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The Planning Policy Team,
Woking Borough Council,
Civic Offices, Gloucester Sq.,
Woking,
Surrey,
GU21 6YL

Woking, 30th July 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

Regarding: Woking 2027 DPD Consultation

I am writing to comment on the above consultation as a resident of Woking and specifically Mayford. I am concerned about the proposed plans for the Borough for many reasons, some of which I will expand on below.

I understand the pressures on local councils to grow and develop towns in line with demographic changes as well as government imperatives. However I feel deeply concerned about the arguments (or rather lack thereof) brought forward in this consultation to justify developments that will permanently change the face of Woking. The fact that 60% of Woking constitutes Green Belt land must not come to be seen as a curse, but rather be treasured as the blessing it is. As the National Planning Policy clearly states, "housing need – including for Traveller sites – does not justify the harm done to the Green Belt by inappropriate development."

In recent years a phenomenal amount of development has taken place in the town centre which is totally out of keeping with such a small town. The high rises create a suffocating, impersonal corporate atmosphere which is all about money, not people, and yet, is not the official version that this is all for the good of the local population? There are no green spaces whatsoever in the (after all tiny) town centre and the appearance and feel of it, despite the beautification of some of the buildings' exteriors, remains grim and lifeless. This picture is complemented by a network of roads that were not built even for the existing volume of traffic and are already plagued by congestion much of the time.

There are many studies to show how important the aesthetic appeal of a place as well as the availability of open and green spaces is to human wellbeing. At present the local population can at least take refuge in the green belt, which provides open spaces for local residents of all age as well as a much needed habitat for local flora and fauna. If this is not protected and

further development within the Borough not carried out with the utmost caution, there is a real risk that the Woking of the future will look like Croydon.

In particular, I would like to make the following points;

1. Re. ref. GB7 of the DPD:

- I strongly object to the proposal to increase the number of Traveller Pitches on this site. The proposed area is adjacent to Smarts Heath Common, an SSSI, the importance of which should be self-evident. Any increase in the number of occupants of the present Traveller site would increase risk to wildlife due to human presence as well as increased number of domestic animals in close proximity.
- Over the years successive Planning Inspectors have refused applications on this site because they reduce the openness of a Green Belt area, it seems puzzling therefore that this would be no longer a concern.
- The land is further at risk of flooding, hence substantial investment would be necessary to make the site suitable in the first place.
- Further as potential occupants may require to carry out business activities on site or store related machinery etc., this would worsen further both the visual impact as well as that on wildlife in the vicinity.
- The site is not terribly well connected for pedestrian, car or other access to and from the surrounding infrastructure, this has not been considered in the proposal and would likely constitute another burden on the environs with the related knock-on effects.

2. Re. refs. GB8 - GB11 of the DPD:

- I strongly object to the proposed housing developments in these areas. A total of an additional 619 dwellings are being proposed here, which would add 1548 new inhabitants to Mayford's current 2470 - an increase of over 60%!! Clearly such development is completely unsustainable in all respects.
- The Green Belt was established for very good reasons, to prevent limitless urban sprawl and protect wildlife, amongst others. I am not satisfied that all other options have been thoroughly explored and exhausted or that exceptional circumstances exist that would necessitate development on the Green Belt. I believe that the loss of these green areas would have a terrible effect not only on Mayford, but would come to haunt Woking as a whole.
- The housing will fill in any green space between Mayford and Woking, thereby turning Mayford into a suburb of Woking and increasing greatly the risk of the merging of Woking and Guildford – the avoidance of which is one of the main purposes of the Green Belt. There appears to have been no consideration for preserving Mayford as a separate settlement to Woking, nor the impact on the character of the Village and the fundamental changes to the lives of Mayford's inhabitants.
- The sites are described as being well-linked to local infrastructure; in fact our local roads are already struggling to cope and constitute a source of considerable pollution (light, noise as well as fumes) for the local population. No consideration appears to have been given to the fact that local roads would

not be able to accommodate the additional number of car movements (especially given there is also the possible impact of planning application PLAN/2015/0703, which alone would result in several thousand car movements per week, as well as likely development at Slyfield). The cumulative effects of the developments would not only affect Mayford but anyone travelling to Woking town centre from the south.

- No consideration appears to have been given to the effects on local residents' health which clearly would be impacted upon by the much increased levels of all types of pollution.
- There are no amenities to support such an increase in population, be that shops or GP surgeries etc.
- Worplesdon station is already bursting at the seams with no further parking available; there is also no safe pedestrian access to it. Whilst it may be possible to create both additional parking and better access, again this would not be possible without major alterations to Green Belt land.
- Not only would the wildlife in the areas to be developed be wiped out, but also there would be increased risk to wildlife in our protected Heaths (Smarts Heath and Prey Heath) due to the proximity of the development and the consequential increased footfall, traffic and pollution.

In summary I find the suggestion that "land released from Green Belt will not undermine its purpose and integrity" (Executive Statement, 4th June 2015) staggering in its audacity. The proposed SANG areas will in no way ameliorate the obvious effects these developments would have (two green spaces (A,B) minus one (A) still equals one (B), even if the remaining one is then named "A!").

It is difficult to adequately comment on these proposals as a lay person, I would therefore request that you please also refer to the response by the Mayford Village Society who I am happy to represent my views to elucidate my points more fully.

Yours faithfully

Graham Earl