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B1 2JB

Cleevemoor
5, Deepcut Bridge Road
Deepcut
GU16 6QX

29th December 2011

Dear Sirs

Following the exhibition held at the Deepcut Village Centre the DLG have consulted and the following are the responses of residents and the whole DLG to the DIO's plans for re-development of the Princess Royal Barracks.

We are disappointed that the DIO have not taken into account many of the discussions and agreements the Deepcut Liaison Group had with SHBC and the resulting final version (Regulation 19) of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). We are concerned that many residents were told that you have not received much of the information. I enclose a copy of the DLG's 8th June 2011 response to the SPD process and also our 9th November response on environmental issues so that you have a full, first hand, un-diluted, understanding of our position on all key issues. I will also copy all this to the relevant personnel at SHBC and John Taylor at DIO so that there can be no future miscommunication.

TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE DIO'S PLANS

In all its submissions and responses to SHBC's Core Strategy and its Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Deepcut, the Deepcut Liaison Group has consistently argued that the key issue is how the transport implications of the proposed development are dealt with. Unless credible and effective plans are produced to deal with the potentially large increases in traffic, the whole viability of the proposals is open to serious question. To date, we have formed a very sceptical view of the various transport assessments produced by Surrey County Council and the DIO, and we have been struck by what we consider to be the thread of complacency that runs through all the mitigation proposals that these assessments have generated. In our response to the DIO's most recent plans we look first at the section on Wider Access and Movement and then the section on Site Access, Internal Streets and Movement.

WIDER ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

Unfortunately, this section contains exactly the same flaws as we identified in the sections on transport mitigation in the Core Strategy and the SPD: an over-reliance on a Travel Plan and a Sustainable Transport Strategy to reduce car use; and an under-acknowledgement of the impact of increased traffic movements on key access roads and junctions.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Although we acknowledge that the laudable objectives of a Sustainable Transport Strategy are ones we would share, we have major reservations that sustainable travel will have the significant impact on car use that is claimed. These reservations are shared by SHBC. In the preamble to Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy it is acknowledged that the Deepcut site is "not a highly sustainable location due to the poor local facilities, distance from local centres and poor accessibility by public transport and non-car modes." Moreover, on page 12 of the first

draft of the SPD it is acknowledged that “car travel is currently the dominant mode of transport to and from the area and there are limited opportunities to encourage significant modal shifts to more sustainable forms of transport such as cycling and bus.” These observations are hardly a ringing endorsement of the likely impact of a Sustainable Transport Strategy and, although we support the aspiration to promote greater use of walking, cycling, rail and bus, we would seriously question whether it is really going to get new residents in sufficient numbers to change their transport choices so that car use is significantly reduced. In effect, there is an unrealistic over-reliance on what a Sustainable Transport Strategy can be expected to achieve.

HIGHWAY AND JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS

If the Sustainable Transport Strategy falls short in its aim of reducing car use then the spotlight focuses even more significantly on road capacity and accompanying junction improvements.

In the section on Wider Access and Movement it is blithely asserted that the evidence from a preliminary Transport Assessment “has demonstrated that the site can accommodate the proposed level of development.” Yet no evidence is provided to confirm this. In fact, our experience has been that much of the evidence produced by both the DIO and Surrey County Council is contradictory and less clear cut.

This applies particularly to the Entec Traffic Assessment published on behalf of the DIO in November 2010 and the Surrey County Council Assessment, 2026 Transport Assessment, produced in October 2010. With regards to Deepcut Bridge Road, the main access road into the proposed new development, Entec’s assessment suggests that this road’s capacity in 2026 with the PRB development will be approximately 70%, well within acceptable thresholds. However, this is strangely at odds with the Transport Evaluation carried out by SCC which in Table 5.12 on page 57 lists roads within Surrey Heath that will experience the greatest increases in traffic delay during the AM peak hour in 2026 with the PRB development factored in. Deepcut Bridge Road is not only in this list but it is shown to be the only one of the featured roads to have a flow substantially above its nominal capacity, which is the flow at which queuing begins. Its nominal capacity is put at 1,700 but the projection for 2026 is put at 1,983, making it the road link with the largest increase in flow resulting from the PRB development. It hardly inspires confidence when there is such a divergence of results between two of the main traffic assessments being used to inform the viability of the PRB development.

