

Parish Council discusses Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The Local Plan continues to dominate proceedings at Parish Council meetings with the main development in February being the publication of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which gives the first indication of the number of new homes which could be factored into the Plan when it finally appears later this year. The 670-850 new homes per year quoted over the planning period to 2031 is significantly greater than the numbers envisaged in previous plans and significantly increases the chances of major developments in the Borough coming to fruition. The Parish Council made a response by the tight 21st November deadline.

The February meeting of the Council was addressed by Tim Harold, Chairman of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England who made a number of useful points.

Any proposed developments at Gosden Hill and Nuthill Farms, Slyfield and Wisley will have to have the blessing of the Highways Agency since the A3 is under their complete control. They will want to control the design of any access road plans for Gosden Hill and the proposed Park & Ride there which is on the agenda for consideration.

The National Planning Policy Framework lays great emphasis on cooperation across district boundaries when preparing Local Plans. Woking District borders Guildford at the Sutton Place Estate and at Clay Lane.

If an A3 tunnel is still being considered as a possibility for Guildford, which could run from the A3/A31 junction at the Hogs Back to Burpham, then land will have to be reserved at the Burpham end for the exit which it has been suggested could be located around Potters Lane. 2 roundabouts would be required to allow access to the A3 both North and South.

Tim also thought it unlikely that Network Rail would support a new station on Merrow Lane or wish to contribute to the cost of a new railway bridge.

CPRE, however, do support the redevelopment of the Surrey Depot on Merrow Lane as a brownfield site suitable for housing but he added, "Anything which is a step towards merging West Clandon and Burpham would in our opinion be inappropriate development to which objection should be made. The current proposal calls for 2,000 houses at Gosden Hill with a primary school, doctor's surgery, local shops, and employment land towards the railway. The site would also involve some form of country park which to our mind sounds suburban. Nothing is supposed to be visible from West Clandon. For comparison purposes, it is useful to remember that the current Burpham community has a population of 2,500."

Residents and local organisations can attend a Scrutiny Forum held by Guildford Borough Council on Tuesday 4 March examining the evidence base for Guildford's new Local Plan. There will be two identical sessions at the Council's Millmead offices at 3pm to 5.30pm and 6.30pm to 9pm.