

Knaphill Residents' Association  
c/o 68 Broadway  
Knaphill, Woking  
Surrey GU21 2RH

secretary@knaphill.org



Date: 24 September 2012

Jonathan Lord MP  
County Councillor Linda Kemeny  
County Councillor John Furey  
County Councillor Michael Gosling

## **Brookwood Farm**

### **A Development and the Infrastructure**

Dear Mr Lord, Councillors,

To those members of Surrey County Council's cabinet not familiar with our part of Surrey the proposed development, to which this letter refers, is on what was formerly farmland linked to the old Brookwood Hospital in the Knaphill/Brookwood area of Woking. The proposal is for Cala Homes (South) Ltd to build 297 dwellings with a single road access to the A322 despite compelling evidence against the plans.

The reason for writing to you, key cabinet members of Surrey County Council and our MP, is that for any development to be considered a sustainable development it is important that the infrastructure and key services are in place by the time people start to occupy the new dwellings. History shows that this has not been the case in the past and in fact service and infrastructure changes promised prior to the development of the actual hospital site in the mid 1990's have yet to be delivered. This application will be judged against the National Planning Policy Framework and within the framework there are three key roles that a development should meet to be considered sustainable. The roles come under the headings economic, social and environmental and in the eyes of residents all three roles are of equal importance. The Residents' Association accept that SCC have no formal role to play in the actual consideration of the planning application but the County are responsible for the provision of key elements under the headings social and environmental roles that are required for a development to be considered sustainable and therefore can influence the Planning Officers report. The formal planning application for this development is still under consideration by the local planning authority but Cala Homes and Woking Borough Council had been working on this project for months, if not years, prior to the formal application being submitted. The concern of residents of Knaphill and Brookwood are that although Woking Borough Council and Cala have been working on this project for some time very little work or planning has gone into providing the necessary improvements to the infrastructure and ensuring that key services are included within the plan before approval is given for building to commence.

#### **Health**

The land to be developed is currently in Knaphill but once the development is complete then the new residents and dwellings will transfer to Brookwood given the planned boundary is to be change. For the provision of GP coverage this is important as the GP surgeries in our area have

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strict criteria on who they accept as new patients and this is based on where people live. Brookwood does not have either a GP surgery or health centre within the village. The surgery in Pirbright has responsibility for residents of Brookwood along with Pirbright and Worplesdon. The surgery is well respected but it is small, two doctors, and the question is could it cope with 297 new families?

The surgery that is nearest by distance to the development is the Knaphill surgery. The surgery in Knaphill is part of Heathcot Medical Practice and they have three surgeries across the whole of Woking. Currently the Knaphill surgery is limiting the registration of new patients to Knaphill residents. This restriction must mean that the Heathcot Medical Practice is under pressure, especially as one of their surgeries is close to the centre of Woking where there are major developments in new dwellings and surgeries in town are under pressure to deliver acceptable level of services. **If Heathcot Medical Practice were asked and agreed to provide GP coverage for residents on Brookwood Farm then the question to be answered is whether the Vyne surgery is large enough to accommodate additional doctors and nurses?** The Vyne is owned by Woking Borough Council. There is also the question of NHS dentist coverage, which again is very limited in our area.

I raise these questions because whilst the Brookwood Farm development is being considered the NHS is undergoing major change with the demise of the PCT and the emergence of CCG's. Given these changes GP coverage for this development could fall between the two bodies. It is also worth noting that the Pirbright surgery will come under the Guildford CCG whilst the Knaphill surgery will be under the Woking CCG. Decisions do need to be made at the planning stage so that medical staff could be recruited and premises enlarged or where necessary new premises found. If either surgery needs extending that work will have to start soon and the plans should be approved prior to the Brookwood Farm planning application being signed off.

## Education

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contains the following words '*Where practical, particularly within large-scale developments, key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties*'. Technically Knaphill Lower School and Knaphill School although outside the actual development site are within walking distance of the proposed new development. However both those schools are regularly oversubscribed and at the June meeting of the SCC Local Committee for Woking the County's Education Department agreed that there was a requirement for a new primary school within the area and that officers had started the search for a suitable site. The search for such a site can only be at the expense of land set aside for housing development or Green Belt land. Although Brookwood Farm was not technically Green Belt it is part of the essential green corridor that stops urban areas merging into one and therefore the loss of any additional Green Belt must be questioned. **The first question to be answered is how the search for suitable site is progressing and the second a question, for Mr Lord, once land is found will central Government make the necessary funds available.**

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## Roads

Cala Homes are not the first developer to put forward plans to build on Brookwood Farm but it is the first to have the support of Woking Borough Council. In examining the reports and Planning Committee minutes from earlier applications the records show that everyone agreed a single road access that joins the already congested A322 could only accommodate new traffic from 200 dwellings. The plan from Cala Homes and Woking Borough Council is for 309 dwellings with all the associated traffic having to join the A322 at a new crossroads. The 309 dwellings comprise of 297 new build plus 12 existing houses. How can traffic experts agree that you can jump from an agreed maximum of 200 dwellings to 309 dwellings without any major changes to the road network? Is this plan sustainable? The proposed crossroad junction where the A322 meets Redding Way will, if the planning application goes ahead as it stands, be required to operate above its planned capacity from day one. There will also be greater strain on the junction of the A322 and the A324 (Brookwood crossroads). Surrey's highways authority have put forward a number of suggestions that it believes will assist the new residents to gain easy access to public transport and secondary road access to ease the congestion but we understand that all suggestions have been rejected. Everyone agrees that the A322 in the area between Bisley and Fox Corner, Brookwood is heavily congested. The developer, to mitigate the additional traffic, has proposed an untested and in an earlier discussion with the Highways Authority a traffic management system that would fail to deliver any improvement to the flow of traffic on the A322.

Previous developments to the west of Woking town centre have been agreed with promises of improvements in the road network. In the late 1970's when the development on Goldsworth Park was being outlined the plan was for the roads to connect with the West End and Bisley bypass. With the proposed development of the old Brookwood hospital site in the 1990's the plan was that the majority of through traffic would use a bypass. These bypasses have never been built but development along the A322 corridor has continued.

My understanding of SCC's policy on congestion is that the County's target is that congestion does not deteriorate beyond current levels both in delay and journey time reliability. That policy was laid out in 2008, in the case of the A322 the County have completely failed in getting anywhere near that target. Returning to the proposed development on Brookwood Farm the transport assessment submitted by the developer included the point that they accepted the A322 was congested and that they were adding to that congestion. A blatant disregard to the residents especially those currently living in the area who use the A322 on a daily basis. **The basic question is does this development meet the County's criteria on easing congestion on the A322?**

Finally on the issue of road congestion, there is a direct link between traffic congestion in the A322 corridor and air quality. There are already concerns about the air quality in the area of the proposed new crossroads and an independent review of traffic congestion both now and in 10 years' time should be commissioned prior to any approval to these plans.

In conclusion, the Residents' Association accept that Woking Borough Council and Cala Homes have the right to build on the old farm land. Our whole argument is around the size of the development and the infrastructure that is required to make the development work both for new residents but also those currently living in Knaphill and Brookwood. As we have outlined above

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although the County Council are not responsible for the detailed examination of the application they are responsible for key elements in creating the necessary infrastructure that would make the development sustainable. Looking back at the recent Olympics, everyone has said how well the venue worked and that was down to the fact that a strong infrastructure was planned and put into place prior to the event being opened. Although Brookwood Farm is not on the same scale as the Olympics the principals remain the same.

Yours faithfully

Philip Stubbs  
Secretary to Knaphill residents' Association