

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL DISAPPOINTED AT WESTBROOK MILLS PLANNING APPLICATION

At the Planning & Environment Committee meeting of Godalming Town Council on Thursday, 23 January, Town Councillors expressed their disappointment at a planning application which has been put before them for Westbrook Mills in Borough Road. Outline permission is being sought for a 67-unit retirement scheme which includes 30% affordable housing with new vehicular exit, associated parking and landscaping. Committee Members objected to the application and their observations have been sent to the Local Planning Authority. Members expressed concerns including the fact that the proposed development is on the Green Belt with no exceptional case for removal from the Green Belt having been made.

Members were also concerned about the bulk and mass of the proposed blocks which they considered to be overbearing and not in keeping with the environment, as well as increased vehicular access through the narrow Westbrook Road, railway archway and an inappropriately located site entrance. Members also felt that the applicant had not addressed the aims of the water Reuse and Efficiency Policy (GOD13) as stated in the Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood plan. Members were equally concerned that the proposed development is contrary to Policy GOD9 A & C of the Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan due to the potential increased risk to pedestrians using Westbrook Road and New Way.

The closure of the rear access of Godalming Railway Station combined with the increased footfall anticipated by the Ockford Park development increases the pedestrian and cycle movement through the Westbrook railway bridge archway as well as along Westbrook Road, which does not have a separate carriageway and footpath. Members also felt that the proposed development threatens the biodiversity of the adjoining meadows and countryside and would also result in a loss of amenity to The Meath. It was felt the proposed development could increase the risk to residents of The Meath from vehicular movement, which would restrict residents' ability to safely move aided or unaided along Westbrook Road, thus reducing their quality of life.

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