

Guildford Borough Council

Local Plan 2003 strategic policies assessment

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to identify the policies in the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 that are strategic. This is done for the benefit of qualifying bodies (neighbourhood planning bodies) that are producing neighbourhood plans and/or Neighbourhood Development Orders.

2. Background

Neighbourhood planning

Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011. This act allows qualifying bodies (parish or town councils, or neighbourhood forums in areas without parish or town councils) to produce neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders. Neighbourhood plans allow communities to set planning policies for their area. Neighbourhood Development Orders allow communities to grant up-front planning permission for developments they want or need.

Neighbourhood plans and orders are tested against a series of 'basic conditions' through examination. One of the basic conditions that they must meet is to be in general conformity with the strategic policies within the adopted Local Plan. Outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan, neighbourhood plans and Orders can plan positively to support local development by shaping and directing development in their area. Therefore, it is important that neighbourhood planning groups and bodies can identify which policies are strategic.

Local plan and development plan

The Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 is the currently adopted local plan. This plan was produced under a planning system where strategic policies were provided by other, higher-level plans. The strategic policies for Guildford borough's development plan were originally contained within the Surrey Structure Plan, and later the South East Plan. Both these strategic plans are now revoked, though two policies of the South East Plan are saved and remain in force. The saved South East Plan policy that has relevance for Guildford borough is policy NRM6¹, which deals with protection of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

¹ Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan can be found in Appendix 4 of the background paper appended to the [Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy](#).

The Local Plan 2003 was reviewed in 2007. The majority of the Local Plan's policies were saved at this point and remain in force. The saved policies can be found online at <http://www.guildford.gov.uk/localplan>.

Guildford Borough Council is currently working on a new Local Plan. Groups and bodies undertaking neighbourhood planning activities should also consider emerging strategic policies when drawing up neighbourhood plans and orders.

Assessment method

The [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) (NPPG, neighbourhood planning, paragraph 75) states that strategic policies are not necessarily those labelled as such. Strategic policies are those that address the big picture rather than dealing with detailed matters. They may cover things like the spatial pattern of development, protection of valued assets of borough wide significance and issues that affect the whole borough.

The NPPG (Neighbourhood Planning, paragraph 77) suggests the following considerations when deciding which policies are strategic:

- whether the policy sets out an overarching direction or objective
- whether the policy seeks to shape the broad characteristics of development
- the scale at which the policy is intended to operate
- whether the policy sets a framework for decisions on how competing priorities should be balanced
- whether the policy sets a standard or other requirement that is essential to achieving the wider vision and aspirations in the Local Plan
- in the case of site allocations, whether bringing the site forward is central to achieving the vision and aspirations of the Local Plan
- whether the Local Plan identifies the policy as being strategic.

We have assessed the saved policies of the Local Plan 2003 using the above criteria. In some cases we have found that policies are strategic, and in some cases have found that parts of policies are strategic. Policies may be partly strategic because the policy sets out an overarching objective or shapes the broad characteristics of development, but then goes further to provide detailed criteria. In these cases, neighbourhood plans and orders should be in general conformity with the overall aims of the policy, but may be able to introduce new criteria to suit local circumstances.

Where a policy (or part of a policy) is not identified as strategic, it does not mean that it does not carry weight in planning decisions.

3. Strategic policies of the Local Plan 2003

The list of policies (and parts of policies) that are strategic can be seen in **Appendix 1**. Saved policy NRM6 of the South East Plan is also strategic.

Appendix 1	Part of policy that IS strategic	Part of policy that is NOT strategic (empty cell indicates policy is wholly strategic)
G1 (6) FLOOD PROTECTION	Areas of floodplain, identified on the Proposals Map, are safeguarded from development that would increase the risk to people or property from flooding.	
G5 (6) IMPORTANT PUBLIC VIEWS AND ROOFSCAPE	Important public views are protected	opportunities to create attractive new views and vistas are provided and encouraged
G6 PLANNING BENEFITS	Where necessary to the grant of planning permission and in order to meet a planning need arising from a proposed development the Borough Council will seek from developers the provision of suitable planning benefits.	
G11 THE CORRIDOR OF THE RIVER WEY AND THE GUILDFORD AND GODALMING NAVIGATIONS	<p>Development within the corridor, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be permitted provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It protects or improves the special character of the River Wey and the Guildford and Godalming Navigations, in particular their visual, setting, amenities, ecological value, architectural and historic interest; 2. The special character of the landscape and townscape in the corridor is protected or improved; 3. Views both within and from the corridor which contribute to this special character are protected or improved; 4. Where appropriate, public access is provided to and along the River and the Navigations. 5. The Nature Conservation value of the site is protected or improved. 	
G12 LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT	Development generating significant numbers of trips will only be allowed in locations highly accessible by public transport (including park and ride) and served by existing cycle and pedestrian routes. Planning permission will only be granted for this form of development in other locations where adequate provision exists or has been made for improvements to public transport services (including park and ride) and improved access for cyclists and pedestrians.	

