

A COUNCIL OF DESPAIR?

WEST HORSLEY STILL THREATENED WITH 100s OF NEW HOMES ON DENSE ESTATES + REMOVAL FROM THE GREEN BELT

Following the critical response by thousands of residents to last Autumn's Draft Local Plan Consultation by Guildford Borough, a Council Press Release issued on 24th November quoted the Council Leader, "I can state categorically that no site will come forward for development within the green belt, any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or area of flood risk unless it has been fully reassessed against the tests set out in the planning practice guidance as amended in October this year.". Comforting, reassuring words you may think? Your Parish Council thinks **NOT**, particularly as Land Surveyors have been observed during February doing detail survey work on at least 2 of the major development sites proposed for West Horsley. Such work is the necessary advance work required for detail drawings and planning applications to be submitted.

West Horsley Parish Council is aware that Draft Local Plan sites are being, or have been already, reassessed and it is suspected that the 3 sites proposed in the Parish have already been cleared as OK by GBC, despite being within the Green Belt. Land owners or their Agents have possibly received a verbal indication (so there's nothing on record!) that their sites will still be in the **reassessed new Draft Local Plan** due to be put out for Consultation **after the Elections** this summer. Hence Land Survey work is being started in anticipation of sites in West Horsley being brought into an enlarged Settlement Area which will be removed from the Metropolitan Green Belt by inseting.

Is there a flaw in Guildford's presumed strategy? Yes, Chapter 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework is about **Protecting Green Belt land**. Para 83 requires that established Green Belt boundaries *should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan*. WHPC thinks that Guildford will say that **the exceptional circumstances** are non-availability of brownfield land sites within the first 5 years of the new Local Plan to deliver the housing numbers that *they, Guildford*, deem to be to be required. Infrastructure (lack of) and sustainability are other key battleground areas for resisting large numbers of new dwellings being imposed upon West Horsley. Elsewhere in this Newsletter there is a summary of the findings from the 2014 Housing Survey identifying what types of homes are really needed in the Parish. West Horsley Parish Council will fight both inseting from the Green Belt and enlarging the Village Settlement Areas

Your Parish Council will alert and issue briefings on the second Draft Local Plan Consultation once it is published. Just six weeks is anticipated for the 2nd Consultation (Guildford will be in a hurry by then!!) so WHPC and residents will have to act fast if the threat to build many new dwellings in West Horsley becomes a reality.

PLEASE WATCH OUT DURING THE COMING MONTHS FOR

SPECIAL Email & NEWSLETTER BRIEFINGS

ON THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN AND COMMENTARY FOR RESPONDING