

Compton PC Local Plan Sub-Committee Report - July 2018

EIP results

The Planning Inspector has found the Guildford Local Plan to be sound, and he has not recommended the removal of the Blackwell Farm site allocation. This is very disappointing news for Compton PC, especially as our consultants (planning, traffic and landscape experts) presented our case at the hearing so well, albeit under immense time pressure.

It is particularly disappointing that the Inspector has expressed an intention to take more of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) than was proposed in the submitted Plan. This would seem contrary to national planning policy, which states that AONB must be given the 'highest level of protection'.

Regrettably, this particular Inspector did not seem to have much time for objectors' arguments/evidence. He would not allow studies produced by traffic and landscape experts on behalf of Compton and Worplesdon PCs to form part of the examination papers, and therefore neither he, nor all the other participants had read them. Arguments presented by our experts verbally at the hearing were extremely rushed because of the Inspector's strict time controls. In the end, it seems that the Inspector did not take on board any of our arguments (except those relating to the safety of the new access road).

Richard Bate (of Green Balance) has said that he will give advice on whether he considers the Inspector's Examination and Report is lawful. The PC may also wish to seek the same advice from counsel. If we are advised that the Inspector has acted unlawfully, there may be opportunity for a Judicial Review. This will require the appointment of a barrister as this will take place in the High Court.

We will not know whether there is a case for a Judicial Review until the Inspector produces his Examination Report (expected in December 2018), but the PC may want to consider whether it would be appropriate to fund or contribute to funding this. In the meantime, the Local Plan Sub Committee will approach other organisations (such as the Guildford Residents Association, the CPRE, and other parish councils) to see if they are interested in jointly funding a JR, and report back to the PC.

Other outcomes of the Examination are as follows:

- The Inspector has accepted the housing number proposed by Guildford Borough Council (despite strong opposition from groups such as the Guildford Residents Association, and Guildford Green Belt Group). Instead, he has asked for the number of houses across the borough to be increased to make up 25% of Woking's unmet need and to help increase the affordability of houses in the borough. The number of homes that will have to be built across the borough each year will therefore be around 700.
- The Inspector has not recommended the removal of any of the strategic sites (including Blackwell Farm). This is bad news for Compton, which will lose around 25

per cent of its green belt and a large chunk of its Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but also for other areas of the borough, such as Ockford (Wisley Airfield), Burpham (Gosden Hill), and Ash.

- The Inspector has asked for more housing in the town centre and for more housing to be delivered in the early years of the plan. (This will result in additional sites being put forward for development, including those on the Guildford/Waverley border, which will have to be consulted upon.)

Next steps

- Guildford Borough Council will complete a list of main modifications to the Plan, the first draft of which will be published on July 23. The Inspector will comment on this draft and it will be revised accordingly. There is likely to be six-week consultation on these main modifications, expected to take place early September.
- The Council will then summarise the responses to that consultation, which the Inspector will consider before writing his final report. This is expected to be delivered by late autumn.
- The Local Plan is likely to be adopted early in 2019.

Waveley Local Plan

The High Court has granted permission for a legal challenge by CPRE Surrey, Protect Our Waverley and others seeking a judicial review of the Waverley Local Plan. This will put the spotlight on Waverley Council, the Planning Inspectorate and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for their approach to 'housing need'. CPRE's case focuses specifically on the imposition on Waverley of 'unmet need' from Woking, and the consequences of this 'uplift' on Waverley's countryside including Green Belt and AONB.

Charterhouse School planning application

Charterhouse School plans to submit a planning application for 132 new homes on its Broom and Lees playing field - a six-hectare site off Hurtmore Road (opposite the school's main campus) so it can sell the site to a housebuilder. Whilst this potential development is within Godalming, the additional traffic may have an impact on Compton's residents in Priorsfield Road. The PC may want to consider responding to the planning application once it has been submitted.