

Dear Mr Amoako

Proposed use of Green Belt Land around West Hall, West Byfleet

I am very strongly opposed to the proposed use of Green Belt Land around West Hall, West Byfleet for housing and potentially commercial uses.

I absolutely fail to see how the proposed use of Green Belt land around West Hall, West Byfleet meets the following requirements of national planning policy for Green Belt:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

In addition, Woking Council asked an additional context of the study should be the “preservation of the character and quality of the setting of the Borough” and that “an assessment of the landscape character and sensitivity to change of developing the various parcels of land was undertaken to ensure that the landscape character of area and the setting of the Borough are not compromised.”

Again, I fail to see how this context is being achieved by the proposed use of Green Belt Land around West Hall, West Byfleet.

Sustainable Development

I note that the principles for a sustainable development include the following which I believe are *not* met by the proposed use of Green Belt land around West Hall, West Byfleet:

- to reduce the risk of flooding;
- to make efficient use of land and buildings;
- to protect and enhance the borough’s important landscapes, habitats, flora and fauna;
- to reduce pollution levels: air, water, light, noise;
- to promote sustainable modes of transport and reduce the need to travel;
- to secure the protection and enhancement of the historic and natural environment;
- to ensure the provision of green space and access to the countryside;
- to promote healthy and active lifestyles through the provision of recreation;
- to enable the delivery of sufficient infrastructure required to meet future growth of the borough;
- to promote economic growth and employment opportunities in sustainable locations within the borough;
- to promote prosperous, competitive centres.

Lack of adequate infrastructure

Any proposed development of Green Belt Land around West Hall, West Byfleet is going to place additional strain on the existing and planned infrastructure. Road infrastructure is a major concern and discussed in the next section. However schools, healthcare and the provision of utilities also need to be considered.

Woking’s Infrastructure Development Plan already indicates:

- a shortage of school places in West Byfleet and Byfleet by 2019;

- West Byfleet Health Centre is already at capacity with more GPs than its allocated headcount and a higher than average number of patients per GP (headcount) compared to Woking area and, at 1,886, already above the 1,800 threshold required to necessitate additional GP provision; and
- We are already designated as an area of severe water supply stress.

Woking is one of nine areas having been assessed as having ‘extensive’ areas of flood zone 3, without significant flood infrastructure, and are therefore considered to not benefit from the minimum standard of protection. The Infrastructure Development Plan is too vague to assess the potential flood risk associated with the development of Green Belt Land around West Hall, West Byfleet, but given its proximity to the Wey Navigation there must be a considerable risk of flooding and material concern over the impact of surface water management.

Increase in Congestion along Parvis Road

The main concern is the increase in the volume of traffic along the Parvis Road.

Because of the position of this land there seems to be only one possible access/egress point and this would be onto Parvis Road. The volume of traffic along Parvis Road and the A245 linking it to the A3 and M25 is already such that it is virtually at a standstill during peak hours, as identified in the Infrastructure Development Plan. The (ongoing) development of the Brooklands site (Elmbridge Council) has already added significantly to the traffic congestion in both directions and the already approved commercial development of the Broadoaks site (when completed) will add further traffic to a road system that is already used beyond its capacity. This will create a “black spot” making residential and commercial activities from Brooklands/Byfleet through to Woking unattractive.

Such congestion will also hamper access by emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance) across much of the eastern part of Woking Borough.

The Transport Evaluation conducted for WBC in 2010 is based on *modelling that does not take account of the proposed development of Green Belt land around West Hall, West Byfleet* and so cannot be used to justify minimal impact on the road infrastructure in West Byfleet. In fact, the report only considers scenarios based on the release of Green Belt land around Worplesdon Station and Sutton Green and so is not relevant to the assessment of the release of Green Belt land around West Hall, West Byfleet.

Green Belt is a Natural Noise and Environmental Buffer

The existing Green Belt, along with the Wey Navigation, is a natural buffer between Byfleet and West Byfleet with the trees and feel of the countryside contributing to the enjoyment of all, including those travelling along the Parvis Road. The trees also act as a natural buffer between the M 25 and the residential homes along the Parvis Road from the constant noise of the motorway.

This area is also subject to seasonal flooding and will surely present additional challenges to its environmentally responsible development.

There are many concerns if this area of land was to be developed at all, let alone on a large scale.

No Green Belt within West Byfleet village

We have very little natural green space in West Byfleet, and the curtilage to the Wey Navigation to the north of the land at West Hall as well as being of historic importance is very precious and is enjoyed by walkers, runners and cyclists as well as canoeists and narrow boat owners on the water. The Wey Navigation is a manmade water way owned and maintained by the National Trust but constructed some 350 years ago.

Any development on the West Hall land would have an enormous impact upon this waterway which is also an important wild life corridor where deer, swan, kingfishers and other species have established habitation. It is of utmost importance that we take our environmental responsibilities seriously and that the ambiance of this area is protected for future generations to enjoy.

The Dodd’s Lane track, part of which runs along the southern boundary of West Hall land, is also used by families for cycling, dog walking, running etc. to access the Wey Navigation footpath and is another area of natural beauty that should be protected.

If this plan was to go ahead we could have no Green Belt area within our village.

Land at Broadoaks

I also feel it is necessary to view the future use of West Hall land in the context of potential development of the land at Broadoaks. Broadoaks is a 44 acre site, with a lovely old house, grounds and lakes and could, if developed with sensitivity, become a major asset to the West Byfleet community and meet some of our housing needs.

However, as previously mentioned, development of this site will also exacerbate the existing traffic problems as well as increasing pressure on our schools, health care public transport, water supply, and sewerage services.

I would be interested in any comments you have to make on my view of the situation regarding the Green Belt areas within our village and what actions you will take on behalf of the residents of West Byfleet to ensure responsible future development of a sustainable and “joined-up” plan for West Byfleet and the Woking district.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,