

Woking 2027 DPD Consulation - OBJECTION

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To: Planning Policy

Cc: [REDACTED]

Dr. Martin Waller,
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29th July 2015

Dear Sirs/Madams,

Regarding: Woking 2027 DPD Consultation

I have been a resident living in Prey Heath Road for 14 years and have been made aware of the Woking 2027 planning proposals that will impact Mayford and surrounding areas. My comments are not specific to any of your documents, however I will refer to the specific site references that I am concerned about:

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, Burdeshott 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. 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.

It is my opinion that, for reasons of inclusion, more effort should be made by the council to identify urban areas for Traveller sites rather than semi-rural/rural locations so they can have better access to amenities.

Site References:

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 the proposal for housing on all of the above sites.

Building on the green space between Mayford and Woking will have a disastrous effect on wildlife and the wider environment. There are Red Kites and other raptors (e.g. Buzzards) in the area (I regularly see them flying over my garden near Prey Heath) and their continued presence requires a sufficient area to support populations of rabbits and other small mammals, a key food source for these birds. The site references above are important habitats for rabbits and other wildlife that will be wiped out if this development goes ahead – resulting in loss of feeding and nesting habitats for these and other fine birds.

As a professionally qualified Entomologist, I can also vouch that the area also has a number of Nationally Scarce insects that require substantial wild areas to maintain viable populations. These include such rarities as the Small Chocolate-tip moth, Stag Beetles, Heath Banded Tiger crane fly, and many more.

The proximity of development to the protected SSSI Smarts Heath and Prey Heath will result in an environmental tragedy for which the council would bear responsibility should it allow this development to proceed. There should be a 400m buffer around these sites prohibiting development.

The 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 is already pressure to the South from proposed developments to the north of Guildford. 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.

There also appears to have been no consideration to the impact on Mayford's infrastructure that the increased population will result in. More people mean more cars and more strain on the transport infrastructure. I note that there are no plans to upgrade the roads (some of which have no pavements) or railway bridges (which are all single lane) nor robust solutions to deal with the existing traffic problems on Egley Road. Houses cannot just be built in areas that have no supporting infrastructure – 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). Furthermore, Worplesdon station is already at full capacity and the services are not frequent enough to support more demand – that the small size and infrequent service from Worplesdon station was not considered in the assessment is major and naïve oversight. Development in the site references above would only lead to a debilitating gridlock of traffic into Woking along the A320 and surrounding roads during peak hours and could even result in dangerous overcrowding at Woking railway station.

Mayford also has no significant amenities to support a population increase of the size proposed. There are no shops except a small post office with limited access near a busy and accident-prone roundabout.

Consideration has also not been adequately given to the effect on the flood-risk to Old Woking and surrounding areas of the Hoe Stream – the green areas currently act as an important buffer regulating water drainage into the catchment. Surfacing over the areas with roads and buildings will result in a greater risks of flash flooding as the water will flow more rapidly into the streams, where currently it can be contained in the ground regulating the discharge into the streams. Significant amounts are also removed by uptake from the area's vegetation - removal of this in addition to the hard-surfacing that will result from the proposed development will generate dangerous amounts of surface runoff which is likely to lead to flooding of the A320 itself as well as unsustainable extra drainage into the already strained streams and rivers.

It is my opinion that the green belt review has not been undertaken with sufficient diligence nor has it been done with a sufficiently holistic approach and I object to the proposals in the strongest possible terms.

Please reconsider your plans - what is currently planned will have a devastating impact to the environment, and the entire area between Woking and Guildford, including Mayford as a Village.

I further note the purchase of the land surrounding Havering Farm by the council, and this has not been mentioned in the green belt review. I shudder to think what plans may be being considered for that area, much of which is flood-plain, and the continued environmental damage the council seems to be bent on inflicting on this unique and rare habitat.

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

Yours sincerely,

Martin Waller, PhD