

## Opposition to planning consultations GB7,8,9,10,11

Sent: 07 July 2015 15:55

To: Planning Policy

22 Smarts Heath Road

Mayford

Woking

GU22 0NP

7<sup>TH</sup> July 2015

References listed below:

### GB7

- **Address:** Ten Acre Farm, Smarts Heath Road, Mayford, GU22 0NP
- **Proposed Use:** Up to 12 Traveller pitches
- **Timing:** Between 2016 and 2027

### GB8

- **Address:** Nursery land adjacent to Egley Road, Mayford, GU22 0PL
- **Proposed Use:** Residential including Affordable Housing, recreational/open space and education,
- **Timing:** Between 2022 and 2027]

### GB9

- **Address:** Woking Garden Centre, Egley Road, Mayford, Woking, GU22 0NH
- **Proposed Use:** To meet long term development needs
- **Timing:** Safeguarded to between 2027 and 2040

### GB10

- **Address:** Land to the North East of Saunders Lane, between Saunders Lane and Hook Hill Lane, Mayford, GU22 0NN
- **Proposed Use:** To meet long term development needs
- **Timing:** Safeguarded to between 2027 and 2040

### GB11

- **Address:** Land to the North West of Saunders Lane, Mayford, GU22 0NN
- **Proposed Use:** To meet long term development needs
- **Timing:** Safeguarded to between 2027 and 2040

To whom it may concern,

As residents of Mayford Village for 15 years, we would like to register our opposition to the above proposals - **GB8, GB9, GB10, GB11**

Although we are well aware of the need for 'affordable housing' in the Woking area, we vehemently oppose the use of greenbelt land for a list of reasons which are noted below. To summarise, the school and homes proposals whilst not only being built on greenbelt will also seriously affect the transport infrastructure which is already stretched at peak points during the day. We cannot think of another mile area in Woking and Guildford that has three schools located on or near Egley Road – Freemantles, Barnsbury and a proposed secondary school. It is inconceivable that Mayford and Egley Road could accommodate the traffic for these three schools at peak points in the day.

Our final opposition is to **GB7** - the addition of 12 traveller sites located across the road from our house. The main concern here, for us as residents of Smarts Heath Road, being the request that each of said sites contain a business. We are already affected on a 30MPH road by the location of Martlands Industrial Estate which is on Smarts heath Lane. We are constantly

bombarded with buses, skip lorries and vans speeding along Smarts Heath Road at all times of day (especially after 5am). Not only does it make the road unsafe for families with children and pets, it is also unsafe for cyclists as there are no cycle lanes approaching the lights at the railway bridge. The state of the road is also a cause for concern as the heavy duty vehicles are churning up the road surface.

**National Planning Policy Factors:**

- National Policy states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in “exceptional circumstances” – this has not been proved by Woking Council, especially as Policy clearly states that “housing need – including for Traveller sites – does not justify the harm done to the Green Belt by inappropriate development.”
- No evidence (independently verified) has been produced to demonstrate that Woking Council has exhausted Brownfield sites for development in its Plan
- The Green Belt Review incorrectly dismissed the Green Belt Purpose “To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns” stating that “Woking is not considered to be a town that has a particularly strong historical character” – however Mayford does have a strong history and is mentioned in the Domesday Book.
- Green Belt land in Mayford is fundamental to the physical separation of Woking, Mayford and Guildford – this is incorrectly classified only as “important” in the Green Belt Review
- There is only two miles between the Mayford roundabout and Slyfield, which results in a high risk of coalescence between Woking and Guildford should Mayford develop further
- Woking Council openly states that it considers land available for development (for example owned by the Council or a Developer) as more “viable” for removal from the Green Belt – the ownership status of land has no bearing on whether it should be Green Belt or not.

