

Little Orchard
5 Singles Cross Cottages
Blueberry Lane
Knockholt
Sevenoaks
Kent TN14 7NH
26th July 2020

Dear Planning Officer,

Re Amended Planning Application: 19/05000/HYB

DSTL Fort Halstead, Crow Drive, Halstead, Sevenoaks TN14 7BU

As detailed with various changes including housing numbers, employment allocation and alteration to access provision.

I still strongly **OBJECT** to this amended application to further develop this site, which already has outline permission (SE/15/00628/OUT) for a 'business led' development with 450 houses. There was strong local opposition to that application, on the grounds of the severe effects of such a large development so close to our small settlements, even with the restriction that Star Hill was only a limited 'secondary access'. A further 165 homes and **dual access** only adds to the grave concerns of all the local residents who actually know the area.

The restriction of the use of the Star Hill entrance to public transport and utilities vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists only, was a major consideration when the previous outline planning permission was granted. This hill has no pavements, is steep, with blind bends and has already been the site of two fatal accidents in recent memory. Nothing has changed since that decision, traffic in the villages is already seriously affected when there are problems on the motorway, and at school run times we can approach a gridlock situation. The increasing use of our narrow rural lanes by various cycling clubs, both local and more distant, due to the challenging nature of the terrain, also increases the risk factors if the Star Hill entrance were to be allowed as access in the same way as Crow Drive. If unrestricted access were to be allowed, there is no doubt that traffic would 'rat run' through the villages to avoid delays on the major roads, with huge effects on road safety, air pollution, and quality of life for the existing residents.

Sustainability is key to any development, but there is no Balanced Strategy for Growth, as in the Draft Local Plan there are already proposals for in excess of 1,050 dwellings in our small area (which comprises just 2% of the SDC area).

There is no adequate infrastructure, as clearly evidenced by the December 2018 'Sevenoaks District Transport Assessment' from SWECO (commissioned by SDC) which quoted from the

NPPF Ch 9 para 102 which stated significant development should be: *'focussed on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.'* (Currently 102 and 103)

SWECO also highlighted that: *'Within those villages that have a limited range of local facilities and transport options, there will be change on a more limited scale through smaller scale housing developments consistent with the size and relative sustainability of the settlement concerned.'* They then went on to state that the Fort Halstead proposal at the edge of Knockholt would be impacted by the increased traffic generated, specifically with reference to the proposed Star Hill Road junction and the Old London Road/ Main Road junction at Knockholt Pound.

Existing congestion in the village(s) at peak and school run times, with consequences for air pollution from emissions, will only get worse with increased and probably gridlocked traffic! They concluded that: *'many of the impacts predicted would be exacerbated by other developments being constructed. As such it is important that the cumulative effects of developments are considered, not just the impacts of the development in isolation.'*

The application currently under consideration for Broke Hill Golf Course is for in the region of 1,000 dwellings plus major traffic-generating sports facilities, so also has the potential for huge impacts on our rural village(s).

Transport requirements entail appropriate public transport rail and road links, but both are woefully inadequate. A consultation by Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association advised that: *'The recent Kent Route Study by Network Rail showed that mainline trains are already:- "congested (60-100% of standing space used)" from Chelsfield inwards' - but the Study shows that no significant improvement is planned between now and 2044 - 'We (SRTA) consider there is a disconnect between the house-building policy and the rail investment policy.... Houses are being built without the transport capacity to get people to work.....Peak hour services are already configured for the maximum 10 coaches so it would require an extra train...(but) there's no capacity on the Tonbridge- Orpington line for an extra train path and no capacity at Charing Cross or Cannon Street to turn it round'.*

Local bus services have recently sustained drastic cuts, causing villagers who previously used public transport to resort to private vehicles. Polhill (A21) has serious ongoing subsidence. The hilly terrain and lack of pavements mean walking and cycling, although environmentally friendly options, are not practical alternatives for local commuting for many, apart from the fittest, and school runs will of necessity be by private transport.

SDC'S own Site Allocation Tables (supplied in Week 2 of the recent Inspector's Hearing) classified settlements according to 'Combined Population, Services, Green Belt & Employment Scores' and the local ones fell in the 'Small Village' (Knockholt and Halstead) and 'Hamlet' (Badgers Mount) categories.

The current NPPF states new sites should be *'...proportionate in size'* to existing settlements and *'...their size and location will support a sustainable community, with*

sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself...'
It also states that housing densities should equate to existing, which in our area is 18.8 dph.

A new community with a total of 615 homes, plus employment, immediately adjacent to our village of 490 homes, and with totally inadequate infrastructure, will hardly be compliant with all these conditions, especially as it will have to be confined to the existing built form!

Contamination is well known to exist on the site, with 38 samples showing significant levels that require remediation measures to protect construction workers and potential future residents and visitors from the known routes of toxic material transfer. As a retired A/E Consultant formerly at the old Bromley and then the Princess Royal University Hospitals, I am among many local residents who have serious concerns about disturbance of the contaminated ground during activities on site, especially during windy conditions, and also the inevitable dispersal risks during the transport of soil/made ground materials away from the site, which will of necessity be through the local road network.

Healthcare is also a major concern, with many local GP surgeries having closed lists and some even having closed permanently. The local Princess Royal University Hospital regularly suffers excessive waiting times in A/E, frequently up to eight hours, as I can confirm from recent visits with relatives, friends and neighbours with various acute medical emergencies. Speaking to several former colleagues, they say the PRUH could not accommodate the inevitable rise in attendances resulting from large increases in population in our area, as they know people will inevitably go to the nearest hospital, a mere 10-15 minutes away, not travel longer distances to hospitals in the south of the district. Provision of potential Medical Facilities on site does not guarantee they will be staffed, as that is dependent on GP uptake and funding, which may not occur, as happened at the huge Ryedale development at Dunton Green which now does not have the promised facilities for local residents, just an increase in housing!

The existing residential water supply is totally inadequate, recently there was no supply for over thirty weeks and households had to exist with bottled water, and since then there has been no running water for several days, with all the associated health and hygiene risks.

There are other huge applications under current consideration for this area, plus the potential for many smaller sites accepted in the 'call for sites'. The evidence is surely overwhelming that this application for a further 165 homes, in addition to the 450 already granted outline planning permission, and another attempt to instate a dangerous access should be **refused**. Anything else will contribute to the potential massive overdevelopment of this very small area of the Sevenoaks District.

Yours sincerely,

Rita C Radford MB. BS. FRCS (Eng)