

## **CABINET MEMBER DECISION**

### **Decision:**

Petition: In relation to continued development in Surrey

#### **(i) Details of decision**

That the response, attached as Appendix 1, be approved.

#### **(ii) Reasons for decision**

To respond to the petition.

#### **(iii) Details of any alternative options considered and rejected**

None

#### **(iv) Details of any consultation and representations received not included in the published report**

Diane Doney attended the meeting and tabled a response, a copy of this response is available upon request.

The Planning and Development Group Manager was also in attendance and reiterated that Surrey County Council was a statutory consultee in the District and Borough local development plans but that the determination of planning applications for housing development is the remit of the District and Borough Councils.

### **Conflicts of Interest and any Dispensations Granted**

**(Any conflict of interest declared by any other Cabinet Member consulted in relation to the decision to be recorded and any dispensations granted by the Audit and Governance Committee)**

None

### **Decision taken by:**

- (i) Name:** Mike Goodman
- (ii) Portfolio:** Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

**Date of Decision:** 08 October 2014

**Date of Publication of Record of Decision:** 08 October 2014

**Date decision effective:** 08 October 2014

## RESPONSE TO PETITION CONCERNING DEVELOPMENT IN SURREY

### The Petition

'Surrey is under constant bombardment from Developers, all keen to seek the best financial return on their developments by building in the areas with the biggest cash return. Each borough has an agreed allocation of new housing that requires to be completed by 2028, which has been subdivided by the borough council into parishes/villages/towns.

Developers are filing planning applications which are far in excess of those published, adopted allocations (sometimes demanding release of the green belt), and which are unsustainable, due to poor infrastructure. The developer contributions will not fund all the required roads and services, so the tax payer will have to pay or go without. These developments will put immense strain on local roads, services and jobs. We understand the concept of providing affordable and local homes for local people, which can be provided by minimal infill development. We call upon Surrey County Council and local MPs to lobby parliament to call a halt to this madness.'

Submitted by Mrs Diane Doney

Signatures: 450

### Response

I would like to thank Mrs Doney and all those who signed the petition for bringing the concerns of residents to the attention of the Council.

Firstly, I should point out that the allocation of housing in local plans and the determination of planning applications for housing development are entirely the responsibility of each borough and district in Surrey as local planning authority and the Council has no control over the process. The Council is, however, a key provider of infrastructure and services such as roads and schools and the Local Highway Authority. In this capacity, it is consulted on development proposals and has a legal Duty to Cooperate with the boroughs and districts as they prepare Local Plans. This includes the provision of infrastructure to meet the needs of new development and the Council shares residents concerns over how this infrastructure is to be funded.

#### Government Policy

The Localism Act 2011 gave boroughs and districts responsibility for determining the level of new housing in their area and its location following the abolition of the regional tier of government, which formerly set the targets for housing through regional strategies. This system no longer applies, but many of the adopted Local Plans (or Core Strategies) in Surrey have as their housing requirement the target that was set out in the South East Plan.

Government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) now requires the number of houses in Local Plans to be based on an objective assessment of housing need for the local housing market area and local authorities should plan positively to meet this

need. Meeting housing needs is fundamental to government policies to support economic growth and to address the current shortfall in housing provision. In Surrey, these 'objectively assessed needs' are higher than the housing requirements that were established through the South East Plan. Central to the NPPF, however, is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and local planning authorities should take account of local circumstances, particularly environmental constraints and the Green Belt, in striving to meet their assessed housing needs. They are also required to have a five year supply of available land for housing development at any one time.

#### Council's Position

In line with Government guidance, the Council supports a plan led system where the scale and location of growth to meet needs is set through Local Plans in consultation with local communities and other key stakeholders.

The Council is concerned about the environmental impacts of development and on 19 March 2013 resolved:

1. To use its power to protect Surrey's Green Belt.
2. To support the National Planning Policy Framework (section 9 – paragraphs 79 to 92) and the Government's policy of protecting the Green Belt.
3. To make Surrey's MPs and the County's Districts and Boroughs aware of this resolution.
4. That any Green Belt development in the County is in line with the needs and wishes of Surrey residents.

Nonetheless, economic growth is a key priority for Surrey and the Council recognises that this needs to be supported by some housing growth and, in line with the NPPF, it is important that development is sustainable and supported by the right infrastructure. Therefore, the Council is working with boroughs and districts to draw up Infrastructure Delivery Plans to support their Local Plans and to ensure that they can secure contributions from developers towards the cost of providing infrastructure to avoid these costs being borne by local residents through increases in council tax. However, I agree with you that developer contributions will not fund all the infrastructure required to support new development in Surrey.

Therefore, the Council is working in partnership with the boroughs and districts to secure funding for strategic infrastructure from the Local Economic Partnerships and from central government and has been actively lobbying Government on a regular basis for additional infrastructure investment in Surrey. For example, the Leader and Chief Executive have met with the Secretary of State for Transport to press Surrey's case for investment to help deliver strategic transport priorities including improvements to the A3, the North Downs Line orbital rail route that links Reading and Redhill and access to Heathrow and Gatwick Airports. The Council has successfully lobbied Government to retain the New Homes Bonus to help deliver infrastructure and is currently making the case at national level for more funding to meet future needs for school places in Surrey. The Leader has also called for a new cabinet minister for infrastructure to be appointed before any decision is made on expanding Heathrow and Gatwick to coordinate investment now in road, rail, healthcare and schools.

I can assure you that the Council will continue to take every opportunity to raise these issues and lobby Government to address residents' concerns.

**Mr Mike Goodman**

**Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning**

**8 October 2014**