Turning to the question of junction review/improvements we are also very concerned that the DIO proposals are as vague and imprecise as those contained in the sections on transport in the Core Strategy and the SPD. In both these documents the phrase “to be assessed” is used with monotonous regularity when specific junction improvements are identified and the DIO proposals carry on in the same vein with mention of “a wide ranging impact assessment.” We are quite amazed that, over 15 months since we were asked to comment on the Core Strategy, no in depth assessment of junction improvements has been produced.

In this section a map of the wider area identifies the range of junctions to be assessed and we hope that any suggested improvement schemes are more substantial and credible than the ones identified in Entec's November 2010 modelling assessments. These were carried out on the four junctions most likely to be affected by the development and we have serious concerns about the mitigation schemes based on the modelling conclusions.

For two of these junctions, where Upper Chobham Road, Red Road and the Maultway meet and at the Red Road and Bagshot Road roundabout, the modelling assessments clearly show that a 1200 dwellings development will "increase congestion, queuing and delay... exponentially" and will make each junction "operate significantly worse." Yet, the suggested mitigation schemes for these two junctions, enlarging the roundabout at the first one and putting in signals at the second one, seem to us to be totally inadequate for the projected increases in traffic.

Problems are also identified for the A30, A325 and B3015 junction with "higher queues and degrees of saturation" as a result of the development but no plans for mitigation are mentioned.

For the final identified junction, the B3015/B3012 and associated railway bridge, the assessment indicates no potential problems but, through our local experience, we feel that the suggested signalisation of the railway bridge is likely to lead to traffic queuing back in both directions. Indeed, should queuing south of the bridge extend as far as the B3102/3015 junction, this will cause potentially dangerous congestion as the junction is 'blind' for fast moving cars driving from Frimley Green to Pirbright.

The superficial quality of these four suggested junction improvements is a cause for real concern because if, as we believe, the Sustainable Transport Strategy proves ineffective and fails to reduce car use sufficiently, continued poor highways infrastructure will lead to increased congestion and delay. We would urge the DIO to come up with a much more rigorous set of proposals for junction improvements.

CONCLUSION

In the SCC Transport Assessment concern is expressed that the car could be the main form of transport from the redeveloped PRB site and that to counter this and conform to the Highway Authority's policies, sustainable transport mitigation should take precedence over highway improvements to accommodate car growth. We feel strongly that this is the essential weakness in the transport proposals made so far. This assertion is based on:-

- An average of 2.8 cars per household in Surrey
- Established patterns of travel by car to fit in with employment opportunities
- The additional attraction to non-Deeput resident car users of a large supermarket
- The general car usage routines of average families.

It is unrealistic to place so much emphasis on a Sustainable Transport Strategy to restrain the car use generated by a 1200 dwellings redevelopment. Add to this highway mitigation proposals that involve only fairly minor junction improvements and you have all the ingredients of a car dominated transport infrastructure characterised by on-going congestion and delay. This is totally unacceptable to DLG: we re-iterate that there must be significant road improvements before any re-development commences.

In our view, if the Sustainable Transport Strategy fails to reduce the number of car journeys considerably and the suggested highway and junction improvements remain inadequate, serious questions will need to be asked about the size and viability of the proposed development.

SITE ACCESS, INTERNAL STREETS AND MOVEMENT

With our serious concerns about the levels of traffic that will be generated by the new development, we feel it is essential that the plans for accessing and moving round the site do all they can to minimise the impact of increased vehicular movements. In our view, the plans, as presented in this section, do not go nearly far enough to achieve this objective.

Deepcut Bridge Road is identified as the main route within the area and in the previous part of our response we have detailed our concerns about the capacity of this road to cope with the increased levels of traffic. Therefore, we feel that one of the priorities should be to produce a road design that disperses a large proportion of the increased traffic away from this road. Unfortunately, the plans as detailed in this section do not go far enough to achieve this aim and, in one respect, run counter to it.

