

**Woking Council Offices,
Planning & Policy Department,
Woking,
Surrey.**

**Gavin & Chrissy White
6 Hook Hill Park,
Hook Heath,
Woking,
Surrey.
GU22 0PX**

30 July 2015

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 residents of Hook Heath we write to register our objection to the removal of areas GB10, GB11 and GB14 from the Green Belt and the proposals to build houses on parcels GB10 and GB11 post 2027 as noted on WBC website.

Our objections are:

1. The Green Belt was established in order to prevent over building. In these instances the green belt exists to prevent over building and to maintain open spaces between individual towns and villages. The current proposals to build on the open land noted above are in complete contradiction to this principle.
2. National planning policy allows the release of land from the Green Belt only in exceptional circumstances. The Core Strategy requires WBC to find sites in the Green Belt for 550 homes in the period 2022-2027. However, WBC has gone further than required by identifying sites for an additional 1200 homes in the period 2027-2040. WBC has not demonstrated any exceptional need for 1200 houses, in the Green Belt around Woking post 2027. Where do all the new flats and apartments recently built in Woking town centre and close surrounding areas figure in WBC's requirements for housing?

WBC should be arguing on our behalf by stating that the green belt is important and resisting this and future requirements to build on this land and thereby not jeopardising the quality of life to the residents of Hook Heath & Mayford

3. Woking Core Strategy policy CS24 requires that:
All development proposals will provide a positive benefit in terms of landscape and townscape character, 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’.

The current proposals ignore this requirement.

4. There has been no consultation with residents living adjacent to these pockets of land to determine the main justification for the decisions to ignore current green belt legislation. As a result, the following flaws exist:

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 is claimed that these sites were ‘sustainable’ on the basis of ‘Google’ travel times – taken outside the rush hour and hence hopelessly optimistic. Anyone travelling on Egley Road during or near to ‘rush hour’ would know this – clearly the policy advisors have chosen to look at this with blinkers and hence this obvious daily problem is ignored.

5. Again, anyone living in the Woking area will be all too familiar with local traffic congestion at all times but particularly during A.M & P.M rush hour. The local transport infrastructure, particularly Egley Road, as noted above, 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. Further, the additional traffic will seek alternative routes of which Hook Hill Lane will be one as will Saunders lane. The clue is in the word “LANE” not you’ll notice “Road”. The reason for this is obvious – Hook Hill Lane and Saunders Lane were never intended for, and cannot cope with, the heavy traffic, the like of which will be generated as a result of these proposals, not to mention the fact that there will undoubtedly be a large increase in the level of traffic related accidents, particularly in Hook Hill Lane which is effectively single track in places.
6. 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. The removal of GB14 from the green belt to create ‘green infrastructure’ is not necessary since no change of use is planned, unless WBC have plans but are not publishing them at present. If WBC have no plans there can be no good reason to remove the Green Belt status.
8. In summary, we feel that WBC are not looking after its residents quality of life and are seemingly to us anyway, willfully pandering to unrealistic policy. There comes a time when the line has to be drawn and we believe this is that time.

Yours faithfully

Gavin & Chrissy White

