

Planning Department  
Sevenoaks District Council  
Argyle Road  
Sevenoaks, Kent  
TN13 1HG  
Attn: Case Officer, Claire Shearing

Treetops  
Stonehouse Lane  
Halstead  
Sevenoaks  
Kent TN14 7HH

1 November 2019

## **Planning application 19/05000/HYB Fort Halstead**

Dear Ms Shearing

I strongly object to the Hybrid Application for Fort Halstead 19/05000/HYB.

In the (currently suspended) Local Plan, Halstead is expected to be burdened with nine sites and amounting to 10% of the whole district's housing allocation whilst occupying 2% of the land area. This is unfair and completely disproportionate. Halstead fair proportion of new housing, including the required growth percentage, should be around 200. There are currently around 1,000 in the Local Plan and with repetitive applications being submitted for Broke Hill, this could rise to 2,000 if SDC eventually buckles under pressure from Quinn Estates.

The cumulative impact of development of 750 dwellings on Fort Halstead plus eight other sites on the area will lead to to urban sprawl and decimate rural communities.

The expansion of the proposed development from 450 to 750 properties is totally unreasonable in the local area which currently consists of just 62 residential properties. The whole of Halstead only has around 750 dwelling so the Fort Halstead proposal effectively doubles the population by itself.

The proposed housing density of 45-60 dph approaches urban proportions, with many building exceeding two storeys. There is nothing urban about Halstead, the housing density in the village centre is less than 19 dph and there are very few existing building exceeding two storeys. The development would be completely out of character with its surroundings.

Fort Halstead is well over a mile from Knockholt Station. Commuters would likely drive to the station, compounding the inadequate parking provision along London Road. Kent Route Study shows there is no capacity for any extra trains on the lines into London and this situation will not change until the 2040s. Knockholt and Chelsfield stations and trains would not be able to cope with the influx of new commuters. Trains run half hourly at peak times and Saturdays, hourly at off-peak times and Sundays. There is an infrequent bus service in the area with no buses on Sundays.

With these inadequate transport links, residents would be forced to use their cars for commuting, shopping, schools, medical and other facilities, and would mainly travel to Otford or into the London Borough of Bromley as facilities there are closer than Sevenoaks. The local lanes are narrow and would not be suitable to take on all the additional traffic. A high proportion of the new community would travel out of the district and into the London Borough of Bromley for their day to day needs so that Borough should have a say in the decision making as they it may be impacted more than SDC.

The main roads through Knockholt and Halstead are already used as rat-runs. If there is access into and out of the site on to Starhill Road there would be a significant increase in traffic through the villages. Furthermore, access at either ends of the development could be used as a cut through from Starhill Road to Polhill by traffic unassociated to the development. Starhill Road is steep and narrow with no pavement. It is used by cyclists and any increase in traffic on this lane would be a safety risk for cyclists and pedestrians. Therefore access to Starhill Road should be restricted to emergency service vehicles and buses only.

The original application for 450 dwellings was only approved as it was employment led and included a hotel. This latest application has dispensed with this scheme and, apart from a small industrial area, it has become almost wholly a housing estate.

The development encroaches on to Green Belt land and there is ancient woodland nearby and open grazing land. There appear to be no exceptional circumstances to justify building on and AoNB and Green Belt here.

I hope you will consider my objections in your decision making.

Yours sincerely

