efforts to utilise brownfield and urban sites should be taken before encroaching on the greenbelt and other protected areas.

Julian Lyon says: -

"the fifth purpose of the Green Belt is to encourage urban regeneration. If, at the first signs of difficulty of master-planning and bringing forward brownfield land in the town centre or Guildford Urban Area, we opt to target the Green Belt instead, we are clearly failing to apply that fifth purpose properly."



GSoC is also concerned that so much of the housing supply is predicated on a substantial upgrade to the A3 over which we have little or no control. Maybe the Council feels this is the best leverage to get the A3 improved. The Society feels that the Council should have been focussing in the town and urban areas where they and Surrey County Council are in control of much of the infrastructure provision.

Julian Lyon summed up by saying: -

“it looks as though we may have an adopted plan towards the end of this year or early next year. The work now begins on making sure the prize of environmental improvements, pedestrianisation and urban renewal away from the High Street, can begin in earnest and that meaningful and inclusive consultation can be carried out as soon as practicably possible.”

-Ends-

Notes for Editors

- Guildford Society has since 1935 been dedicated to:
 - Conserving the best of Guildford and its environ
 - Promoting high standards of planning and architecture
 - Influencing the pace and type of development
 - Raising the level of public awareness of local issues
- The Society campaigns on key issues affecting the town and urban area of Guildford, holds public meetings, lectures, events, visits and interesting talks and more besides.
- The Guildford Society Website can be found at www.guildfordsociety.org.uk
- Please contact the Chairman or Secretary of The Guildford Society for more information