

FACE

Fleet and Crookham
Environment **is Threatened**



05 April 2014.

TRAFFIC CHAOS LOOMS IF DEVELOPERS GET THEIR WAY

Planning applications are being received thick and fast by Hart District Council as developers take advantage of a window of opportunity afforded by the Government's Planning Inspector throwing out Hart's proposed local plan. There are now planning applications in for over 800 further homes around the Hart river valley on top of the balance of the 900 houses yet to be built on the Queen Elizabeth Barracks and Wakefords Copse sites.

Recent road works in Gally Hill Road, Hitches Lane, Crondall Road and Pilcot Lane in the Crookham Village and Church Crookham area, as well as in Cove Road have shown the local community the sort of traffic congestion that they will have to get used to if the continued development goes ahead in the area. Proposed developments in Hook will mean at least six months of disruption with London Road to the east and Station Road to the south partially closed. Whilst each of these closures is for vital work on Power, Water, or Sewerage utilities the traffic chaos they have caused shows how close to saturation the roads in Hart already are.

The current 900 homes currently under construction at Queen Elizabeth Barracks and other sites in the local area are likely to bring more than 2000 extra cars on to the local roads. Proposals for 500 houses in Hook, 315 at Watery Lane in Church Crookham, a further 193 at

Press Release

Edenbrook, 60 on Stillers Farm and other proposals will add thousands more cars to local roads.

Developers are required to carry out traffic assessments to submit with each planning application. These assessments always seem to come to the conclusion that local roads have the capacity to take the additional traffic. Martin Grant's traffic assessment for Albany Park, the proposed development on Watery Lane in Church Crookham, is a case in point. It contains a number of factual errors that cause the conclusions of the report to be questionable. One readily verifiable assertion is the data for the train service to London from Fleet station. According to the developer we have we have 3 trains service an hour to Waterloo in the peak and one per hour in the off-peak hours. In fact, there are 4 trains per hour in the peak and 3 in the off-peak hours. Errors such as this call into question the overall professionalism and accuracy of the traffic assessment.

The 315 houses proposed would be likely to result in an additional 750 cars coming to the area. This site, contrary to the assertions in the report, is not well served by buses and is remote from local schools, from the shops in Fleet, from Fleet railway station and from employers of any size. The developer places great store on residents being expected to walk up to 2km or cycle 5km to access schools, shops, trains, employment, etc. It is highly unlikely that parents will be willing to walk 2km or cycle 5km with junior school children, yet this assumption is the basis of part of the developer's report. Contrary to their conclusions, it is much more likely that the vast majority of journeys undertaken will be by car and the percentage of journeys on foot or cycle will be far short of their aspirations. Residents deciding to drive to Fleet Station, will enjoy the benefits of the new additional car parking but have to put up with even more gridlock trying to get out of the car park via the roundabout at the exit to the station.

The current traffic on Redfields Road is about 500 to 600 vehicle per hour in the peak (10 every minute or one every 6 seconds). Martin Grant's traffic assessment also looks at the additional traffic along Redfields Lane from the 900 homes (over 2,000 cars) being built on the Queen Elizabeth barracks. Their assessment is an additional 88 cars per hour in the peak. If the peak is 3 hours long then the assessment is for only 264 or about 15% of the cars from the Queen Elizabeth development using Redfields Lane. This would seem to be an under estimate by some way.

The proposed Watery Lane development will have only one access point – yet another roundabout on Redfields Lane. If only half of the likely 750 cars leave in the peak period to go to work or drop off children at school, that will mean a 50-60% increase in the traffic on Redfields Lane. Yet Martin Grant estimate that only 143 cars will depart and 49 will arrive during the morning peak period. Experience would suggest that this is a huge underestimate and that far more traffic movements would be likely in reality.

In mitigation, the developer proposes to construct a new roundabout on the A287. Whilst this would seem at first glance to be welcome, the construction of the roundabout would mean yet more congestion in the short term followed, as in the case of all road improvements, in an increase of the traffic once the roundabout was complete. With the development of the warehouse site at Pyestock, there is likely to be a huge increase in the amount of traffic using the M3 at junction 4a, the primary route for accessing the site. When the M3 approaching Junction 4a is congested, as it frequently is, especially in the mornings, north of Fleet Services, traffic will seek an alternative route and any traffic approaching from or leaving to the South is likely to use Junction 5 instead. With a new roundabout to ease their route into/out of Fleet via Redfields Lane, this is likely to be the diversion

of choice. This scenario does not appear in the traffic assessment.

FACE IT is opposed to development that is not well thought-through and that has a huge impact on the lives of those already living in the area. We need houses but in parallel with infrastructure, like roads, schools and doctors that meet the needs of the community.

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Note to Editors:

FACE IT is a local campaign group for the Fleet and Crookham areas of Hart with an increasing membership and profile. The group has been actively engaged in the planning process and has encouraged Hart to review and improve local plans for the benefit of the community and the environment.

The FACE IT group is campaigning for a better local development plan for Hart that provides full and balanced arguments for and against all the potential development sites in Hart and not just for those to the west of Fleet. A key aim of FACE IT is to make the critical information that needs to be considered for planning housing available and understandable to everyone so that they can actively influence local decision-makers.

The sheer number of homes potentially being proposed is also of concern including the plans to develop a further 315 homes at Watery Lane adjacent to Church Crookham, 450 homes at Grove Farm adjacent to Crookham Village and West Fleet, a further phase of 170 homes at the 'Edenbrook' development to the west of Fleet, development at the brownfield site of Tudgeys Nursery in Crookham Village, and a number of other smaller developments and 'garden-grabbing' schemes.

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