H4 HOUSING IN URBAN AREAS	<p>Planning permission will be granted for residential development in the urban areas of Guildford and Ash and Tongham provided that the development:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is in scale and character with the area; 2. Has no unacceptable effect on the amenities enjoyed by the occupants of buildings in terms of privacy and access to sunlight and daylight; 3. Has no unacceptable effect on the existing context and character of the adjacent buildings and immediate surroundings.
H5 RETENTION OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK	<p>Development involving a net loss of residential accommodation will not be permitted.</p> <p>Development involving the net loss of specialised types of housing accommodation (including hostels, elderly persons' housing, residential institutions and residential mobile homes) will not be permitted.</p>	
H11 AFFORDABLE HOUSING	<p>An element of affordable housing will be sought by negotiation with developers of all housing developments of 15 or more dwellings, or residential sites of 0.5ha or more irrespective of the number of dwellings. In settlements in rural areas with a population of 3,000 or fewer a threshold of 10 or more dwellings, or residential sites of 0.4ha or more irrespective of the number of dwellings, will be applied.</p> <p>At least 30% of the housing on the Bright Hill car park site should be affordable housing.</p> <p>At least 30% will also be sought on any unidentified sites in excess of the above thresholds which may come forward during the plan period.</p> <p>The final number of units to be provided may vary with regard to site suitability, the need for affordable housing, and any other material planning or marketing considerations.</p> <p>The Council will require secure arrangements to be made to ensure that the benefit of affordable housing will be enjoyed by successive as well as by initial occupiers of the property.</p> <p>The affordable housing provided should be dispersed in the scheme rather than concentrated in one place.</p> <p>Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of any affordable housing which has been negotiated.</p>	

<p>H13 GYPSY CARAVAN SITES</p>	<p>Proposals for Gypsy Caravan sites will be permitted provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development would not conflict with policies for the Green Belt, the Countryside beyond the Green Belt and other policies for the protection of designated areas; ... 4. The site is within reasonable distance of local services and facilities e.g. shops, hospitals, schools and public transport; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The development is for the stationing of gypsy caravans for recognised gypsy families at an appropriate scale of provision for settled occupation or as temporary or transit stopping places; 3. The site only provides residential accommodation and ancillary facilities, except when the particular circumstances of the site enable business use to be accommodated satisfactorily in terms of noise, safety, traffic movements and visual intrusion; ... 5. The development would not have a significant adverse impact on the environment or character of the locality, including impact on the water environment, pollution, areas subject to flooding risk, high grade land, agricultural businesses, and the amenities of neighbouring properties arising from vehicular movements or activities on the site; 6. The development can be made compatible with the character and appearance of the surrounding area through appropriate landscaping and screening which can be subject to a planning condition or obligation over long term maintenance. <p>Planning conditions may be imposed limiting the parts of site which may be used for residential or other purposes where this is justified in terms of visual and other amenities.</p>
<p>H14 SITES FOR TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE</p>	<p>Permanent sites for travelling showpeople will be permitted provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development would not conflict with policies for the Green Belt, the Countryside beyond the Green Belt and other policies for the protection of designated areas; ... 4. The site is within reasonable distance of local services and facilities e.g. shops, hospitals, schools and public transport. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The development would not have an unacceptable environmental impact on the locality including nuisance to neighbours from vehicular movement, the maintenance and testing of equipment and other activities; 3. The development can be made compatible with the character and appearance of the surrounding area through appropriate landscaping and screening which can be subject to a planning condition or obligation over long term maintenance;

