

We want economic growth, but it needs to be the right kind of growth - growth derived from adding value and efficiency in the way things are done; rather than simply from increasing population.

Here in Guildford we're going for the latter; and this is not only unsustainable, it's also going to have a negative impact on quality of life for us all. Take Cornwall for example, if we moved everyone in England into the county of Cornwall, its economy would grow. There would be more people working and spending their hard-earned cash there. But Cornwall would become an awful place to live - traffic would be a nightmare and its beautiful coastlines blighted by housing.

On a smaller scale, this is what you're proposing for Guildford. You're moving thousands more people into the borough to "grow our economy". But, like Cornwall, our infrastructure can't cope and our landscapes would have to be sacrificed. Our "well-being" - the ONS's measure of how society is doing - would fall.

And for what?

- The promise of better roads? Even if enough funding was secured, it takes decades for major infrastructure to be delivered. Meanwhile, Guildford will be in gridlock. It took 10 years just to widen Gill Avenue near Tesco.
- Then there's the promise of cheaper housing. No way! We're too near to London for house building schemes to have any effect on prices. Estate agents acknowledge this, Edge Analytics acknowledges this, the Bank of England acknowledges this. A one-bedroom flat in Wandsworth or Lambeth can be swapped for a three-bedroom house in Guildford, and as long as this situation remains, so will the demand for housing.
- Finally there's the promise of a better economy. Guildford is relatively economically successful, but more importantly it scores highly as a "good place to live" and this needs to continue because being "a good place to live" is intrinsically linked with economic success. It's what draws top businesses and people to the town. St Albans, Winchester, Edinburgh are all attractive places and they perform well economically. The University recognises this and

promotes its MBA course by stating: “Many of the most influential people choose to live among Surrey’s beautiful green hills, so you could be rubbing shoulders with major players right here in the restaurants of Guildford.”

So those “beautiful green hills” are not just an important part of our heritage, they are important to our economy too. They help attract the knowledge-based businesses to create a better, stronger - but not necessarily bigger - Guildford.

GDP is not everything. We need to adopt quality of life as a more sensible and balanced target. Such an approach would recognise the importance of the green belt, thereby halving your draft housing figure and resulting in a fitter, leaner and more sustainable Guildford for the future.