

Woking 2027 DPD Consultation

Ruth Miles [REDACTED]

Sent: 21 July 2015 13:37

To: Planning Policy

Dear Sirs,

I am a resident and home owner in Egley Drive, Mayford where I have lived for the past 17 years. My family has lived in Mayford and Prey Heath since at least the 1870s.

I have been made aware of the Woking 2027 planning proposals that will impact Mayford and I am responding to the DPD consultation. The specific site references that I wish to comment on are

GB7 (Ten Acre Farm, Smarts Heath Road)

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 strongly object to your proposals for ALL THE ABOVE specific sites in Mayford and Prey Heath as I am extremely concerned about the general effect on our historic Mayford village and the adverse impact on the lives of the people who live here.

The proposed housing will fill in any green space between Mayford and Woking, thereby turning Mayford into a suburb of Woking and increasing greatly the risk of merging of Woking and Guildford – the whole purpose of the Green Belt. There appears to have been no consideration for preserving Mayford as a separate settlement to Woking, nor the impact on the character of the Village.

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 – including for Traveller sites – does not justify the harm done to the Green Belt by inappropriate development.”

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, Mayford and Guildford – this is incorrectly classified only as “important” in the Green Belt Review. No evidence (independently verified) has been produced to demonstrate that Woking Council has exhausted Brownfield sites for development in its Plan.

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.

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.

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 also appears to have been no consideration to the impact on Mayford’s infrastructure that the increased population will result in. Mayford has a very poor road network. Roads are narrow and most are unlit at night with few pedestrian footpaths. It is already not easy to exit Egley Drive onto Egley Road due to the amount of existing traffic. I note that there are no plans to deal with the existing traffic problems on Egley Road. Houses cannot just be built in areas that have no supporting infrastructure as there will be gridlock.

Prey Heath Road will become very dangerous as increased traffic to Worplesdon station will be weaving around people walking on the road (as there are no pavements).

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 VERY limited bus services.

Worplesdon Station is inaccessible with unlit pedestrian footpaths leading to and away from the station. And Prey Heath road has no footpaths and is quite narrow, so it is dangerous for pedestrians.

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 (males only), 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.

With particular regard to Site References GB7 and GB8:-

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. I personally use this common regularly for running and walking. 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. Over the years successive

Planning Inspectors have refused applications on this site because they reduce the openness of a Green Belt area.

Site References: GB8 (Nursery land adjacent to Egley Road)

I strongly object to the proposal to build houses on this land. This land has an area of woodland in the southern end that lies between Egley Drive and the railway line. The trees not only act as a sound and visual screen between my house and the railway, it supports a lot of local wildlife. Please DO NOT build houses on this haven of natural beauty.

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.

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

Yours sincerely,
Ms Ruth Miles,
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