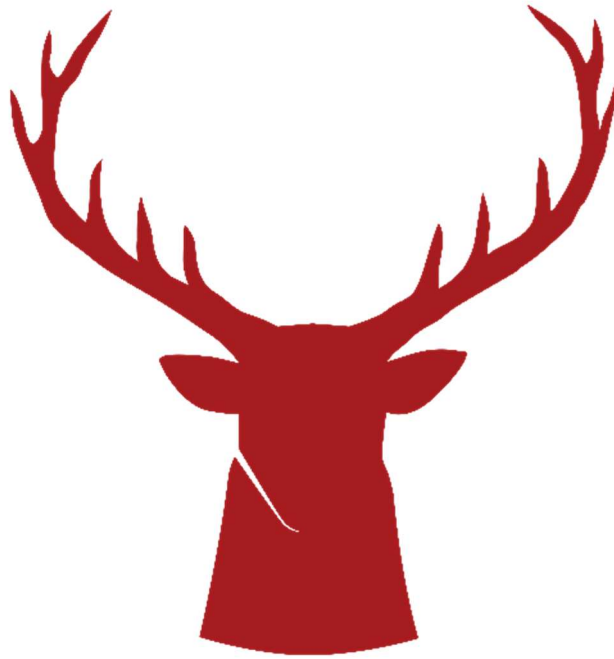




Local Plan Feedback Submission



The University of Surrey
Students' Union

About the Students' Union

The University of Surrey Students' Union is an independent educational charity (registered 1142479), funded by the University of Surrey with full legal, political and operational independence.

The Students' Union is recognized as the sole representative body for University of Surrey Students. There are currently just over 14,000 students studying at the University, and all students are automatically members of the Students' Union unless they opt out of membership. As of 2016 there are no opt out members.

The Union is ultimately controlled by all members, and led by a board of trustees. The board comprises 6 elected students, 4 appointed external trustees, and 1 appointed trustee from the University of Surrey with the chair of the board being the President of the Union. For academic year 2016-17 the president is Alex Mackenzie Smith.

The six elected trustees are elected by all students in the annual elections held in February of each year.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

For academic year 2016-17 Alex Mackenzie Smith is also a member of the University of Surrey Council. This submission has been prepared and approved solely in the interests of the members of the Students' Union.

About this Submission

The Students' Union has collected the experiences of over 600 students regarding their time in Guildford borough - excluding their experience in University accommodation. We asked them about their experience in the following:

- Acquiring accommodation
- Rental level
- Rental budget
- Transport
- Opinion on the local plan

Comments directed about the local plan are included in this submission verbatim. Any responses not relating to the local plan were not included.

