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19th October 2018

Dear Guy,

Modest Additions to Larger Rural Villages

At the Village Association's Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 17th October the subject of the proposed sites under the above scheme was discussed. Below is the feedback which I would be grateful if you will take into account in the next stages of your development planning proposals.

The comments are based on feedback at the meeting as well as emails received from residents. Most emails I have received have also been sent to you by the authors, but not all. All residents have been encouraged to write directly to the council with their views.

Meeting Attendance

The meeting was attended by 99 residents of Westcott village out of a total village population of voting age of around 1,700, (just under 6% of the adult population) and slightly less than attended the first open meeting in September.

The majority of those attending represented the older generations in the village but some under 50's were present.

Proposed sites 18-WC-001; 18-WC-003 and 18-WC-004

The attendees of the meeting were asked, by a show of hands, whether they supported the two sites identified by the council as having been put forward by the property owners for development.

On a show of hands 22 out of 99 supported development on these sites; marginally less voted for the Mill Way sites than the Westcott House site. No vote was taken for those against or those abstaining.

Residents' primary arguments against development were:-

1. That they did not want to see any encroachment of development into currently designated Green Belt land. The Village survey results from 2013/14 were referred to.
2. That the council should exhaust all possible "Brownfield" sites before removing land from the Greenbelt.
3. That serious concerns were expressed about the "sheer weight of traffic" on the A25 into Dorking and its ability to cope with an increase in traffic volume created by the addition of new housing.
4. That both sites would potentially access the A25 at very dangerous points in the village with poor sight lines.
5. That the village will have no control over the numbers and type of housing if approval to build on these sites were to be given.

(These have been summarised to provide some clarity in the feedback to the Council).

Minority Considerations

Of the minority at the meeting supporting development on the two sites, there was a small distinction between them.

Those supporting development in 18-WC-003 and 18-WC-004 did so on the basis that it was effectively a "developed part of the village" albeit in designated Green Belt land.

Those supporting development in 18-WC-001 expressed the view that “this had greater potential to serve the housing needs of the village”.

That minority pointed to the much more positive tone of the Westcott NDP and asked that the nature of any housing development should reflect Para 6.1.6. of the plan defining the types of housing the village needs.

There was recognition that “freeing up houses at the top of the chain [by creating opportunities to downsize] will allow others to move up the chain as they need more space for growing families”.

A minority of (mainly younger) residents made a strong call to take broader considerations into account expressing concerns over the loss of amenities in the village over the last 10 years, and, if left unchecked, the impact this would have in the longer term on viability of a thriving village community.

If there is any more information you would like us to provide, we will be happy to assist.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Way

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Chairman,

On behalf of the Westcott Village Association.