

Chevening Parish Council strongly endorses Option 2

The Pedham Place development will bring a prestigious arena to the District which will benefit many groups especially the disabled who don't have a sports venue for activities such as powerchair football and wheelchair rugby.

It will bring only positive benefits to the District and is situated on a key transport link (close to the M25 with no restrictions of historic single passing roads).

The area was previously a golf course and therefore no vital agricultural land will be lost to housing. The development will have all the supporting infrastructure in terms of roads, schools and other transport, rather than smaller developments which will put the existing local infrastructure under incredible strain especially in addition to the baseline position which is already proposed

Option One sites

Of the three sites identified in Sevenoaks **two** sit within Chevening parish. The whole purpose of the historic establishment of the green belt was to prevent more and more urban sprawl. These sites have been chosen specifically because they would extend the urban sprawl as they are on the edge of urban settlements and therefore completely fly in the face of the purpose of green belt designation. *Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. (NPPF 2023)*

The third one (HO29 Brittain's Lane) although not in the parish itself will equally have a detrimental effect on parishioners as was recently seen when Brittain's Lane was closed and therefore all traffic accessing south Sevenoaks to and from the West came up Cold Arbor or Bessels Green Rd and turned onto Dibden Lane. Access to the A25 from Cold Arbor creates huge congestion at the best of times. This additional traffic meant queues to get to the A25 were back to Bessels Green Road. Bessels Green Road itself is essentially single file for much of its length (as is Park Place) adding an additional 330 houses there for minimum 660 cars to that scenario is ridiculous. Equally Brittain's Lane, as we will cover with the sites in Chevening shortly, is also currently used to grow crops and therefore has benefit to the community and country of that production of foodstuffs. It seems highly short sighted to remove good quality agricultural land which is also AONB and Greenbelt in order to fulfil a housing need which could be better met elsewhere.

The Parish Council is aware of crops having been grown on this land for at least 40 years and as recently as 2023

Air Quality

The Air Quality in Bessels Green with the consistently slow moving traffic on A25 remains a concern and adding extra vehicle movements will exacerbate that situation. Both sites have dual carriageways/motorways on their boundaries which will further adversely affect housing in those locations.

Transport & Parking

There is insufficient public transport now to meet the needs of existing residents during the day and the school buses run at full/over full capacity.

Within the baseline the development of the Car Park at Morewood Close which would displace traffic to park on Worships Hill, Witches Lane and the surrounding roads in Riverhead/Bessels Green and Chipstead, further adding to traffic chaos and air quality impact

Noise Pollution

H028 has the A21 as one of its boundaries. MX13 is bordered by M25 and the sliproad to A25. Noise pollution is a significant issue in both of these locations

H028 Land between Back Lane and the A21 Bessels Green

Traffic

The proposal is to have both new access as well as a secondary access for emergency use (SHELAA). There is no sensible access into the site. Access via Back Lane is a single track road onto a blind bend of the already busy and hazardous Cold Arbor Road (B2042). The majority of the occupants of these proposed houses will travel into or towards Sevenoaks for Schools and to use the station or access public transport. They will travel down Cold Arbor Rd (B2042) which is a single carriageway road with no pavement on either side. The alternative is Bessels Green Rd which is a single lane road for much of its length, again with no pavement. *The proximity of an infants school and junior school puts children at risk in trying to cross these increasingly busy roads*
Both roads (which are the only access to the A25) provide no safe passage for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and other vulnerable road users. Cold Arbor Road and Bessels Green Road are also poorly lit or unlit over much of their lengths exacerbating local safety issues.

Agricultural Land

The SHELAA states the land is "No existing use". This is untrue. The land concerned has been used for crops for at least 40 years. It is regularly sown with Oil Seed Rape and has been for 4 decades (as our Clerk lived there 40 years ago along with other residents can testify). It is green belt and AONB and the importance of both food production and the long term employment of those who work in agriculture will be lost

Schools

The primary schools in Sevenoaks are already oversubscribed, as are the available secondary schools. The School bus services for secondary schools run from A25, but as already stated there is no safe route from the site to the A25 to access any public transport

Wildlife

The site is home to bats, buzzards, kites and newts. Many endangered species and whole eco systems will be lost if this development goes ahead

MX13 Land at Moat Farm off Homedean Road Chipstead.

Traffic

The proposed development sits on the incredibly dangerous A21/A25/Westerham Road junction and will add significantly to traffic using that junction. The alternative access to Sevenoaks for schools shops and station and to Riverhead or Dunton Green is through the Hig Street and Chipstead Lane which is single lane along much of its length and is part of a restricted width zone. The roads in this area are not suitable for this considerable volume of traffic

Agricultural Land

The land is currently used for grazing (specifically rare breed sheep. Under the SHELAA it is stated that the use of the land will be reprovided. The Parish Council cannot see how agricultural grazing land can suddenly be made available if has not been used in the past. Surely that is a travesty of land use if anyone suggests there is valuable grazing land not being used.

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Flooding

We draw your attention to December 2013-January 2014 where the water run off from the fields caused the sewage tank in Moat Close to overflow. Turning porous fields in to tarmac streets and buildings will increase that flooding potential and the risk also to those houses as they will also be below the level of the main sewer and therefore require a pump for their sewage

In conclusion

Chevening Parish Council strongly supports Option 2. It gives the opportunity of building homes and facilities in an area which has the major arterial route, but does not have single lane or single carriageway roads already congested by existing housing and traffic. The roads can be constructed with proper pavements to any transport links. There is no loss of valuable farm land. The houses can be properly provisioned with schools local to where the children are living, and a fantastic sports facility of which the whole District can be proud.