

PIXHAM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

21st October 2021

To: Mole Valley Planning Dept

Re: draft Regulation 19 Submission Version of the Local Plan

Dear Sirs,

We are writing as representatives of the Pixham community to express our reactions to the most recent version of the above Plan.

We were pleased to note that your plans to introduce 4 traveller pitches at The Depot have been dropped and also that the 'Aviva' playing fields will stay as they are.

However, there are several aspects of the Plan which we feel you failed to address and we are writing to you again to reinforce our points.

In more detail:

- a) **The Community of Pixham.** We are concerned that there has not been a single mention of Pixham in your entire Plan. It is seen as an adjunct of Dorking, with its role and benefits as a community ignored. We are lucky to live in a vibrant community of around 400 homes, some small businesses, 'Aviva' offices, a sports ground with pavilion, Patchworking Gardens, allotments, a beautiful church and our hub, the Old Pixham School, etc. With regular social events, seasonal festivities and activities, a regular newsletter, a website and other linked facilities, we consider that Pixham is a good place to live.
- b) **Traffic implications.**
 - i) We do not feel reassured by comments in your Strategic Infrastructure Implications document such as: (2.13) . *On the whole, development on the sites included in the consultation draft Local Plan is linked to a **marginal increase in congestion at a number of known locations, but is not forecast to establish new congestion hotspots in and around the built up areas.***
 - ii) We feel your traffic infrastructure plan is superficial and trivialises the impact of extra traffic generated by the 747 proposed dwellings for Dorking, of which 442 will be at Pixham End and Dorking Station. The A24 at the Denbies roundabout is highlighted as one of Dorking's traffic hotspots and Pixham Lane is a popular 'rat-run'. Traffic will inevitably increase, traffic queues by the railway bridge will lengthen and the number of minor accidents will inevitably increase, to the huge detriment of our Pixham community.
 - iii) Our community is already inconvenienced by the 'No right turn' at the junction of Pixham Lane and the A25. Near misses, minor traffic accidents and long, polluting queues of traffic have become commonplace along Pixham Lane especially during rush-hours. The area between the railway bridge and the A25 is particularly bad, especially for local residents who have no footpath.

- iv) Our Pixham Speedwatch survey has revealed some startling statistics about the amount of speeding along Pixham Lane. The Speedwatch co-ordinator informs me of pre-Covid levels: 'We record on average 350 vehicles per hour using the road during the day and over 700 during the rush hours. Of these, an average ten percent are recorded as speeding (36mph and over)'.
- v) Other Pixham issues such as car parking in the village / flooding are dealt with separately.

We therefore request that your Plan includes specific traffic mitigation measures and signposting to direct traffic away from Pixham Lane and improve traffic flow along the A24 and through the junction with the A25.

- c) **Development at the Aviva site, Regent House and Dorking Station. DS23, DS25, DS27, DS30.** We are considering these together as regards parking as we consider that Pixham will be severely affected by i) commuter ii) residential and iii) office parking.
 - i) We are pleased to see that your Plan includes specific reference to car parking at Dorking Station but need to be reassured that this will provide enough space for commuter needs for the duration of your Plan.
 - ii) Commuter parking will only be dealt with by a cohesive and far-reaching policy of improving bus-links throughout the area so that it is more convenient to leave the car at home. Raising car park prices will mean that more people park on the streets: Pixham already suffers severely from this, as parking permits for residents at Swanmill Gardens already show. Possibly the whole of Pixham would have to follow this route if commuter parking is not addressed as a major issue.

Improving local bus services can only be addressed with significant funding from local government and we hope that you are putting pressure on Surrey County Council to address this matter.

- ii) Whilst we applaud MVDC's sterling efforts to reduce the number of cars per dwelling by providing only one space per household, we feel this is unrealistic unless stringent policies are in place to ensure this happens, possibly a restrictive covenant for all who buy or rent dwellings on any of these sites.
- iii) We already suffer from considerable parking on grass verges and fear this will become commonplace unless strong measures are undertaken to prevent overflow parking from the Aviva site residents.
- iv) Office parking. With a significant amount of office space available in the area, car parking provision must be realistic. We therefore suggest that all companies who work in the proposed developments should be allocated a realistic number of specified spaces in the new Station car park.

