

## High Court Challenge – Update January 2020

We are very disappointed to report that Compton and Ockham Parish Councils and Mr Cranwell have lost their joint High Court Challenge of Guildford's Local Plan, and as a result, it looks likely that Blackwell Farm and other strategic sites will now be developed.

In coming to his decision, the Judge was not considering the merits or otherwise of the site allocation, but rather whether or not there had been an error in law, and unfortunately, he decided that there had not.

Compton Parish Council's QC has advised that the chances of successfully overturning the High Court Judge's decision in the Court of Appeal are "minimal", and therefore Compton PC has decided not to risk further funds in fighting for the removal of Blackwell Farm from the Local Plan. However, Ockham PC has lodged an appeal on the following joint ground:

*"The learned Judge erred in law in failing to find that the Council and the Inspector had taken into account matters which were not capable of contributing to exceptional circumstances for the removal of land from the green belt and the allocation of that land for 3,924 homes above the objectively assessed need and Local Plan requirement of 10,678 and had reached their conclusions irrationally."*

If Ockham PC's appeal is successful, the Court may ask Guildford Borough Council to reduce its housing supply figure and return one or more sites to the green belt. In this event, Compton PC will be putting forward a strong case for removing the Blackwell Farm site allocation and its associated road infrastructure (policies A26 and A27).

If Ockham PC's appeal fails and there is no further opportunity to remove Blackwell Farm from the Local Plan, Compton PC's focus will be to try to mitigate against the most harmful impacts of the development, particularly in terms of traffic and air pollution.

The first stage in drawing up detailed plans for the site is the *Strategic Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SDF SPD)*. Guildford Borough Council began a five-week consultation on this document on January 20 and the Parish Council will be participating in this. For others who want to have their say, the *SDF SPD* can be found at the following link:

<https://guildford.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/SDFSPD/consultationHome>

Please note that the SDF SPD cannot create new policy, it can only supplement adopted Local Plan policies and is for guidance only. This means that any comments from residents need to be directed towards constructive ways to improve what has already been tabled.

Compton PC is very grateful to everyone for their support over the past seven years in opposing the development at Blackwell Farm and in trying to protect this part of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty from being harmed. We will continue to strive for the best outcome for our residents at all stages of Blackwell Farm's development.