**Planning Dept**
**Sevenoaks District Council,**
**Argyle Road,****Sevenoaks, Kent,****TN13 1HG**

31st October 2019

*Subject*: **Revised planning application for Fort Halstead, 750 houses**
*Your Reference*: 19/05000**/HYB**

A major issue for Knockholt and Halstead residents of planned developments at Fort Halstead has been the exit onto Star Hill Road. Sevenoaks District Council’s (SDC) has already pledged to deny general access but I have concerns that this decision will come under pressure from the developers. It is imperative that the Star Hill Road access remains restricted—emergency services vehicles and buses only and failure to do so would cause a devastating impact.

The Fort Halstead developers have, in their original application, stated that their development would: ‘Help protect other less-developed areas of the Green Belt from potential release’. In this context, one has to reflect on the planning application recently submitted by Quinn Estates for about 1,000 houses on the former Broke Hill Golf Course, which is virtually adjacent to Fort Halstead. Broke Hill is both Green Belt land and an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Fort Halstead was addressed by Sevenoaks District Council in its 2010 Core Strategy, and in a SDC public statement in January 2011 that said: “As part of its development, the Core Strategy was examined at a public inquiry last October, held by the Planning Inspectorate. Planning agents acting on behalf of the owners of Fort Halstead tabled a proposal to re-allocate the site for a residential development of up to 1,000 homes with local facilities.
“Sevenoaks District Council did not support this proposal and it was opposed by the Kent Downs AONB Unit at the inquiry. The Planning Inspector rejected the idea.
“The Inspector said the site was not in a sustainable location as its inhabitants would have to travel a considerable distance to access transport, shopping, and other facilities and that the development was not needed to meet the district's future development requirements.
“In practice,” SDC stated, “**this means that large-scale housing development at the site is unlikely to be granted planning permission**.”

The Government National Planning Policy Framework regarding the Green Belt states:
•             It should check against unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
•             Prevent neighbouring areas merging into one another
•             Safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

There are absolutely no ‘exceptional circumstances’ that should allow Fort Halstead to breach those aims. With the collapse of the current ‘Employment-Led’ excuse to despoil the Green Belt, the Society asks SDC to reject the application.

Yours faithfully

Mr. P Lambillion

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