

## DISCUSSION NOTE: Meeting with Cllr Joss Bigmore, 18<sup>th</sup> Aug 2021

### BACKGROUND

We have requested this meeting because large-scale developments in the Horsleys, coming through one after another, are creating massive resentment amongst our local residents.

Anger is being fuelled by planning decisions which apparently give no significant weight to our adopted Neighbourhood Plans.

### GROUNDS FOR CONCERN

The four Horsley Local Plan sites are coming forward more or less together. One is under construction, two have secured planning approval and the fourth is partly submitted, partly in pre-application. In total around 500 new homes are expected to be built over the next 2-3 years. West Horsley in particular is expecting a population increase of around one third.

Residents' have two major concerns about the new developments:

- *That they will fundamentally damage the existing character of our villages; and*
- *That no new infrastructure is being provided to cope with the huge influx of people.*

### IMPACT ON CHARACTER

Plans submitted for the four Horsley sites to date all show similar housing designs for urbanised housing to be constructed within a rural setting, including features such as:

- **High housing densities** that range from 23 to 40 dph, (see Appendix below).
  - *Existing settlement area densities are 8 dph in East Horsley and 11 dph in West Horsley, reflecting the rural nature of these villages.*
- **Uniform housing designs**, which are similar for each site and also within those sites.
  - *Most roads in East & West Horsleys have homes with individual housing designs.*
- **Very high ridge heights** of 8.5 to 9.5 metres in so-called '2.5 storey' houses.
  - *Houses are being designed for third-level roof extensions as a means of circumventing the Housing Mix policies of the Local and Neighbourhood Plans.*
- **Urban features** such as street lighting, on-street parking, shared spaces, etc.
  - *Features rarely seen within existing roads across the rural Horsleys.*

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS IGNORED

Despite Neighbourhood Plan policies intended to preserve our existing village character, they are effectively being ignored by GBC planning officers who accept multiple breaches of Neighbourhood Plan policies at every allocated site, (See Appendix below).

For example, the Manor Farm application was recently approved despite breaching 6 WHNP policies, a similar number as in the Oakland Farm application now awaiting decision.

***Four large-scale urbanised developments are coming forward reminiscent of anonymous housing estates from the 1960's and 1970's, developments fundamentally out of keeping with the existing character of the Horsley villages.***

## LACK OF NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

The other major concern of residents is the lack of new infrastructure to cope with the large influx of people. Key areas of concern amongst residents are:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Primary School   | The only local primary school, the Raleigh, is already turning away Horsley pupils for the first time in its history – and this before any residents from the new sites have arrived. SCC has no plans to build or extend any new primary school within the Horsleys.   |
| Secondary School | SCC admits there is a capacity problem, but no new secondary school is planned within the wider area for at least 5 years. Nor is one planned for the Wisley airfield site. A diaspora of Horsley's youngsters looms.   |
| Medical Centre   | Currently the Horsley Medical Centre operates at full capacity. A future extension is at least 5 years away and dependent upon Wisley airfield s106 funding coming through.   |
| Road traffic     | All Horsley Local Plan sites have traffic assessments showing the road system can cope with the additional traffic from each site. But there is no analysis provided of their cumulative impact. In a previous modelling SCC estimated a 70% increase in traffic volumes through the centre of East Horsley over the next 10 years. |
| Parking          | Nobody has done any assessment of public parking impacts. In December EHPC submitted a paper to GBC's Head of Parks & Leisure proposing Kingston Meadows car park be expanded and funded from s106 contributions. Beyond an acknowledgement, we have heard nothing further, whilst the s106 funding opportunity has nearly passed.  |

***Due to the absence of an overall vision for local infrastructure, residents of the Horsleys will suffer a material deterioration of a range of key services.***

## **WHAT DO WE WANT?**

### **a) That GBC Planning Services is urgently given a re-boot**

A re-setting of decision-making parameters used to guide decision-making by GBC Planning is badly overdue. Such a re-boot should ensure that:

- Neighbourhood Plan policies are given full weight in planning assessments and not simply paid lip-service to, before being duly ignored; and
- There is a clear recognition that planning benchmarks used for urban areas are not automatically applied to rural settings, which is now apparently the case.

### **b) An interregnum for large Green Belt sites until the Local Plan review is completed**

Our proposal is that the Green Belt status of large, former Green Belt sites in Guildford borough is temporarily restored until the GBC Local Plan review has been completed.

Clearly, appropriate legal advice is needed on how this might be achieved most effectively.

Without such an interregnum, there is a real danger that historic Surrey villages such as East Horsley and West Horsley will see their character irreparably damaged through the construction of anonymous housing estates which are apparently unnecessary for meeting the housing needs of Guildford borough.

Elaine Best

Chair, West Horsley Parish Council

Robert Taylor

Chair, East Horsley Parish Council

## **APPENDIX: BACKGROUND DATA**

### **1. Local Plan sites within the Horsleys: NP policies breached**

| <b><u>Site</u></b> | <b><u>Common Name</u></b> | <b><u>Planning status</u></b> | <b><u>No. units</u></b> | <b><u>NP policies breached</u></b> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A36                | 20, The Street            | Approved, Nov 2019            | 41                      | 2 WHNP policies                    |
| A37                | Manor Farm                | Approved, July 2021           | 139                     | 6 WHNP policies                    |
| A38                | Lollesworth Fields        | Outline approval, Dec 2020    | 110                     | 4 EHNP policies                    |
| A39(a)             | Oakland Farm              | Submitted, April 2021         | 35                      | 6 WHNP policies                    |
| A39(b)             | Waterloo Farm             | Pre-application phase         | 100                     | n/a                                |

### **2. Housing density at the Horsleys' Local Plan sites**

| <b><u>Site</u></b> | <b><u>Common Name</u></b> | <b><u>No. units</u></b> | <b><u>Housing density (dph)*</u></b> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A36                | 20, The Street            | 41                      | 32                                   |
| A37                | Manor Farm                | 139                     | 28                                   |
| A38                | Lollesworth Fields        | 110                     | 40                                   |
| A39(a)             | Oakland Farm              | 35                      | 23                                   |
| A39(b)             | Waterloo Farm             | 100                     | n/a                                  |

*(NB: Calculated on the developed area, excluding SANG's & swales)*