

Rep 167

01037/11

26/3/14

Representation on behalf of The Woodcock Hill Village Green Members.

Elstree Way is the main artery through the Town taking traffic from the A1 in the East through Shenley Road across a narrow railway bridge to Allum Lane and beyond. Woodcock Hill Village Green is situated to the South of the Town bounded by Barnet Lane in the South. Barnet Lane is approximately parallel to the middle route through the Town and also carries a heavy traffic load with drivers trying to avoid the congested Town centre. Therefore extra development in the Elstree Way Corridor (EWC), will have a knock on effect on all roads in the Town. The extra housing will generate at least 2000 more cars. It will generate more noise and pollution particularly in particulates.

More traffic generated by the developments will cause health problems for the frail, elderly and those suffering from chest and breathing disorders by exacerbating the pollutant content in the air. Being held up in traffic everyday causes stress and anxiety for all.

The infrastructure plans, which should be made in advance to support development on such a large scale, have not been implemented. The major stakeholders will have to play catch up. The difficulty, too, is that the Infrastructure needed to support such a huge development: education, highways, public transport, social care, health care etc., are all under the influence of different bodies none of which comes under the control of the planning authority, Hertsmere Borough Council.

It is accepted that we need more housing and that in 2007 residents did not want building in the green belt. The amount of Hertsmere that is Green Belt is 81%, therefore a search for brownfield sites revealed that Borehamwood had a number of brownfield sites in one area. The EWC was considered and it was decided that as many of the sites there would be available for development. Hertsmere Borough Council decided that Borehamwood would have 60% of the development of the Hertsmere total and that the EWCAAP would be put in place to ensure that development would be regulated.

The EWCAAP states that there will at least 800 homes in the EWC. Two sites Oaktrees and Studio Plaza have recently been completed in the EWC adding 210 homes to that total. Outside the EWC but on the boundary an application is being considered for over 420 homes on the Thrift Farm Lane site. Another development again on the boundary with EWC, is at Horizon where 130 homes are expected. This brings the total to 1560 homes. Completely outside the control of the planning authority is the change of offices to accommodation. These converted office to homes have no need to provide affordable housing.

Hertsmere Borough Council policy is that 35% of each development must include affordable housing. Already developers in EWC are requesting a lowering of that to 20% as they challenge the viability of building otherwise.

Other sites being considered outside the EWC in the SADM document, Directors Arm 26, Station Rd 43 land to the South of Station Rd 50 and those being built now and considered at Croxdale Rd 150 will mean some extra 500 homes could be built in the Town. Offices that could come forward as accommodation will also affect the totals but no one can quantify what that number might be.

You will see from the accompanying attached objections by paragraph and policy that specific policies are being challenged.

I hope the inspector will carefully consider these challenges from Woodcock Hill Village Green Committee that represent 150 homes and 350 members.

Yours sincerely



Pat Strack Chair WHVG

Objections to EWC PROPOSALS

Para 3.3b Policy EWC 1

No matter what work is carried out on existing road networks there will continue to be traffic congestion for most parts of the day. Our roads were built in the 1930s and will remain narrow and unfit for the 21st century. Getting out of the EWC in the morning is a nightmare with the option of going North on the A1 being the only route free of massive congestion.

Although near to public transport routes;

- persuading residents to give up their cars is aspirational not a reality;
- the routes do not necessarily correspond with where people need to go or want to travel.

Rail transport to and from the town leaves much to be desired and travel to and from the station adds considerably to the congestion, particularly in the morning and evening. In a recent survey First Capital Connect who run the rail service, in a recent Which Report, were rated 17th out of 19 companies for customer satisfaction. This clearly adds to the frustration of commuters living in the EWC. The lack of parking at the station is another bone of contention.

Stakeholders in transport matters are outside the planning authority control.

Solution: Before any development takes place, it is critical that the transport requirements need to be identified and plans set in place, with timescales to ensure that they proceed in parallel.

Para 4.11 & 4.12 Policy EWC 4

The site is not suitable for a primary school. It is too small, has poor access and has a busy main road separating the catchment area. The school grounds would encroach onto a valued green space against the SADM policy.

The activities that take place at present at Maxwell Community Centre & Guide HQ could not be accommodated within a school. To comply with safeguarding of children, people would not be allowed on school premises in term time, during school sessions or after school activities. Regular classes could not be run as there would be no guarantee of continuity. Parking, too, would be a problem. Shared use would not work for either the community or the school.

Solutions

- To build the new school on the Hertswood Academy site at Cowley Hill;
- To change 1FE schools into 2 FE schools and absorb the extra pupils that way. St Teresa's, Saffron Green, Kenilworth, Monksmead and St Nicholas are all 1FE.

It is noted that Herts County Council have not set aside any money to purchase sites for new schools.

Para 4.16 & 4.17 Policy EWC 4

96 Shenley Road does not and could not replace 7 current buildings. The Library, the Museum, Youth Connexions Shop, Village Hall, Church Sunday School and Guide HQ activities were all expected to move to 96 and help to pay the running costs. All these buildings provided important recreational and leisure activities for the Town.

The Library and the Museum have moved into smaller accommodation at 96. Storage is a big problem for the Museum. It is hard to get to and cannot open when the Library is closed.

The main Hall at 96 is too small for some activities e.g. indoor bowls and table tennis, neither could their equipment be stored at 96. The main hall at 96 can be divided with a partition but it would require 2 quiet or silent activities to take place.

The activities at Maxwell cannot be accommodated at other community centres for many reasons, lack of parking, cost, availability and storage are all factors.

Loss of green space at Maxwell Park would be a travesty.

Solution; Build the school elsewhere and allow Maxwell and the Guide hut to remain

Para 6.23 policy EWC 8

There is not enough parking allowed for residents, visitors, friends, family, GPs, health visitors, district nurses, care workers social workers or deliverymen. Although we would want to encourage less cars and make more use of public transport that is an aspiration not a reality.

Solution: Make the car parking allocations realistic.

Para 1 Policy EWC 9

Isopad House and Hertsmere House were not in the original plan but were added after a planning application slipped through for a 12 storey building of 150 dwellings with 150 car park spaces. It breached the design conditions for the EWC of 5/6 storeys.

A 12-storey building is not a gateway to the Town but an affront to residents. Residents were not properly consulted about this.

Solution; Encourage the developers to go for their second back up option of change of use to an accommodation of 40 dwellings.

