

Annex A - Reasons for allocating PC funding to oppose the Blackwell Farm development:

- 1) Blackwell Farm occupies 20% of Compton Parish, is located entirely within the green belt, and is of high landscape value – it forms the views out of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has been independently assessed on behalf of the Parish Council as meeting Natural England’s AONB criteria. Under Planning law, AONB should be afforded the same protection as National Parks.
- 2) The proposed development, relies on two new road schemes, which will increase congestion on the west of Guildford, and result in increased traffic along the A31 and B3000 (“The Street” in Compton) and other roads in the parish, eg Down Lane, The Avenue, Priorsfield Road. This will have a severe impact on the quality of life of those Compton residents living along these routes, increasing pollution and noise pollution levels, as well as on commuters and Compton businesses, which rely on good access and free-flowing car movements for their operations.

The proposed new access road from the A31 (Hog’s Back) to Gill Avenue, on which the scheme depends, will:

- increase tailbacks on the A31, resulting in traffic seeking alternative routes, such as the B3000, which will have an impact on The Street.
- increase congestion on Gill Avenue (at the A3/Tesco Roundabout), and impede access to the sub-region’s hospital for emergency vehicles. It will also increase tailbacks along The Chase, and on residential roads in Onslow Village, such as Queen Eleanor’s Road.
- require a major roundabout to be built on the top of the Hog’s Back, impacting on residents living at Compton Heights, and causing harm to the AONB (particularly in terms of light pollution). Both Surrey County Council and the Traffic Engineer, commissioned by Compton PC, have said that a roundabout would be the most suitable junction type for the levels of traffic likely to use the new route. This roundabout would no doubt be required should the 1,800 be built out, regardless of what GBC is putting forward now.

The proposed widening of the A3, on which the scheme also depends, will:

- Potentially increase the flow of traffic movements north-south on the A3 and thereby draw further traffic along the B3000, again impacting Compton.
- Do nothing to alleviate Guildford’s traffic problems, which are due to inadequacy of the road systems operating east to west, and the insufficient river crossings.
- Not necessarily be delivered during the period of the Local Plan (if ever).

- 3) Compton PC has a mandate from the residents of Compton to do this. At the Local Plan Meeting on July 5, hosted by the PC, considerable concern was

expressed by the 40 or so residents who attended about the proposed Blackwell Farm development and its traffic implications. Some residents expressed concern that the Parish Council had not already appointed an expert to help oppose the scheme and felt that our parish might be on the back foot, particularly when other parish councils have already appointed barristers to oppose potential development sites in their areas. When asked whether they would be happy for the Parish Council to spend money opposing the Blackwell Farm development, there was a unanimous show of hands. There were comments such as "This is the most important issue facing the parish" and "spending money in trying to prevent Blackwell Farm being developed is more important than paying for a new bus stop".

- 4) It would be better to spend £10k now in trying to get the development quashed at the Public Examination stage, than to try to fight the scheme further downstream at a judicial review, which would cost ten times as much.
- 5) Money has already been allocated for this purpose. At the May 2016 Parish Council Meeting, it was agreed that "£60,000 would be directed to allocated reserves as follows: **£20,000 to legal advice and research in connection with the Local Plan**; £20,000 for environmental projects; £20,000 for heritage projects." (CPC Minutes, May 2016, para 69.)

Reasons for selecting Green Balance:

- 1) Green Balance has extensive knowledge of planning, which we believe is more important than legal knowledge at this stage of the Local Plan process.
- 2) Green Balance has particular expertise in planning issues that affect AONB – Richard Bate has authored "AONBs and development" for the National Trust, as well as undertaking work for the Council of National Parks, the Campaign for National Parks, the Campaign to Protect Rural England; Historic England (formerly English Heritage), and Natural Resources Wales (formerly the Countryside Council for Wales).
- 3) Green Balance has a good track record in overturning developers' plans for building on the green belt, particularly where these have an impact on AONB. The consultancy was involved in quashing Imperial College's plans to build 4,000 homes across 250 acres of agricultural land in the Wye Valley AONB in Kent, and has recently defeated some extremely influential developers, which wanted to build 1,400 homes in the Vale of the White Horse in Oxfordshire, on part of the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 4) Richard Bate has already prepared a review of the West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (which includes assessment of Guildford's housing need) on behalf of the CPRE as well as a response to the latest draft of the Local Plan on behalf of the CPRE and Save Hogs Back. He is therefore already knowledgeable about the issues affecting Guildford, and particularly the Blackwell Farm site. He has already undertaken some research and would not be starting from scratch.

Of course, the hope is that Blackwell Farm will not be put forward in the next draft of the Local Plan, but it is important that we have this money allocated so that we can "hit the ground running" should it remain in the Plan.