

31st July 2015

Planning Policy team  
Woking Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Gloucester Square  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU21 6YL

Dear Sirs

My wife and I own a house in the Borough of Working and are resident there as well. We have been resident in West Byfleet since May 2012. I am writing in relation to the development of Green Belt land in and around West Byfleet rather than completing the Site Allocations DPD consultation online questionnaire.

We strongly object to the proposed developments for the following reasons:

1/ Fairness - Woking Council is required to find sites for development to provide in the region of 2000 homes and around 750 homes are currently planned for West Byfleet alone. Coupled with proposed developments in Byfleet and Pyrford, this small corner of the Borough would therefore under the current proposals bear a disproportionate share of the planned developments. It would be much fairer for the homes to be spread around the Borough rather than penalizing one area (West Byfleet) with such aggressive development.

2/ Green belt loss - Two specific sites are planned for development – the site at Broadoaks and the site at West Hall. We understand that the current proposal is for a school of 900 pupils and around 150 teachers plus 157 houses at Broadoaks. As an alternative could Broadoaks not be developed solely as residential with West Hall not being developed? This would preserve some of the green belt around West Byfleet which is due to lose 80-90% of its land designated as green belt under current proposals? Could brownfield sites like Broadoaks not be used instead of green belt land to provide a significant proportion of the borough's housing needs?

3/ Traffic – we understand that a separate study will be conducted relating to transport provision in and around West Byfleet. However, we have been made aware that a similar study was conducted by Surrey County Council in the 1990s and that the conclusion was that the area should not be developed further as the road infrastructure could not be expanded to cope with increased levels of traffic. Traffic has increased substantially since then and the Parvis Road is already rated as “F” for traffic. The fact that a lower rating does not exist should not mean that development in the area should not be viewed as affecting traffic just because a lower rating is unavailable. Traffic on the Parvis Road is already at a standstill most mornings and evenings and the situation would only be made worse with a) the opening of a 900 pupil school as not all pupils will walk to the school or come by public transport and b) a flow through road for the West Hall development.

If the development at West Hall were to happen, the current plan is for a road to be built that would connect with the Pyrford Road with up to a 1000 cars using that road in the morning. The traffic lights at the corner of the Pyrford Road and the Parvis Road let through around 6 cars each time they go green. Putting traffic through there would therefore result in complete gridlock. We can factually state this as we live on the corner of the Pyrford Road and the traffic is already at a standstill there every morning. If a school was to be built at Broadoaks and West Hall developed, then pollution levels would increase dramatically and residents in the area would be effectively locked in.

4/ Public transport - It should be noted that South West Trains is not planning on expanding services to West Byfleet. On the contrary, development of Woking station is being prioritised with a view to West Byfleet users having to change at Woking. As it is in the morning, whenever there are train delays, the platform towards London is already at capacity and any significant increase in use could become a health and safety risk on a regular basis. The platforms already accommodate 12 carriage trains but they are very narrow and cannot be widened easily. The three fast trains to West Byfleet in the evening are also already full (standing room only if there is any room from Waterloo).

5/ Schools – the proposal of a secondary school at Broadoaks would relieve the issues at secondary level (if built) but both primary schools in the village have already added a class per intake to accommodate the current population increase. With the proposed increase in dwellings by approximately 33%, it has been calculated that WB Infant/Junior School would need to increase their intake to 120 per year (x7) making the school a 840 pupil school. There are already significant issues with traffic around the school (and the Marist School which is doubling its intakes) in the morning and evening. How are these issues to be addressed and as the school cannot expand further on its current site, what plans are in place to accommodate such an increase in size?

6/ Healthcare – we appreciate that the provision of healthcare is looked at on a wider basis than just the village but with the surgeries already at capacity in West Byfleet, any increase in demand would have to be met from new sites (have these been provided for?) or residents would have to travel to surgeries in other towns or villages, thereby again increasing the strain on the road network and public transport.

7/ Environmental – the effect on air quality will be significant with the increase in traffic that such concentrated development will generate. Prior to the building of the M25, the land at West Hall was used for general agricultural purposes. It is now only used as pasture as it floods every year. We understand that the land was classed as sensitive but that the classification was overturned to allow proposals for development on the site to be put forward. With all of the flooding which occurred in Byfleet in 2013/2014, it does not seem sensible to be building close to 600 houses on a site which residents who live there know floods yearly. Several other sites in the area also flood yearly so there is not much land for the excess water to go (eg Lock Lane, Martyrs Road).

8/ Utilities – will the current infrastructure be able to cope with the increase in population? Gas pipes are being replaced down the Old Woking Road affecting traffic from August til November this year. If utilities need upgrading, what impact will this have on local traffic and for how long?

Yours Sincerely

James Docherty