



WEST CLANDON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Mr Terence Patrick , Stoney Royd, Woodstock, West Clandon, Guildford, GU4 7UJ

Clerk: Mr John Stone, Hunters End, Lime Grove, West Clandon, Guildford GU4 7UT
01483 385187: westclandon@talktalk.net : www.westclandon.org.uk

Local Plan Consultation 2014
Planning Policy
Guildford Borough Council
Millmead
Guildford, Surrey
GU2 4BB

5th September 2014

Response to Local Plan Consultation-Proposed School at Cuckoo Farm

1. The Parish Council contends that a five entry form secondary school on the Cuckoo Farm site will prove to be undeliverable. The problems including access, traffic congestion, safety, surface water and flood risk are likely to be insurmountable or will prove to cost more than the education authority or a private developer of a school is prepared to pay (see below).
2. We have seen no evidence that Surrey County Council want this site or believe that it is viable. There is nothing in the evidence base which addresses the need for such a school or provides justification for it being sited in the middle of a green belt village.
3. We have seen nothing in the evidence base which constitutes the exceptional circumstances to justify taking the site out of the green belt.
4. The Parish Council is opposed in principle to the siting of such a development in the middle of a green belt village on green belt land. The structures will be much larger than anything in the village and the number of people using the site daily will equal the total population of the village. We contend that the buildings and attendant infrastructure plus the inevitable effects of 1000 pupils and staff and consequent traffic will materially and irretrievably damage the village and the green belt.
5. It has astonished the Parish Council that no one from GBC or SCC visited the site before its inclusion in the Local Plan as the site for a large school and the Parish Council was not even informed. It seems as though the necessary investigation and evidence gathering to demonstrate deliverability of a large school on the site has not been done and will not be completed before the end of the consultation period. We believe that access, traffic and safety risk, flood risk and other assessments will show that the site is not viable.
6. We are concerned that the proof of deliverability or otherwise will not be available until the land has been taken out of the green belt. If the site is eventually declared undeliverable (as we strongly believe will be the case) this will leave a large area of land in the very centre of our green belt village unprotected by green belt status. Assurances that it could only ever be used for educational purposes will ring hollow. Villagers fear that if green belt status can be removed, the restriction of the site to educational purposes could also be removed in the future.
7. Guildford Borough Council has stated that the village should remain in the green belt as it contributes to its openness. It is therefore quite out of keeping with this view to propose a bulky and extensive development in the very middle of the village.

8. The choice of the Cuckoo Farm site appears to be a last minute decision to use a site which the owners are prepared to sell and are promoting the use as a school site because they have been told that it cannot be used for housing.
9. Any need for a five entry form school in the North East arises almost entirely from the housing developments being proposed in the Local Plan-particularly Gosden Hill and Wisley. These proposals in turn are based on a housing number which has been widely challenged, is not yet finalised and apparently will remain so until after the end of the consultation period.
10. The Cuckoo Farm element of the local plan is therefore effectively a declaration of intent rather than a matter which is being consulted upon. Because of the lack of evidence, people are unable to properly weigh up something which has the potential to change the very nature of the village.

Cuckoo Farm Site

Setting

The Cuckoo Farm site is on the main road through the village of West Clandon- the A 247. Although designated an "A" Road it has none of the features common to other A roads. It is incapable of carrying the volume of traffic expected of an "A" road and in a number of places has poor sight lines. Much of the road to the South of the Cuckoo Farm site is very narrow and at its narrowest point is 14 feet wide (approximately). Large vehicles such as buses, GBC rubbish collection vehicles and HGV's cannot pass without one mounting the pavement (available on one side only). Such an event is observable every week day and is often conducted at speed. This South section of the road also has two quite severe bends. The one outside the church is completely blind in both directions. The A247 is not wide enough over any of its length to allow for cycle lanes. Sections of the footpaths along the road are only wide enough to allow pedestrians to pass each other with care. For much of the road there is a footpath on one side of the road only and the footpath switches sides in various places. Accordingly it is not possible to walk the length of the road without multiple crossings and large lengths of the road are unlit.

Immediately to the North of the Cuckoo Farm site the A247 crosses over the railway on a hump backed bridge. Immediately to the South of the bridge is the Station Road giving access to the station and the station car park and several dwellings. This bridge severely restricts the view of traffic from the North for car drivers trying to exit the Station Road. For the same reason, car drivers travelling south have a very restricted view of traffic trying to exit Station Road. The bridge has only one footpath-on the opposite side of the road from the Cuckoo Farm site. Immediately to the North of the bridge and on the same side of the road as Cuckoo Farm is the only access to the 70+ houses in Oak Grange Road and Malacca Farm. Between this road and the bridge is a dead-end road which gives access to the London bound platform.

