



WESTCOTT VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Planning Department  
Mole Valley District Council  
Pippbrook  
Dorking  
Surrey, RH4 1SJ  
31 October 2024

Mr James Leaver



jamesandfrancesca@hotmail.co.uk

Dear Sirs

**MO/2024/1703 RESERVED MATTERS MAJOR**

**Sondes Place Farm, Westcott Road, Dorking**

**Reserved Matters application for consideration of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping pursuant to Outline permission MO/2023/0188 (allowed on appeal ref: APP/C3620/W/23/3324631) which was for a residential development of up to 144 dwellings including the creation of new vehicular access, school parking and drop-off/pick-up, gypsy and traveller pitches (0.2ha), public open space, landscape planting, surface water attenuation and associated infrastructure.**

I refer to the application above and write in my capacity as the lead for planning matters for Westcott Village Association (WVA).

WVA participated in all stages of the Future Mole Valley (Local Plan) consultation as well as Gleeson's and Taylor Wimpey's consultations with respect to this site. We

objected to MO/2023/0188, presenting a WVA petition of objection with 240 Westcott names on it. WVA's concerns have consistently related to loss of Green Belt and loss of separation between the settlements of Dorking and Westcott. All parties have been made well aware of Westcott's highways concerns as well.

We accept that MO/2023/0188 was allowed on appeal. This site and Milton Court Lane (pending application MO/2024/1228) are now allocated sites in the new Mole Valley Local Plan 2020-2039 with proposed vehicular access from Westcott Road (A25).

We have reviewed MO/2024/1703 and have no specific landscape, layout or design concerns. We also welcome Taylor Wimpey's proposed replacement of the school pick up and drop off with a staff car park for 15 cars and a coach park for 3 coaches instead. **We stress that this modification must be conditioned and be enforceable to prevent abuse.**

Notwithstanding the fact that the vehicular access has already been consented and the S.106 signed, we remain very concerned about the potential combined impact of this scheme and the Milton Court Lane scheme on the highway infrastructure. The proposed mitigation in the S.106 and 278 for Sondes Place is almost entirely focussed on walking and cycling infrastructure between the scheme and Dorking and a demand responsive bus service. Surrey CC Highways' recent statutory consultee response for MO/2024/1228 - see snip below - appears to have a similar emphasis.

**Location:** Land at Milton Court Lane, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3GA

**Development:** Outline application with all matters reserved except for means of access for a residential development of up to 86 dwellings including public open space, landscaping, surface water drainage, earthworks and all other associated infrastructure.

Contact Officer	Matthew Strong	Consultation Date	12 August 2024	Response Date	18 October 2024
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The proposed development has been considered by THE COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY who recommends an appropriate agreement should be secured before the grant of permission.

**S106 Payments**

1. A contribution of £5,000 to go towards a validation exercise for the traffic signals MOVA system.
2. A contribution of £4,600 towards the auditing of the Travel Plan.

**S278 Works**

3. The development hereby approved shall not first be occupied unless and until improvement works have been provided at the following locations:

- (i) The junction where Hanover Court meets Milton Court Lane;
- (ii) The junction where Nutcombe Lane meets Westcott Road;
- (iii) The junction where Drill Hall Road meets Westcott Road;
- (iv) The junction where Station Road meets Westcott Road;
- (v) The footway between Drill Hall Road and Station Road; and
- (vi) Milton Court Lane.

These shall be provided in accordance with the approved plans, Drawing Numbers:

0001 P06, 0010 P03, 0011 P03, 0012 P01, 0013 P02, 0014 P02, 0015 P02.

Thereafter these shall be retained and maintained for their designated purposes.

While the proposed walking and cycling S.106 and 278 measures are very welcome not all journeys from these schemes will be a walkable or cycling distance or in the direction of Dorking. The Design Statement for Sondes Place confirms that it will have car parking for 354 cars and 3 coaches. This will inevitably lead to a considerable increase in vehicle movements on Westcott Road (A25) at am and pm peak in particular. There are no hard numbers for the Milton Court Lane yet but, with 88 dwellings, this is conservatively another c.130, so a total of c.500 additional vehicles.

