

BETCHWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Guy Davies
Mole Valley District Council
Pippbrook
Dorking
RH4 1SJ

[REDACTED]

4 December 2018

Dear Guy

Future Mole Valley Proposals: Response from Betchworth Parish Council

Thank you for giving Betchworth Parish Council time to consider the proposals put forward as part of the Future Mole Valley plan, and the opportunity to allow members of the Parish to be informed along with the Parish Council at this stage. Our response reflects the minutes taken at the Parish Council meeting on 1st October 2018, ref 173 and then further consultations with Parishioners on 5th November 2018, Betchworth Parish Council minute references 212 and 213.

Referring to the 'Betchworth Map' in the 'Future Mole Valley' Plan (<http://futuremolevalley.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Betchworth.pdf>), the following comments and observations have been made:

- i. South east of the village, red line showing extension to boundary proposed alongside Old House South: and brings a stretch of the East road frontage of The Street within the village boundary. This is within the Betchworth Conservation Area and the Parish Council would be strongly opposed to amendment to the boundary for the purpose of development in that place.
- ii. Central east of village, red line showing reduction to boundary proposed close to waters edge: an unnecessary amendment without full consideration or local knowledge of the terrain; should not be approved for amendment.
- iii. Far east of the village, small extension of boundary adjacent to the property named Tranquil House – no objection
- iv. Red line extension North of Old Reigate Road, adjacent to Station Road: whilst recognising that the proposal for amendment has not been made in order to define the existing village as a whole, Councillors expressed a strong opinion that the Village boundary should not spread North and that the Old Reigate Road provides a sensible and justifiable boundary to the village with regard to its development potential, which should continue to be observed, and that this suggestion should not be approved for amendment.
- v. Red line boundary to the west of the village, adjacent to School Path: Councillors considered this extension to the village boundary to be justifiable and acknowledged potential for development opportunities at this location.
- vi. Shaded orange area (Potential Site Allocation):

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- Councillors debated the potential scale of a development and noted that MVDC had suggested 6no. Dwellings at this site. Comparisons were drawn to the size of this plot compared to a development at the south of the village.
 - At the Open Forum part of the Parish Council meeting on 5th November, opinions were split within the room as to the acceptable density of any proposed development and that the number of properties proposed might not address the requirement for 'affordable' housing. Some members of public expressed a wish for the introduction of more modest housing and to be 'in keeping with the village' and not more 'million pound houses', and for consideration to be made towards existing Betchworth residents who would wish to remain within the village but need to downsize, as well as potential for young families to buy in the village.
 - A member of public also asked whether shared ownership would be an option.
- Councillors expressed a wish to be consulted and kept informed of plans and proposals and that the land owners involved and market forces should determine the nature of development in this area.
- Councillors were unsupportive of the proposed access adjacent to the property named Fox Hollow and the disturbance it would cause being so close to the house. Councillors unanimously agreed that the land allocated for access was too narrow and therefore not suitable. Councillors commented alternative access could be to the west of Bumblebee Cottage or from The Street, however acknowledged the dangerous bend in The Street at this point. Councillors briefly discussed the effect of increased vehicular traffic due to development which would be an important factor for the village.
- It was also acknowledged that access via The Street would be an unsuitable access point due to the dangerously narrow road and blind bend. Regarding amendments to boundaries, the Parish Council shared its thoughts on whether the MVDC proposals should be considered for approval (see minute ref: (173) from Minutes of 1st October 2018) and a member of public commented that despite the proposed amendment to incorporate the identification of 'physical boundaries', there were discrepancies between the actual definition and MVDC's interpretation of the term.

In summary, whilst the Parish Council remains open to the suggestion of boundary amendments and limited infilling where appropriate, the recognition for consideration to the natural geography of the village, and a sympathetic approach to the structural make up and Betchworth's unique features is paramount. Betchworth is a small rural village with narrow roads, high walls and no streetlights and these characteristics must also be allowed to remain.

Yours sincerely



Marion Hallett

Clerk, On behalf of Betchworth Parish Council

Cc: Cllr Helyn Clack

Cc: Cllr Simon Budd