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The Planning Policy Team  
Woking Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Gloucester Square  
Woking  
Surrey GU21 6YL



30th July 2015

Dear Sirs

### **Woking 2027 DPD Consultation**

**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)**

**GB14 (Land adjacent to Hook Hill Lane, Hook Heath)**

I have lived in Woking for 54 years, 24 of which were spent in Ridge Close on the borders of Mayford and Hook Heath and my parents continue to live there. My parents moved to Ridge Close in 1960 and chose this location because of its peaceful rural setting, surrounded by fields and woodland. Indeed their garden backs on to one of the fields earmarked for development. If development goes ahead on any of these sites, Mayford will become an urban suburb of Woking and will lose its unique village character. This should be protected as Mayford village has a strong history and is mentioned in the Domesday book.

In addition to personal interest, I am strongly opposed to the Council's proposals to release the above-mentioned sites from Green Belt and to allow development of any kind on them for the following reasons:

- Green Belt is meant to protect towns from merging. Green Belt land in Mayford is fundamental to the physical separation of Woking, Mayford and Guildford.
- National Planning Policy states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in 'exceptional circumstances' - this has not been proved by Woking Council, especially as the policy clearly states that 'housing need, including traveller sites, does not justify the harm done to the Green Belt by inappropriate development'. I understand that the Council is not following guidance produced by central government in October 2014 but from recommendations made by a Green Belt Review undertaken by Peter Brett Associates.
- No independent evidence has been produced to demonstrate that Woking Council has exhausted Brownfield sites for development in its Plan.
- Woking Council openly states that it considers land available for development ie. owned by the Council or a developer 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. Most of the land detailed above is owned by Martin Grant Homes and it would no doubt be a very lucrative deal for the Council if the land was released from its Green Belt status. It would also be an

easy way for the Council to fulfil its requirements concerning the National Plan for housing without the need to attract, engage and negotiate with potential developers.

- 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.
- Areas of Mayford are recommended to be released from 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 and protected woodlands. The proposed changes would in fact make a weaker boundary due to the removal of the escarpment.
- The Green Belt Review proposes to change boundaries without a Landscape Character Assessment. This questions the validity of the Review and why have areas of landscape importance NE7/CS24 been ignored ?
- 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. Currently, Egley Road and Hook Hill Lane flood when there is heavy rain. In 2006 my car was written off at the Hook Hill Lane bridge due to flood water after a heavy downpour. The field between Hook Hill lane and Saunders Lane floods on a regular basis.
- The Green Belt Review recommended Mayford on the ease of access to Woking town centre. Traffic is currently gridlocked in the village at peak hours as is Woking town centre. This will be further adversely affected by traffic from 550 new homes under construction on Mayford's boundary at Willow Reach and Kingsmoor Park. The proposed school and leisure complex for Egley Road will further exacerbate the situation. Egley Road is a dangerous road and there have been a number of serious accidents over the years. There are no plans to reduce the speed limit.
- Mayford has a very poor road network and I understand there are no plans to update the infrastructure. Roads are narrow and most of them are unlit at night with very few footpaths which poses a danger for pedestrians. There are three single line bridges, two with traffic lights in the village and neither could handle additional traffic. Hook Hill Lane is already used as an alternative route for drivers. The third services Worplesdon railway station. Prey Heath Road will become extremely dangerous and congested and those on foot will be walking on the road as there are no pavements.
- Increased volumes in traffic will result in significant raised levels of air pollution.
- Mayford has no supporting infrastructure in the form of shops, doctors, dentists, medical facilities or schools apart from Barnsbury Primary School. The Green Belt Review recommended Mayford on the basis of proximity to to a 'Local Centre'. The local centre has a Post Office and barbers ! It is already very difficult to obtain a doctor's appointment within a reasonable timescale. What would it be like with 619 additional houses in Mayford ? The proposed development will place huge pressures on existing hospitals in the area and their services are already stretched.
- Access to support and care at home for older or disabled residents will prove almost impossible and we have an ageing population.

- Residents living on any major development in the village would be isolated unless they had a vehicle as there is a poor public transport system with limited bus services.

Please reconsider your plans for, as you will see from my comments, Mayford is not the location for 619 new houses and should remain a village with Green Belt protection.

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

Yours faithfully

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Mary Eileen Kirkman