<p>E3 SAFEGUARDING EXISTING AND ALLOCATED BUSINESS, INDUSTRIAL AND WAREHOUSING LAND</p>	<p>The loss of business, industrial and warehousing premises to non-employment uses will not be permitted unless:</p>	<p>1. The retention of the land or premises has been explored fully without success; or</p> <p>2. The land or premises are unsuitably located in terms of its impact on the environment, levels of traffic movement, its accessibility to public transport and its link with the infrastructure, and its impact on the amenity of the area or adjoining occupiers;</p> <p>And there is existing suitably located land or premises either on the market or with outstanding planning permission, for any displaced firms.</p>
<p>M3 PARK AND RIDE SITES</p>	<p>The Council will grant planning permission for park and ride sites provided that the following criteria are met:</p>	<p>1. Highway access, parking, turning and any increased traffic movements can be accommodated satisfactorily;</p> <p>2. The proposed development including any ancillary buildings, peripheral fencing and lighting, would not detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area;</p> <p>3. The amenities of occupiers of existing buildings are protected;</p> <p>4. The provision of adequate landscaping;</p> <p>5. Existing natural features are safeguarded and enhanced;</p> <p>6. The provision of cycling facilities and visitor coach parking facilities.</p>
<p>M4 PROVISION FOR BUSES</p>	<p>Major new development shall be designed to allow access and, where appropriate, give priority to bus services.</p>	
<p>M5 RAIL NETWORK AND INTERCHANGE FACILITIES</p>	<p>The Borough Council will support and where necessary grant planning permission for improvements to the railway infrastructure, including the provision of new railway stations and interchange facilities.</p>	
<p>M6 PROVISION FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS</p>	<p>The Proposals Map shows specific routes along which the council will undertake or promote measures to encourage cycling, including improvements to the safety and convenience of the routes, the designation of cycle lanes, signposting and the provision of cycle parking facilities.</p> <p>Major travel generating development, including residential developments,</p>	

	<p>will be expected to make provision for cyclists and link with existing and planned routes. All new developments will be expected to make provision for cycle parking in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 1.</p> <p>Major new development will not be permitted where it interrupts established or proposed cycle routes Permission will not be granted that would prejudice established or proposed pedestrian routes or pedestrian priority schemes.</p>	
M8 GUILDFORD TO CRANLEIGH MOVEMENT CORRIDOR	The route of the former Guildford to Cranleigh railway line, shown on the Proposal Map, will be protected from development in view of its importance as a movement corridor.	
S2 ADDITIONAL RETAIL DEVELOPMENT IN GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE	Planning permission will be granted for retail development in Guildford town centre where no more than 2,500 sqm of additional gross floor area is provided.	Developments over 2,500 sqm will only be approved if they satisfy the criteria of Policy S1 and other policies within the Plan.
S4 GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA	Within the prime shopping area as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for the change of use of existing shops (Class A1) to other uses will not be permitted.	
S5 GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE SECONDARY SHOPPING AREAS	Within the secondary shopping areas of Guildford Town Centre, as defined on the Proposals Map, planning permission for the change of use from shops (Class A1) to financial and professional services (Class A2) and food and drink premises (Class A3) will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The additional use results in no more than two permitted non-retail uses adjacent to each other; 2. The additional use results in no more than a guideline figure of one third of the sum total of the defined street level frontage (as defined in Appendix 2) in permitted non-Class A1 use; 3. The use does not result in loss of amenity in terms of noise, disturbance, smell, litter or traffic generation; and 4. The proposed use will not be detrimental to the shopping pattern or character of the Town Centre.
S6 GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE TERTIARY SHOPPING AREAS	Within the tertiary shopping areas of Guildford Town Centre, as defined on the proposals map, planning permission for the change of use from shops (Class A1) to financial and professional services (Class A2) and food and drink premises (Class A3) will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The additional use results in no more than three permitted non-retail uses adjacent to each other; 2. The additional use results in no more than a guideline figure of two thirds of the identified ground floor tertiary frontage (as defined in Appendix 2) in permitted non-Class