The building of a new Main Street to connect the main access points into and out of the development seems, initially, a good first step and we agree with the aim of reducing the impact of traffic on the centre of the existing village. However, it has two significant flaws. Firstly, the access point at Blackdown Road is too far south and risks contributing to greater congestion on Deepcut Bridge Road. We certainly support the idea of the new Main Street but for it to work effectively it needs to link the southern access point at Brunswick Road with a northern access point close to the existing Officers' Mess, thereby running to the east of Dettingen Park and not re-joining Deepcut Bridge Road at Blackdown Road. Secondly, the existing plan shows the Main Street joining Deepcut Bridge Road right next to the site of the supermarket. This is, frankly, the nightmare scenario for many residents. It is planned to place a large supermarket right next to both Deepcut Bridge Road and one of the main access points into the new development and this is undoubtedly a recipe for significant congestion. We, therefore, urge the DIO to rethink this part of the plan, set the supermarket within the development away from Deepcut Bridge Road and move the Blackdown Road access point further north.

As we indicated in the previous section of our submission, a source of serious concern is the effect of increased traffic movements across the railway bridge just before the B3015/B3012 junction. This will have to carry all the traffic exiting to the south and the introduction of signalisation is likely to lead to traffic queuing back in both directions. A strong argument has been made by the residents that Brunswick Road should be re-opened in the direction of Pirbright with Curzon Bridge being used to link this back to Gapemouth Road. This has been firmly resisted so far by the MOD but we feel that this would alleviate the potential problems associated with the railway bridge and is something that we would urge DIO to examine again.

There are two final points that we would like to make in relation to site access. The first concerns the future of the Bellew Road/Blackdown Road link. At present, this has become a significant "rat run" that has impacted very negatively on the residents of both roads. It has

been suggested that either this link is closed at the top of Bellew Road or a clear system of traffic calming, which may involve routing traffic through the new Sergeants' Mess development, is put in place. We would therefore urge that the future of this link is very much a part of the whole traffic management programme for the new development. Secondly, there is a clear concern amongst the residents of the impact of construction traffic on the local environment. We were not re-assured by the EIA Scoping Report which seemed to downplay any impact but failed to appreciate that this traffic, contrary to what the report stated, will have to make use of roads where houses are located. We would urge DIO to ensure that a careful assessment is made of this potential problem and show clearly how the impact on the local environment will be minimised.

SIZE AND LOCATION OF THE SUPERMARKET

Deepcut residents were dismayed at the exhibition's details relating to both the size and location of the proposed supermarket. Our position has been clear and consistent: we want a supermarket whose size is relevant to the needs of the future population of the village and, secondly, we want the location to be away from Deepcut Bridge Road.

SHBC have been massively disingenuous in their attempts to justify a supermarket of the size outlined at the exhibition (2985 square metres gross: 2090 m² net). At the Core Strategy Review on 16th February 2011 they were caught out with having included Heatherside in the study they commissioned along with both Frimley Green and Mytchett, this despite the study being entitled 'Retail Needs Assessment for **Deepcut** (sic)'. The removal of Heatherside from the subsequent updated study does not provide the base area that residents are insistent upon namely, Deepcut village alone.

Deepcut residents want to be treated in this matter the same as those of Heatherside, Lightwater and Bagshot whose supermarkets are sized at 575, 629, and 675 square meters respectively (source Jenny Rickard 14/12/10 statement on SHBC community web-site). We want a supermarket of 600-800 square metres, not a store of the size of Waitrose in Sandhurst (the referred comparator suggested by Jenny Rickard) let alone something in excess of the size of Waitrose in Frimley!

Because large supermarkets necessarily serve customers from a wide geographic area it is axiomatic that customers will drive to such a facility, particularly if it is located in a rural setting such as Deepcut. The traffic generated, from customers, employees, and deliveries will, in aggregate, significantly exacerbate the road congestion problems outlined above relating to development of the PRB site.

