

West End Action Group (WEAG)

22 April 2019

UPDATE ON PROPOSED 74 HOUSES ON WEST END'S GREEN BELT

Dear WEAG supporters,

This newsletter is an update concerning planning application 19/0154 by Fairfax Acquisitions for 74 houses at Fenns Lane. This is the first major housing estate to attack the precious Green Belt surrounding the village.

107 objections have been received by Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC), and there are no submissions in support of the proposal. The most extensive objection was WEAG's 15-page submission, which was circulated to supporters in draft for comments; the final version can be seen on the SHBC website and also our own website www.weag.info. Copies of our submission have also been sent to our MP Michael Gove and to our Borough and County Councillors.

In addition to the 107 objections there are also some from the 'consultee' official bodies. West End Parish Council has submitted an objection. Provisional objections have been sent in by the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Transportation Department of Surrey County Council (SCC). All three are critical of the Fairfax application for not including enough information.

The Environment Agency is particularly critical of Fairfax. It recommends that SHBC should refuse planning permission because Fairfax's consultants Temple have produced a very inadequate flood risk assessment. Among the many shortfalls are:

- The assessment of the effects of climate change has only covered Rosedene Farm but should have covered the entire site.
- There are flood attenuation features proposed within areas that are themselves at risk from flooding from Trulley Brook, instead of being outside the flood risk zones.
- The proposed boardwalks in the SANG are in places within 8 metres of the main river, which is liable to result in a loss of floodplain storage and/or impact on floodplain flow paths, and the necessary mitigation is not specified.
- Special considerations arise when there is a new crossing over the river, but this has not been addressed.
- There is no consideration about the effects of the houses on flooding outside the application site, in Fenns Lane itself and nearby.

Natural England has asked for further information from Fairfax "to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects" on

the Special Protection Area (SPA) of Brentmoor Heath. However I doubt if any such measures are possible, because the proposed houses would be on the very boundary of the SPA's 400 metre buffer zone; the proposed green recreational space (SANG) would be within the buffer zone itself; and the SANG would be too small to cater for all the dog-walking generated by the new houses. Consequently dog-walkers from the new estate would walk through the SANG, along a footpath (or alternatively along Fenns Lane), and onto nearby Brentmoor Heath, adding to the pressure on the protected species.

Surrey County Council's Transport Development Planning Officer asked for five drawings which were missing from the application; criticised the lack of any pedestrian-only exit from the proposed estate; and commented on the narrower part of Fenns Lane.

WEAG has written to all three of these organisations, quoting the points about their respective areas of concern which were made in WEAG's own submission to SHBC. This ensures that the EA, NE and SCC are aware of WEAG's local knowledge when they make their final submissions.

Since these three organisations require more time to receive further information and to respond to it, it means that the effective time available for residents to submit objections is extended, at least until the end of April.

The earliest that the application could go to SHBC's Planning Applications Committee for a decision is the meeting on 23 May, but in view of the work still to be done by SHBC's planning officers the 20 June meeting is more likely, or even later.

Rosedene Farm application for a certificate of lawful existing development

There is another planning application relevant to the 74 houses proposed for Fenns Lane: application 19/0214. This concerns some of the land at Rosedene Farm, Fenns Lane, which is part of the site for the 74 houses. The application seeks a certificate to state that the existing uses of the land, as part builders yard and part storage of caravans and mobile homes, is lawful. Granting this application would help the case for building 74 homes on the land proposed by Fairfax.

The central argument is about whether or not the present uses of Rosedene Farm's land have been going on for at least ten years. If it is established that they have, those activities would be considered lawful, and the land would be classified as previously developed land. If you have any evidence that the current uses have not taken place for at least ten years, it would be relevant evidence to submit to SHBC (and please let WEAG know).

Regards

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