

Welcome to your regular Update on planning issues.

A new Neighbourhood Planning Support Programme has been launched with £23m funds available, confirming the Government's commitment to Neighbourhood Planning.

Planning Legislation & Policy Update (taken from Planning Aid England)

The new Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has been busy recently introducing new sets of regulations and guidance that are important for neighbourhood planning.

Neighbourhood planning guidance has been revised to explain the new plan updating procedures – i.e. where a plan has been prepared and 'made' by the local planning authority and the group that prepared it wants to update part(s) rather than prepare a totally new neighbourhood plan. Importantly, where updates are proposed and do not significantly change the nature of the plan, the Examiner's report will be binding - and providing the updated plan meets the basic condition tests there will be no requirement to hold a new referendum.

A further reform will come into force on 31 July requiring local planning authorities to set out the support they will give to neighbourhood plan groups in their area. This will be included in their 'Statement of Community Involvement', a document which all local authorities have to produce to clarify how they will involve and consult people on local planning applications and in plan making.

Reforms have also recently come into force for Local Plans that are useful for neighbourhood plan groups. These require local planning authorities to identify their strategic priorities and the policies to address them, and require them to keep their plans up to date. Local Plans should cover a period spanning 15 years ahead and be reviewed regularly at least every five years.

A draft set of revisions to the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been published for consultation by MHCLG – it is inviting responses by 10th May. Neighbourhood planning remains a key theme in the document. A final version will be published later this year – probably in late summer. Areas of particular neighbourhood planning interest include:

1. Confirmation of the important protection from speculative development for neighbourhood plans for two years after a plan is successful at referendum where they contain policies for housing and allocate sites for housing development to meet local needs.
2. A proposed new requirement on local authorities to provide a housing requirement figure or indicative figure for designated neighbourhood planning areas.

3. Recognition of the important role that neighbourhood plans can play in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.

4. Groups are encouraged to consider including design code policies in their neighbourhood plans.

5. Groups are also encouraged to consider in particular which local small sites might be suitable for development in their plan.

6. A distinction is now included between 'strategic policies' and 'local policies'. Strategic policies will be prepared by local authorities and included in their Local Plan to address the strategic priorities for their area - to provide a clear starting point for local policies that may be needed. Local policies can then come forward either as part of the authority's local plan - or via a neighbourhood plan.

7. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been demonstrated through strategic policies in a local plan, detailed amendments to Green Belt boundaries can then be made through local policies – i.e. proposed changes can now be included in neighbourhood plans as well as in local plans.

Though little of this is of current relevance to us, the guidance on how to make changes to a neighbourhood plan could come in useful.

If anyone wishes to see a change to our Neighbourhood Plan (that does not constitute a significant change to the nature of the Plan) please let me know. If we are going to make changes to the Plan, then it makes sense to do them all at once.

Woking Borough Council has announced that it hopes to publish the final version of its preferred site allocations plan (and its impact on the Green Belt) by the end of October. This will be followed by a consultation before the plan is examined.

In England as a whole there were nine neighbourhood plans that passed referendum in December, nine in January, twenty-seven in February and twenty-one in March.

As usual, the second part of the Update summarises planning applications specific to Hook Heath, starting with the two big ones just outside the Neighbourhood Area:

The Star / Co-op

Planning application 2017/1148 to put up the new advertising signs has been approved and the old 'Star' sign on the other side of the road has been removed. For more information on the Co-op see the HHRA newsletter.

Hoe Valley School

Work continues to get the new school ready for September 2018. Some minor supplementary planning applications have been approved.

Local Planning Applications in the Neighbourhood Area

Woodbank

Following a management change, the Methodist Homes Association have indicated that they do not intend to build a new care home and plan to dispose of the site.

Five applications reported in the last Update have been approved by the Council.

AMEND/2017/0082

Further non-material amendments to PLAN/2018/0900 (already approved) at 3 Blenheim Gardens.

PLAN/2017/1161

Removal of hedge and fence and replacement with new hedge and fence at Sheldons House, Holly Bank Road.

The existing conifer hedge has apparently been killed by honey fungus and the proposal is to replace it with laurel.

PLAN/2017/1321

Variation of condition 2 of PLAN/2016/0347 for removal of two velux windows to the side of the elevation and add a tile-hung dormer with two velux roof lights to the flat roof dormer at Park House, Fernhill Park.

The original application was refused by the Council but allowed at appeal.

PLAN/2017/1418

Erection of a detached garage at Limburg, The Drive.

PLAN/2016/1453

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) and informative 3 of PLAN/2014/1317 dated 08.05.2015 for new dwelling following the demolition of the existing dwelling at Greenlea, Cedar Road.

The existing house has already been demolished.

