

Parish Council objects to School Proposals

West Clandon Parish Council has written to all Guildford Borough Councillors to:

- Point out the inappropriateness of the projected five form entry Secondary School in West Clandon included in the latest draft Development Plan.
- Explain that issue with the site mean the proposal is probably not viable.
- Urge Councillors to reject this proposal before the Plan is finalised. Taking this land out of the Greenbelt for a proposal unlikely to happen risks other inappropriate development.

Inappropriate

The school, if it includes a sixth form, would have 1,000 pupils, perhaps 70 staff and require large buildings and other infrastructure including extensive parking.

The magnitude of the development would clearly exceed that of any other development in the Village by a large margin. It would:

- Urbanise an attractive green belt agricultural land in the centre of West Clandon in a site which is highly visible from Station Approach.
- Be totally out of character in West Clandon, dwarfing any other structures in the village.
- Be out of completely out of proportion to the size of the village and its population.
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Proximity to West Clandon Station is a red herring. Unless the school could attract large pupils who live in walking distance of stations on that railway line (eg London Road, Guildford mainline, Horsely and Effingham junction) the numbers arriving by train are likely to be low.

Impractical

Councillors could visit the site to see for themselves. We believe the multiple obstacles to developing a school here, taken together, make the project unviable. Taking the land out of the Green Belt for a school project which is likely to fail will open the way to other unsuitable development.

The project is unlikely to be deliverable at acceptable cost because:

- The current road access is unsafe and would not gain approval. The access is blind to traffic travelling south on the main Clandon Road because of the humped back railway bridge. The cost of achieving satisfactory access would be very significant and likely to run onto millions of pounds making the proposal uneconomic. (Satisfactory access could be achieved by rebuilding the railway bridge, altering the layout of Clandon Road and introducing a large roundabout, or purchasing expensive residential property to make new access.)
- The site is wet and flooded in winter 2013/14. Part of it is Environment Agency Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3. This limits the area which can be built on. Parts are often waterlogged in winter and would be unsuitable for playing fields without extensive and costly drainage works.
- Water run off from buildings and hard surfaces and any drainage scheme from playing fields would drain east to an existing stream which will increase flood risk down stream to the north in Oak Grange Road. Unrestricted run-off is unlikely to be permitted and costly countermeasures would be needed to mitigate runoff.
- Clandon Road from which the site is accessed is a busy narrow "A" road with pavement on one side of the road only. It would not be practical for cars or busses to pull over on the highway to load and unload passengers. Consequently extensive loading areas for cars and school busses will be required. This is not of itself a problem but will exacerbate water run-off and puts pressure on the size of the site which is referred to further below. On site parking would be needed for all staff, visitors and sixth form pupils who drive. This is because there is virtually no public on street parking in the vicinity. Taking account of sixth form parking and parking for parents at events there would be a need for perhaps 150 or 200 cars)
- The 7 hectare site is small for a non-urban school site intended to have playing fields on site and we believe 9 hectares would be more realistic. Thus the site would be undersized even assuming the entire site was flood free and suitable for development. The constraints placed on the site by the flood risk to part of the site, the waterlogged nature of much of the site, the need to ameliorate water run-off, and the need for extensive drop off and pick up areas and car parking are all likely to combine to make the proposal sub-optimal. The likely need to use off site sports pitches detracts from its attractiveness as a site.
- Sewerage facilities in that part of Clandon are already under strain and the school is likely to require a new sewer facilities. .

Whilst in theory each of these problems might be overcome they combine to make the proposal unrealistic and most unlikely to ever be developed. Taking land out of the greenbelt for a local authority school which is unlikely to materialise risks other inappropriate development.