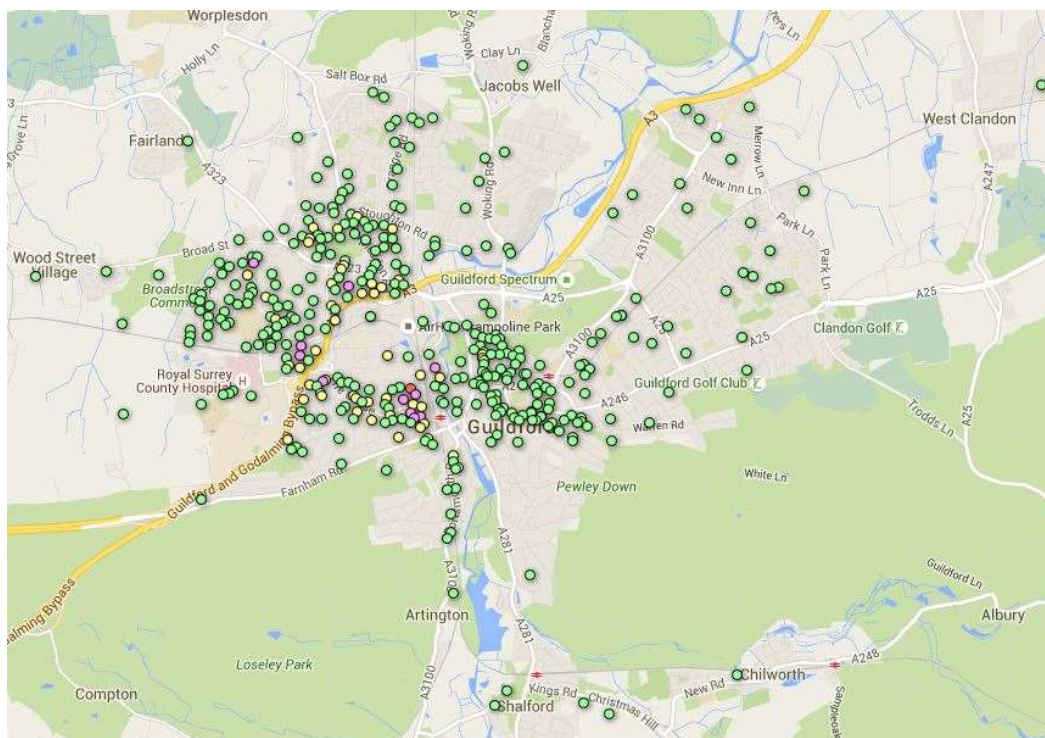
The Guildford Student Experience

“The problems we face in my constituency are a microcosm of the problems which the country as a whole faces. Half choked by traffic, hard pressed by demands for more housing, more schools and considerable pressure of population on all sides, preparing for a new university, we certainly do not lack any new ideas or bold approaches to meet these challenges.”

David Howell MP 1966

Living in Guildford as a student has never been easy. For the last fifty years the continued expansion of the town through industry, retail and business has put pressure on the student community which has been traditionally pushed to the fringes of Guildford. Recently however, the phenomenon of a middle class exodus from the city into the suburbs has put unbearable pressure on the student community. All residents of the town on low income now have to compete for an ever dwindling stock of rental properties. Combined with the arrival of the amateur landlord, students are regularly ripped off with sub-standard properties and face a fight to safeguard their deposits.

As a result of this change the student community has been scattered far and wide



Term time postcodes, density shown from green > red



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International students are particularly hard hit by the lack of affordable student rentals as they lack the local knowledge and have to arrange their accommodation remotely, this leaves them prone to extortion by landlords and agents, or even faced with arriving in the UK to a house that does not actually exist despite apparently having paid for one online.

Rental Values

Almost every student who responded told us the rent they ended up paying was either the same or more expensive than they had budgeted for. The average budget overspend was £47 per month, which compounds the financial difficulties faced by our students.

The average rent paid excluding bills was £457 per calendar month. This gives Guildford landlords an estimated monthly income of £2.2m. Despite this, students are regularly told they must 'do more' to be a part of the community even though the entirety of their student maintenance loan pays for accommodation alone.

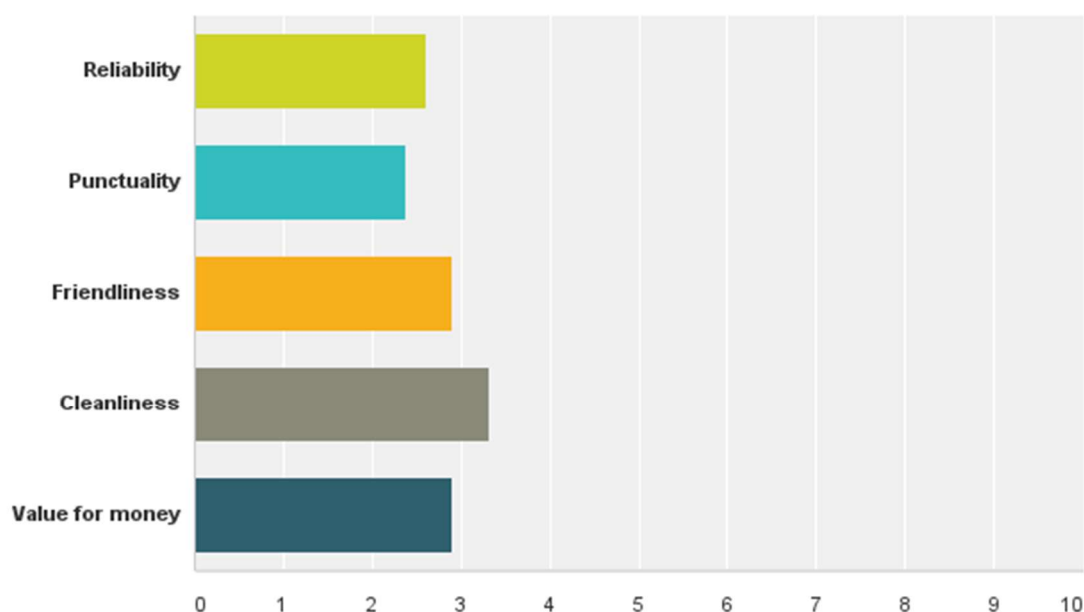
In academic year 2014/15, University of Surrey students borrowed £21m for living costs, and the total outstanding debt for all current students and alumni is over £318m. As we have shown with the exception of the tuition fee loan, the maintenance loan is paid wholesale to Guildford landlords. Surrey students will be paying this debt for the next forty years or more.


