



GUILDFORD GREENBELT GROUP

MANIFESTO

OUR CORE VALUES:

- Brownfield land should be used for building before any green fields
- Housing numbers must reflect real local need not developers' wishes
- Existing legal protection for the Green Belt and the AONB should stand
- Green fields matter - they are not just building land
- The Metropolitan Green Belt is for the benefit of all

WHO ARE WE?

- We have led the agenda for change in relation to planning
- We formed in 2013. We united opposition to green field building across and around the borough
- We joined together to oppose Guildford Borough Council's consultation proposals on housing on green fields in autumn 2013 and led opposition to the draft Local Plan in summer 2014
- We are a cross-party group with no affiliations to any other party
- We are standing for both local council and for parliament

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

- We've led debate on attacking the proposed housing numbers, associated congestion and the flawed consultancy work supporting council plans
- We have highlighted basic procedural and planning errors by the planning department and its consultants
- The first consultation on the new Guildford BC Local Plan (before we formed) involved building on the greenbelt and was supported by a unanimous councillor vote – we have changed the agenda
- We've highlighted flawed evidence. The Council has spent £1.5 million on the draft Local Plan so far, including that evidence. The Council wasted another £150,000 on a further consultation in summer 2014 knowing that the required work had not been completed, resulting in the draft being withdrawn immediately after the consultation ended – a complete waste of public time and money.
- Without GGG, 16 villages would have already been removed from the green belt, and plans for major development would be much more advanced, including on Gosden Hill Farm, the nationally important Hog's Back and around Wisley
- We have made formal representations on the flaws within the National Planning Policy Framework and have lobbied for change, including giving evidence to a parliamentary select committee
- We have asked all our MPs to campaign with us. However, we are not aware of any formal opposition from Anne Milton MP to building on the green belt – and she voted for the National Planning Policy Framework

WHAT WILL WE DO?

PLANNING – A FRESH START

- Prepare a completely new local plan, based on real local needs
- Identify 5 year housing needs to avoid “planning by appeal” (note the greenbelt is partly protected from planning by appeal if the local council is supportive).
- Implement a Brownfield First policy using previously developed land before green fields
- Build new homes above car parks without cutting parking spaces
- Conserve all protected sites and nature reserves
- Stop “land banking” by developers
- Enforce new design guidelines with conservation/heritage/green requirements
- Work to change the National Planning Policy Framework, with a local democratic right of veto over major projects

ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Support organic growth for existing local businesses
- Support agriculture and the rural economy including tourism
- Support growth initiatives that create high quality value-added jobs



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HOUSING

- Cut the number of empty homes and clamp down on overseas “buy to leave” speculators
- Make genuinely affordable tied homes available for key workers
- Require the University of Surrey to build the accommodation it has promised for existing students and ensure that all additional students are housed on campus
- Boost shared ownership to help first-time buyers onto the housing ladder
- Bring forward the proposed Slyfield redevelopment within next 5 years
- Focus development in places which minimise additional road congestion
- Ensure developers deliver all the “affordable” homes that they have undertaken to build

ENVIRONMENT

- Stop urban sprawl
- Promote higher environmental standards and energy-saving incentives
- Promote improvement in air quality by cutting pollution including vehicle emissions
- Protect the countryside and urban green spaces
- Seek National Park status for the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Endorse the CPRE “Manifesto for the countryside”
- Promote public access to the countryside and increase public understanding of the natural environment

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- End the dictatorial Executive form of governance and return to collective decision-making
- Introduce a committee system immediately on an interim (“hybrid”) basis and formally as soon as legally possible
- Give power back to parish councils and local residents by seeking and respecting their views
- Bring in stricter codes of conduct for councillors and council employees based on best-practice standards of transparency, integrity and ethics, including a whistle-blowers’ charter
- Ensure local government offers transparency in decision making and accountability
- Remove the party whip from any GGG councillor who has brought the party into disrepute

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Conduct an early review of all council functions including the proposed Millmead renovation
- Ensure continued provision of high-quality public services, cut inefficiency, consultants and waste
- Make sure public money is spent appropriately, efficiently and wisely – fiscal prudence
- Seek greater cost-effectiveness through shared services with other councils

CONGESTION - TRAFFIC AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- Unlike the current council we will not encourage more traffic in the town centre by out-of-town housebuilding and significant retail expansion
- Work to minimise through-traffic (including the A3)
- Encourage rail travel
- Address congestion by promoting more regular bus services and car sharing incentives
- Offer free park-and-ride services
- Improve safety for all road users and create better cycle lanes
- Improve roads by working with Surrey County Council on potholes and repair

RUBBISH, RECYCLING AND STREET CLEANING

- Increase recycling and enforce high service standards
- Work for more active cleaning of drains
- Stop fly-tipping