

Let's stand up for the Green Belt: Briefing on the DMP consultation

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council is consulting on its draft Development Management Plan. This Plan outlines where development should go, what kind of standards it should meet, and which areas should be protected – until 2027 and beyond.

The Plan covers a wide range of issues. We are particularly concerned about four:

- Proposed 'urban extensions' into the Green Belt
- Affordable homes for local people
- Identifying sites where homes can be built
- Redhill town centre

These are expanded below.

We urge everyone to respond to give the Council your views. And please encourage your friends and neighbours to respond too. **Responses must be submitted by 5pm on Friday 23 February 2018.**

Here are some points you might like to cover:

Proposed 'urban extensions' into the Green Belt

The Plan proposes removing Green Belt protection from land next to Redhill, Reigate and Merstham, to create 'urban extensions' with 1,005 homes. Green Belt serves important functions and we believe it should be off limits for development.

East of Redhill (see the Area Fact Sheet for Redhill accessible via www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/dmp)

- Copyhold and the field next to it (known as the Paddock or Sheep Field) are presented as one site, proposed for approx 210 homes and a new primary school and/or other community facilities. Copyhold is a brownfield site but if it is accepted for development, the field will go too. These sites are a 'biodiversity opportunity area', one of around 50 across Surrey.
- Hillsbrow (south of the A25) is ancient woodland and the area that was quarried was meant to be restored to woodland habitat. It is proposed for approx 100 new homes
- Both these sites are on the Greensand Ridge, a prominent landscape feature. Development on these sites would be very visible in views from the north and south.
- Hillsbrow is an unsustainable location for transport because it is at the top of the hill.
- Development of these sites would increase traffic congestion on the A25 east of and into Redhill.

South West of Reigate (see the Area Fact Sheet for South Park & Woodhatch)

- Four sites off Sandcross Lane and Dovers Green Road are proposed for a total of 395 new homes, shops and healthcare facilities.
- This area has poor public transport links and is a long walk from Reigate town centre/station, making it a less sustainable location.

Redhill Aerodrome (see the Area Fact Sheet for Earlswood, Meadvale & Salfords)

The Plan wants to 'safeguard' land between Redhill Aerodrome, East Surrey Hospital and Salfords for a new 'garden village' after 2027. Joined with land in Tandridge, this area could see a huge new settlement of up to 8,000 homes.

- This would join Whitebushes, Salfords and South Nutfield together. The purposes of Green Belt include 'to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas' and 'to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another'. Developing this site would do exactly what Green Belt is meant to stop.
- This site has a lack of sustainable infrastructure. It would create a settlement nearly the size of Redhill with no rail link.
- The proposed new link road from the M23 to the A23 would increase congestion and pollution. The existing roads (including under the railway arch on Three Arch Road) couldn't cope with the increase in traffic.
- The building of housing on the Green Belt should not justify building a new A23-M23 link road and vice versa.
- The Tandridge part of the aerodrome is not proposed for development until after 2033. The Reigate and Banstead part should not be developed earlier.

Horley Business Park (see the Area Fact Sheet for Horley)

- We should not use the rural surrounds of Horley to create jobs. There is no shortage of space within industrial sites around Gatwick and there are other locations which could be used for corporate headquarters.
- This appears to be driven by business interests rather than local need.
- See the Keep Horley Green campaign for more information
www.facebook.com/KeepHorleyGreen/

Affordable homes for local people

There is a serious lack of affordable housing in our area. The average house price here is around 14 times average earnings.

- Affordable housing should be in the town centres, which are sustainable locations for infrastructure, not in the countryside or on the urban fringes.
- The Plan proposes providing affordable homes on the back of developers building more homes for higher-income households. This approach (with 'affordability' defined as 80% of market rent) is not providing homes that are genuinely affordable and that meet local need.
- The proposals are based on developers' wishes to build larger houses for the open market rather than affordable housing such as homes for social rent.

Identifying other sites where homes can be built

The Council has set a target of 460 new homes a year, and this target was approved by a government inspector (the local Green Party and others argued unsuccessfully for a lower target at the earlier 'core strategy' stage – and now the Government wants councils to set even higher housing targets).

The local Green Party suggested extra sites in the urban area where houses could be built instead of in the countryside (see www.redhillgreens.org.uk/brownfield-site-review). The Council appears not to have considered all of these. We also suggested increased density on urban sites.

If you have suggestions where housing could go, please send them to the Council. Some ideas include:

- Sites which are *already* being promoted for housing development, including: the gasworks site in Earlswood; the TA Centre on Batts Hill; the area north of Brook Road; and the youth centre site on Marketfield Way (proposed for re-provision of youth centre with flats above).
- Sites which are not yet being considered for housing, including: above the Family Centre on Station Road, Redhill (a single storey building next to flats near the town centre); on Donyings car park (making the car park multi-storey).
- Increased density of housing on sites already identified for housing, such as the Redhill Station car park (now that Waitrose is no longer interested in building a store in Redhill) and other sites near our town centres.
- New homes in town centre sites (eg, above shops).

Redhill Town Centre

- We believe there should be a Design Standard to guide the development of town centres.
- There should be rules to avoid over-provision of tall buildings in town centres, to avoid the ‘Croydonisation’ of Redhill. The ‘Tall Buildings Policy’ has been removed in latest version of the Plan.

How to have your say

You can see the draft Plan (the Regulation 19 publication document) and supporting documents at www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/dmp

You can also view the documents at the Town Hall in Reigate and libraries across the Borough.

You can send in your views in several ways:

- email LDF@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
- download a form or take an online survey at www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/dmp
- write to: Planning Policy, Town Hall, Castlefield Road, Reigate RH2 0SH

Cllr Jonathan Essex and East Surrey Green Party are writing a detailed response which will be available at www.redhillgreens.org.uk by 17 February 2018.