



Newsletter 19 May 2017

We have just received this from Elmbridge Borough Council (see below); whilst it is early days, it is a move in the right direction. We shall be considering the implications and keep you informed.

With best wishes

Gerry

Chairman, Cobham Green Belt

Acher

Statement of Progress on the New Local Plan

We would like to thank all those who responded to the Strategic Options consultation on the Local Plan undertaken earlier this year. The Council has received about 3,800 responses which generated around 50,000 individual comments.

In the meantime, the Council has responded to the Government consultation on the Housing White Paper- Fixing our Broken Housing Market (HWP). The response is on the Council website. The Government also announced that it will be consulting on a standardised approach to assessing housing need but, unfortunately, this consultation will now not take place until after the elections on June 8. As such the Council can no longer rely on the housing need it assessed through its Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SHMA). The Council is also uncertain as to the impact of all the consultation responses received by the Government to the HWP consultation.

For both these reasons, the Council considers it to be premature to progress work on the Local Plan until such a time as the Government makes all the necessary information available to resume work on the Local Plan.

The Council will, however, publish a report on the issues raised in response to the Strategic Options consultation as soon as it is able to do so. Given that the consultation was extended by two weeks, the large volume of comments, and to ensure that all comments and issues raised by all the respondents are fully considered, it has not been possible to adhere to the timetable for the Local Plan. As mentioned above, the general election and delays to Government policy have further delayed work on the Local Plan. Once there is some indication of the standardised methodology for assessing housing need the Council will issue a revised timetable.

We fully understand residents' concerns over the amount of housing that the Government requires the Council to provide and the impact this might have on the Borough. Indeed, the Council shares those concerns. None of the Members of the Council want to give up any areas of the Borough's Green Belt to development and will consider all options in order to protect it. However, in order to produce any Local Plan, the Council needs to follow due process, without which it lays itself open to challenges. It is with that in mind that all three leaders of the political parties at Elmbridge Council wrote to the Right Honourable Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to seek clarification on a number of matters relating to the Local Plan. That letter, together with the response received, are on the Council website at www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/local-plan.

We do assure residents that we will continue to listen to the comments received on the consultation and do our best to act in the best interests of the residents of the Borough.

Ends

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