



John Hobbs
 Chairman
 33 Sandyhurst Lane
 Ashford
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Mr John Bunnett
 Chief Executive
 Ashford Borough Council
 Civic Centre
 Tannery Lane
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10 February 2014

Dear John

Submitted Sites for Ashford Local Plan

Further to our letter dated 10 November 2013, I am writing again to share with you the results of the recent survey we conducted to gauge residents' views on the local impact of implementation of any or all of the developments outlined in your Submitted Sites schedule.

Sandyhurst Lane is situated on the northern outskirts of Ashford and enjoys a relatively unspoilt rural location amid some of Kent's most beautiful countryside. The Lane itself has around 200 residential properties and there are up to a further 140 properties in the adjoining lanes and roads. Electorally the area covered by the SLRA embraces three Borough Wards, represented by Cllrs David Robey (Downs West), Winston Michael (Boughton Aluph & Eastwell) and Michael Claughton (Bockhanger), and two Parish Councils (Westwell and Boughton Aluph & Eastwell).

All residents in the SLRA area, not just the SLRA members, were invited to respond both to the formal questions posed and to add comments voicing their support or concerns.

The summary results are tabulated below.

	Surveys distributed		Responses		Response rate	
	315		133		42.2%	
<i>Sandyhurst Lane/Lenacre Street has long been seen as a barrier to further housing development north of Ashford. Should this policy be maintained?</i>						
	Yes		Not concerned		No	
Total	127	95.5%	3	2.3%	3	2.3%
<i>After developments at Chilmington Green and Cheesman's Green should Ashford protect ALL its large green field sites and concentrate future development on only other brown field sites?</i>						
	Yes		Not concerned		No	
Total	118	88.7%	11*	8.3%	4	3.0%
<i>Are you in favour of limited development in the Westwell/Sandyhurst Lane areas to provide for our local population needs?</i>						
	Yes		Not concerned		No	
Total	36	27.1%	7	5.3%	87	65.4%

* Some respondents who answered 'Not concerned' to this question did so because they did not know or did not have the information to make a judgement.

About a third of respondents added comments to their survey returns. The concerns voiced by them included:

- **Access** - Sandyhurst Lane and Westwell Lane are both rural, mainly unlit roads without pedestrian footpaths and of single width in places. They are incapable of carrying the increase in traffic that would result from these proposed developments. Sandyhurst Lane is already used as a 'rat run' between the A20 and the A251 and the minimal traffic calming measures which have been introduced have not been effective.
- **Environmental** – as well as traffic considerations, development on these green field sites would exacerbate flood risk, increase noise and light pollution and damage the natural habitat of many endangered species of animals, flora and fauna. Most of the area is not connected to any mains drainage; properties rely on cesspit or private drainage.
- **Infrastructure** – as well as road access issues, nearly doubling the population of the area would put intolerable pressures on local medical and dental facilities, the William Harvey Hospital, schools and community services as well as Drovers Roundabout and Faversham Road.
- **Quality of Life** – this is a mature and established residential area. Such developments would irreversibly change the semi-rural character of the area that many residents cherish and for which they paid premium prices for their properties. Developments of this scale would be contrary to all the "green belt" philosophies which have hitherto been accepted, including in the Greater Ashford Development Framework, and would ultimately lead to the Sandyhurst Lane / Lenacre Street areas being subsumed into the increasing Ashford urban sprawl.
- **Demand** – ABC has already identified a number of existing large green field sites – Chilmington and Cheeseman's Green - which together with pipeline brown field sites will exceed the housing needs of even the most optimistic job-led housing demand until well into 2030s.
- **Amenities** – the golf course acts as a natural green boundary to the area as well as offering a unique local facility for the residents. Building on the unspoilt countryside in the area would deprive the residents access to open space for recreational purposes.

From the above you will see that the size and unanimity of local resident opinion reinforces the opposition we intimated in our earlier letter.

Yours sincerely



John Hobbs
Chairman
Sandyhurst Lane Residents' Association

cc Cllrs David Robey, Michael Cloughton, Winston Michael, ABC
Cllrs Jim Wedgbury, Charlie Simkins, KCC
Cllr Mrs Christine Drury, Chairman, Westwell Parish Council
Cllr Jason Matthews, Chairman, Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Council
Mr Jim Davies, Chair, Central Ashford Community Forum
Mr Chris Morley, Chair, Kennington Community Forum
Mr Simon Cole, Planning Policy Manager, Ashford Borough Council