Equally it is a complete nonsense to argue that the Supermarket has to be visible from Deepcut Bridge Road to attract interest from potential owners. Sainburys purchased the Heatherside Supermarket from the company that developed it. This Supermarket is not visible from either of the 2 roads that pass it. Accordingly residents have a strong preference for a small Supermarket development to be developed in a central location within the PRB site (such as the Parade Ground) where it can be accessed from the proposed secondary road system that is planned to run through the PRB site. If this road has to be constructed to a size that accommodates emergency services such as Fire Engines then it can be made to accommodate Supermarket delivery vehicles!

Let us be very clear: we totally reject the ideas illustrated at the exhibition regarding the Supermarket. We want a supermarket of 600-800 square meters to primarily serve Deepcut's future residents (the Retail Needs Assessment states that less than 25% of users are expected to be from the PRB site and we note that this site's future population/ housing units dwarfs the existing village!) and we want something similar to our neighbours in Heatherside, Lightwater and Bagshot, nothing more nothing less. We reject the suggested location near a dangerous junction and insist upon something within the heart of the PRB site to the north of the village green/school area.

THE LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL RETAIL UNITS ON DEEPCUT BRIDGE ROAD

While DLG supports the development of retail units to create a heart to the village these must be accessed from within the new development site. They cannot be accessed from Deepcut Bridge Road. It was suggested double yellow lines will be installed on this road. Parking will need to be provided within the new development and there will need to be an easy way for shoppers and residents to cross Deepcut Bridge Road to support existing and new retail units. Build outs, creating chicanes and traffic flow priorities and an additional pedestrian crossing need to be installed to slow traffic and make the area pedestrian friendly as specified in the SPD.

PROPOSAL TO CONVERT THE BLACKDOWN ROAD PLAYING FIELD INTO ALLOTMENTS

The current DIO proposal shows the entire playing field turned into allotments. This is despite the written evidence of the strength of feeling expressed during the SHBC SPD consultation in favour of retaining this area as green space. Furthermore this proposal contravenes many extant SHBC policies relating to retention of green spaces and recreation facilities and also the National policy regarding Planning for open space, sport and recreation. The latter policy, PPG17, presented at the Core Strategy hearing specifically states that "The Blackdown Road Recreation Ground was identified as an outdoor sports facility site that scored highly in terms of quality, accessibility and level of usage. It was recommended that the site be protected as a site of high value to the local community." That this has been arbitrarily over-ridden gives the impression of arrogance on the part of the planners. Therefore the proposal remains wholly unacceptable.

The Proposal does not take account of the fact that the Regulation 17 Deepcut SPD statement demonstrated a strong desire from residents to keep the playing field (138 resident responses to the SPD on this point). There were also 132 responses to keep existing green spaces. This is the only green space amenity on the west side of Deepcut Bridge Road and it is completely unreasonable and nonsensical to expect the residents, both young and old, who live on that side to negotiate the busy thoroughfare to enjoy a facility similar to that which they already have and can use in complete safety.

It is of concern that the proposal does not reflect the guidance on page 71 of the Regulation 19 SPD which states "Blackdown Park to be less formal and based around the existing Blackdown Road playing fields". How this guidance has been interpreted as remove the playing field and replace it with allotments is quite beyond comprehension. Incidentally, SHBC itself, in its submission to the Core Strategy hearing, suggested that the allotments be placed in the wooded area South West of the playing field and not on the field itself.

The proposal demonstrates that the DIO is unaware (or in the worst case has turned a blind eye) that the playing field is used for many recreational activities (other than football) by the local residents including village barbecues, fireworks night, zumba dance sessions and teenagers/parents kick about area. This amenity, along with the children's playground, is extremely popular, especially during spring, summer and early autumn. The loss of either would have a tremendous detrimental effect on the morale of many villagers who really do see this as a place to meet friends and get to know neighbours in a social environment.

The DIO proposal to remove Blackdown park and turn it into allotments is wrong in so many ways not least because it overrides the opposition of residents so strongly expressed during consultation and completely ignores extant and relevant policies relating open space, sport and recreation planning.