Transport

As the University has committed to reducing car journeys, Surrey students have to rely on the local bus or train service. The Arriva bus service is rated poor or worse in every category that was measured

Q9 How would you rate the Arriva Bus Service?

Answered: 405 Skipped: 219





The lowest rating was reserved for 'punctuality' which is no doubt a result of the poor provision of traffic control in Guildford, as the town is gridlocked at peak times.

For those students who do rely on a car such as student nurses and midwives, they face frequent berating from non-student residents who believe they have a greater right to park their car in the estate than 'a student'.

Conclusion

While it is true that many students are transient in nature, this is often not by choice. Many graduates would naturally remain in Guildford as that is where the developing industries of the 21st century are based, many of whom have benefitted from the University influence.

Guildford borough development has been woefully inadequate for the last two decades and simply not kept pace with the demands of this region. As a result, Guildford is regressing to a quasi-feudal system where those who were fortunate enough to capitalise on the housing boom of the 1980's and 1990's hold sway over the student class who must now work almost full time to support the high cost of renting.

A privileged class of landowner holds Guildford in its grip, believing that only they have the right to a secure home, to a reliable income, and to afford the space for their car (or multiple cars). The very nature of Guildford is being sterilised as it gradually transforms into 'Fortress Surrey' with the drawbridge pulled up.

The students of the University of Surrey have been a part of Guildford for fifty years, they have contributed financially, culturally, physically and emotionally in the history of this town. This is the time that Guildford must now repay this faith and loyalty.

More housing is needed urgently.

Reliable transport is needed urgently.

The local plan must be implemented in full, as is drafted, as soon as possible.

Alex Mackenzie Smith

Students' Union President

Student Submissions

**Would you like to comment on the Guildford Local plan?
Your comment will be forwarded to Guildford Borough
Council**

Upgrade transport system, frequency and punctuality

Affordable housing would be nice !!!

affordable student houses/rooms that do NOT make the student enter a joint tenancy contract, and which offer fair management, would be very welcome.

All for it, with the university increasing cohorts there aren't enough houses available in Guildford, and if you're lucky enough to find one the rent is extortionate, the prices asked of students is totally unaffordable.

An A3 bypass is a must! Additional housing is drastically needed within a 30-40 minute walk to the university

As long as it brings prices down

As the university is a key part of the city, houses should be available for students as a priority

Based on my experience of where I live there isn't enough parking and the public transport route is highly unreliable. There is a high demand for the bus route in my area (26/27) and there aren't enough buses

Be even more cycle friendly and build low cost accommodation not high end housing

build more places for students not everyone is rich

Cheaper accommodation for students

CHEAPER HOUSING FOR STUDENTS!!

CIL charges are a sensible idea but only if they're actually used for what they say rather than the usual corrupt GBC antics.

Consider a restructure of road layouts in town, if possible, to help reduce congestion and traffic.

create affordable, reasonable quality housing so that being a student living in Guildford is a viable option

Generally good, but needs to be more ambitious. The train station redevelopment needs to include bus station on the same site to integrate public transport system. Government housing targets are unnecessarily high and national focus should be on creating jobs where there are housing surpluses. Blackwell farm development is best of the evils it you assume you have to build on greenbelt & Uni implement what they say they will in terms of green infrastructure and holistic design. If CPP site redeveloped CPP should remain along with additional housing. Union should do more to inform there student of local plan and it's implications. I think traffic lights on gyratory should be turned into roundabouts. I think single lane 20 mph counter flow each side of river connected by dual lane counter flow over middle (modernist bridge) is best option. Allowing both old bridges to be pedestrianised + cycle lanes & maybe buses.

Give students affordable housing that isn't covered in mould!

Guildford as a city could really do with less people driving as the traffic can be rather dire. But it's citizens are not given adequate incentive to forego their cars as public transport is borderline unaffordable for commuting purposes.

Happy that improvements are being made however in the future, action needs to be taken quicker as the next few years will exponentially become more difficult for students to rent property. The process is far too bureaucratic and needs to be improved in order to increase efficiency of decision making.