	<p>...</p> <p>Exceptionally loss of shopping area uses (Class A) at ground floor level will be permitted where replacement uses are appropriate to a shopping frontage.</p>	<p>A1 uses;</p> <p>3. The use does not result in loss of amenity in terms of noise, disturbance, smell, litter or traffic generation, and</p> <p>4. The proposal does not result in a continuous non-Class A1 frontage exceeding 20 metres</p>
S7 GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE SPECIALIST SHOPPING AREAS	<p>Within the specialist shopping areas as defined on the Proposals Map, applications for changes of use to food and drink uses (Class A3) will be permitted provided that the proposed use does not result in the loss of amenity in terms of noise, disturbance, smell, litter or traffic generation. Applications for the change of use to financial and professional services (Class A2) will not be permitted.</p> <p>Exceptionally loss of shopping area uses (Class A) will be permitted where replacement uses are appropriate to a shopping frontage.</p>	
S8 DISTRICT SHOPPING CENTRES	<p>The following District Shopping Centres have been identified and are shown on the Proposals Map:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Station Parade, East Horsley 2. Wharf Road, Ash <p>Within District Shopping Centres planning permission will be granted for limited increases in shopping (Class A1) floorspace where they are consistent with the scale and function of the district centre as a whole.</p> <p>Planning permission for the change of use from shops (Class A1) to financial and professional services (Class A2) and/or food and drink (Class A3) will only be permitted if the following criteria are met:</p> <p>...</p> <p>Exceptionally loss of shopping area uses (Class A) at ground level will be permitted where the replacement uses are appropriate to a shopping frontage.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal results in no more than two permitted non-retail uses adjacent to each other; 2. The proposal results in no more than a guideline figure of one-third of the sum total defined street level frontage in permitted non-retail uses; 3. The proposal will not result in loss of amenity in terms of noise, smell, litter or traffic generation; 4. The proposal will not prejudice the character and appearance of the district centre and its immediate environment.
S9 LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRES	<p>Local Shopping Centres are identified as follows, as shown on the Proposals Map: Aldershot Road, Westborough; Ash Vale Parade; Collingwood Crescent, Boxgrove; London Road, Burpham (Kingpost Parade); Epsom Road, Merrow; Kingfisher Drive, Merrow; Madrid Road, Guildford Park; Southway, Park Barn; Stoughton Road, Bellfields; The</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal will not result in a concentration of such uses that would be harmful to the Local Shopping Centre's vitality and viability; 2. The proposal will not result in loss of amenity in terms of

	<p>Square, Onslow Village; Woodbridge Hill, Guildford; Woodbridge Road, Guildford; Manor Road, Stoughton; Worplesdon Road, Stoughton; Bishopsmead Parade, East Horsley; Effingham; Fairlands; Ripley; Send; Shalford; Shere; The Street, Tongham.</p> <p>Within Local Shopping Centres planning permission for increases in retail floorspace will be granted where they are consistent with the scale and function of the local centre.</p> <p>Proposals involving the change of use of a shop (Class A1) to use for financial and professional services (Class A2) and/or food and drink (Class A3) will only be permitted where the following criteria have been met:</p> <p>...</p> <p>Exceptionally loss of shopping area uses (Class A) at ground floor level will be permitted where the replacement uses are themselves appropriate to a shopping frontage.</p>	<p>noise, smell, litter or traffic generation;</p> <p>3. The proposal will not prejudice the character and appearance of the local centre and its immediate environment.</p>
<p>RE1 EXTENT OF THE GREEN BELT</p>	<p>There will be a Green Belt covering the entire borough with the exception of Guildford urban area, Ash and Tongham and land to the south and east of Ash and Tongham, as shown on the Proposals Map.</p>	
<p>RE2 DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT</p>	<p>Within the Metropolitan Green Belt, as shown on the Proposals Map, new building will be deemed inappropriate unless it is for the following purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture and forestry; 2. Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, cemeteries and other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it; 3. Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings providing it is in accordance with Policies H6 and H9; 4. Infilling in villages to the extent specified in Policy RE3; 5. Affordable housing for local needs in accordance with Policy H12. 6. Re-use and adaptation of rural buildings in accordance with Policies RE9 and RE10. 	

<p>RE3 IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS IN THE GREEN BELT</p>	<p>The following settlements in the Green Belt are identified with their boundaries shown on the Proposals Map: Albury, Chilworth, Compton, East Horsley, Effingham, Fairlands, Flexford, Gomshall, Holmbury St. Mary, Jacobswell, Normandy, Peaslake, Pirbright, Puttenham, Ripley, Send, Send Marsh/Burnt Common, Shalford, Shere, West Clandon, West Horsley (North), West Horsley (South), Wood Street, Worplesdon.</p> <p>Within these settlement boundaries new building will be permitted in the nature of infilling on land substantially surrounded by existing development for the developments referred to in Policy RE2 and the following purposes:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built up frontage of appropriate scale and design; 2. Small scale housing developments appropriate to the scale of the locality; 3. Community or employment facilities appropriate to the scale of the settlement. <p>The above will not be permitted where it involves the loss of important open spaces, harms the character or appearance of the area or where necessary services are inadequate.</p>	
<p>RE4 COUNTRYSIDE BEYOND THE GREEN BELT</p>	<p>Development in the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt will be resisted except for that related to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture and forestry; 2. The reasonable expansion of existing employment uses to diversify the rural economy; 3. Outdoor sport and recreational uses; 4. Uses of land which preserve the openness of the countryside; <p>And the following criteria are met:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Built development is strictly controlled to that reasonably needed for the use to operate; 2. Agriculture and forestry interests are protected; 3. New buildings or extensions are located and designed to minimise their impact on the environment, are satisfactorily screened, landscaped and are constructed of external materials appropriate to the rural setting; 4. The development as a whole will not be of a size and scale that would detract from the character of the rural landscape. 5. Affordable housing for local needs in accordance with Policy H12 6. The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings in accordance with Policies RE9 and RE10.

