

Woking 2027 DPD Consultation

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Sent: 09 July 2015 21:39

To: Planning Policy

Cc: [REDACTED]

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Thursday 9th July 2015

Dear Sirs,

I have been a resident of Mayford for 8 years and have been made aware of the Woking 2027 planning proposals that will impact Mayford. My comments are not specific to any of your documents, however I will refer to the specific site references that I am concerned about:

Site Reference: GB7 (Ten Acre Farm, Smarts Heath Road)

I strongly object to the proposal to increase the number of Traveller Pitches on this land. I do not deny that suitable sites should be identified for Travellers Pitches allocation but no urban sites appear to have been considered, and surely they should take priority over the use of Green Belt land? And even if there are no urban sites available, then surely the proposal of sites should be near an urban area that benefit from good access to public services and infrastructure that can support them. In relation to that point, Smarts Heath Road is not currently close to schools and does not have easy access to local facilities. Another concern of mine is the close proximity of which the proposed Traveller Pitches will be to Smarts Heath Common, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and an increase in Pitches would decrease the visual amenity, character of the area and also increase the risk to wildlife due to an increased number of domestic animal in such close proximity.

I find it difficult to trust the validity of this proposal with particular relation to this point after there clearly being no alternative location following an examination of the whole of the Borough and being unable to identify or find somewhere else more suitable.

Site Reference: GB8 (Nursery land adjacent to Egley Road), GB9 (Woking Garden Centre, Egley Road), GB10 (Land to the north east of Saunders Lane, between Saunders Lane and Hook Hill Lane), GB11 (Land to the north west of Saunders Lane) and GB14 (Land adjacent to Hook Hill Lane, Hook Heath)

I strongly object to the proposal for housing on all of the above sites. The main reason for my objection is the removal of Green Belt boundaries, without the consideration of Brownfield sites. There has yet to be an independently verified evidence to demonstrate that Woking Borough Council has exhausted Brownfield sites for development in its Plan. This point links in with National Policy which states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in “exceptional circumstance” which has not been proved by Woking Borough 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”. The proposed Plans would be inappropriate development as they act as fundamental physical separation between Woking, Mayford and Guildford. 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 merging of Woking and Guildford.

In terms of the The Green Belt Boundary Review it incorrectly states that “Woking is not considered to be a town that has a particular strong historical character”, however it fails to identify that Mayford has a strong history and is first mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086. 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.

The Green Belt Boundary Review also excluded consideration of land relating to Special Protection Area (SPA) specifically to Prey Heath and Smarts Heath which are SSIs and are designated by Bird Life International as “Important Bird Areas” and therefore should be subject to Special Protection Area policies. It should be noted that the Mayford Village Society is currently pursuing the inclusion of Prey Heaths and Smarts Heath into the Thames Basin Heaths SPA which if successful, will result in a 400m development buffer zone within which development is not allowed. The land North of Saunders Lane should not be considered for development as it includes “Escarpments and Rising Ground of Landscape Importance” (1999 Local Plan Policy NE7 - referred to as CS24 in the Woking 2027 submission). The Green Belt Boundary Review proposes to change boundaries without a Landscape Character Assessment, which not only questions the validity of the Review but also suggests why areas of landscape importance NE7/CS24 have been ignored.

The Green Belt Review also 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. The Green Belt Boundary Review also recommends Mayford for the proposal on the basis of the ease of access to Woking Town Centre, using estimations from Google Maps (7 minutes) to travel from Mayford to Woking. However, at peak hours the actual travel time can be over half an hour, and with the proposed construction this would only increase the time spent travelling. Traffic is gridlocked in the Village at peak hours and would only be further exacerbated from the proposed 550 new homes being built on Mayford's boundary at Willow Reach and Kingsmoor Park. Mayford was also recommended by the Green Belt Boundary Review because of its close proximity to a “Local Centre”, this brings in to question the validity of the Review as Mayford has no supporting infrastructure in the form of shops, doctors, dentist, medical facilities or

schools just a Post Office and Barbers. Without a vehicle, residents living on any major development in the Village would be isolated unless they have a vehicle.

This brings me on to my next point regarding the impact of the proposed housing development. Mayford has a very poor road network, with many of the roads being narrow and the majority being unlit at night and few with pedestrian footpaths. The three single line bridges in the village would be unable to handle additional traffic, with or without development. The B380 road outside the Post Office has to be repaired regularly due to traffic, further development would see this road become dangerous to not only cyclists but also damage cars and other vehicles. The public transport system in Mayford is poor, with a limited bus service and Worplesdon Train Station being inaccessible without car as there are unlit pedestrian footpaths leading to and away from the station. There appears to be no consideration to the impact on Mayford's infrastructure that the increased population will result in. There are no plans to upgrade the roads, railway bridges nor implement any solutions to deal with the existing traffic problems on Egley Road.

Please reconsider your proposal as what is currently planned will have a devastating impact not only on the environment with relation to wildlife on our protected Heaths (Smarts Heath and Prey Heath), but also on the infrastructure, lack of public services and also to the character of the historical village. Please also refer to the response by the Mayford Village Society who I am happy also to represent my views.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Oliver Eden