

Response to Woking 2027 DPD Consultation

Charlotte Maidment [REDACTED]

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To: Planning Policy

FROM: Charlotte and Robin Maidment

Email: [REDACTED]

Tel: [REDACTED]

Oak Ridge

Hook Heath Rd

Woking

GU22 0LF

30 July 2015

Dear Sirs,

Re: Woking 2027 DPD Consultation and in particular to site references:

GB8 (Nurse 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, 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)

SHLAASJHH044 Land to the rear of Hook Heath Road, Hook Heath, GU22 0LF

As residents of Hook Heath we are writing to register our strong objections to the removal of areas GB8, GB9, GB10, GB11 and GB14 from the Green Belt and to proposals to build on parcels GB8, GB9, GB10 and GB11 now or in the future. We are also writing to register our strong objection to the removal of SHLAASJHH044 from the Green Belt.

Our reasons for objecting are:

1) Urban Sprawl will be increased

All of the sites listed above are in the Green Belt. They also form part of the Green Belt boundary to stop the urban sprawl of Woking Borough spreading southwards towards Guildford. The fundamental aim of the green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl, by keeping land permanently open and free from inappropriate development.

In amongst the 418 page document called "allocationsdraftdpdsingle.pdf" references are made to name Saunders Lane as the 'new' Green Belt boundary for Woking. The Green Belt boundaries are already in place and in our view should not be re-drawn for the very reason that the Green Belt was established in the first place.

Please look at the Green Belt interactive map available on the Daily Telegraph website. The government issued the data for this map and despite being from 2011, it is still very relevant today – an up to date map would needless to say just show more grey urban areas. (www .

telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/greenpolitics/planning/9708387/interactive-map-Englands-green-belt).

The Woking Borough urbanization already adds enough to the urban sprawl from London starting up at Byfleet in the North East edge of the Borough and providing a solid South Westerly urban jungle all the way through to Brookwood.

The DPD consultation refers to 'green corridors'. As you can clearly see from the interactive map there are certainly no protected 'green belt corridors' in Woking. The urbanization is solid all the way from Byfleet down to Brookwood. There are no protected corridors from the northern side of Woking Borough urban areas to the southern side.

On page 299 (from a total of 418 pages of the file called 'allocationsdraftdpdsingle.pdf') you state that 'Development of this site would not adversely affect the integrity of the escarpment'. We totally disagree. The development of this site will **TOTALLY ADVERSELY AND IRREVERSIBLY AFFECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE ESCARPMENT**. With the development of these sites the Escarpment will all but disappear from the majority of viewpoints. Trying to pretend that all of this development will not have an impact on the environment, the landscape, pollution levels and the people who have lived in this area for years is completely irresponsible. It will have a disastrous, irreversible impact.

2) No notice taken of Woking Borough Council's own strategy

Woking Core Strategy policy CS24 requires that:

All development proposals will provide a positive benefit in terms of landscape and townscape character, and local distinctiveness and will have regard to landscape character areas.

To protect local landscape and townscape character, development will be expected to:

- conserve, and where possible enhance existing character, especially key landscapes such as heathlands, escarpments and the canal/river network and settlement characteristics; maintain locally valued features, and enhance or restore deteriorating features.

What is the point of having a strategy if a few years from when the strategy was agreed and implemented by all, it is then ignored? The Hook Heath Escarpment should be protected from ALL development, as was the intention of the Woking Core Strategy.

It would be interesting to know the number of planning applications where CS24 has been used to prevent such developments.

3) Serious flaws in the Green Belt Review

The review of the Green Belt took place with no consultation yet it is being used as the main justification for these very important decisions.

The review states that these sites are recommended on the basis of their proximity to a 'Local Centre'. The nearest 'Local Centre' is currently the Mayford Post Office and a Barbers, otherwise you have to use a car to drive into Woking town centre. There is NO other supporting infrastructure in the form of shops, doctors, dentists, medical facilities or schools, 'nearby'. The conclusion goes on to say that land will also need to be developed to include a local centre (presumably because the mentioned centre was not deemed adequate) – so all of the above will also have to be built as well as the housing. Not forgetting the new 'retail park' suggested for where Wyevale garden centre is currently situated.

4) The transport infrastructure will be overloaded

Currently the local transport infrastructure is already heavily congested during the morning and evening rush hours, and in fact it is pretty much constant all day and until the early hours of the morning along the Egley Road. We should know because we can hear it despite living further away from the road. The additional traffic from all of the proposed new houses, a new retail park, a new school and a new leisure centre will add to the currently overloaded local transport infrastructure. The additional congestion will certainly not add to any appeal to visit Woking.

5) No exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated for 1200 new houses

Woking Borough Council have not demonstrated any exceptional need for an additional 1200 house and indeed this is not even required in the Woking Core Strategy. We believe that Woking Borough Council should be arguing that the green belt is important and preventing all future requirements to build on such land.

6) Impact on Mayford village

The DPD consultation has not taken into consideration the impact of these proposals on the unique and historic village of Mayford. The developments would fill in all the open spaces between Mayford and Woking. Mayford will simply become a suburb of Woking losing it's own identity and character.

7) Wildlife

I have made donations to the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) for more than 25 years of my life. We find it totally ironic that Woking is happy to welcome the prestigious WWF headquarters to Woking town with open arms, but then it is willing to wipe out acres of precious wildlife habitat.

Every effort should be made to help nature recover from the decline that for decades has been the staple diet of scientific studies and new stories. The wildlife and natural processes need to have space to thrive beyond the designated nature reserves and other protected sites. Wildlife sites across the County face the constant threat of encroachment by new development.

There is a family of Buzzards that live on the Hook Heath Escarpment. The buzzard is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which makes it an offence to kill, injure or take a buzzard or to take damage or destroy an active nest or its contents.

The nesting territory of a pair of Buzzards contains several alternative nest sites but up to 14 nest sites have been recorded. The breeding success depends largely on a good food supply and a lack of interference from humans either illegal or accidental. Human interference causes up to half of nest failures. (Ref: RSBP)

The removal of any trees in these sites will destroy the Buzzards habitat. Any development on these sites will destroy the Buzzards habitat and food supply. They will die from starvation.

We trust that the above objections, together with all of the objections raised, will be taken fully into account and that Woking Borough Council will reconsider their proposals which will have a devastating impact on the area and Woking Borough as a whole.

Yours faithfully

Charlotte and Robin Maidment