

**WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL**  
**9 HIGH STREET, WEST MALLING. KENT ME19 6QH**  
TELEPHONE : 01732 870872 EMAIL : CLERK@WESTMALLINGPC.ORG

Planning Department  
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council  
Gibson Building  
Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill  
Kent  
ME19 4LZ

By Email

10<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Dear Planning Department,

**TM/19/01814/OA** – Development Site Land West of Winterfield Lane East Malling

West Malling Parish Council object to this application for the following reasons:

1. The site is not shown for housing on the current Local Plan and is instead shown as rural countryside. The majority of the area of this site was not submitted to the call for sites, with development upon it not included in the submitted Local Plan. The submission already includes sufficient sites to deliver the housing supply required by Government.
2. The site is proposed Green Belt on the submitted Local Plan. In addition to preserving a pristine green space, the inclusion of this site within the Green Belt extension is designed to preserve the distinctiveness of the historically separate settlements of West Malling, East Malling and Larkfield.
3. The site is crossed by virtually two diagonal, rural public footpaths which are used extensively and should be protected. Importantly, these paths provide easy access to West Malling station and therefore reduce the environmental impact of journeys to and from it by encouraging more people to walk. This application includes proposals to upgrade the footpaths, which may mean laying a hard surface. This type of work would spoil the rural character of these ancient pathways, making them much more urban in the process and spoiling their aesthetic and the enjoyment of local residents and walkers.
4. The site comprises high-quality agricultural land in continuous use since at least the last war. The site is classified as 'best and most versatile' agricultural land and records show that it has been in agricultural use for at least the last three quarters of a century. The previous Local Plan included reference to its special significance as agricultural land.
5. Even without the Green Belt designation, the site is vital in preserving the historic distinction between the settlement boundaries of West Malling, East Malling and Larkfield. These proposals will extend the urban area through this important green space which not

only marks the edge of the settlements to the north of the A20, but also the edge of both East and West Malling. The application itself acknowledges that these plans will mean a substantial extension to the build-up area.

6. Already struggling transport infrastructure will be stretched by this development. Neighbouring roads, such as the A20, are regularly heavily congested, particularly at morning and afternoon peaks and during disruption on the nearby M20. Rail capacity too is already limited during peak hours and the uncertainty around additional rail services into London and down further into Kent is further cause for concern. Specifically, the inclusion of a new access road linking the A20 to Winterfield Lane will place unmanageable pressure on Winterfield Lane, a narrow, rural thoroughfare and create a 'rat-run' from the A20 towards southerly destinations via East Malling and into West Malling.

7. The site contains a number of trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders which should be maintained. With the Council having recently declared a Climate Emergency, maintaining and upgrading green spaces with trees is a vital component of the Council's efforts to tackle irreversible climate change. This application proposes the removal of ten trees, three of which have TPO status. The application also requires four other trees to be removed away from the site, along with 51m of a hedgerow with 'important' status under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997) for access roads.

WMPC would wish to point out that this application falls within East Malling and not Leybourne.

Please note:

If this application is significantly amended subsequent to the Parish Council considering it, we would appreciate notification as this might affect our comments.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Clerk.

Yours faithfully



Claire Christmas  
Clerk to West Malling Parish Council

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8<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Dear Planning Department,

**TM/19/01814/OA** – Development Site Land West of Winterfield Lane East Malling

West Malling Parish Council have had the opportunity to consider this amended application and would make the following comment.

West Malling Parish Council support the amendment to this application i.e. the removal of the link road between the A20 and Winterfield Lane, but in principle still object to the application. All other comments submitted by WMPC on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 still stand.

Yours faithfully



Claire Christmas  
Clerk to West Malling Parish Council