

From: James Leaver

Sent: 04 July 2023 17:01

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Subject: 3324631 Land at Sondes Place Farm, Westcott Road, Dorking MO/2023/0188

I am writing from Westcott Village Association (WVA) on the suggestion of Piers Mason, Head of Planning at Mole Valley District Council.

It is understood that the appellant lodged the appeal after 5pm on 22nd June, that acknowledgement was quickly communicated to both parties on 23rd June 2023 noting the appellant's preference for a Planning Inquiry. A response was requested from Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) by 28th June 2023 (just 2 working days).

Although WVA has not yet been formally notified of the appeal by MVDC we established this fact for ourselves on Thursday 27th June, together with the fact that the appellant had requested a 6-day Public Inquiry. We shared our concerns about this approach with MVDC by letter (attached) at the earliest opportunity on Monday 3rd July. We suggested an appeal process by written submissions only.

MVDC told WVA that a request for an alternative Hearing format had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by them on 29th June and had already been rejected, although this correspondence was not publicly available on MVDC's portal until last night (3rd July) and at the time of writing the Planning Inspectorate's response is not visible.

If this is normal practice WVA is very concerned that the time limits the Planning Inspectorate has set for agreeing the procedure are completely unreasonable and do not facilitate transparency in a process which should be just that.

For the reasons stated in our letter to MVDC we believe a 6-day Public Inquiry is a waste of public resources, particularly as the application has been determined on the basis of the current Local Plan. A 6-day Public Inquiry does not offer a fair forum to the 300+ community objectors who do not have the same access to a professional team or funds that a well-resourced developer would be expected to muster.

Please confirm receipt of this

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James Leaver
WVA Planning Lead
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Planning Appeal
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