Having only just briefly looked now, I think another train station in onslow is a good idea to relieve a lot of the congestion around Guildford station.

House prices have rocketed recently. In 2013 I paid 1850 pcm. The same house is now being rented for over 2200 pcm. The uni have made more accommodation for the first years but have not thought of the impact this would cause 2 or 3 years down the line when all those extra student need to be housed in the local area. It also means that getting a house is harder and due to little supply and lots of demand this has given the power to the estate agents meaning that students are not getting value for money and struggling to actually find a house in Guildford. There needs to be more student housing in Guildford that is of a price that is affordable to a student living off the maintenance loan of £3700-£5000 per year. At the moment it is costing more than that just for rent not even considering food etc.

I agree that Guildford has a housing problem and as result many of the properties are not affordable, particularly for students. I think more student accommodation owned by the university needs to be built rather than private sector housing, that way more affordable accommodation can be built for students that is maintained and kept by the university, so the property does not become inhabitable.

I agree that housing in Guildford is very expensive, but being so close to London it's expected. If more affordable accommodation was available, I would be even more likely to live in Guildford after I graduate in 2017. I feel that there is a huge problem with traffic on the A3 having been commuting to High Wycombe from Oxford this year and after moving back to Guildford last week so my commute to High Wycombe is now from Guildford I feel that there is a huge amount of work needed in order to fix the problem and I hope that this can be done over the next few years!

i don't know what that is but you need to provide greater availability for affordable housing as landlords are literally robbing students blind, who have no choice but to pay ridiculous prices for houses as there is little alternative. especially for me who if i commuted from my permanent home everyday would spend 8hrs commuting.

I just want students to have affordable accommodation that they can live in and worry about their degree and not so much about the accommodation

I think it is a good idea and needed.

I think it is a real shame that some of the only green bits are being built on as I often see lots of wildlife around these areas, foxes, rabbits etc

I think that cheaper, private halls would be the best solution at the moment. It works well in other towns with different universities/colleges and if private companies which charge a reasonable amount (not like the new ones built near campus) were encouraged it would provide more accommodation for the increasing student population whilst helping to stop relations deteriorating between locals and students

I think the university should distribute bus card to every student who doesn't live in the campus but the accommodation districts belonging to the university. It's inconvenient to go to school from Manor Park. If we buy the bus card by ourselves, I think the distance is unfair to us who hand in high accommodation fees and live in Manor Park

I think there should be more focus on affordable housing aimed at providing for students. Developing more housing over such a long period of time as in the plan will not have any tangible effect on rental prices, as landlords will simply by cheaper houses and let them at the same or higher prices as they are currently, making profit off of students that have no choice in accommodation. Private landlords are rare and often of poor quality. Letting agents are completely unregulated in practice and have no idea of the legislation they are attempting to enforce, resulting in frustrating experiences. To find accommodation in Guildford that is even remotely affordable to a student from a low income background such as myself, remains impossible and forces me to work over the summer instead of enjoying it as a break from my studies.

If it good if Guildford has more bus stop, smoking zone (not free area outside building only).

It is dangerous to cycle outside campus, the roads are narrow and the traffic intense.

It would be helpful to have more university housing, maybe small houses for sharing beyond the first year of university as student housing in Guildford is poor and expensive for what you actually get

Make sure cycling is promoted. It's a really valuable method of transport for fitness, environment and saving money and as such, should be encouraged and provided for

Maybe build some shops that you don't need to give up your entire student loan for? (aldi, iceland..)

More affordable housing and flats need to be built. There is a ridiculous shortage of affordable housing, most houses to rent are bank breaking for a student like myself

More affordable housing for students that aren't in rough areas like park barn which I often felt unsafe living in.

More affordable student accommodation. Even if this means living further away from university but having an efficient transport service.

More high density condo/apartment where it is affordable for students

More leisure activities required for university students age range, other than clubs, and/or an improvement in clubs

more low cost housing for students is required!

Much, MUCH more has to be done with parking close to train station and campus.

