



The following letter was sent to Claire Upton Brown, Director for Planning, Guildford Borough Council, on 21/08/2026.

Dear Clare,

Re: Guildford Green Belt Assessment 2026

West Horsley Parish Council's Planning Committee has reviewed the Guildford Green Belt Assessment 2026 and in preparing for that discussion, read the published proforma for each of the 115 assessment areas covering West Horsley and the seven neighbouring parishes.

That review has raised eight questions about the methodology and the supporting material which are set out below. These questions are asked as a constructive contribution to the Local Plan evidence base. West Horsley Parish Council is not, at this stage, objecting to the assessment of any particular area.

1. Publish the site visit record. Does an area level log of the January 2026 site visits exist, and which of the 115 areas in these eight parishes were included? If a log exists, will the Council publish it alongside the assessment?

2. Publish the gap share measurements. Can the underlying measurement of each area's share of the relevant strategic gap be published, so that the distinction between "very small", "small", "relatively small" and "relatively substantial" can be checked? Why do 109 of 115 areas across eight parishes fall on the same side of the Weak and Moderate line?

3. Explain the heritage approach. Where an area is provisionally grey belt solely because a heritage designation covers less than 95 per cent of it, has any assessment been made of harm to the setting of that asset, which is the statutory test the Council itself applied when refusing the Effingham scheme in July 2026?

4. State the cumulative constraint threshold. EH-001 in East Horsley was excluded on the basis of a "combination and spread of multiple Footnote 7 constraints", where each individual constraint was only "presence of some". Other areas with two or three concurrent constraints of the same kind, including SM-001 in Send Marsh, WH-006 in West Horsley and EF-002 in Effingham, were not escalated. What threshold triggers that escalation, and was it applied consistently?

5. Explain how the strategic gaps were assigned. Our eight parishes are assessed against five different gap pairings, Ockham against a three town gap, and Send Marsh and Burnt Common against two different gaps within a single settlement. What determined the gap assigned to each area and can that reasoning be published so the resulting share of gap judgements can be understood?

6. Set out how village coalescence will be assessed. Given that purpose (b) cannot capture village to village merging, how will the Local Plan assess the risk of our villages coalescing, along the A246 between the Horsleys, along the A3 corridor between Ripley and Send Marsh, and between the Clandons, and what evidence base will be used?

7. Clarify what happens to provisional areas. FAQ Q17 states that if the NPPF revision proceeds, the assessment "will be re-issued without the Footnote 7 component" and there would be no provisional category at all. Because every one of the 42 provisional areas in these parishes scores no higher than "Moderate" on the grey belt purposes, re-issuing on that basis would move all 42 into grey belt. Will the purposes assessments be revisited at the same time or will the existing purpose scores simply be carried across?

8. Reconcile the flood risk position. SE-001 in Send is excluded from grey belt on flood risk alone, and the Main Report itself states that Green Belt land in this part of the Wey valley is "in any case highly unlikely to be brought forward for development due to flood risk from the River Wey" (para 2.3.17). How will flood risk and infrastructure capacity be weighed when the Local Plan comes to select sites from the 42 provisional and 45 grey belt areas in our parishes?

A written response would be greatly appreciated and an indication of when this might be expected. If it would be beneficial or more efficient, the Parish Council's Planning Committee would be glad to meet officers to go through the methodology points.

Kind regards

Karen Young
Deputy Clerk to the Council

cc: Zoe Franklin MP
cc: Cllr Catherine Young, GBC/WSC
cc: Cllr Dawn Bennett, GBC
cc: Cllr Ruth Brothwell, GBC
cc: Cllr Pat Owen, GBC
cc: Cllr Merel Rehorst-Smith, GBC
cc: Cllr Fiona White, GBC
cc: Cllr David Evans, WSC