



## MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

### **Response from the Merrow Residents' Association (MRA) to questions raised by the Inspector in his note reference ID/12 and the Submission Local Plan (2017) Guildford Local Plan: Resumed Examination in Public**

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This response from the Merrow Residents' Association (MRA) is to questions raised by the Inspector in his note with the reference ID/12.

#### **Matters and Issues.**

#### **1. The appropriateness of using 2016-based household projections for the basis of Guildford's Local Plan**

As the Inspector will be aware the MRA is a member of the Guildford Residents Association and they have sought advice from Neil MacDonald of NMSS and this response is based on his expert advice.

We support the view from NMSS that it is entirely appropriate to use the 2016 based household projections which are an improvement on earlier calculations which over-estimated need.

#### **2. Whether the calculation set out in the Council's paper "Update to OAN Assessment in Guildford as a result of the 2016-based household projections" is an appropriate basis for calculating the OAN.**

The NMSS report which will be submitted with the GRA response explains in detail why GL Hearn's assumptions and calculations are wrong and we will not repeat them here except to say that we find the NMSS conclusions compelling.

#### **3. The implications of the Council's paper "GBC note on OAN following the 2016-based Household Projections"**

- **The overall housing requirement set out in the plan**

The NMSS report concluded that only 361 new homes per year are required to support a job growth of 0.8%. It therefore follows that the GL Hearn figures that underpin the GBC figures should be reduced. We are extremely concerned that the figures from GL Hearn and NMSS are so widely separated bearing in mind that both groups are acknowledged as experts. On that basis we take the view that the OAN must be reduced to a more reasonable and acceptable figure to achieve a balance between these two conflicting figures and thereby do less damage to the Green Belt.

- **The housing trajectory**

The reduced need has implications for the housing trajectory which now needs to be amended but also because it is now agreed that there is excessive retail space allocated in Guildford which should be re-allocated for household development. If it is accepted that the OAN should be reduced by 201 being the difference between GL Hearn (562) and NMSS (361) it means that there is a need for 3819 fewer houses over the life of the plan (19 years 2015-

2034). It follows that at least one of the major Green Belt strategic sites should be removed from the Local Plan such as Gosden Hill Farm where there are so many major infrastructure issues to overcome and where development would cause major traffic congestion in Guildford and the surrounding areas including Merrow

- **The 5 year housing land supply**

The revised need figure takes all the pressure off the perceived problem of the 5 year housing supply.

- **The need for the additional sites included in the main modifications.**

It follows from the reduced need that not all the additional sites are now needed.

**4. Whether it is possible at this point in time to come to conclusions on the issue of Woking's unmet need.**

Yes. The answer is clear as NMSS argue that there is now no unmet need in Woking.

**5. Whether in view of current uncertainties (especially in view of item 4) it would be appropriate to insert a review mechanism into the plan and, if so, how it would be phrased.**

In view of the fact that there is now no unmet need in Woking it would not be appropriate to insert a review into the plan

21<sup>st</sup> January 2019