We would like to remind MVDC that the comments above are all made in the context of Surrey County Council's Strategic Highway Assessment Report – October 2021 which states at paragraph 4.1.7:-

*“The level of service of the A25 / Vincent Lane junction in the Do Something scenario deteriorates to F during the AM peak and is likely to require some form of mitigation measure in terms of highway layout. However, the need to limit travel by private vehicle should not be overlooked as this has the potential to minimise congestion in this location. The allocation sites at Milton Court Lane and Sondes Place Farm are relatively close to the town centre amenities and its public transport links. High quality pedestrian and cycle links linking these sites to the town centre and railways stations would provide minimise [typographical error in report noted] the need for travel by private car”.*

No improvements have been made to this A25/ Vincent Lane junction since the report in 2021 and it is well known that there is no identified physical solution to do so. It therefore highlights the added importance of identifying “*some form of mitigation*” to optimise the level of service of the A25/ Vincent Lane flow during peak. The S.106 agreement for Sondes Place (MO/2023/0188) did not include any mitigation to improve the efficiency of the A25/ Vincent Lane flow. The Surrey CC statutory consultee response for Milton Court Lane in the snip above does not either and this disconnect should concerns us all.

Increased congestion on Westcott Road (A25) will be to the significant detriment of:-

1. Dorking's economy - the market town for all communities in it's western catchment, including Westcott and the villages beyond. Westcott residents do not have safe or compelling walking and cycling infrastructure or a frequent bus service to get to and from Dorking, so are heavily dependent on private cars. With ever-increasing congestion on Westcott Road it will become much more difficult for anyone living to the west of Dorking to access the shops, businesses, social infrastructure and rail services in Dorking and they will have to take their business elsewhere;
2. Air quality on the Westcott Road (A25) with more congestion and stationary traffic at am and pm peak;

3. The developers of Sondes Place and Milton Court Lane because potential buyers will realise they will be unable to exit the developments in a vehicle via a priority "T" junction and regard this and the above factors negatively when considering whether to buy.

For the reasons stated above we believe that the Council and Taylor Wimpey should be fully aligned with us in this thinking and everyone should be working much harder to address these known issues.

We note that the Surrey CC statutory consultee response for Milton Court Lane includes a contribution of £5,000 towards a MOVA (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation) validation exercise. We believe that Sondes Place Farm should contribute as well. We do not know what the total cost of this study will be or what the recommended technology solution it identifies will cost to install or monitor, but it is in everyone's best interest to get on and do it.

**WVA believe both Milton Court Lane and Sondes Place should contribute significant sums towards MOVA in S.106 and its recommendations in S.278. Please use these planning applications as an opportunity to properly fund the study and solution for the known congestion issues that the schemes will increase and should mitigate.**

WVA wish to remind MVDC, in the context of MO/2024/1703 and MO/2024/1228 that:-

1. LCWIP funding has recently been redirected away from the Westcott to Dorking corridor so there does not appear to be a solution to address the sustainable accessibility concerns we have shared in this letter;
2. NCR22/ bridleway 110/112/114 floods between Westcott and Dorking and is in desperate need of refurbishment with a permeable surface. Funding has still not been allocated by the county council to do this;
3. MVDC footpaths alongside the A25 are not sufficiently wide for two people to safely walk abreast or pass, for a wheelchair, a children's buggy or pram;
4. 33% of pupils of Surrey Hills All Saints School, Westcott already come from the Dorking direction and it is most likely that there will be more pupils from Sondes Place and Milton Court Lane in the future. Per points 1-3 above there is no safe walking or cycling infrastructure to enable these pupils to walk or cycle to school safely and there needs to be.

We ask MVDC to object to this application, as we have for Milton Court Lane (MO/2024/1228) until these valid concerns about highways, walking and cycling infrastructure have been properly addressed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Leaver', written in a cursive style.

James Leaver

Planning Lead, Westcott Village Association

cc Cllrs Margaret Cooksey, Abhiram Magesh, Leah Mursaleen-Plank, Chris Budleigh

Katrina Sullivan-Watkins, MVDC planning for Milton Court Lane - MO/2024/1228

Piers Mason and Louise Nolan, MVDC planning