

Speech by Amanda Mullarkey 21.2.2024 at Extraordinary Council Meeting on recommendation to update the GBC Local Plan

We'll need to review our Plan. We don't want to be caught without a 5 year housing supply based on the new formula.

But we ask you to **plan the timetable wisely and to get some crucial things in place UPFRONT.** Without making progress on these things first, we'll be utterly vulnerable in a plan review, to overdevelopment, development without infrastructure, and to release of more greenfield sites.

To inform and influence the plan review, as part of the timetable, we need to fast track:

1 **A heights SPD** to sit alongside a heights policy for the plan. The SPD would inform site allocations for brownfield sites in the new Plan, allow a plan led approach and avoid excessive allocations for brownfield sites driving up heights.

2 **Development briefs for major brownfield town centre sites** linked to flood risk management and sustainable transport plans. We don't want to be caught in the same position as last time, with brownfield sites being discounted as not ready to deliver and developers pitching for a host of greenfield sites. Site briefs would make brownfield proposals credible and avoid housing figures for sites that bear no relationship to how a site can be developed.

3 CIL We still don't have a **CIL Plan** to channel developer contributions from the current plan! We can't afford to miss out that important part of the previous Plan cycle. We need effective means to secure developer contributions to infrastructure. Not only do we have no A3 improvements, we have no sustainable movement corridor.

Putting these 3 things in place will help to mitigate some of the big challenges a plan review will trigger:

Eg **Gaming of the system by developers** who will have an incentive to talk down delivery of existing allocated sites in order to negotiate new, supposedly deliverable sites as happened in the run up to the last Plan. (Remember how the university took campus development off the table to boost the need for other sites. Remember the clamour for developers to add all their speculatively held sites scattered across the borough arguing strategic sites would be slow.)

Eg **Woking's unmet need** – a glaring omission in your report. Last time we had to provide homes for Woking's unmet need under the duty to cooperate. This time, Woking's housing shortfall figure could be eye watering. We'll need excellent data on our constraints and on deliverable strategies for sustainable development of brownfield sites. Otherwise, we'll be asked to look for many more unsustainable greenfield sites again.

In sum, we need a heights SPD, brownfield site briefs and CIL in place to ensure this plan review avoids overdevelopment, development without infrastructure and further green belt release.