

.v.J

17 Hillside

Woking

GU220NF

Tel: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Mrs Jeni Jackson Head of Planning & Planning Policy Team Woking Borough Council Woking Surrey  
GU21 6YL

27 July 2015

Dear Mrs Jackson,

Re: Woking 2027 DPD Consultation

PLAN/2015/0703 - Hoe Valley School and Leisure Centre

I understand that you are coordinating replies for the consultation on a planning application to remove land adjacent to Egley Road, GB8 (WGB020a of parcel 20) from Green Belt. I wish to object to this application and the plans to build a school and leisure facilities. We are all familiar with the underpinning rationale for the establishment of the Green Belt. I believe to take land out of Green Belt the Council is required to demonstrate exceptional circumstances beyond the need for additional school places or new facilities. Whilst I acknowledge that a review commissioned by the Council through Peter Brett Associates may well have concluded that the Egley Road site was suitable, I am not convinced that such exceptional circumstances exist or that all the alternative sites have been fully explored. In particular, I believe alternatives included Havering Farm, West Byfleet and Shey Copse have not be properly considered. Whilst these sites may have required compromises or have been more expensive these factors do not in themselves warrant exceptional circumstances. Indeed, given the purchase price of the land I would seek a reassurance that public money was being assigned in a responsible manner here and would ask to see sight of your business case to support all the alternatives, including the risk assessment for each proposition.

Lastly in relation to alternatives, I remain unconvinced that alternative brown sites (beyond the three cited above) could not offer a credible alternative to the use of Green Belt land. The re-provision of facilities at Sheerwater if that site is developed for housing brings into question why smaller (albeit less efficient) brownfield sites cannot be used for the housing requirements, noting the obvious appetite for multi-storey accommodation in Woking centre.

To the best of my knowledge the "Brett Review" was not subjected to any consultation, nor am I aware of any briefing of the findings. This brings the process into question and opens up suspicions that the application is being progressed without due process or diligence being observed. I would seek your reassurance that this is not the case.

In terms of the impact of taking this land out of Green Belt, I am clear that given the application there would be a number of significant negative impacts including traffic; physical, light and noise pollution; and the potential negative impact on the views locally. Finally, it is inconceivable that there will not be a negative impact on the local wildlife and as yet this is not quantified.

So to close. I strongly object to the application to remove the land from Green Belt and I am unconvinced that all the alternative brown field sites have been identified or examined. This brings into question the attribution of "exceptional circumstance" status which underpins this application.

I would be grateful if you could address the concerns raised above and confirm receipt of this letter by return of post.

Mr M W Poffley

Yours faithfully,