

# West End Action Group (WEAG)

Dear WEAG Supporters

## Borough Council refuses application for 95 houses around Malthouse Farm

The very good news is that the Borough Council's Planning Applications Committee (PAC) refused planning permission for 95 houses on the fields around Malthouse Farm, next to Holy Trinity School (ref. 15/0445), at its meeting on Tuesday.

The Borough's Case Officer, Duncan Carty, had recommended refusal on the grounds that the Borough's housing targets could be met without using West End's 'reserve land' which includes this site and on other policy matters that were not completed. WEAG's letters to all members of PAC, and WEAG Vice Chair Jeff Llewellyn's 3-minute speech at the PAC meeting, urged the committee to refuse the application on a number of additional grounds. The PAC decided to cite the application's layout and high density of housing as an additional reason for refusal (see detail below under the vote)

Unfortunately this is not the end of the matter, since the developer, Southern Heritage Developments, is almost certain to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. If so, the Inspector's planning inquiry is likely to be held in early 2016.

### The Planning Applications Committee meeting

The meeting on Tuesday 13 October in the Council Chamber in Camberley was lively and well attended by some 50 + residents of West End. The Case Officer's report advised refusal mainly on the basis of the Core Strategy Local Plan and the availability of sufficient housing development sites as shown in their 5 year plan.

Dr Jeff Llewellyn, Vice Chair of the West End Action Group, presented an excellent account, within the 3 minutes allocated, of the weaknesses of the developer's proposal including:

- Traffic - developer's modelling underestimates true levels of additional traffic; estate's road junctions so close to primary school invites accidents; school run parking already creates gridlock
- Education - Holy Trinity School at full capacity; new estate children would get priority, so catchment area will be tightened, displacing children from west of village, generating more traffic
- Healthcare - doctors surgery now at capacity - new residents will have travel to facilities elsewhere
- Loss of rural character - the site is highly visible, impact of development on rural character of this part of West End
- Strength of local opposition - more than 1,000 signatures on petition, more than 200 written objections sent in

This was indeed a lively meeting with many questions coming from the PAC members, especially in relation to 'other reasons' beyond the Case Officer's recommended refusal on planning principles. These included layout and density of the proposed development, traffic, schools, and healthcare provision by GPs. There was some confusion as to the funding on schools and healthcare, which the Head of Development sought to clarify.

Most questions and proposed amendments were dismissed by the forceful Chairman as not policy, not appropriate, or not defensible in an appeal. The Head of Development was ardent in his efforts to enlighten and sometimes undermine some of the the PAC's questions or suggestions. However certain PAC members persisted in wanting to refuse on the additional grounds of the density of the proposed houses, at 20 dwellings per acre, being out of keeping with the lower density of the surroundings - namely Benner Lane and the very lightly developed northern side of Fairfield Lane.

### The vote

When the Chairman declared the discussion closed, the committee voted 14-1 for 'Refusal as Amended' - meaning refusal as advised by the Case Officer Duncan Carty mainly on planning policy grounds, with the amendment orchestrated by the PAC that "the layout and density would result in a development that would not integrate satisfactorily in relation to neighbouring buildings and land on the peripheries of the site and would therefore fail to respect and improve the character and quality of the urban and rural environments, contrary to Policies CP2 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework"

We understand that this planning application may return to a further PAC meeting in order to discuss the layout and excessive density of housing.

Regards

Beulah Kingston  
Chair, West End Action Group  
[contact@weag.info](mailto:contact@weag.info)