

# Compton PC Local Plan Sub-Committee Report - July 2025

## *Solar Farm*

- On April 10, following submission of Compton PC's pre-action protocol letter challenging the granting of the solar farm planning permission, Guildford Borough Council conceded that it had acted illegally on two grounds and that its decision to grant permission to the solar farm on the Hog's Back would be quashed by the Court. The two grounds were that:
  1. GBC had not fulfilled its duty to preserve and enhance the Surrey Hills National Landscape (with regards to the setting of the NL); and
  2. No sequential flood risk assessment had been carried out, despite part of the proposed solar farm being located in an area at high risk of flooding.

A third ground (that councillors were not given the opportunity to put forward an alternative motion at the planning committee meeting) was not conceded.

- On April 11, Compton PC filed the claim form with the High Court. Unfortunately, due to a clerical error and the resultant one-day delay, the claim was not filed within the six-week period permitted and the PC has had to apply to refile the claim. The re-filing has not changed GBC's position, but the developer Scottish Southern Electricity (an Interested Party) has challenged the application to file out of time.
- We are currently waiting for the Court to determine the application for permission and the associated application for an extension of time for filing the claim. According to Compton PC's lawyer, David Warman, there is nothing we can do to speed up this process – it is simply a question of when our file reaches the top of a judge's in-tray.

## *Boundary Review*

- In the meantime, Natural England (NE) has published its latest iteration of the Surrey Hills National Landscape boundary review and the fields at Chalk Pit and Wildfield farms have all been removed from the proposed new boundary because of the planning permission for the solar farm. This is frustrating as the decision to omit this area from the new National Landscape boundary has been based on a planning decision that GBC acknowledges is illegal. Kathy Atkinson, chair of the Surrey Hills NL Board, states that the next stage in the boundary review process will be a paper to the NE Board for approval. Ms Atkinson does not know exactly when that will be, but possibly September, so time is of the essence.

**Recommendation:** Compton PC contact its lawyer, David Warman, to find out definitively whether or not the erroneous omission of this land from the new Surrey Hills National Landscape boundary is grounds to expedite the claim. On June 23, Mr Warman felt that the claim would be considered within two weeks, but Compton has still not received any news.

## *Housing supply*

On 1st April 2025, GBC published an Interim Position Statement (IPS), which set out that the next five-year housing land supply will be published this summer as part of the annual update to the Council's Land Availability Assessment (LAA). The IPS states that, *"The new local housing need figure is significantly higher than the housing requirement in the LPSS and represents an increase of 106%. As a result, it is anticipated that the Council will no longer be able to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing when it publishes the LAA 2025."*