

Resident objection to planning proposals - EG Harris

Sent: 31 July 2015 11:55

To: Planning Policy

Mrs EG Harris
Ladywood House
Pond Road
Hook Heath
Woking
Surrey GU22 0NS
31 July 2015

Dear Sirs,

Re: Woking 2027 DPD Consultation and in particular to 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)

As a resident of Hook Heath since 1969 and Woking since 1964, I am writing to register my objection to the removal of areas GB10, GB11 and GB14 from the Green Belt and to proposals to build houses on parcels GB10 and GB11 post 2027.

My main reasons for objecting are that the proposals are incompatible with National Planning Policy. National Policy states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in “exceptional circumstances” and there is no evidence that Woking Council has exhausted Brownfield sites for development in its Plan. In addition, Mayford does have a strong history and is mentioned in the Domesday Book and so development should be avoided 'To preserve the setting and special character of historic town'. Moreover, Green Belt land in Mayford is fundamental to the physical separation of Woking, Mayford 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. Of equal significance are landscape and environmental factors. The Green Belt Review was inconsistent in its approach as it identified areas of land not to be considered but then proceeded to recommend land that contained these constraints, of which Mayford was one. 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. 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. There are also major concerns over inadequate infrastructure. 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, with traffic from the Wych Hill Roundabout to the Mayford Roundabout. Mayford itself 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.

Motorists already use roads through Hook Heath to avoid the congestion at Mayford and the number doing this will increase as a result of new housing. The housing developments between Hook Heath Road and Saunders Lane will also increase the traffic through Hook Heath, as new residents would drive up Hook Heath Road to avoid the gridlock at the junction of Saunders Lane and Smarts Heath Road by the bridge. Hook Heath and Mayford have a poor public transport system with limited bus services.

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.

For the above reasons, it is vital that Woking Borough Council reviews its planning proposals for these sites.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs EG Harris