

Welcome to the regular Update on planning issues. It's a bit later than normal but there has been a HHRA Newsletter issued in the interim.

I hope you're well. We've been isolating at home since the lockdown started, only venturing out to walk the dog, and visit the nurse and dentist. I walk the dog early in the morning and have certainly seen more people out and about. It will be interesting to see whether that stays the same once things get back to normal.

Given that there are more people out and about, now is the time to check that hedges are not blocking the pathway forcing pedestrians to walk in single file or step out into the road; and if they are to trim them back. This is a particular issue on the roads with fast moving traffic - Hook Heath Road and Holly Bank Road – where for a pedestrian moving into the road can be dangerous. And if you are encouraged to pick up the hedge trimmer, do please check first that there are no birds nesting in the hedge.

Site Allocations

On 31 July 2019 Woking Borough Council (WBC) submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination a "Site Allocations Development Planning Document" that identifies land on which development will be needed in the current planning period up to 2027, or subsequently up to 2040. The Inspector held hearings into the proposals at the beginning of December.

On completion of the hearings, the Inspector retired to compile his report. In February of this year he wrote to WBC to say that his report could not be completed until an update to the Annual Monitoring Report on the 2012 Core Strategy had been circulated and there had been an opportunity to submit comments. In the meantime he asked WBC to make various changes to the submission document as a result of his Examination. Of particular interest to us is his statement on the future of the land adjoining the railway line between Hook Hill Lane and Allen House Park, which he recommends should be kept in the green belt. He asked for the text and related policy maps to be amended to reflect this.

Feedback on the Monitoring Report was published on 11 March and the Council's responses (essentially rebutting the comments, which looked like repeats of comments made earlier) on 29 March. Since then there has been no progress reported.

We cannot be certain of anything until the final report is published, but it looks as though we have been successful in convincing the Inspector of the

merits of protecting the openness of the Hook Heath Escarpment by retaining all of it within the green belt – at least for the time being.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Projects

There's little to report on the projects at the moment. We are waiting for WBC to contact us to say they are ready to complete the estimate for installing/renovating benches. We hope that once lockdown is lifted, some progress can be made on all our planned projects.

WBC have not published the 'green book' (the monthly performance report) since the end of February. At that time the amount in our CIL account was £22,805. In terms of approved developments there is £11,554 in the pipeline relating to Belfairs (subject to covenant), South Hurstgate (2nd & 3rd tranches) and Strawberry Tree/ Cedar Views (3rd tranche).

Funds are slowly increasing with the development of Ridge End on Hook Hill Lane being the latest contributor. Work on other significant new projects with planning permission is yet to start.

Redesignation of Hook Heath Neighbourhood Forum

Neighbourhood forum designations only last for five years and we have submitted the paperwork for redesignation in order to retain our legal status. The Council meeting to approve the redesignation was cancelled and we are waiting to find out when Council meetings will resume.

Hook Heath Community Facebook page

Since the last Update, membership has risen from 95 to 288 members. If you're already a Facebook member then you can search for 'Hook Heath Residents' and apply to join - or go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HookHeath/>

In the last four months the range of subjects covered by postings has increased significantly.

Other Neighbourhood Plans

As of March over 1,000 Neighbourhood Plans had been submitted for examination and nearly 1,200 have been published for pre-submission consultation. Of those that went to a vote the average 'yes' vote was 87%

with a 28% turnout. The first areas to review and modify their plans were Arundel in November, Great Glen in January, and Farnham in March. These were driven by the creation of local plans in the relevant boroughs and the need to keep the housing allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan in sync to prevent inappropriate development.

Crime

The weekly crime summaries circulated by the police have stopped; however numerical summary information is still available on the police website. This suggests that crime in Hook Heath has remained at a higher than normal level during the lockdown. In addition there have been a number of vehicle crimes.

Police are reminding Surrey residents, especially the elderly, to stay on the alert for bogus phone calls and visitors after a sudden, sharp increase in courier fraud in the county.

Since 1 June the force has received 20 reports of this type of fraud, a crime which sees the suspect impersonate an official from the police or the victim's bank.

The caller alleges that there has been unauthorised use of a debit or credit card, that someone has been arrested and that there is an investigation underway. They state that they need the resident's help with the investigation and need their PIN and card details provided either over the phone, or handed to a courier who they will send. In four of the recent Surrey cases, a courier turned up at the victim's home.

Remember - no police officer, or bank staff on the phone, will ever ask for your bank details, PIN or for cash. Don't give your details or cash to anyone in these circumstances. Hang up the phone straight away.

A lot of new companies are advertising their wares on-line; if you're making a purchase from a company or person you don't know and trust, carry out some research first, for example, by checking to see if others have used the site and what their experience was. An advert on Facebook and a UK-based website can easily be a front for a China-based operation, with a six+ week delivery time and no possibility of returns. One company I looked at that sold an apparently attractive camera had 16 reviews, every one of them one star. Be warned.

Local Planning Applications in the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Area

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

PLAN/2019/0756

Proposed two storey side and single storey rear extension and new highway access at Turaco House, Hook Heath Avenue.