**Landscape and Environmental Factors:**

- The Green Belt Review was worryingly inconsistent in its approach as it identified areas of land not to be considered (due to a number of constraints), however it then proceeded to recommend land that contained these constraints (Mayford included). The Brett & Associates Report rejected the 10 Acre Site as a Traveller site.
- Land relating to Special Protection Areas (including a 400m buffer) was excluded from consideration of the Green Belt Review to protect endangered birds. Prey Heath and Smarts Heath are SSSIs (Special Sites of Scientific Interest) and are designated by Bird Life International as “Important Bird Areas” and therefore should also have buffers applied for the same reason.
- The Mayford Village Society is currently pursuing the inclusion of Prey Heath and Smarts Heath into the Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Special Protection Area) which, if successful, will result in a 400m development buffer zone within which development is not allowed.
- Land North of Saunders Lane includes “Escarpments and Rising Ground of Landscape Importance” (1999 Local Plan Policy NE7 –referred to as CS24 in the Woking 2027 submission) and therefore should not be considered for development.

- The Green Belt Review proposes to change boundaries without a Landscape Character Assessment – this questions the validity of the Review and suggests why areas of landscape importance NE7/CS24 have been ignored.
- Areas of Mayford are recommended to be released from the Green Belt on the basis of “creating a defensible Green Belt boundary” – “strong” boundaries are considered to be motorways, district roads, railway lines, rivers, prominent physical features, protected woodlands – the proposed changes would in fact make a weaker boundary due to removal of the escarpment
- The Green Belt Review indicates that a school on Egley Road would maintain the openness of the area, however this is misleading if the school is merely a Trojan horse as a precursor to housing on fields either side of the school later on.
- Mayford is a key area for the absorption of rainwater to alleviate flooding. Developing on the land proposed will increase surface water and increase flood risk to surrounding properties.

**Infrastructure Factors:**

- The Green Belt Review recommended Mayford on the basis of the ease of access to Woking Town Centre, stating that it takes 7 minutes to travel from Mayford to Woking. The report acknowledged that this was estimated using Google Maps timings. At peak hours the actual travel time can be over half an hour.
- Mayford has a very poor road network. Roads are narrow and most are unlit at night with few pedestrian footpaths. Traffic is gridlocked in the Village at peak hours. This will be further adversely affected by traffic from 550 new homes being built on Mayford’s boundary at Willow Reach and Kingsmoor Park. The proposed school for Egley Road will further exacerbate this situation.
- Mayford has a poor public transport system with limited bus services.
- Worplesdon Station is inaccessible with unlit pedestrian footpaths leading to and away from the station.
- There are three single line bridges, two with traffic lights in the village. Those on Smarts Heath Road and Hook Hill Lane service the area proposed to be developed - neither could handle additional traffic. The third services Worplesdon Network Rail station which would notice a major increase in congestion.
- The Green Belt Review recommended Mayford on the basis of proximity to a “Local Centre”, however, other than a Post Office and Barbers, Mayford has no supporting infrastructure in the form of shops, doctors, dentists, medical facilities, or schools. Residents living on any major development in the Village would be isolated unless they have a vehicle.

**Key Arguments against Increased Travellers Pitches (relevant to GB7)**

- A sequential approach must be taken in identifying suitable sites for allocation, with sites in the urban area being considered before those in the Green Belt. However no urban sites appear to have been considered - there must be doubt as to the validity of no other sites across the whole of the Borough being identified or suitable.
- Where no sites are available in the urban area, priority will be given to sites on the edge of the urban area that benefit from good access to jobs, shops and other infrastructure and services. Mayford does not satisfy any of these criteria.

- Currently Woking's Traveller sites are concentrated in one part of the Borough - Burdenshott Road (one mile from Ten Acre Farm), Ten Acre Farm, Mayford, and Brookwood Lye (three miles from Ten Acre Farm). Mayford already provides a major contribution towards the Traveller Community. There is no justification for further expansion in Mayford.
- Traveller sites should have adequate amenity for its intended occupiers, including space for related business activities. Smarts Heath Road is a residential road of some 25 houses, with two Grade Two listed buildings in close proximity to Ten Acre Farm. Travellers related business activities are out of keeping in such a road.
- Traveller sites should not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the visual amenity and character of the area. Ten Acre farm is adjacent to Smarts Heath Common, an SSSI, used by residents of Mayford for leisure purposes. Any increase in the present Traveller site of five caravans at 10 Acre Farm would decrease the visual amenity and character of the area.
- Traveller sites should have safe and reasonable access to schools and other local facilities. Smarts Heath Road is not currently close to schools. It does not have easy access to local facilities.

Thank you in advance for your attention to our objections listed above.

Yours sincerely,  
Linda M Aitchison