RE5 AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)	<p>The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as defined on the Proposals Map, is of national importance and will be subject to the most rigorous protection. Development inconsistent with the primary aim of conserving the existing landscape character will not be permitted.</p> <p>Small scale development for agriculture, forestry or outdoor recreation as well as that in support of services for the local community will normally be acceptable provided the proposals conserve the natural beauty of the landscape. Important views to and from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be retained.</p>	
RE6 AREA OF GREAT LANDSCAPE VALUE (AGLV)	Development within the Area of Great Landscape Value, defined on the Proposals Map, should be consistent with the intention of protecting the distinctive landscape character of the area.	
NE1 POTENTIAL SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (PSPA) AND CANDIDATE SAC	Planning permission will not be granted for proposals which are likely to destroy or have an adverse effect directly or indirectly on the nature conservation value of potential Special Protection Areas (pSPA) and candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC), as shown on the Proposals Map.	
NE2 SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST	Development which would harm Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as identified on the Proposals Map will not be permitted unless the reasons for development clearly outweigh the intrinsic value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the nature conservation value of such sites.	
NE3 LOCAL AND NON-STATUTORY SITES	Planning permission will not be granted for proposals which are likely to materially harm the Nature Conservation Interest, directly or indirectly, local or non-statutory sites, including Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) as identified on the Proposals Map, unless clear justification is provided that the reasons for the development outweigh the value of the site in its local or regional context.	
NE4 SPECIES PROTECTION	Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would be liable to cause any demonstrable harm to a species of animal or plant or its habitat, protected under British law unless conditions are attached requiring the developer to take steps to secure their protection.	

<p>R1 LOSS OF LAND AND FACILITIES FOR SPORT AND RECREATION</p>	<p>The Borough Council will resist the loss of land and buildings used for recreation purposes or with the potential for recreational use unless:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A suitable alternative is provided nearby; 2. There is an excess of recreation land and buildings in the area; and 3. Sports and recreation facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site. 	
<p>R5 PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE</p>	<p>Proposals for development on open space will only be allowed if there is no material harm to the character and visual amenity; and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed development is ancillary to the open use of the site; or 2. The proposed development enhances the recreational value of the site; or 3. Where equivalent provision is made nearby; or 4. Where there will continue to be adequate open space in the locality; or 5. In the case of school playing fields, the proposed new development meets a legitimate educational need that is appropriately met on the site. <p>Open spaces within the urban area of over 0.4 ha (1 acre) are identified on the Proposals Map.</p>	
<p>R11 BLACKWATER VALLEY</p>	<p>The Blackwater Valley strategic open gap as shown on the proposals map will be maintained in order to prevent the coalescence of the settlements in the valley. Development will only be permitted which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserves the strategic open gap; 2. Promotes open air recreation as the prime land use activity or increases the amount of public open space; 3. Improves accessibility to the riverside, open space within the Blackwater Valley or countryside beyond; 4. Enhances the landscape; and 5. Protects and enhances the ecology of the area. <p>Built development will not be permitted unless it is ancillary to recreation, agriculture or forestry uses. Suitable redevelopment of an established use</p>	

	may be permitted provided there is no material intensification of the use.	
T2 SAFEGUARDING ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES	Proposals which result in the loss of arts and entertainment facilities will be resisted unless equivalent facilities are first made elsewhere or where it can be demonstrated that:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The retention of a facility has been fully explored without success; or 2. The site is unsuitably located in terms of traffic impact, noise or other adverse effects causing detriment to the amenity of the area or adjoining occupiers.
CF1 PROVISION OF NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES	Planning permission will be granted for the development, expansion or change of use of premises for community facilities in urban areas or identified settlements provided that:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed use would not detract from the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area; 2. The site is accessible, or can be made accessible, by public transport, on foot and by bicycle; 3. The proposed use would not prejudice the amenities of the occupiers of adjoining properties.