

'Red Roofs'
Hook Heath Road
Woking, Surrey
GU22 0QF



27th July 2015

The Planning Officer
Civic Offices
Gloucester Square
Woking Civic Offices
Woking, Surrey

To whom it may concern

We are writing with regard to the current public consultation regarding The Draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document and specifically the areas affected in the vicinity of Hook Heath and Mayford commonly referred to as The Escarpment – the area between Hook Heath & Mayford north of Saunders Lane.

We would like to register our significant and deep concerns on the hugely negative and damaging proposals that are being put forward with regards to the area in Hook Heath & Mayford concerning the land areas designated for development denoted by the codes GB10 & GB11 for a proposed 500 homes.

We would strongly recommend that these particular pockets of land do not have their green belt status removed, and in fact, become designated an area of publicly accessible green open space – in effect a natural country park.

- Given the numerous prominent government and independent reports that have recently stressed the huge value of green open public spaces, specifically regarding dramatically improved well being of health, both mental and physical, as well as the huge community benefits, and the monetary savings on the already over burdened NHS, the classification of the land GB10 & GB11 to become open public green space seems to make perfect sense.

- Furthermore, given the significant lack of acknowledged open public green spaces in South Woking, it seems the perfect opportunity for Woking Borough Council (WBC) to preserve the areas of Hook Heath & Mayford, whilst safeguarding public green open space for all to enjoy, rather than building a high density of low quality homes in the area.

- The purpose and definition of The Green Belt is to prevent needless urban sprawl and maintain essential open spaces, woodland and character between towns and villages. The current proposals particularly regarding GB11, GB10 and GB14 do exactly the opposite. In effect merging Mayford and Hook Heath with Woking itself.

- The National Planning Policy clearly states the release of land from the Green Belt should only take place Under Exceptional Circumstances. WBC within its own Core Strategy document states the need to find sites in The Green Belt for 550 homes from 2022-2027, but with the packets of land GB11, GB10, GB14 it aims to use these to meet the needs of building an additional 1200 homes from 2027-2040. This need to plan to 2040 is not yet defined and it most certainly is not based on firm evidence that states land is required within The Green Belt to build another 1200 homes. WBC has not demonstrated any exceptional need for this number of dwellings or in fact any other number in The Green belt post 2027.

- In summary, whilst we recognise the need for WBC to plan into the future and accommodate the growing need for affordable and quality character long term housing within the borough, the current proposals seen in detail and in the context of the surrounding area of Hook Heath & Mayford, seem to have been made in complete contradiction of National Planning Policy. The proposals have at their core a deep disregard and seemingly wanton desire to significantly reduce The Green Belt, build over essential green public open spaces and woodland and destroy the character of Hook Heath & Mayford.

- For all the above we would urge you to consider land areas GB10 & GB11 to be classified as a publicly accessible open green space for the community and safeguard its immediate and long term future against development.

Yours sincerely

C.W. Miller & B.C. Miller