

**Rosedene
Blackbridge Road
Hook Heath
Woking
Surrey
GU22 0DN**

29 July 2015

The Planning Officer
Woking Borough Council
Civic Offices
Gloucester Square
Woking
GU21 6YL

Dear Sir,

Re: Woking 2027 SADPD Consultation: Green Belt Site References:

GB10 (Land to the north east of Saunders Lane, between Saunders Lane and Hook Hill Lane, Mayford GU22 0NN)

GB11 (Land to the north west of Saunders Lane, Mayford, GU22 0NN)

GB14 (Land adjacent to Hook Hill Lane, Hook Heath, GU22 0PS)

I am writing to register my objection to the proposed removal of areas GB10, GB11 and GB14 from the Green Belt and to proposals to build houses on parcels GB10 and GB11 post 2027. (I make no comment with regard to parcel GB8 - Hoe Valley School, Egley Road - which is currently the subject of a detailed planning application in contradiction to what is said at p296 of the SADPD.)

My reasons for objecting are:

Parcel GB14:

The proposal to release this parcel of land from the Green Belt for “green infrastructure” seems totally unnecessary. The land is Green Belt, the primary purpose of which is to preserve permanent openness between settlements. So what does “green infrastructure” achieve that Green Belt does not? I cannot see that the designation “green infrastructure” improves the concept and permanent preservation of openness;

Parcels GB10 and GB11:

The proposal to release these two parcels of land for future residential development post 2027 appears to be ill founded. The draft SADPD proposal is based on the Green Belt Review Report prepared by Peter Brett Associates (the Report) and published in 2014. In my view the Report is an unsound basis for the release of Green Belt contained in the draft SADPD. Green Belt is Green Belt and as such, can only be released in “exceptional circumstances”. The Report includes no evidence of “exceptional circumstances” to justify release. Because of the importance Government attaches to Green Belt, a review of such

land for development should be thorough and transparent with robust evidence to demonstrate “exceptional circumstances” for release. The Report is neither robust nor transparent as regards GB10 and GB11; in fact the Report offers little to support the release of the two parcels. For example, there has been no detailed landscape character assessment of the parcels and no transport infrastructure assessment. Evidence based on such assessments would be the minimum requirement before a decision on the very important matter of release of Green Belt land could even be considered.

The Report acknowledges that a landscape character assessment was beyond the scope of the Report; oddly, the Report claims that a “preliminary assessment of the landscape character of the parcels has been carried out” but admits that the “preliminary assessment” is not offered to support release of the parcels from the Green Belt. As regards a transport infrastructure assessment, the nearest the Report gets is a reference to travel times between local centres based on Google maps! This is totally unsatisfactory as evidence to support the release of the land from the Green Belt.

Safeguarded Green Belt Land 2027 – 2040:

As part of the Core Strategy 2012, the release of Green Belt land for the provision of 550 dwellings in the period 2022 – 2027 was agreed at inspection. There is no argument with that. The Core Strategy made no reference to the prospect of 1,200 additional dwellings after 2027, many of which would be built on GB10 and GB11. It is plain wrong for WBC to use the SADPD to change the Green Belt boundary (allegedly to a new defensible boundary) to facilitate the provision of 1,200 dwellings. Development of this magnitude requires a comprehensive and properly evidenced Green Belt review in 2027 to be considered on its merits at that time. Safeguarding may be prudent, but the prospect of 1,200 additional dwellings in the guise of safeguarding would be an abuse of the “exceptional circumstances” requirement for the release of Green Belt and disrespect to the concept of permanence of the existing Green Belt.

Yours faithfully

G B Griffiths