

[REDACTED]

From: Roy Burrows [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 August 2020 08:52
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: Planning Application PLAN /2020/0568 Proposed high rise developments at Goldsworth Road, Woking.

[REDACTED]

Dear Sirs,

As a Woking resident, I am writing to express my opposition to the above proposed high rise development in Woking at this time and to ask the planning authority and council to either reject the application, or to delay the decision pending further public consultation and proper engagement between residents and our elected councillors on the critical issue of the future development and direction of our town centre, especially in light of the impacts of the Covid pandemic, both near term and longer term.

Those proposing this extensive development advance various aspects of improved amenity to residents . The reality however is that Woking town centre is becoming an eternal open construction site. Many of us who live in Woking now struggle to remember a time when there was not building work going on for one reason or another with traffic diversions and congestion. The quality of life for residents has been adversely impacted for many years already by previous and current construction projects. The Victoria project for example has created major traffic problems for years and we then have the future impact of the railway arch widening and new road system and even more traffic impacts and disruption from these further high rise construction projects.

The impact on traffic flow of these construction projects must be producing significant additional local air pollution from emissions, and this will be perpetuated by more years of similar intensive centralised developments in the town centre and A320 corridor.

It has also lead to increased traffic on surrounding local residential roads, due to the congestion caused on the main roads.

There is already significant mid rise and high rise residential accommodation in and around the town centre. Rather than focusing on the development of satellite developments across the entire borough to provide a more balanced mix of residential homes, the council and planning authority seems to prefer to simply 'double- down' on yet more high rise 40 storey towers . A strategy which may have had some economic rationale in pre-Covid economic conditions must now be seriously and urgently re-evaluated. As ever more high street stores and restaurants close and the retail and hospitality sectors decline, where will the new and additional business tenants for these new retail and commercial developments come from? Will the previously assumed demand for more 'commuter' homes on a fast line to London continue in an economy which has rapidly adapted to embrace increased home remote working?

What are the guarantees that there will be demand for these additional commercial units and high rise apartments.? We are already seeing empty retail units in the current Peacock and Wolsey centres. What is the basis for the assumed increased demand which will fill these new developments and backfill the existing retail centres? Will these shiny new developments simply attract remaining retailers away from the existing centres and doom us to even more years of town centre redevelopments in an endless cycle?

Rather than ploughing on regardless with a previous 'vision' of town centre regeneration, the council and planning authority should pause further developments to re-evaluate it's strategic plan for the town centre and for meeting the needs for residential homes across the borough. I therefore oppose the approval of this further development application at this time.

Alternatively any further town centre development should be limited to lower density, mid-rise with stricter conditions regarding construction time and traffic management to significantly reduce the adverse impacts and strike a more reasonable balance for the additional apartment style housing realistically needed in coming years whilst maintaining a town centre which works for everyone.

Yours faithfully

Roy Burrows

Sent from my iPad