



NEWS RELEASE

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WAVERLEY HOUSING NEED TARGET OVERSTATED BY 29% OR 2,500 HOUSES

A new report commissioned by the Surrey Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) shows that the housing target of 590 houses per annum, 11,210 homes over the life of the emerging Local Plan to 2032, which is expected to be imposed on Waverley Borough Council as a result of the recent Planning Inspector's Examination-in-Public, is overstated by at least 29%, equivalent to a total of 2,500 houses.

The conclusions of the McDonald Report, based on a comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the relevant factors, are that the principal reasons for this significant over-statement are:

1. The assessment of Woking's unmet need, half of which the Inspector wishes to impose on Waverley, is unsound, being based on a mixture of out of date information and uncertain assumptions. The Report notes that the assessment is derived from an untested estimate of the Woking Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) put forward in representations to the Inspector made on behalf of developers. Reassessment of Woking's housing need, in the context of the West Surrey Housing Market Area, of which Woking, Guildford and Waverley are all part, is now due. In the meantime, there is no reliable basis to reach any conclusion on the quantum of Woking's unmet need nor to impose any of it on Waverley. The report recommends that 83 houses per annum – 1,577 homes in all – should be deducted from the Inspector's housing target for Waverley.

2. The Inspector's 25% uplift over Waverley's agreed demographic housing requirement of 396 homes per annum (to improve affordability for market housing) is arbitrary, unsound and severe, says the report. It adds 99 homes per annum – a total of 1881 homes – to Waverley's housing target. The report concludes that an evidence-based affordability adjustment would not be more than be 13%, which would add 50 homes per annum, or 950 homes during the Plan period. This would further reduce by 931 homes the Inspector's assessment of Waverley's housing requirement.

These two important adjustments would reduce the Inspector's housing requirement for Waverley by 2,508 homes to a total of 8,702 over the Plan period, removing the 29% over-statement.

Anthony Isaacs, Chairman of CPRE Surrey's local Waverley committee, said: "The impact of these changes would be of fundamental importance during the life of the Plan period. They would contribute to Waverley's new Plan being declared 'sound' and would help to ensure that throughout the Plan period the Borough would be able to control development under its own sound plan rather than one under threat of excessive housing numbers rendering the plan out of date for lack of a 5-year housing supply."

These findings are being presented to the Waverley Consultation on the Local Plan changes, which expires on 20 October, and also to the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government.

Mr Isaacs continued: "In addition to the McDonald Report findings CPRE's understanding of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is that Waverley's housing numbers, when arrived at, must be considered in the light of the Green Belt and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) constraints. The Green Belt comprises 62% of the land in the Borough, and the AONB (including some Green Belt) and Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) together comprise 77% of the land. As the emerging Local Plan has already allocated areas of Green Belt and AONB to meet housing needs, which we believe is in itself wrong, the higher targets coming from the Inspector will only lead to further erosion of those statutorily protected areas".

-ENDS

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