

M3LEP - the Local Enterprise Partnership for Surrey and Hampshire - has announced government funding of £118m (Greater Manchester had £170m Cumbria £9m). We're quite rich- do we need more pump priming to create congestion? The LEP decided- without public consultation - that Guildford should be one of 4 growth hubs- with more prominence than Camberley or Aldershot. Nick Clegg said "We're placing the money in the hands of people.. who know how to spend it best". Actually, we don't agree. Nor does the Institute of Chartered Accountants - who think there is a lack of clarity in the role of LEPS.

Slide 1

Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deals

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| Greater Manchester | £170m |
| M3 LEP | £118m |
| York, North York and East Riding | £110m |
| Tees Valley | £90m |
| Birmingham and Solihull | £63m |
| Cumbria | £9m |

Our LEP's minutes for April state its consultants' study gives a regional housing requirement of 4805 dpa; that over the last 10 years the historic rate has been 4663 dpa; that the DCLG assessment was up to 6370 dpa - but the LEP wants 11 800 dpa to '*support forecast levels of economic growth*'

-a regional uplift of **253%** compared to historic levels.

Slide 2

| Analysis | Regional housing requirement dwellings per annum |
|--|--|
| M3 LEP consultants (Regeneris) | 4805 |
| Historic rate over past 10 years | 4663 |
| Department of Communities and Local Government | up to 6370 |
| M3 LEP decision | 11800 |

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| M3 LEP target compared to historical | 253% |
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The January minutes note funding received by the LEP will be linked to housing, and that *“the requirement to increase the supply of housing was recognized as a difficult area to deliver due to the restrictions in place. It was suggested that a relaxation on the use of green belt land could be included in the Government asks to assist with potential aspirational ideas”*.

Our LEP includes local and county councillors- our current representative is the Council leader, Cllr Mansbridge - and representatives from builders, including Crest Nicholson and Wilky Group, influencing local policy. Once this would have been seen as a conflict of interest.

Slide 3

“the requirement to increase the supply of housing was recognized as a difficult area to deliver due to the restrictions in place. It was suggested that a relaxation on the use of green belt land could be included in the Government asks to assist with potential aspirational ideas.”

M3LEP minutes Jan 2014

The terms of reference of the LEP Land and Property Group include promoting development of commercial and residential property –they will *“seek to engage and influence planning and economic policy strands at both the strategic level*

and through the local delivery process, at a time when the national planning policy is undergoing major change.” Their priorities include “how do we engage with political bodies to encourage growth, seeking support for housing.”

To the lay observer, it looks as though the Green Belt is being sold off to support aggressive forecast regional growth. Guildford has more than 9000 homes proposed for Green Belt land – 70% of the proposed new homes are on Green Belt.

*“seek to engage and **influence planning and economic policy strands at both the strategic level and through the local delivery process, at a time when the national planning policy is undergoing major change”***

*“how do we engage with political bodies to encourage growth, **seeking support for housing.”***

M3 LEP minutes April 2014

This is not what we voted for either at a local or a national level. Public money – our money - is being used to promote aggressive housebuilding which is in excess of demonstrable need, at the instigation of housebuilders who will profit from this.

GBC has embraced this policy, and is enforcing it through the Local Plan. Is this acceptable? Who agreed to sell off our countryside? Why should housebuilders decide?

NOTES

<http://www.enterprisem3.org.uk/news/118-million-funding-secured-for-enterprise-m3-lep/>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/industries/publicsector/article4141246.ece?shareToken=b3e88563f11d7782a3ba8895dad1e4f6>

<https://www.gov.uk/state-aid>

BACKGROUND - SEP LETTER TO DRAGON. 28.3.14

We all know that there are limits on how many more homes Guildford and Guildford Borough can support – we have limited building land constrained by the Green Belt, we have poor infrastructure, and we are already suffering from severe congestion with the homes and population that we have.

The quality of life – that is the main draw and attraction of the area for us all – could easily be destroyed by uncontrolled development. How much development we want, and how much control, is a matter for debate. But it must be **public** debate, and not be decided behind closed doors, and not by vested interests. So it

matters when our Council publishes a key strategy document for the next three years. We should know about it and have a say in it.

When GBC published its Corporate Plan on 21 November, just at the end of the Issues and Options consultation, had residents seen it or had a say in its development? No. It has never been subject to any public consultation. If you want to read it, it is summarised in the leaflet that accompanied the council tax documents for all borough residents and is also available on the GBC website http://www.guildford.gov.uk/media/15695/Corporate-Plan-2013-2016/pdf/CORPORATE_PLAN_2013-16.pdf

It is now part of the evidence base for our Local Plan, and informs council decisions. It is pro housing development, without any relationship to need. It contradicts the local Conservative manifesto - there is no reference to protection of the Green Belt which was a key pledge for the Conservative majority in the Council at the last election. Our local corporate plan is not just a matter for councillors. This is our locality, and it is OUR local plan. So we should be able to comment on the Corporate Plan.

Our Local Plan and our Corporate Plan are substantially influenced by the strategic views of our regional LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership). The LEPs are a shadowy group – part replacement for the previous development agencies, or maybe the regional planning authorities (ie like SEEDA or SEERA), holding the purse strings for government infrastructure contributions (but not very much). Our LEP is the Enterprise M3 LEP covering all of Surrey and Hampshire – Basingstoke to Gatwick. There is no democratic accountability at all.

The board of this quango includes council members, representatives of the University of Surrey, and local company representatives. It has enormous influence. We have come to know that Surrey University is very involved in planning - advised on the SHMA, sits on the LEP board and was the author of the Guildford Economic Strategy 2009- and of course is now proposing to develop 3000 homes. And it's clear why Crest Nicholson would want to be involved (a house builder, who has permission to build a large number of houses in Cranleigh - <http://www.crestnicholson.com>) or Wilky Group (property investment - see <http://www.wilky.co.uk>) Crest Nicholson is on the main LEP board and both Crest Nicholson and Wilky Group representatives sit on the Land and Property Committee, together with other developers and builders, and are involved in influencing local and national strategic policy decisions. (See <http://www.enterprisem3.org.uk/uploads/fde2a979807eae56a8386707b1d74264148f7d84.pdf>)

These are commercial companies answerable only to their shareholders, but they are helping to determine national policy without reference to the electorate. The target strategy of the LEP (stated) is to “seek support for housebuilding” and “to influence planning and economic policy at both the strategic level and through the local delivery process”. No self-interest there, then. Minutes in January 2014 propose that “a relaxation on the use of Green Belt land could be included in the Government asks”. See <http://www.enterprisem3.org.uk/uploads/66968558ead226d6fd47e47c685d44649b330811.pdf>

Once this would have represented a conflict of interest – why not now?