

BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Buckland Parish Council Representation to Publication of Draft Mole Valley Local Plan (Proposed Submission Version – Regulation 19).

Buckland Parish Council (Council) asks the Planning Inspectorate to consider whether it might be possible, conditional upon Mole Valley District Council (“MVDC”) amending the plan to include firm commitments to:

- (i) undertake an intermediate review of housing delivery; such review to take into account the calculation of housing demand by the time of that review; and**
- (ii) fully consult and work collaboratively with parish councils prior to publishing any proposals to adopt changes to parish settlement hierarchies, parish village boundaries or the criteria for site selection to ensure MVDC can gain from local knowledge,**

to judge the Local Plan sound.

Rationale for Council’s request

Council:

- (i) believes MVDC will be unable to meet local expectations until a new Local Plan has been adopted;
- (ii) notes a cumulative shortfall is evident from 2029/30 on the Regulation 19 Draft Plan Housing Trajectory; and
- (iii) is concerned that if the plan were to be rejected based on that projected shortfall, this would inevitably lead to a further lengthy delay to a new plan being adopted to the detriment of everyone living and working in Mole Valley.

Accordingly, Council asks the Planning Inspectorate to consider whether it might be possible, conditional upon MVDC amending the plan to include a firm commitment to undertake an intermediate review of housing delivery; such review to take into account the calculation of housing demand by the time of that review, to judge the Local Plan sound.

Council enjoyed positive early engagement with MVDC when strategic options were being assessed and specific consideration given to the potential for Modest Expansions to Rural Villages to contribute to the vitality of those rural communities.

Council engaged proactively with the MVDC Planning Policy team during the evidence gathering stage that informed preparation of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan; a process that led to a proposal to change Buckland to a tier 4 settlement with two settlement boundaries.

Sheena Boyce, Clerk

email: parishcouncil@bucklandsurrey.net

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Council, working with the Buckland Estate, the principal local landowner, undertook extensive consultation with our local community and highlighted the following to the Regulation 18 Consultation:

- (i) the fact the Parish is washed over by the Green Belt is core to the village's appeal;
- (ii) limited ribbon development along Buckland's minor lanes and the retention of fields, banks and hedgerows opposite dwellings makes an especially important contribution to the open character of this Green Belt village;
- (iii) the continuity of ownership in Buckland, which extends back to the 17th century, has ensured, over the centuries, the scale and style of modest development undertaken in Buckland has achieved an appropriate balance between meeting housing need and safeguarding the openness of the surrounding countryside in the parish;
- (iv) Council, the principal local landowner, and much of the local community remains:
 - o averse to any development of open green belt pasture or agricultural land in Buckland;
 - o strongly opposed to any proposal to include such land within a settlement boundary;
 - o believes there are opportunities in the village for new homes to be built within the proposed settlement boundaries without detriment to the character of the village (including its Conservation Area) or causing any harm to the Green Belt; and
 - o believes the commitment Buckland Estate has given that "any specific proposal will need to be consistent with Buckland Estate continuing to function as custodian for the village, a village the family has a deep respect for and a community they wish to continue to live within" has been key to securing broad community support for the proposed settlement boundaries.

Following the May 2019 MVDC elections, the newly elected MVDC decided to curtail engagement with parish councils which means Council's first opportunity to view the Regulation 19 Draft Plan has been when it entered the public domain. Council does not believe it is in the interests of the Mole Valley parished communities for any interim review to be similarly undertaken "behind closed doors".

Accordingly, Council asks the Planning Inspectorate, if minded, conditional upon MVDC being required to undertake an interim review, to judge the Local Plan sound, to require MVDC to include a firm commitment in any adopted plan to fully consult and work collaboratively with parish councils prior to publishing any proposals to adopt changes to parish settlement hierarchies, parish village boundaries or the criteria for site selection to ensure MVDC can gain from local knowledge.

Date : 5th November 2021

Sheena Boyce, Clerk
email: parishcouncil@bucklandsurrey.net