



## Local Issues for Merrow

### **Dear Merrow Residents**

Readers may be tired of hearing about the Local Plan but much has happened in the last few months and some progress is now being made.

Guildford Borough Council (GBC) had a further but limited consultation over a six-week period in June this year on the revised draft Local Plan where they were only asking for comment on the changes made to the version published in June 2016. There were some significant changes to the earlier plan in that the number of houses proposed to be built on the key sites, including Gosden Hill Farm, were reduced and one site at Normandy had been removed totally. We noted that no development is being proposed on the Clandon Golf Site in Merrow.

The Merrow Residents' Association response can be found on our website, [www.merrowresidents.org.uk](http://www.merrowresidents.org.uk) but it majored upon the effect of the proposed Local Plan on Merrow and those travelling in and out of Merrow.

As some readers will be aware, the Guildford Residents Associations commissioned their own report on the housing need and this report by Neil McDonald has now been refreshed, concluding that GBC should reduce the demographically-based estimate of the number of homes needed from 558 homes a year to 404. We also drew attention to other shortcomings in the GBC housing need report and concluded that we had no confidence in the GBC figures.

We have commented at length on the proposal for the development of Gosden Hill Farm since our earlier concerns have not been adequately addressed and the internal design, infrastructure and transport connections are missing and there is increased reliance on the developer to cover major costs for infrastructure, the Sustainable Movement Corridor, the A3 access, the new Park & Ride and the proposed Merrow Station. Our major concern is that the plans to access the A3 are totally unacceptable since there would only be access going South and those wishing to travel towards London would have to go through Burpham to

join the A3, adding to the very severe congestion problems there. It is imperative that all necessary infrastructure, including access to the A3, is in place before any building takes place. We concluded that our previous objections related to the severe impact of the Gosden Hill Farm development on surrounding communities, including Merrow, still stand.

We have also commented in some detail on the transport infrastructure, basing our comments on a submission from a member of the Guildford Residents Associations, Richard Jarvis, who is a qualified Civil Engineer. He concluded that the plan cannot be regarded as sound and the evidence indicates that congestion will be widespread on much of the highway network in peak periods.

We need to be clear that many elements of the draft Plan are extremely unpopular and will be challenged every inch of the way. We understand that GBC have received 9,500 comments on their revised Local Plan which they hope to take to full Council for approval in November, prior to submission to the Secretary of State for a full examination in public in the Spring of 2018.

The Merrow Residents' Association will continue to 'watch this space' extremely carefully, and in all likelihood, will seek to be involved with the discussions when the plan is examined in public by an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate.

We welcome your feedback and hearing what is important to you, so please do email us on [publicity@merrowresidents.org.uk](mailto:publicity@merrowresidents.org.uk)

The MRA Committee hope you all enjoy the rest of the summer and see you all again in the December edition of The Merrow Pages.

**Sarah**

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