Site Issues

1. **Pedestrian Access:** Walking from Woking, Send, or Ripley requires four crossings of the A 247. From the South, the A247 would have to be crossed at the school entrance because there is no footpath on the East side of the road. A further consideration is that the footpaths are largely unlit. The only light controlled crossing is at the Meadowlands junction and there is no access to the site from Meadowlands. There is little or no catchment within 2km and very little more within 3km. It is unrealistic to expect that many pupils will walk from Woking, Send and Ripley. They will be delivered by car or school buses.
2. **Cycling:** As mentioned under “Setting” above, the road is too narrow for cycle lanes. The road is very dangerous for cycling and as a consequence most parents in the village do not let their children cycle on this road.
3. **Travel by Bus:** Bus services to the site are utterly inadequate-one every 2 hours.
4. **Travel by Train:** The site is adjacent to Clandon Station and pupils and staff could travel from Guildford town, East Horsley and Effingham by train. Train travel from the Gosden Hill development will only be possible if a station is built at Meroo (and if trains stop there). From Wisley, Ripley, Send, West Horsley, Shere, Albury, Chilworth, Gomshall, Holmbury and anywhere else North or South of Cuckoo Farm, rail travel is not an option.
5. **Vehicle Access:** The possible access points are via the Station Road (see comments under “Setting”) or via a new entrance off the A247 immediately adjacent to the Station Road. This would suffer the same problems as the Station Road. The dangers of this access/egress should be very well known to both the Surrey and Guildford officers who recently visited the site. The peak of traffic to the school would overlap with the most intense use of the station access road by rail users. Vehicles cannot stop on the A247 road without causing severe congestion at busy times. Vehicles (e.g. staff members’ cars, buses, delivery vehicles) turning across the A247 to enter the school site from the South would materially add to this. Parents attempting to drop off pupils as near to the school entrance as possible would bring the road to a standstill.
6. **Park and Walk:** It is very likely that parents delivering children would attempt to park in Meadowlands, at the Village Hall, the Station Road, Oak Grange Road, Dedswell Drive, Bennett Way, or the Onslow Arms car park, all of which are only accessible from the A247. Meadowlands is narrow and already suffering from parking problems. The Village Hall parking area is owned by the Parish Council and in use for the Hall, the British Legion and residents using the tennis court and play areas. Oak Grange Road, Dedswell Drive and Bennett Way are private and residents will take action to prevent parking. The Station Road suffers from the problems of access/egress already detailed. The Onslow Arms car park is private and furthermore has a very difficult and single point entry / exit
7. **Drainage:** The site is wet and at its Eastern side is subject to flooding. At present, the site appears to act as a water “buffer” because of its holding capacity. In theory, run off from the site passes under the railway and into water courses in Oak Grange Road and Malacca Farm which are shown on the Environment Agency flood map as Flood Zone 2 or 3. Development of a large school on Cuckoo Farm would result in considerable areas of hard standing and roofs, earthworks, levelling and land draining. All of these would lead to increased run off and / or increased rates of flow which would exacerbate the flood risk in Oak Grange Road and Malacca Farm

8. **Sewerage:** The main sewer (which crosses the railway) is a source of problems and its capacity to deal with 1000 pupils plus staff and ancillary workers is a cause of concern. The most recent incident involved a sewer cover blowing off and sewage flowing down the Station Road, flooding the tracks and booking hall and causing trains to be cancelled.
9. **Traffic congestion.** The A247 is an "A" road not a local road. Much of the traffic is travelling from outside the village to the A3, A25, A246 and the railway station. A general increase in traffic on this road is to be expected because of new developments proposed at Gosden Hill, Burnt Common, Send, Horsley, Wisley and elsewhere. The addition of school buses, cyclists, cars dropping off pupils, cars of staff and ancillary workers or traffic turning across oncoming vehicles plus the possibility of control measures such as traffic lights, pedestrian crossings or a roundabout will in our opinion cause very severe congestion in the morning peak period and quite possibly in the afternoon as well.
10. **Site Size.** The need to provide on-site solutions to a number of the issues listed above will mean that the area of site which is already at the bottom end of desirability will prove to be too small overall.
11. **Environment.** The site has a number of trees with Tree Preservation Orders and Purple Emperor butterflies have recently been spotted on the site. There will be considerable air pollution generated by the school traffic and additional pollution generated by the inevitable stop/start vehicle movements because of congestion.

Solving the Issues

The Parish Council believes that the site cannot be delivered at an affordable cost. It is our view that the following must be realistically assessed and where necessary costed by Guildford Borough Council as Planning Authority and Surrey County Council as both Highways and Education Authority before the decision is made to take the site out of the green belt.

1. **Move the access to the school site away from the bridge.** This would require the purchase and demolition of a house on the A247 or one or more houses in Meadowlands. Even with the access moved away from the rail bridge, all additional traffic would have to use the A247.
2. **New access road.** From the A246 or from Ripley Lane (ca. 1 km) assuming compulsory purchase of land would be possible. However, Ripley Lane is itself unlikely to be suitable as an access route.
3. **Traffic lights on the A247 at the bridge.** These would need to cater for traffic going North and South on the A247 as well as access to the station, school and Oak Grange Road. Wherever they are sited they will lead to a high degree of congestion. This happens now every time delivery vehicles stop on the road or control lights for works are installed.
4. **A roundabout on the A247.** Because of lack of space, this would have to be mainly on the Cuckoo Farm site itself. There is a Grade II listed house (believed to be the oldest in the village) immediately adjacent and a roundabout would have a serious effect on this property.
5. **Pedestrian crossings.** Light controlled crossings would be required at several points on the A 247 to reduce the risk for children walking to the school. These will add significantly to congestion on the road at peak time in the morning.
6. **Cycle routes.** Dedicated cycle paths will be required for this to be a safe means of travel to the school. Short of the compulsory purchase of land it is unlikely to be possible to provide these.

7. **Laybys.** To allow for buses and cars to pull in without stopping traffic. There is simply no land available on either side of the road without compulsory purchase.
8. **Lighting.** The street lighting would require upgrading if the footpaths are to be safe for children to walk to the school. This would change the nature of the village and make it more suburban.
9. **Bus services.** An upgraded bus service would be required if this is to be a realistic mode of access to the school.
10. **Sewerage.** It is likely that sewerage provision will need to be upgraded (probably including the syphon under the railway) to cope with an additional 1000 pupils, teachers and ancillary staff.
11. **Surface water control.** Extensive (and expensive) works will be required to ensure that the amount and rate of run off from the site both during construction and in operation does not add to the flood risk for the railway, the cottages on the Station Road and properties in Oak Grange Road and Malacca Farm.



John Stone
Clerk
For West Clandon Parish Council

5th September 2014