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GU22 0HW

30th July 2015

Woking Borough Council,  
Civic Offices,  
Gloucester Square,  
Woking,  
Surrey,  
GU21 6YL

sent by email and post

Dear Sirs,

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

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)

As a resident of Hook Heath I am writing to register my objection to the removal of areas GB10, GB11 and GB14 from the Green Belt and to proposals to build houses on parcels GB10 and GB11 post 2027.

I have studied the plans closely and whilst I understand the need for more housing I believe that more should and could be done by Woking Council to find alternatives to simply annexing a large swathe of green belt land which will have a detrimental effect on the environment for all residents. Many people such as myself have escaped from living in an urban environment to live in Surrey with abundant green spaces, less population density and significantly less pollution. The areas proposed are not scrub land nor poor arable land but provide a vital amenity for all residents. These planned proposals will have a very negative impact on us all and contradict what was the stated ethos of the councils planning policy.

Hook Heath Residents Association have outlined very clearly relevant objections with which I concur and therefore I repeat them here.

## **My reasons for objecting are:**

### **1) Urban sprawl will be increased**

The purpose of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl and to maintain the open spaces between individual towns and villages. The current proposals to build on the open land that separates Hook Heath from Mayford and Mayford from Woking do just the opposite.

### **2) No exceptional circumstances demonstrated for 1200 houses**

National planning policy allows the release of land from the Green Belt only in exceptional circumstances. The Woking Core Strategy requires WBC to find sites in the Green Belt for 550 homes in the period 2022-2027, but WBC has gone further than required by identifying sites for an additional 1200 homes in the period 2027-2040. While it may be sensible to look further ahead than the current core strategy, the exceptional circumstances rule still applies. WBC has not demonstrated any exceptional need for 1200 houses, nor indeed any other number, in the Green Belt around Woking post 2027. WBC should be arguing that the green belt is important and resisting future requirements to build on this land.

### **3) No notice taken of WBC'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.

This proposal takes no notice of this requirement

### **4) Flaws in the Green Belt Review**

The main justification for the decisions is the green belt review on which there was no consultation.

Flaws include:

These sites were recommended on the basis of their proximity to a "Local Centre". However, other than a nearby Post Office and barbers, there is no supporting infrastructure in the form of shops, doctors, dentists, medical facilities, or schools. Residents living in these major developments will be isolated unless they have a vehicle.

It claimed these sites were 'sustainable' on the basis of Google travel times – taken outside the rush hour and hence hopelessly optimistic.

### **5) The transport infrastructure will be overloaded**

Local transport infrastructure, particularly the Egley Road, is heavily congested during the morning and evening rush hours. It will not be able to cope with the additional traffic that several new housing estates, a retail park and a school will place on it.

### **6) The density of housing is not compatible with the surroundings**

The proposed housing densities of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) on the Saunders Lane sites GB10 and GB11 are grossly excessive when compared to the average density of 5.5 dph in Hook Heath, and even less in the Fishers Hill Conservation Area.

**7) Removal of GB14 from the green belt**

The removal of GB14 from the green belt to create 'green infrastructure' is not necessary since no change of use is planned. It is in any case 'not an exceptional circumstance' which is required for land to be removed from the green belt.

I hope that the objections of the many will be listened to.

Yours faithfully

C A Perrin