Accordingly we would like to see that the new Station car-park has considerably increased capacity, with levels below and above-ground. Waitrose have done this locally and this has to be the way forward to minimise the very wasteful amount of space used for parking. Despite initial costs it will more than pay for itself because of the high number of spaces provided. This would free space for more dwellings on brownfield sites which will avoid having to use Green Belt land.

The Aviva site: DS23

- i) We consider this as part of Pixham: residents regularly used the Friends' Prov sporting and social facilities and it is situated opposite and next to many Pixham houses. We would therefore like to see this site developed with its role as a community resource and links to Pixham prioritised.
- ii) The existing Pixham End site contains an ornamental garden created in the 1980s and this should be retained as a facility for the public and not destroyed. In addition, there are two rows of mature tall pine trees which also be preserved with TPO's if possible. There are many other mature trees on other parts of the site which contribute to the rural feel of the neighbourhood and local area. We note you have mentioned these in your Plan but feel reference should be made to specific trees.
- iii) Until SCC took over the management of the site it had thriving sports and social club which we feel should remain to supplement and support the initiative to use the land north of Pixham Lane as a recreational facility. This club, formerly a residence called Hazlebourne, should be incorporated into the Pixham conservation area.
- iv) We were pleased to see your emphasis on the area being developed sensitively and in keeping with the ethos of Dorking, built to a high standard and with due regard for your declared priorities for the future and for MVDC's declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Other matters specific to Pixham which we would like to raise with you are:

1. Flooding: surface water run-off must be mitigated & effects on nearby properties carefully analysed. Existing houses close to the proposed sites regularly flood, to such an extent that many owners don't bother to report flooding. With increasing weather events due to climate change this situation will only worsen.
2. We would want to make Pixham End into an integral part of the Pixham community but are concerned that efforts to 'pack in' dwellings and offices would work against this.

General points:

e) Infrastructure

We have already raised concerns about the superficiality of your **traffic** infrastructure plans and look forward to hearing of the more detailed report requested by councillors M. Cooksey and H. Watson.

Medical: personal experience of many Pixham residents points to problems getting appointments and treatment at local surgeries and hospitals. Infrastructure plans seem vague and do not mention the already overstretched local facilities.

Schools: the Infrastructure Plan says that single form entry at primary level will be needed but we could not see where this is planned. Pixham residents have personal experience of problems with getting their children into their school of choice and we know that this is a problem for the wider area. Much of your proposed housing is for families but we have not seen any detailed studies as to the number of extra children who will need to find a school place.

Sewage: we are most concerned to hear of pollution to the River Mole caused by discharge of raw sewage. To be precise: At [Dorking's](#) Sewage Treatment Works (STW), the overflow spilt 118 times for more than 2100 hours in 2020. [Raw sewage flowed into Surrey's rivers for 19,800 last year as campaigners call for upgrades - Surrey Live \(getsurrey.co.uk\)](#). With over 700 homes planned in the Dorking area, we are most concerned that the Sewage Works will not cope and this horrendous rate of discharge will worsen. We have not seen any mention in your Plan of a need to upgrade sewage works and we feel this should be a priority.

Policy EN3: The climate emergency. Mole Valley, Surrey County Council and the government have all declared climate emergencies. All proposed housing MUST therefore prioritise carbon neutral buildings. We note from section 6.79, c, you state that you plan to apply the Future Homes Standard from 2025. We urge you to apply this from NOW.

Finally, we would like to applaud your determination to include far more affordable housing in Mole Valley and hope that this continues to be a high priority throughout the years to come. We have also noticed your determination to consider the potential effects of climate change, maintain biodiversity and maintain the quality of life in this beautiful area of the country.

We hope that you will maintain pressure on the government to ease the housing targets they have established for Mole Valley and thus avoid violation of the Green Belt.

I trust that our comments will be forwarded to The Planning Inspectorate.

Yours faithfully,

On behalf of the Pixham Residents' Association Committee

(Mrs) Pat Smith

Chair