

## **HOUSING AND TRAVELLER SITE CONSULTATION**

### **REPRESENTATIONS BY CAPEL PARISH COUNCIL**

#### 1. **Beare Green Sites**

##### (i) **Site BG03 Land off Highlands Road**

The site (BG03) is owned by the Mole Valley Housing Association for affordable housing. It is located in the Green Belt. In the context of its extant open character, problems relating to vehicular access and the limitations of the existing community site within the body of Beare Green we consider that a significant opportunity presents itself in relation to this site to provide a permanent area for formal and informal recreation thus retaining its open characteristics.

The site provides open access to the countryside.

##### **Recommendation**

The site is designated for recreational use. Further concentrations of affordable housing would create an imbalance within the community.

##### (ii) **Site BG08 Land west of Old Horsham Road**

The site is wholly inappropriate for residential development being located within the Green Belt and the Surrey Hills AONB.

Although Beare Green has sustainable facilities (bus and rail provision, a community centre, shops and a school) it does not have the capability to absorb further levels of significant development.

The local highways network off the A.24 within the village has no additional highways capacity (narrow roads, car parking for residents, parking for station).

##### **Recommendation**

That no development is considered.

##### (iii) **Site BG01 Breakspear Farm**

In overall terms a limited part of the site adjacent to Godwins Nursery could be developed for housing (maximum 20 dwellings) rounding off the village of Beare Green.

It is located close to public transport and village facilities.

The northern portion of the site should remain undeveloped but could, in association with any housing, provide a valuable community recreational benefit (formal and informal).

Access to the site presents a significant issue (visibility). A car park area could be provided for the residents using rail and bus services.

### **Recommendation**

Potential for limited residential development and community recreational benefit, subject to resolving access issues and local car parking.

## 2. **Capel Sites**

### (i) **Site CP02 Capel House Farm**

Capel House Farm site has (in part) already been redeveloped. In the opinion of the Parish Council further proposals beyond the built framework would result in an unacceptable incursion into the surrounding countryside impacting upon its setting. A limited development comprising a maximum of three dwellings contained within the development frameworks (and avoiding the concerns identified above regarding intrusion into the countryside east of the village) It may also be reasonable for one of the additional dwelling to be shared ownership.

A new access road, required for any additional development would have an adverse impact upon the character of the highway in this important approach into the village and it's Conservation Area.

### **Recommendation**

No further development.

### (ii) **Site CP06 Land west of Horsham Road**

The location of this site is important to the character and setting of Capel Village. It would create a significant incursion into the open countryside (Green Belt) as well as impacting upon the village Conservation Area.

Access problems also prevail.

### **Recommendation**

The site is not considered as being appropriate for residential development.

### (iii) **Site CP08 Land North of Bennetts Wood**

The site has no natural boundary and could only be accessed via Bennetts Wood, Coles Lane and onto The Street.

The boundary at present forms part of the irregular pattern which characterises the west of the village (see also CP06).

In addition to access issues, drainage capacity (surface water and foul) would present 'insoluble' problems.

### **Recommendation**

The site is not considered appropriate for development.

#### (iv) **Site CP10 Old Kiln Farm**

The subject site is inappropriate for development having regard to access, its proximity to Coles Lane/A24 junction and its 'exposed' location being visually intrusive from a series of important vantage points.

Its development would 'breach' a strong village settlement boundary.

In addition, this is or adjacent to an old landfill (quarry) site. With no controls over fill any application for development within 400 metres is subject to a caution. With contamination prevailing its potential as a development opportunity must be dismissed.

### **Recommendation**

This site should not be developed for housing.

### 3. **Other Sites**

#### (i) **Site CP09 Clockhouse Brickworks, Capel**

We consider this site, which is in the countryside beyond the Green Belt, as being suitable for mixed use development.

It is, in effect, Brownfield in character (previously developed land) and could provide both housing and employment uses (starter businesses).

The former kilns could be re-designed to provide community recreational facilities.

The Parish Council also considers that linked to the re-instatement of the surrounding area (required under the terms of the extant planning permission) a 'solar' energy farm could be created without detriment to the surrounding landscape.

#### (ii) **The Weald School, Beare Green**

The site is at present the subject of public consultation relating to the possible provision of a new school secured through enabling residential development.

Should proposals be submitted by the school, the Parish Council will make a formal representation to the planning authority.

As an interim position we indicate the following:-

- (a) the school need to demonstrate why refurbishment cannot achieve their education needs:

- (b) that in the event redevelopment is proposed on a 'without prejudice' basis the following would be considered:-
- residential (enabling development) is located to the south on the existing school area (maximum 1.5 hectares):
  - the playing fields are retained, apart from an area to the north which may be suitable for the replacement school:
  - the playing fields are enhanced and dedicated for community use
- (c) This is a Green Belt site and the school must demonstrate exceptional circumstances to justify a departure from policy.

### **Conclusion**

While accepting rural villages should be sustainable the emphasis must be urban first.

Key to the design of a village is to protect and retain public and private spaces so that they remain attractive and enjoyable to walk (and drive) through. It should be a pleasure to move about the settlements.

The existing pattern of development in the two villages follows a traditional evolution. In Capel (in particular) the prevailing character is of low density housing hidden behind hedges and walls.

In reviewing the 'Consultation Sites' we have considered the importance of where development could be located having regard to:-

- the need to minimise the impact upon the Green Belt and Countryside:
- the ability to 'round off' a village rather than to encourage its outward expansion:
- opportunities which might be available within the 'built up' areas:
- highways and drainage infrastructure:
- proximity of local services, including health facilities and public transport:
- the impact of/and on existing properties and on the character and heritage of the villages:
- the impact on agricultural land and the landscape:
- visual impact, landscape character and land uses:
- opportunities that might be available to reinforce and provide for the needs of the village, i.e. Beare Green – recreational land and a health facility:
- the potential of sites to contribute to the community infrastructure, i.e. Green Travel Plans

The response to the Consultation by the Parish Council is positive and realistic. It has made recommendations based upon knowledge, experience and the value of retaining and protecting the fabric of the two village communities.

While Beare Green may be 'unremarkable' in its urban character this should not be seen as mitigation to justify further development unless proposals are aimed at redressing an imbalance.

It is material to the consideration of whether appropriate sites can be found to refer to Paragraph 4.2 of the Inspector's Report which states ***"In determining whether development should be direct protection of the countryside, together with Green Belt, AONB and other environmental designations has had to be balanced for providing the growth of homes and jobs."***

Capel Parish Council considers development should concentrate on the urban sustainable locations identified in the Consultation.

### **Traveller Sites**

We do not consider any sites within Capel Parish would meet the required criteria.