

The Council view and response to our objection to flats on 1 Kearton Close and the concept of preserving this area for the Community from over development.

Julia Dawe (Strategic Planning) and I (Pete Smith, Head of Development Management) discussed your paper earlier in the week and rest assured (in relation to the other attachment) we have logged your objections to 1 Kearton Close. As you may be aware, Robert Naylor is managing this planning application from our perspective.

We met with you and your colleagues before Xmas and discussed your concerns over the intensification agenda and specifically traffic generation and the lack of on-street car parking capacity in and around Welcomes Road.

I see little point commenting further on schemes that have already been granted planning permission, especially as we have corresponded previously at some length. As your summary highlights, there is a balance to be struck between housing growth and the capacity of areas to accommodate that growth. The New London Plan and the Croydon Local Plan is focussed on suburban intensification - as a means to deliver the much needed housing numbers - and the challenge will always be how to manage the private car and deliver enhanced opportunities for increased use of public transport, cycling and walking.

If we are to make this work, there is no longer a case to plan for excessive use of the private car - and your suggestion of a car parking ratio of 1.5 spaces per unit (as a minimum) is not sustainable and/or achievable - and is not supported by policy. We operate on the basis of maximum parking standards. Car clubs spaces might be possible - but we need to formulate a critical mass to make car club spaces viable and attractive to an operator. This might well be possible in Kenley - closer to the train station but filling sites up with 2 cars per household will never allow us to realise that critical mass.

The capacity of Welcomes Road to provide for on street parking is very limited indeed - which in itself limits the capacity of sites to deliver a large number of units, especially if the sites concerned are relatively small in size. That said, there are a number of very large plots in and around Welcomes Road and there is absolutely no reason why sites cannot come forward for development (providing a mix of family and non-family apartments). There is nothing wrong with this approach. Space is at a premium and we need to find sustainable ways to deliver more units. With these types of schemes, we need to take a balanced approach; we can all pick and choose from elements and phrases in planning documents that (apparently) follow a particular line of argument. More generally however, my team is charged to deliver the Plan viewed as a whole and managing car parking where on street car parking is limited or constrained might mean that we need to be imaginative around siting and location of on-site car parking.

Every case is different and should be determined on its own merits. For example, with the case of 1 Kearton Close, the existing house has a massive hard standing area that is able to accommodate a large number of vehicles (as it currently stands) and the proposal in effect reduces (or at the very least reconfigures) the existing hard standing area. I don't necessarily disagree with your issues - but approach it from a different perspective.

When we met, you appeared to infer that you were keen to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan - and Julia sent you various links which provided information around how to approach this. As we advised at the time, the Neighbourhood Plan needs to flow from an adopted Local Plan and needs to accord with the overall vision and strategy. The current Local Plan seeks to deliver 1/3 of its new homes through the use of windfall sites (such as those in Kenley) and any Neighbourhood Plan would need to embrace this. We also have the Kenley Place Specific policies; otherwise, a Neighbourhood Plan will not be found "sound" (following testing and examination).

The points included in your summary give us a flavour of your priorities and vision for your neighbourhood - which I will share with those who regularly manage Kenley planning applications. We are in no position to reduce the area of focussed intensification - as it has been identified and tested as part of the adopted Local Plan process. I am currently unclear as to any linkage between a Green Grid and Intensification; I would have thought that a better way to maintain clear access along Welcomes Road is to consider a range of enforcement measures, designed to dissuade parking on street. The Green Grid approach (as a principle) is supported by the Plan but I am unclear how this might trump the intensification agenda and the desire for more homes - assuming of course that the development is in itself acceptable.

I suggest that we keep in touch - I am always happy to debate the issues. There is focussed work underway in Kenley (as you may be aware) by our Regeneration Team - and I am sure we will continue to engage moving forward.

Secretary comment. This sets out Government's priorities which seem to over ride the views of the existing population. The flats are outside the focussed intensification zone. By the time a Neighbourhood Plan has been approved the area may well have been irreversibly harmed from the overdevelopment of an already stretched infrastructure.

Emailed to WURA by Pete Smith Development Management Croydon Council January 2019