

Woking Borough Council

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RE WOKING 2027 DPD Consultation

I have been a resident of Hook Heath for over 35 years and note the planning proposals that will affect the Hook Heath and Mayford areas.

My comments will be in relation to your site references

Site Reference GB7 (ten acre farm smarts heath road

I **object strongly** to the proposal to increase the number of travellers pitches on this site. The site is not suitable for the following reasons.

a) Such sites should not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the visual amenity and character of the area. The adjacent Smarts Heath Common is used for leisure purposes and Smarts Heath Road is a residential road with 2 Grade Two listed buildings in close proximity. The addition of more travellers caravans and related business activities would be totally out of character with the road diminish the visual amenity and character of the area.

b) Urban areas should be preferred to Green Belt areas, but we have no evidence that any urban areas have been considered or that no suitable urban areas exist.

c) Even should such urban areas not exist, site GB7 is not near access to employment shops or other infrastructure, which are priority considerations.

d) Existing traveller sites are concentrated in one area within 3 miles of Ten Acre farm. There should be no further expansion in this area.

e) Over many years planning inspectors have refused applications on this site as they adversely affect the Green Belt. Such considerations should not be discarded.

Site References GB8 Nursery land adjacent to Egley Road

GB9 Garden centre Egley Road

**GB10 Land to the northeast of Saunders Lane
between Saunders Lane and Hook Hill
Lane**

GB11 Land to the northwest of Saunders Lane

I **strongly object** to the proposal for housing in all the above sites. The proposal will greatly diminish the open space between Woking Town and Mayford and encourage a further merger with Guildford. The Green Belt partly exists to resist such encroachment. Further the character of Mayford as a village separate from Woking will be destroyed. Mayford has a separate history dating back over 900 years.

The infrastructure around this proposed development area is totally inadequate to support the population increase that development will bring. Roads are unsuitable and bridges are single lane. No plans appear to be tabled to remedy these defects. Roads without pavements will pose a significant danger to pedestrians.

The destruction of open land will adversely affect wildlife populations and corridors and cannot but adversely affect neighbouring protected areas.

Please also refer to the responses by the Mayford Village Society and the Hook Heath Residents Association, who I am happy also to represent my views. Please also refer to the public consultations by the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Forum which overwhelmingly opposed these changes to the Green Belt.

GENERAL OBJECTIONS

1) **National Policy** states that Green Belt Boundaries should only be altered in "**exceptional circumstances**" This policy has not been followed by

Woking Council especially as **"housing need including Traveller Sites does not justify the harm done to the Green Belt by inappropriate development"**

It is clear that these proposals are entirely driven by a perception of housing need. That the development proposals are inappropriate is also clearly demonstrated by the many classes of objection noted above and further below.

2) There is no independent evidence that Woking Council has exhausted Brownfield sites for development in its plan.

3) With respect to Mayford, the separation of Woking from Mayford by open land is **critical** to the preservation of Mayford as a separate entity. The Green Belt Review incorrectly classed this as only "important" With these plans Mayford will become a suburb of Woking.

4) The Green Belt Review was inconsistent in a number of areas.

a) The land to the north of Saunders Lane has long been designated as **"Escarpment and Rising Ground of Landscape Importance"** in both the Woking Local Plan Policy NE7 and in the Woking 2027 submission **and therefore should not be considered for development** and yet the Green Belt Review proposes boundary changes which remove this land from the Green Belt **without a Landscape Character Assessment**. This is unacceptable.

b) The Green Belt Review indicates that a school on Egley Road would maintain the openness of the area. With housing development on either side of the school, this is highly questionable.

c) The Green Belt Review itself rejected the 10 Acre Site as a Travellers site.

d) the assertion that the Green belt Review would create "a defensible Green Belt Boundary" is highly contentious.

Firstly the existing boundary is highly defensible

Secondly, the removal of the escarpment, destroys a significant physical landscape feature that is itself a strong defensible boundary. Without this feature the boundary is in fact weaker.

e) The Green Belt Review was in error in quoting a 7 minute travel time between Mayford and Woking. It is clear to anyone who has actually travelled the route in peak times that the journey time can easily be 30 minutes. If one adds the major proposed school ,housing development ,the poor road network, and single lane bridges, there is a recipe for gridlock on the roads.

T.M Brandman