

From: Caroline Shufflebotham [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 October 2019 13:40
To: Planning Comments
Subject: RE: Revised planning application for Fort Halstead, 750 houses

Categories: Orange Category

Good afternoon

Further to your email regarding the above, my address is Rosemary Cottage, Main Road, Knockholt, Sevenoaks TN14 7JA

Kind regards

Caroline Shufflebotham

On 29 Oct 2019 10:08 am, Planning Comments <planning.comments@sevenoaks.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear Ms Shufflebotham,

Thank you for your email.

In order for us to record your comments, I'd be grateful if you would supply your full postal address.

Kind regards

Peter.

Peter Bareford

Administrative Assistant

Development Management

Sevenoaks District Council | Council Offices | Argyle Road | Sevenoaks | Kent | TN13 1HG

Tel: 01732 227000

Please note our office hours are as follows;

Monday - Thursday 08:45 - 17:00

Friday 08:45 - 16:45

From: Caroline Shufflebotham [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 October 2019 22:27
To: Planning Comments <planning.comments@sevenoaks.gov.uk>
Subject: Revised planning application for Fort Halstead, 750 houses

Your Reference: 19/05000/HYB

To Whom it May Concern

The area north of the M25 in the (now to be withdrawn?) Sevenoaks District Local Plan is being targeted with a disproportionate number of residential developments with no fewer than 9 sites in the area of Knockholt and Halstead, which would mean the destruction of significant areas of the Green Belt including large swathes of ancient woodland and grazing lands. The proposed development sites are mainly along the A224 in the Polhill area, including the proposed major development at Fort Halstead. The cumulative impact on the area will contribute to urban sprawl and detrimentally impact rural communities.

With regard to Fort Halstead, the expansion of the proposed development from 450 to 750 properties, not including the 62 existing residential properties, will dwarf surrounding village communities, which typically do not exceed 500 residences. Over 50% of the proposed houses have a density of 45 to 60 dwellings per hectare, while about 25% will be at a density of 50 to 60 dwellings per hectare, with many of the proposed properties being 3 storeys high.

The area has diminishing public transport links. Recently, one of only 2 bus services via Knockholt was axed and with Knockholt Station 2.5 miles from Knockholt village and no bus service to the station, and limited parking capacity, the scant infrastructure will not cope. Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association has advised that services are already configured for a maximum of 10 coaches while the Kent Route Study shows there is no capacity for any extra trains on the congested local lines into London meaning standing room only to and from London. The rail services would not be able to cope with a potential 750 or more

new commuters. With poor transport links, residents today are forced to rely heavily on cars. If 750 houses are added at Fort Halstead, there will be an increase of at least 1,500 cars using the country lanes.

It is imperative that the Star Hill Road access remains restricted for the emergency services vehicles and buses only. Star Hill is very steep and narrow, has no pedestrian pavements, has a series of hairpin bends with no visibility, and over weekends is heavily used by cyclists and cycle clubs. Recently my son had to drive onto the opposite side of the road to avoid a cyclist (a local man from Otford who should have known better) as he rode out of control into the bushes onto the opposite side of the road. It was pure luck there was nobody coming round the blind bend my son had to drive into. He would have been another of the major accidents which have occurred on this dangerous stretch of road. Should the existing exit from Ford Halstead onto Star Hill become available for general use, congestion and the accident risk will rise hugely.

In addition, living on Main Road, the speeds at which some cars already use the road "are an accident waiting to happen" with Main Road being used as a rat-run especially when the M25 is blocked; a higher density of housing will only exacerbate the problem.

Regarding the under-developed local infrastructure, the services, shops, schools, medical facilities, etc will be overwhelmed by the development of a town nearby. With the possibility of a small industrial area with no guarantee of any significant take-up, there will not be enough employment for all the new residents and the proposed development will merely create a ghetto of unemployment.

The developers at Fort Halstead state that their development would: 'Help protect other less-developed areas of the Green Belt from potential release'. However, the planning application submitted by Quinn Estates for about 1,000 houses on the former Broke Hill Golf Course, which is virtually adjacent to Fort Halstead is both Green Belt land and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In 2011, a development on the Fort Halstead site for over 1,000 homes and facilities, Sevenoaks District Council's public statement in January 2011 said: "Sevenoaks District Council did not support this proposal". It was also opposed by the Kent Downs AONB Unit at the inquiry and 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." Nothing has changed. *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.*

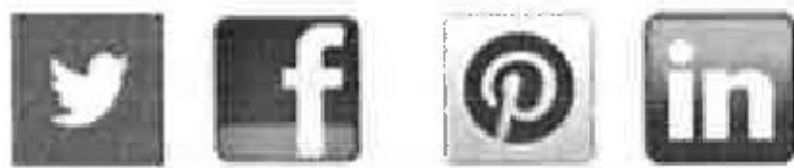
There are no 'exceptional circumstances' that should allow Fort Halstead to breach the above aims, so I therefore request that Sevenoaks District Council look elsewhere other than the northwest corner of the district to fulfil its quota of new housing and reject the above application.

Yours faithfully

Caroline Shufflebotham

TN14 7JA

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