

Comments re Yateley & District Neighbourhood Plan

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Wed 12/01/2022 14:05

To: Neighbourhood Planning <neighbourhoodplanning@hart.gov.uk>; SarahJAllen [REDACTED]

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Dear Sir / Madam,

My comments and observations on the numbered point within the Yateley, Frogmore & Darby Green Plan are as follows:

I recognise a huge amount of voluntary work over several years has gone into this 99 page document. However it doesn't read like a plan to me, it reads like a list of eloquent reasons why places can't be built on, along with the policies to make sure it is as difficult as possible to do so, all the whilst acknowledging the public want or need more homes. A plan is usually about what you WANT TO DO not about what you CANNOT DO. The section I can associate most with planning is the Community Aspirations, which are not officially part of a Neighbourhood Plan in terms of where and what developers can build. There's also a bit of romanticism afoot as by no stretch of the imagination is Yateley & District still 'Three small hamlets'. It's a small sprawling town of 22k+ people with no discernible green gap between Darby Green and Frogmore and barely 20 acres of grazing on one side of the road between Yateley and Frogmore.

2.0 I think the plan should cover the year from when it is adopted to ten years after that date, not two years before it has been voted on and formally accepted, so potentially it covers 2022 - 2032. This would bring it in line with the Forestry Enterprise 10 year plan for the neighbouring area.

37. Reference to using the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - this is yet to be adopted by Hart DC so seems very proactive or possibly a little presumptuous of the Neighbourhood Plan to assume that Hart will eventually start charging it and start passing the income down to the town & parish councils to use for projects.

38. The 2018 survey showed the public want more smaller homes, starter homes and flats. By 'smaller' do they mean less floorspace per home or homes with less than 4 or 5 bedrooms? If Hart DC adopt CIL it will potentially incentivize developers to build dwellings with smaller footprints to keep the CIL charges down. Smaller homes on a site means more homes and therefore more traffic and demands on other parts of the community infrastructure.

Many new one bed, quarter houses and starter homes already have less floorspace than my 1980's built first floor flat. That is not a healthy idea, especially if homeworking remains popular and properties are designed without private outdoor space. I think there should be a minimum space between new build properties stipulated in metres to avoid the trend for the new Dickensian style cramped streets as seen around Fleet. Other parts of Hampshire seem to manage it.

The 2018 survey also indicates that the public recognises building plots are needed, so they need to be identified, not just dismiss the task because Hart haven't done it. Did Hart use the excuse that Hampshire hadn't done it and Hampshire use the excuse the government hadn't done it? Somebody has to 'grasp the nettle' and I think the more local that decision can be made the better, rather than have others who don't hold any part of the area in any regard or affection. If it is to benefit the town why should it be left to a developer to take all the flack and expense when the local residents to the site don't want it built on so object en masse, which creates work and therefore expense for all the local authorities who have to manage or participate in the process. Yateley should,

however reluctantly, identify potential areas for redevelopment or new development. Failing to do so, as far as I'm concerned, is ignoring the increased need for housing and creating undue public expense.

There is so much interesting information in the plan but it is predominantly looking at the past and current 'protection' of the land. There seems to be an assumption that all the different protection categories - SPA, SSSI, Conservation Area etc will suffice and last forever. I think there is too much emphasis on that as a neighbourhood defence and not enough on creating new, modern development. Few imagined thirty years ago that big 1980's office blocks in nearby towns would be turned into residential apartments but they have been and I am quite sure other currently unthinkable engineering and land regeneration activities will become possible in the next decade. Who know if local lakes will be removed from the leisure and nature sector and consigned to luxury waterside residential complexes or even mobile home parks like the nearby Robinson Crusoe Park in Finchampstead? How long before any wide grass verge in an existing housing estate that hasn't been turned into a wildflower bed or tree shelter belt will be earmarked for development? I can think of several in Yateley that would accommodate three bungalows or a block of six one bed flats.

Personally I don't think it is a good idea to rely on adopted or applied for protection status awards for town or countryside as these get over-ridden, especially if there are ample areas with the same status. Parts of Yateley Common, which is in multiple ownership, are the lowest grade of SSSI land and have been for well over a decade with no obvious sign of attempts to restore them. Application for SSSI status is, I believe, at the landowner's discretion, and if that is the case then presumably inaction leading to loss of such recognition can also be of their choosing. Nearby Butser Triangle above Eversley was SSSI Grade 1 (top grade) forestry in 2005 but was subsequently clear felled, quarried and not returned to its original status but left with two small lakes. If SSSI status is as highly regarded as some would have the general public believe then this would not have been permitted nor the Minerals/Aggregates Extraction Plan been given precedence so I am not convinced that SSSI status can be relied on as adequate to consider land protected from construction in the next decade.

47. "There is also community support for ensuring the protection of the separate identities of Yateley with Eversley although the open space between these settlements lies outside of the neighbourhood plan area and is not therefore subject to the policies in this Plan." My understanding of this situation is that Neighbourhood Plans CAN cross parish and county boundaries and therefore incorporating the agricultural fields of the green gap/corridor between Yateley & Eversley is possible. Personally I would have like to have seen it included on account of Eversley Parish Council choosing not to bother having a plan. As part of this omission I am very disappointed to see on Map 14, page 43, that the view for many homes on the Monteagle Estate across the fields of Firgrove Farm have not been recognised as an important one. Yet the view for six or seven homes on the Reading Road overlooking the more neglected field, which is turning to scrub at Love Lane is labelled as important (view 3).

Policy 1 does state that developments outside of the Plan Area won't be supported if it visually or physically joins the settlements but this assumes that Secretary of State Planning Inspectors actually take any notice of the lack of approval at any subsequent appeals. As was the case with creating a dog walking park aka a SANG on the agricultural land in the gap. If there is a stronger alternative to protect these areas I personally would prefer to see the plan adopt them rather than risk delegating the decision to an Appeals Inspector in Bristol.

166. If there is a large demand to reach Horseshoe Lake by cycle or foot I would suggest a simple 'Access Only' sign for vehicles would be far easier, cheaper and quicker than applying to central government for cycle path funding for the narrow country lane that is unlit, prone to flooding and has badly managed hedges and ditches on both Hampshire and Berkshire sides of the river bridge. Removing the signs pointing traffic from the main road towards Crowthorne and Sandhurst and lowering the hedges on the blind corner by the sports field would also improve the survival chances for cyclists, horseriders and walkers alike.

172 There already is a speed limit through Yateley, it just needs more indicator signs on lampposts. You can't put a weight limit on the lorries as they are either making deliveries to town supermarkets and garages or passing through to reach Berkshire locations.

In conclusion, I want to support the Yateley & District Neighbourhood Plan but feel unable to do so as it doesn't currently meet my expectations of what is going to be done to develop or grow the neighbourhood for future generations.

Kind regards

Sarah Allen



█ regards

Sarah J Allen