The Deepcut Liaison Group therefore unequivocally rejects this proposal in its entirety. A desire to develop allotments on the PRB site is understood but to destroy a much used and valuable local amenity is not an acceptable way to achieve this aim. It is the suggestion of the DLG that the proposed allotments are more sensibly located on the eastern side of Deepcut Bridge Road nearer to the new housing estate the residents of which will undoubtedly be the main users of such a facility. The Non SANGS ANGST (area shown as 3.86 ha on the SHBC Land Budget Map Jan 2011) would be in our opinion be a more suitable location and satisfy the requirements of SHBC. Clearly if we are to avoid increasing road traffic by the development of an allotments facility the planners must carefully consider the number of allotments to be provided. It follows that these should only be sufficient in number to satisfy the requirements of local Deepcut residents. A proposal to cater for users from outside of Deepcut would be strongly rejected by the DLG.

SIZE AND LOCATION OF HOUSING

As previous Public Meetings have made clear Deepcut residents believe 1,200 new housing units is far too high, particularly given the traffic infra-structure issues and lack of meaningful mitigation. The exhibition clearly failed to demonstrate meaningful mitigation and therefore the DLG still insist that 1200 new housing units is far too high. If, however SHBC are adamant that 1,200 units are to be built irrespective of the wishes of the residents, then this figure must be an 'all-up' figure e.g. a block of, say, eight flats, is regarded as eight units and not one and that any other multiple occupancy sites are treated similarly, such as the former Officers' Mess site towards the south-east of the PRB site.

The version of the SPD upon which the Reg 17 Consultation document was based, and the only version on which consultation has been sought, showed no development south of Brunswick Road. Indeed the front cover of the Reg 17 document shows (the right hand picture) that the area south of Brunswick Road has been denoted as SANGS. Land use to the South of Brunswick Road appears perverse. Existing wooded areas immediately to the east of DBR are indicated as "new residential area" whilst the existing RLC Maintenance Base, a pending brown-field site, further to the east is to be turned into a 'park area', probably at significant expense. Residents believe the Maintenance base area should be developed and the wooded area left alone.

The Residents have made their views clear on development south of Brunswick Road. The Basingstoke Canal area is one that must be protected and we strongly resist any plan that shows development of anything other than very low density housing on the RLC Maintenance Base site south of Brunswick Road. The area is predominantly heavily wooded. SHBC's own Reg 19 Consultation document states (p20) that an Objective of the Basingstoke Canal is the "protection of the rural, wooded setting of the canal through the creation of an extensive public open space in the form of SANGS along the southern edge of the PRB site". Clearly the provision of a significant number of dwellings south of Brunswick Road directly conflicts with this statement and severely compromises the stated Vision that "the Basingstoke Canal will play a more significant role providing a recreational and landscape resource and a major walking and cycling link..." In their response to the Reg 17 consultation, the DLG states (referring to p18, Objectives, additional point 4) that "The SPD must ensure the minimum removal of existing trees."

The proposals also seem nonsensical in that they require the removal of a large number of mature trees whilst, at the same time, involving the digging up of a brownfield site, the transportation depot, to turn this into a park area.


With regard to development to the west of Deepcut Bridge Road, again, we thank SHBC and DIO that they have listened to our concerns and now only propose to develop on the footprint of the Sergeants' Mess.

We notice the provision of 5/6 pitches for travellers on Bellew Road; this Residents strongly object to on sustainability grounds as per the DLG response in the Analysis of Responses to the Reg 17 Consultation under Housing Requirements.

I have previously stated residents are disappointed that the DIO have not taken into account many of the discussions and agreements the Deepcut Liaison Group had with SHBC and the resulting final version (Regulation 19) of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). We are concerned that many residents were told that you have not received much of the information. I will also copy this letter and the copies of our previous communications to the relevant personnel at SHBC and John Taylor at DIO and our MP Michael Gove so that there can be no future miscommunication.

I look forward to e your revised proposals when you have been able to take into account the residents opinions.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angela Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light grey rectangular background.

Angela Mitchell

Chair

Deepcut Liaison Group

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