

Colin Hall,
15 Saunders Copse,
Mayford,
Woking,
Surrey,
GU22 0NS



Dear Sirs,

Regarding: Woking 2027 DPD Consultation

I have lived in Mayford for approximately 14 years, having moved here with my wife who was born in Mayford, and whose parents still live in the village. I 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.

* Currently, Woking's Traveller sites are concentrated in one part of the Borough – Hatchington, Burdenshott Road (one mile from Ten Acre Farm), Ten Acre Farm, Mayford, and Brookwood Lye (three miles from Ten Acre Farm). Mayford already provides a major contribution towards the Traveller Community. There is no justification for further expansion in Mayford.

* Additionally, Ten Acre farm is adjacent to Smarts Heath Common, an SSSI, used by residents of Mayford for leisure purposes. Any increase in the present Traveller site of five caravans at 10 Acre Farm would decrease the visual amenity and character of the area and also increase risk to wildlife due to increased number of domestic animals in close proximity.

* Traveller sites should have safe and reasonable access to schools, shops, employment and other local facilities. Smarts Heath Road does not meet this criteria.

Site References:

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)

I strongly object to the proposal for housing on all of the above sites.

National Planning Policy Factors:

- * National Policy states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in “exceptional circumstances” – this has not been proved by Woking Council, especially as Policy clearly states that “housing need does not justify the harm done to the Green Belt by inappropriate development.”
- * No evidence (independently verified) has been produced to demonstrate that Woking Council has exhausted Brownfield sites for development in its Plan
- * The Green Belt Review incorrectly dismissed the Green Belt Purpose “To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns” stating that “Woking is not considered to be a town that has a particularly strong historical character” – however Mayford does have a strong history and is mentioned in the Domesday Book.
- * Green Belt land in Mayford is fundamental to the physical separation of Woking and Guildford
- * There is only two miles between the Mayford roundabout and Slyfield, which results in a high risk of coalescence between Woking and Guildford should Mayford develop further.
- * Woking Council openly states that it considers land available for development (for example owned by the Council or a Developer) as more “viable” for removal from the Green Belt – the ownership status of land has no bearing on whether it should be Green Belt or not.

Landscape and Environmental Factors:

- * 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.

* Land relating to Special Protection Areas (including a 400m buffer) was excluded from consideration of the Green Belt Review to protect endangered birds. Prey Heath and Smarts Heath are SSSIs (Special Sites of Scientific Interest) and are designated by Bird Life International as “Important Bird Areas” and therefore should also have buffers applied for the same reason.

* The Mayford Village Society is currently pursuing the inclusion of Prey Heath and Smarts Heath into the Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Special Protection Area) which, if successful, will result in a 400m development buffer zone within which development is not allowed.

* Land North of Saunders Lane includes “Escarpments and Rising Ground of Landscape Importance” (1999 Local Plan Policy NE7 –referred to as CS24 in the Woking 2027 submission) and therefore should not be considered for development.

* The Green Belt Review proposes to change boundaries without a Landscape Character Assessment – this questions the validity of the Review and suggests why areas of landscape importance NE7/CS24 have been ignored.

* Areas of Mayford are recommended to be released from the Green Belt on the basis of “creating a defensible Green Belt boundary” – “strong” boundaries are considered to be motorways, district roads, railway lines, rivers, prominent physical features, protected woodlands – the proposed changes would in fact make a weaker boundary due to removal of the escarpment

* The Green Belt Review 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.

* Mayford is a key area for the absorption of rainwater to alleviate flooding. Developing on the land proposed will increase surface water and increase flood risk to surrounding properties.

Infrastructure Factors:

* The Green Belt Review recommended Mayford on the basis of the ease of access to Woking Town Centre, stating that it takes 7 minutes to travel from Mayford to Woking. The report acknowledged that this was estimated using Google Maps timings. At peak hours the actual travel time can be over half an hour.

* Mayford has a very poor road network. Roads are narrow and most are unlit at night with few pedestrian footpaths. Traffic is gridlocked in the Village at peak hours. This will be further adversely affected by traffic from 550 new homes being built on Mayford’s boundary at Willow Reach and Kingsmoor Park. The proposed school for Egley Road will further exacerbate this situation.

* Mayford has a poor public transport system with limited bus services. You cannot realistically live in Mayford without a car, and there are too many of them already on the roads in Mayford. Roads at peak time are already gridlocked, causing pollution and inconvenience

* Worplesdon Station is inaccessible with unlit pedestrian footpaths leading to and away from the station.

* There are three single line bridges, two with traffic lights in the village. Those on Smarts Heath Road and Hook Hill Lane service the area proposed to be developed - neither could handle additional traffic. The third services Worplesdon Network Rail station which would notice a major increase in congestion.

* The Green Belt Review recommended Mayford on the basis of proximity to a "Local Centre", however, other than a Post Office and Barbers, Mayford has no supporting infrastructure in the form of shops, doctors, dentists, medical facilities, or schools. Residents living on any major development in the Village would be isolated unless they have a vehicle.

Please also refer to the response by the Mayford Village Society who I am happy also to represent my views

Yours sincerely,

Colin Hall