Offer permits at a discount price for students to park in the areas/parkings around university
Please build more affordable housing for students that aren't a pile of poop. I've rented in places without heating this would not be acceptable for a family but for students it seems to be fine! It's not good enough
Please create housing affordable for students in all Guildford locations, as it living costs in Guildford are generally expensive and can be tough on students.
Please put down new roads
Please, think more about students and less about rich people
Prices for student accommodation are unfairly high given the standard of many houses because they know students are desperate
Renting flats is awful in this country. Fees of letting agencies are awful, you pay hundreds of pounds for nothing and excessive credit & background checks, and for cleaning that isn't clean. After one year you pay a renewal fee for NOTHING. There is no tenant protection at all. I am not even allowed to put a hole in a wall to put up a picture frame! The windows are thin and old, the kitchen is crap, carpet is crap, nothing gets replaced, and if you ask for it, the rent goes up. But you already pay excessive rents for flats that are basically shit. This country needs enforced tenant laws and protection against agency fees.
seems ok but more needs to be done to enforce HMO regulations, especially in student housing where students have very little authority
Should be more houses built for young people, but not in highly populated places like Normandy; would be more appropriate on university land that is currently underused.
Sort out traffic, including A31
Students should be considered more often. The price of living is too high for us students
The bus time should be more frequent if possible
The town definitely needs cheaper student studios or one-bedroom accommodations affordable for students.
The cost of housing to students is terrible, we've had an increase of £100 per person per month this year compared to before our placement year.
The Guildford Local Plan is an ill-advised, destructive and irreversible plan that will significantly reduce quality of life in the Guildford area. The council has used questionable analysis methods - the agency that analysed the requirement for housing has themselves said that the method the council asked them to use should not be trusted as the sole source. I am distinctly unimpressed by the council and their behaviour discourages me from living in or around Guildford when I graduate.

The linked websites makes it extremely difficult to actually find the local plan in the first place! Gave up trying to find it.

The rents are expensive

The sooner the better.

the university brings so much to the area, and yet we get so much stick for being students! my maintenance loan doesn't even cover my rent so i struggle, and shouldn't have to! there were times which were an absolute low because i was worrying about money! once you've paid bills you're talking about £150 a month, and then add living expenses! its really unfair!

The University is correct in saying that providing more on campus accommodation will increase vacancy rates on the private rented market. One way or another, housing needs to be increased - the University this year sent out an email saying as they have received a record amount of UCAS applications, third years/masters students/international students applying for campus accommodation are unlikely to be successful. Where are all these soon to be first year students supposed to go after they have moved out of campus accommodation? Even further away sites like Hazel Farm are still useful, and I am sure private housing in further out areas would still be much appreciated by students, as opposed to the constant panic and fear of not finding a house.

The university should build more high density accommodation, for example stag hill is low density, they should build higher up, it is a wise investment for them as as long as there are students they will be able to pay off the investment and it will attract more students

There has been new apartment complexes built near the university such as scape living, I personally do not know any student who can afford to live there. If there are plans for new housing development, please consider the students and make them a reasonable property which can be rented by students and can be afforded

There is a lack of detail in the plans for student accommodation, as far as I can see no actual numerical facts have been used, and it appears as though we are being brushed under the carpet.

There needs to be more houses built!!

There needs to be more student accommodation for students. It's ridiculous. Because the deposits for houses in the Guildford area are so expensive. And the length of the contracts are so long.

There should be a plan in order to prevent abusive rents. Housing is overpriced, landlords ask as much money as good flats for flats in bad conditions (old, without central heating, far) students have serious difficulties to find a place to live (you have to sign the contract 6 months before the beginning of your tenancy, which is a problem for returning students on a placement or an exchange programme).

University has taken on more students, so more properties need to be available to accommodate this change

University needs to build another manor park

Unlikely to be completed fully

Would like more information on how they estimate where students will be living. 50-60% on campus seems like a ridiculously high estimate

Would like to see some redevelopment of the abandoned buildings near to the Friary bus station. Large plot of land that is an eyesore and has been for a long time. Moving quickly to build more shop space and reasonably priced housing would be appreciated.

Yes - university students contribute millions to the local economy each year. Subsidies should be given to both landlords and student tenants because the loan we get does not cover accommodation in 80% of circumstances. I had to work 15 hours a week to survive, which impacted my grades. I feel that landlords should advertise a price (say £450 per month) and then have a 5% subsidy added, paid directly to the landlord and they have to have certain agreements/documents to prove they aren't pocketing the 5% and they are charging the right price

Yes! There needs to be way more student houses because it's now mid July and we still don't have a house to live in because there just aren't any in walking distance of uni or they are all taken. The price for these houses needs to be reduced too. How can you expect students to pay ridiculous amounts of rent when we have books & food to pay for too. There also needs to be an option for 9 month letting contracts as most students don't need a house for 12 so it's a further waste of money.