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Surrey
GU22 0DF



Jeni Jackson
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29 July 2015

Dear Ms Jackson,

**Site Allocations Development Plan Document: Reg. 18 Consultation
Housebuilding and other uses in the Green Belt - GB7, 8, 9, 10, 11**

I learnt of this intended appalling development less than 2 weeks ago. One evening there was a knock at my door. Neighbours from Hillside were alerting Old Hill residents to what was being proposed by Woking Borough Council, and all the implications.

Since the vast majority of those who will be potentially affected - in this case, the entire Mayford and Hook Heath communities - have not been properly consulted, I suggest this entire application is, in fact, **illegal** because the correct procedures have not been followed, nor has the correct consultation period of 6 weeks been allowed. A worrying measure of the incompetence of the Planning Department. I have written to Mr Lord, MP, asking him to intervene.

It goes without saying that not a single resident in the entire area - myself included - is in favour of this massive development, which - to add insult to injury - will destroy designated Green Belt.

The National Planning Framework states:

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open: the essential characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and permanence.

Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances...

The following is Woking Borough Council's own published position on Mayford and the restrictions imposed on any potential development:

ABOUT MAYFORD AND SUTTON GREEN

The Mayford and Sutton Green area lies in the south of the Borough. The area is generally rural and open in character. The majority of the area is designated as Green Belt to ensure there is a **significant gap between the built-up areas of Woking and Guildford**. The Green Belt contains a variety of rural land uses, including agriculture, open recreation (golf courses), ecological and environmental sites, together with **isolated and low-density housing**.

The focus of the Local Plan for this area is on protecting the environment and ensuring that any new development is in keeping with the existing character and Green Belt status of the area. Only very limited types of building will be permitted in the Green Belt, with development of a modest scale, appropriate to the area permitted in the small non-Green Belt area. Important ecological, environmental and heritage sites will be protected. A number of special policies are included to protect the landscape of the River Wey, Sutton Plan and the Hook Heath escarpment.

GREEN BELT

There are substantial development pressures exerted on open land which both threatens the character of the area and could prejudice Green Belt purposes. Local Plan policies:

- protect the Green Belt areas from new building for purposes other than agriculture and outdoor recreation in order to protect its open character (GRB1)
- only allow residential infilling of suitable small gaps within the defined area in Mayford Village (GRB4)
- allow the conversion of existing buildings in the Green Belt to other uses which protect its open character and do not harm the amenity of the area (GRB3)

The above - your words, not mine - is all about 'protection', 'character', 'in-keeping development', 'limited development', etc... It would seem that you, the Protectors, are now intent on 'prejudicing Green Belt purposes'...!!

The proposal to take land out of the Green Belt on Egley Road and between Hook Heath and Saunders Lane to build high-density housing (presumably this will include high-rise flats) clearly contravenes your own stated policies for this area.

Further, the proposal:

- is out of character with the area
- is unsustainable with the existing infrastructure
- will destroy the boundary between the town and the village which the Green Belt was intended to protect

How do the above sit with your statement: "*It is important that the development complements that of other Mayford allocated and safeguarded sites, to ensure effective integration and sustainable development*"? 'Safeguarded' - from what? 'Sustainable' - I think not! These are just meaningless, weasel words.

Woking is limited for development by the Basingstoke Canal, the Hoe stream and its flood plain, the Wey navigation and the Green Belt.

The problems arising from increased traffic congestion are self-evident.

Then there is the problem of **flooding**. The proposed development will inevitably involve the felling of many trees and the laying of mountains of concrete which, as the land slopes steeply from Saunders Lane up to Hook Hill, will result in the flooding of roads and homes at times of heavy rain. Such major construction will involve major earth movements. Can you explain exactly where excess flood water will land up - remembering that, as it is, Old Woking has flooded more than once?

Concerning the proposed school/leisure centre construction: an 800 metre 'cordon sanitaire' must, by law, be sited around leisure sites (ref. the proposed Leisure Centre, et al, construction). So, siting houses here will breach that space.

It is clear from the above that WBC has not been able to assess the situation properly and the risks/consequences of their proposals.

It is further absolutely clear they do not care about:

- the people affected by these proposals
- or the environment
- or the infrastructure
- or the Green Belt
- or the inevitable massive traffic problems

Clearly, they just don't care...

So, finally, to the crux of the matter: what DO WBC care about?

The real truth, it would seem, underlying the entire Mayford/Sheerwater project is WBC's colossal debt, the existence of which does, of course, beg many questions. I am given to understand this debt mountain has now reached staggering proportions (£700 million+). It is a debt currently serviced by some 70,000 residents. So, more people are needed to tax - lots and lots more people. People need houses.

Here, I suggest, is what WBC REALLY care about: the anticipated benefit, not to the community, but to their ailing coffers...! The generally-held suspicion is that this single fact will drive and dominate the entire project, and all legitimate concerns will be cast aside.

Most worrying of all, however, is the fact that you, Woking Borough Council, are intending to force the people of Sheerwater (nearly 700 of them) out of their homes through Compulsory Purchase. This is a clear breach of Human Rights. It is a measure of your desperation - and proof, were it needed, that you do not care one wit for people. What sort of monsters are you that you are prepared to inflict such suffering on so many people - that you are willing to stoop to this evil act in order - we're told - to 'execute your vision' for the area? This is beyond belief.

What else is being planned, I wonder? What further horrors are waiting in the wings?

God, help us!

Sincerely,


Mary Kingston

