

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S RESPONSES TO QUERIES RAISED DURING HEARINGS

COMMENTS OF Ms. ANNE FOSTER

Dear Ian

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above. My responses relate to the proposals for Berkhamsted.

First just a summary of the Berkhamsted situation, from my attendance at the hearing. Developers who have bought land speculatively believe more development is justified (there's a surprise); DBC who have to accommodate the projected need for Dacorum somewhere, have land available in Berkhamsted and propose to maximise its development potential, despite acknowledging the existing infrastructure issues and the fact that little can be done to address them and Berkhamsted residents who live with current chaos (traffic, parking, schools, access to amenities etc) who find the current DBC proposals unbelievable let alone the additional development proposed by developers. I can only hope that the inspector having walked round the town and seen the issues will not allow the character of Berkhamsted to be destroyed by development beyond its capacity.

Q 1B

I note DBC comments on whether migration demand should be satisfied. I would venture that Berkhamsted has a particularly high inward migration and a high percentage of any development will be fill by migrants. Particularly those moving out of London (for whom property prices in Berkhamsted are relatively accessible) or moving from the north to work in London. Estate agents could no doubt confirm.

1)It's a pleasant safe town with good access to London and equally good access to the countryside (Chiltern hills / Ashridge)

2) For those moving south - it has easy access to the M1 and westcoast train line and is one of the few towns north of London where the station is located within the town and therefore walkable from most areas (set SS1 being an exception). That's why we chose to live here 35 years ago.

3) Property prices are high (no wonder developers want to build) but not so for those selling up in London where house prices are still rising.

Q 3A Parking Standards

DBC approach appears to be to discourage car ownership by providing insufficient car parking spaces. This blatantly does not work in Berkhamsted, as can be evidenced by the amount of on- street parking in the newer developments - Stag Lane for instance which is located on he level within walking distance of the own centre and where topography is not an issue.

Q 5B Berkhamsted Business Parking Survey.

I would disagree with DBC comments that this adds nothing to the parking debate. In the absence of any information in the Core Strategy on the parking and traffic issues in Berkhamsted (although the issues are acknowledged) - this is the only document available that attempts to quantify them.

The recently introduced residents parking scheme removes 200 on street parking places used by workers/ commuters and the proposed multi- story car park (if it ever happens) adds only 230 places - net gain 30 places.

At the recent exhibition on the residents parking scheme I meant a business owner who is an Internet publisher and who employs 33 people who currently park in the streets and who will have no affordable parking space available once the residents scheme is introduced. He indicated that he is likely to move his business out of Berkhamsted because of this issue.

No feasibility study on the provision of the multi story car park has yet been done and given that the proposed site on lower kings road feeds into a road which is already congested by traffic feeding into it from the Tesco car park and from the station it will only exacerbate the existing problems. As an example 12 mins from the station to the high street at 4.30 on a Tuesday afternoon.

Q 11A Trip Rates

The projected trip rate was 90 but now " will be agreed with the applicant" at planning stage. Given the location and topography of SS1 and the known traffic issues in Berkhamsted as a whole and Shootersway in particular, surely this figure should be available now so that the feasibility and sustainability of SS1 can be fully considered in the Core Strategy examination process.

Given the location of the site and that family homes are proposed, one would reasonably assume at least 1 trip per household in the rush hour, and given the location of the nearest primary schools (both of which are currently full and cannot be expanded) it is reasonable to assume that there will also be a fair number of school trips. It is worth noting that with schools now running breakfast clubs from 8 and the high number of households where both parents work the commuting rush hour and the schools rush hour now converge..

Shootersway already has high levels of traffic and the dangerous junction with Kingshill Way will not be addressed until after development of the SS1 site generates funds to pay for it. I believe traffic lights are proposed and whilst this will undoubtedly make it safer for children walking to Ashlyns school it will do nothing to address the traffic congestion. It should be noted that the children currently attending Ashlyns are 13+ but the move to a two tier system will mean 11 year olds attending the school. So an increased number of children and younger children dealing with the dangers of Shootersway/Kingshill Way, or probably more children

being driven to School even before the proposed development of SS1.

I final point, I wondered if the Inspector is aware that in addition to the village green application for part of the SS1 site, the same land is also covered by covenants which restrict the type of housing that can be built thereon.

Regards
Anne Foster