10 January 2020

Dear Chris,

Tandridge Local Plan – INSPECTOR LED POST HEARING CONSULTATION ON TDC DOCUMENT TED28 PLAYING PITCH PROVISION IN WARLINHAM DECEMBER 2019

I write in response to your invitation for further comments from Hurst Green and Warlingham Matter 6 participants on the above document.

As you are aware, I represented Village Developments and Oxted Shareholders Group throughout the hearing sessions and attended the Matter 6 sessions. My clients have ownership of a number of omission sites across the district against which representations and matters statements have been submitted throughout the examination process.

Document TED28 sets out four separate location options for re-provision of the existing playing field space at three of the allocations in Warlingham:

- John Fisher Sports Club (HSG15a)
- Greenacres Leisure Centre (HSG15b)
- Shelton Sports and Social Club (HSG18)

Each of these options will be taken in turn and comments provided against each.

Document TED28 provides commentary on the type of re-provision and correctly identify that this must be of ‘equivalent or better standard’. What the council fail to acknowledge within TED28 is that the Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance (March 2018) explicitly states under exception 4, dealing with equivalent replacement, that this must be replaced prior to the commencement of development.

In terms of any replacement of sports pitches, the change of use of any identified land in the green belt would fall under the list of exceptions as set out under paragraph 145 of the NPPF which states that:
A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are (inter alia):

b) The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments, as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

Paragraph 146 of the framework goes on to state that:

Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are (inter alia):

e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds);

However, it is submitted that whilst the change of use and provision of some facilities may be appropriate in the green belt this would not extend as far as the provision of artificial sports pitches and ancillary changing facilities / clubhouses necessary to support the re-provided pitches likely to be required to meet the need for replacement of equivalent or better quality. These matters would have a detrimental impact upon the openness of the green belt. Any re-provision of this type would require a planning application involving a thorough assessment of impact upon the green belt of any option suggested by the council.

Option 1 – Land west of HSG15

The council points towards the ability of land to the west of the site to accommodate the playing pitches and it is accepted that this is within the control of CALA Homes. The Council state in paragraph 3.5 of TED28 that CALA Homes is perfectly placed to ‘seamlessly’ delivery the replacement playing pitches in conjunction with the residential re-development of HSG15a in line with the Statement of Delivery. As set out, the position of Sport England is that any replacement must be provided prior to commencement of development not ‘in conjunction with’ as is the position of the council.

With this in mind, it is submitted that the trajectory as provided by the council within (SADE34) is unrealistic and requires reconsideration in order to demonstrate a realistic delivery of units with commencement of development taking place after re-provision of the sports pitches.

Option 2 – Chartwell’s suggested location

Paragraph 3.8 of TED28 states that Chartwell is in discussions with a landholder for replacement playing pitch space and that the council has sought further information of where this site is. This information has not been forthcoming as of 11/12/2019 and the council has even suggested that it may be the same as one of the other sites set out with TED28.
It is submitted that given the significant ambiguity of this option, it must be discounted by the inspector.

Option 3 – Former Boy’s Club on Chelsham Road, Warlingham (Surrey County Council Land)

Whilst this option has been identified as having potential, the council has presented no evidence of further discussions with Surrey County Council over the availability of this site, suitability of the site for redevelopment or that this option is viable. It must also be discounted.

Option 4 – Qualitative Improvements

Paragraph 3.11 of TED28 points towards the requirements for local qualitative improvements on other pitch sites in the Warlingham area and states that this could facilitated to *partially offset and mitigate local loss to provision*. It would not do this and nor would this option comply with the thrust of the Sport England guidance for the replacement of equivalent provision.

The current wording of the site allocations suggests that if provision is not available locally then provision would be made as part of the South Godstone Garden Community SGGC which is referenced in paragraph 4.3 of the council response to you. The Council state that *the position can be suitably reflected in the final housing trajectory, without detriment to the overall plan housing delivery position*. This cannot possible be the case. The trajectory for the delivery of SGGC is significantly later in the plan period than delivery from the Walingham sites (HSG15a, HSG15b and HSG18).

We have previously made comments regarding the suitability of replacement pitches as part of SGGC and the appropriateness of them mitigating loss in Warlingham so do not seek to repeat them here. If replacement of the pitches does not come forward locally and needs to be provided at SGGC then this *would* have impact on the overall plan position. No evidence has been provided by the council to you on this and it is considered that the approach of the council is unsound in this regard. The modifications proposed by the Council within paragraph 4.4 of TED28 do not provide sufficient clarity in policy terms and if anything provide even further ambiguity over delivery of these sites.

Overall, the Council has sought a forceful approach to the delivery of housing across a number of sites in Warlingham where a principle issue over the loss of sports pitches has been apparent from the outset of the plan making process. The Council has not provided the inspector with robust and deliverable options for the replacement of these playing fields before or since the hearing sessions.

It is patently apparent that the approach of the Council is unsound in this regard and the only option is for these sites to be removed as allocations until such time that the Council can present evidence which adequately supports their development.
Yours Sincerely

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