One application reported in the last update has been withdrawn

PLAN/2017/1388

Proposed first floor side extension, conversion of the existing garage and erection of a new detached garage at 16 Orchard Mains.

Given the refusal of the first application at 4 Orchard Mains and the refusal of the first application at 3 Fernhill Close, this also appeared to be too large and we wrote to object.

There were also issues with the accuracy of the plans, and the position of the garage and house on the plot.

Two applications reported in the last Update were refused.

PLAN/2017/0449

Proposed two storey side and rear extension and a single storey front and rear extension following the demolition of existing single garage at 4 Orchard Mains.

This application was submitted following dismissal on appeal of PLAN/2016/0838. We objected to this new application on the basis that the extension is still too large for the original house, and that as there is no garage proposed, parking three cars in the front would harm the street scene.

The applicant submitted an appeal on the basis of non-determination by the Council. The Council then issued a statement explaining that they had advised the applicant that the plans were not acceptable and that they thought that the applicant would be submitting new plans - and that was why they had not formally determined the application. The inspector agreed with the Council and refused the appeal.

PLAN/2017/0962

Proposed two storey front and side extensions with internal layout alterations at Key Lodge, Hook Heath Road.

This proposal was explained in some detail in the previous Update. It went to Planning Committee where it was refused on the basis of non-compliance with Policy BE1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Six planning applications have been submitted and approved since the last Update.

PLAN/2018/0037

Proposed single storey rear extension and alteration to roof to create balcony, following the demolition of existing conservatory at 8 Hurst Close.

PLAN/2018/0052

Proposed first floor side extension, front porch and rear roof terrace at Hill House, Hook Heath Road.

PLAN/2018/0064

Proposed garage conversion and first floor side extension at 3 Fernhill Close.

PLAN/2018/0098

Proposed single storey side extension at Uplands, Pond Road.

PLAN/2018/0111

Proposed single storey front extension at Little Oaks, Fernhill Lane.

PLAN/2018/0121

Proposed two storey side and rear extensions and carport with addition of side and front porch and Velux window at the Little White House, Golf Club Road.

One planning application listed in the last Update is still undecided.

PLAN/2017/0704

Erection of a two storey detached dwelling (3x bed) on land south of Little Ponds and associated vehicular access and landscaping at Little Ponds, Mount Road.

We wrote to object on the basis that the plot sizes were not in compliance with policy BE1 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Surrey County Council has questioned whether visibility from the site entrance is adequate, and also whether there is sufficient room to turn a vehicle round on site. In addition, the Drainage and Flood Risk team have expressed concerns about the drainage of the site. There have been no new documents put on the WBC web-site since August 2017.

There are five new planning applications which are currently undecided.

PLAN/2018/0042

Proposed installation of a 2m high x 3m wide electric automated gate to replace an existing wooden gate at Netherside, Hook Heath Road.

PLAN/2018/0143

A proposed part two storey and part single storey, side and rear extension following demolition of the existing garage and single storey rear extension at Mounts Ryde, Golf Club Road.

PLAN/2018/0201

Demolition of the existing bungalow and erection of a replacement dwelling with attached garage at Ridge End, Hook Hill Lane.

We wrote to object to this development, mainly because it creates a large house right in the corner of a large (0.25 ha) plot and thus fails to comply with policy BE1 in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Our view is that there is plenty of room elsewhere on the plot for a large house which would comply with policy BE1 and that would also avoid problems with infringement of neighbours' privacy.

PLAN/2018/0252

Demolition of existing 3 bedroom dwelling and the erection of a replacement 5 bedroom dwelling at Pinewood, Mount Road.

We plan to write to object on the basis that the design of the new dwelling is inappropriate for the area and as such does not comply with policy BE1.

PLAN/2018/0270

Proposed ground floor side and rear extension and first floor side extension over existing garage at 1A Fernhill Close.

Certificates of Proposed Lawful Development

An application listed in the last Update has been approved:

PLAN/2017/1372

An application for an orangery to replace an existing conservatory at Ravenstor, Court Green Heights.

There have been two applications since the last update:

PLAN/2018/0033

An application for a single storey outbuilding at Hill House, Hook Heath Road.

This was approved.

PLAN/2018/0265

An application for a front porch following demolition of the existing, and new French doors in place of existing windows at Fishers Vane, Hook Heath Road.

This is currently undecided.

EU General Data Protection Regulation

It's not totally clear to us how and to what extent a post-referendum Neighbourhood Forum needs to comply with this new legislation. We do know that in any case we need a clear statement of policy and will be working on developing one. In the meantime let me assure anyone who is worried that members' details are held securely.

Many thanks for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

Mike Cooke, Chairman

On behalf of the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee