

JONATHAN LORD MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Ms P Hoskyn
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JGCL/KH

29 July 2015

Penny
Dear Ms Hoskyn,

Thank you very much for your recent correspondence about Woking's Green Belt review.

Woking is already a very built up Borough and we treasure the green fields and open green space that we have. I also believe that Woking simply does not have the infrastructure to support large numbers of new homes on the Green Belt. Please be assured that I am right at the heart of the campaign to try to save our Green Belt from development. For example, I have already had meetings with senior Councillors and the most relevant senior Council officers – including the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive - to make my views (and the views of the residents that I have heard from) absolutely clear.

I have been reassured by the Leader of the Council that he does not want a single home more than is necessary built on our Green Belt and he has got Council officers redoubling their efforts to identify as much brownfield land as possible.

The recent consultation closed on 31st July and Woking Borough Council will now study and, I have been promised, reflect carefully on all the representations received. I am expecting the Council to produce its revised proposals towards the end of 2015 and this new report from the Council will be followed almost immediately by a further consultation. This consultation will be the best time for residents to make further representations in the light of the new proposals. In the meantime, I will continue working closely with our Resident Associations, Village Societies and Neighbourhood Forums to put the most coherent and robust case forward for saving our precious Green Belt that we can.

You are obviously very well briefed on all the key issues, but, just for the record, I have attached a simple information sheet that I have pieced together that seeks to explain the process as the Council sees it at the moment. This might be a helpful guide for some of your neighbours who are not so engaged with the process.

Representing Woking Constituency

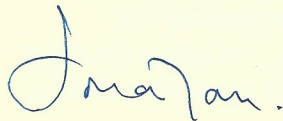
However I, personally, am not yet completely convinced that we need to identify Green Belt sites from 2027 to 2040, since the number of 'homes required' for Woking Borough to 'deliver' for this period has not yet been formally decided.

I am also very hopeful that there may be one or two significant 'windfall sites' that may mitigate substantially those possible new homes numbers 'required' from the Green Belt for the 2027 to 2040 period. i.e. brown-field (or already developed) sites, almost certainly within the main town of Woking, coming forward for (further) serious development - including new homes - over the next few years; 'windfall' developments that are NOT currently accounted for within any of the future estimates for new homes.

Thank you again for writing to me about these important matters. I feel absolutely passionately about protecting the Green Belt around our town and villages and, in particular, about the individual precious green spaces and fields that we must save.

With best wishes.

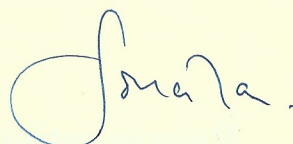
Yours sincerely



Jonathan Lord MP

An excellent submission from the W.B.N. Forum
- and I completely agree re. the problem of the
Laurie Road. That point also came through particularly
strongly at our discussion during Wem Byfleet LIVE.

Kind regards,



Attachment:

Woking Borough Council Green Belt Review Process

The Council currently has a housing allocation of 292 houses per annum (less than the estimated figure of actual need which is 499 per annum).

The Council has pursued a 'high density strategy' in the centre of Woking in order to keep most development away from the surrounding areas and to minimise land being taken from the Green Belt.

The Council's existing Core Strategy covers the period up to 2027, but the Council has not currently identified housing supply for the last 5 years of the plan between 2022 and 2027. After 2022 the Inspector of the Core Strategy felt there needed to be green belt release to accommodate the (mainly housing) needs of the Borough.

As a result of this, the Planning Inspectorate required a green belt review to be carried out before 2015 to inform the selection of Green Belt sites for release. This review has now been published by the Council and is available at the following web link:

<http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/policy/ldfresearch/greenbeltreview/gbbrmainreport>

This document does not bind the Council in its choice of sites. There will be a further Council report in late 2015 and a further public consultation shortly thereafter.

From 2022 – 2027 the Council is looking to identify land for 550 homes, but the Council is taking the opportunity to identify supply from 2027 to 2040 at the same time to prevent further Green Belt reviews for this period.

Ultimately the decision will be overseen by the government inspector at a public hearing. Members of the public will be entitled to make full representations to the inspector.