

Flaws in the DPD specifically relating to Byfleet.

To expand on the submission from the Chairman of the Byfleet Residents' Neighbourhood Forum in December 2018:

1. HS4 Air – The Heathrow Southern Railway (HSR)

The first stage of this project has now been approved and is awaiting a start date with completion hopefully in 2026. This is a rail link between Heathrow, Staines and Woking. The next logical step would be to extend the link to Gatwick, alongside the M25 and through GB4 and GB5, making any building projects on this land unsustainable.

This major transport project is not referred to in the DPD and WBC planning officials appeared to have no knowledge of it when questioned at a public meeting in late 2018.

3. Inadequate research regarding land ownership

It has now been established that one third of GB5 is burial land belonging to St Mary's Church and is not available for any development or road access. This means that there is nowhere to build a safe access point to the remaining part of GB5 with it being on a dangerous bend opposite a primary school.

4. Inadequate consideration of land flooding

WBC has now declared a Climate Emergency due to climate change. The Environment Agency has made it very clear that flood defences are needed for Byfleet and has done extensive work on the best way to provide these, but WBC has refused to make funding available.

6. Inadequate reasons for excluding Pyrford greenbelt

We now know that Councillors were not told until the very last minute about the removal of the Pyrford greenbelt sites from the DPD and the reasons have still not been properly explained.

9. Inadequate infrastructure provision

The number of homes being built at Broadoaks has now increased by 200 which are not included in the DPD. These additional homes will put an extra strain on the already inadequate infrastructure. Traffic on the A245 is often at a standstill in the morning and late afternoon and if there is any hold up in the vicinity such as an accident or roadworks, it is gridlocked in both directions, usually from Rectory Lane and High Road in Byfleet Village itself as commuters .

10. Overdevelopment

The population density of Byfleet is already very high for a village with, according to the 2011 census, 27.1 people per hectare. This is nearing double the Woking average of 15.6.

Since the DPD was published, the Government has promised funding for 3000 future new homes to be built at Victoria Arch in the town centre.

The proposed re-development of Woking Football stadium also includes 1100 new homes.

This strengthens the argument for GB4 and GB5 not needing to be safeguarded beyond the plan period.

11. Exceeding the required plan term

Woking has been very clear that the role of the DPD is to implement the Core Strategy. However, there are no references in the Core Strategy to safeguarded sites for residential development beyond the plan period. Therefore, GB4 and GB5 should not be included in the site allocations. The DPD does not include any safeguarded urban sites beyond the plan period.

12. Inadequate consideration given to alternative sites

There has still been no assessment of brownfield sites suitable for development despite this being a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework.

To conclude, due to significant flaws in the DPD and their lack of knowledge of land ownership and significant transport projects in the area, the BRNF has completely lost confidence in the WBC planning department to produce a sound and adequately researched strategy.

Committee BRNF
14th November 2019