We wrote to object, not to the extension itself, but to the proposed highway access which does not comply with policy OS2 of the Neighbourhood Plan. For consistency we suggested that the new crossover be constructed using a 'cellweb' mesh with grass planted in the cells, as this was the solution agreed for an earlier planning application at Merrywood in 2015. The planning officer agreed and approved the application on this basis.

PLAN/2019/1182

Erection of single storey rear extension, front porch canopy and alterations to main roof at Dunsland, Hook Hill Lane.

PLAN/2019/1208

Erection of a two storey side extension following demolition of existing garage and erection of a rear conservatory following demolition of existing conservatory at The Hollies, Court Green Heights.

PLAN/2020/0135

Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings together with alterations to vehicular access and parking arrangements following demolition of existing bungalow at Belfairs, Pond Road. (Resubmission of PLAN/2019/0292).

The Inspector dismissed the appeal against the Council's rejection of PLAN/2019/0292 because he could not be certain that the financial contributions that the applicants proposed to make under the Council's SANGS (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) scheme would be used to offset the impacts of the developments on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

At the same time, he claimed that despite the smaller plot sizes which do not comply with the Neighbourhood Plan policy BE1, there would have been no harm to the character of the area.

This application was simply a resubmission of the same plan, coupled with a commitment to make appropriate financial contributions. Although the Council still considered that the proposal failed to comply with the Core Strategy and the Neighbourhood Plan, they passed it as it was inevitable that it would be approved at appeal.

Although not a planning permission issue, the property is subject to a covenant with the owners of 1, Penwood End, which prevents the construction of more than a single property on the plot.

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

PLAN/2020/0062

Erection of a single storey extension to and conversion of existing garage. Proposed two front dormers at 1, Hurst Close.

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

PLAN/2020/0058

Installation of a 17.5m high telecommunications monopole and associated ground cabinet on land adjacent to Sedge Cottage, Hook Heath Avenue.

PLAN/2020/0091

Demolition of existing conservatory, garage and utility room. Construction of new single and two storey extensions and a garage at Little Shamba, Mile Path.

PLAN/2020/0189

Section 73 to vary Condition 2 (Drawings) of PLAN/2015/0623, to allow inclusion of patio doors and small patio at Westdeen, Mount Road.

PLAN/2020/0220

Erection of two storey wraparound rear and side extension including 3no. first floor balconies at rear. Garage conversion and first floor front extension above existing garage at Blackwood, Golf Club Road.

PLAN/2020/0249

Insertion of a first floor side facing window at 5, Hale End.

PLAN/2020/0265

Erection of a single-storey rear infill extension at the Hippins, Hook Heath Road.

PLAN/2020/0277

Demolition of potting sheds, existing boiler room, existing extension and non-original chimney. Construction of ground floor rear extension, reinstatement of rear/side access door, insertion of 1 x roof window at Grey Walls, Hook Heath Road.

PLAN/2020/0285

Erection of a single storey rear extension, erection of dummy pitched roof to existing garage and porch, alterations to external material finishes and extension of existing driveway at 18 Fernhill Close.

One planning application has been turned down.

PLAN/2019/1204

Erection of a two storey side extension and single storey side extension. Replacement porch, new pitched roof above study and the construction of an extended terrace with steps down to garden at Well Cottage, Hook Heath Road.

This ran into problems with the green belt restrictions. WBC generally expects extensions to properties in the green belt to be in the range of 20-40% above the original volume of the building. In this case the planning officer decided to take the existing granny annexe into account – this had been built after the main building and by itself had already added 52% to the original volume; without very special circumstances no further extension is possible.

If the house had not been in the green belt then it seems likely that, subject to tree protection issues, the application would have been approved.

There are four new planning applications which are currently undecided.

PLAN/2020/0159

Outline planning application for the demolition of the existing bungalow and the erection of 2x two-storey three bedroom dwellings with double garages using existing accesses from Cedar Road with the access arrangements to be determined at the outline stage at Red Lodge, Cedar Road.

This is a resubmission of an application which (like Belfairs above) had been turned down on appeal because the Inspector could not be certain that the financial contributions that the applicants proposed to make under the Council's SANGS scheme would be used to offset the impacts of the developments on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. The Inspector had no other objections so I expect this to be approved.

PLAN/2020/0162

Erection of a greenhouse at Woodbank, Holly Bank Road.

PLAN/2020/0391

Erection of an attached garage at 4, Orchard Mains.

We wrote to object on the basis that a flat-roofed extension would have a negative impact on the quality of the street scene. Also the proposed new drive would be dangerously close to the neighbouring property.

PLAN/2020/0419

Erection of single storey rear extension at Alameda, 19 Ridge Close.

Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development

PLAN/2020/0426

Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development for the renewal of the existing roof coverings at Holywell, Hook Heath Road.

Hook Heath Residents' Association Committee

Can I remind you once again that the HHRA Committee has vacancies for anyone interested in helping us. If you would like to find out more then please get in touch with any member of the Committee. The current members are happy to carry on for the time being but we're all getting older!

Many thanks for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

Mike Cooke, Chairman

On behalf of the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee