RESOLUTION

Suspension of Greybelt Assessment for sites on Land Around Villages, Pending an Evidence-Based Local Plan

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Proposed by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Meeting date: _____

This Council notes that:

1. The current “greybelt” test does not include land around villages within Purposes A, B or D thereby failing to take account of village merging, setting or character—a fundamental flaw of the greybelt test. Almost all sites on land around villages are therefore now being classified as grey belt regardless of the contribution they make to Greenbelt purposes. Even land assessed as contributing strongly to all four purposes are being designated as greybelt. This pattern is national in character and not just limited to Surrey.

2. Whilst a designation of greybelt is not intended as an approval to develop, the emerging evidence clearly shows that once a site is labelled greybelt, even when rejected by a local council for other robust planning reasons, 79% are being turned over at appeal.

3. Assessments carried out to date have not yet considered whether the cumulative effect of individual and combined greybelt development would fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Greenbelt across the area — work that is dependent on this Council first establishing its preferred spatial strategy as part of a considered, evidence-based Local Plan.

4. Planning applications relying on greybelt status may nonetheless be submitted by developers and determined now, ahead of that strategic work being completed by the new unitary authorities, leaving ancient villages exposed to piecemeal decisions taken without the benefit of the full evidence base a Local Plan is intended to provide and undermining the role of the unitary in determining spatial development strategy.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Call upon His Majesty's Government to agree the immediate suspension of greybelt assessment for land around villages, pending this Council's completion of a full spatial strategy as part of a considered, evidence-based Local Plan.

2. Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the area's Members of Parliament to communicate our adoption of this resolution.

3. Circulate this resolution to parish and town councils within its area, inviting them to adopt a resolution in similar terms.

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____