

Planning Inspectorate
c/o Planning Department
Mole Valley District Council
By email planning.policy@molevalley.gov.uk

6th November 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to you regarding the current Future Mole Valley Local Plan 2021 on behalf of Leigh Parish Council.

Leigh Parish Council (LPC) actively engaged with its residents in 2018 to better understand how to represent their interests and opinions on the FMV local plan. These responses were fed back to Mole Valley DC in 2018 and again in 2020 following this consultation. MVDC appear to have acknowledged the points made by including them in the revised plan.

LPC still have the following observations and in some areas, serious concerns regarding the soundness of the sites and the conditions for developing on them. The points refer to the table in the appendix at the end of the document, lifted from the plan.

A designated Rural Area (Affordable Housing) Affordability/type of dwellings. In 2019, MVDC produced an Affordable Housing strategy exploring the need for both affordable housing to buy and rent. In fact, in Leigh's own 2006 Housing Needs Survey Report survey a proportion of those represented would not be able to afford even a shared ownership property.

Residents in Leigh (2018) were to an extent supportive of developments within their village but only where there was a need. In this MVDC plan it is unclear as to what sort of housing is expected and would be approved for these sites being developed. This makes wholehearted support very difficult with an assumption that these properties will be offered at market rate.

Flooding (Pt 4, 7, 11) The plan considers the impact of fluvial water on the Priests House site being included in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2017 and the Tapners Road site would require surface water drainage measures. Both these points highlight the fact that there are pockets within Leigh which are regularly under water albeit temporarily. This surface water exacerbates the sewage system noted below in the next point.

Level of current sewage capacity (Pt 3 and 10). Robust sewage capacity plans must be in place before approval and ultimate build. This cannot be stressed enough. The current sewage system cannot cope with the current capacity in Leigh. There are two pump houses in the parish, both deemed incompetent by Thames Water, obtained through an FOI. Despite this, there is no intention to replace them. In fact, the response to the problem is to react to overflow by sending tankers to empty the pumphouse, triggered remotely by a sensor. This one is located just across the road from The Priests House site.

Residents in the surrounding properties must deal with raw sewage in their properties on a regular basis. The current system cannot cope with the levels of usage at present. The Parish Council is deeply concerned as to the impact of yet more houses on this incompetent system. It has been lobbying and will continue to do so with the support of District and County Councillors to persuade Thames Water to address this horrific situation.

Level of expectation of conditions (Pt 7) - any conditions relating to flooding and sewage should be 'expected' not 'requested'.

Conditions over time (Pt 1,2,5,6 8,9) - Any future applications connected to the approval of the plans must adhere to any conditions at ANY point in the future. How can residents be assured these conditions will be enforced for future developments on these sites, say 10 years down the line? There must not be a reduced/change in expectation over time.

Backfill vs infill. (Pt 12) The Tapners Rd houses (x8) must follow the current building line, to maintain character. However, there is no reference regarding this for The Priests House site. The Site entrance will be sandwiched between dwellings of character. At the heart of the village, it would be imperative for the character of the village to be maintained here. LPC are concerned that not enough consideration has been made as to how to create an appropriate line using infill (some 10 dwellings) along Smalls Hill Rd on a modest site. The village were assured there would not be backfill. i.e. new road ways going into building plots, creating cul-de-sacs.

Leigh Parish Council have worked hard to engage with both residents and the District Council. It understands that there are housing pressures and needs but asks that you take on these local concerns when deciding upon how the plan will progress. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours faithfully,

Laura Mann

Clerk to Leigh Parish Council

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APPENDIX – FMV PROPOSALS FOR LEIGH

DS56: LAND AT THE PRIESTS HOUSE, LEIGH	POLICY DS57: LAND AT TAPNER'S ROAD, LEIGH
Site Area (ha): 0.5Ha Indicative capacity: 10 dwellings Policy Map Designations: Green Belt, Non-inset Village, Conservation Area, Area of High Archaeological Potential (part), Designated Rural Area (affordable housing) Relevant Planning History: None	Site Area (ha): 0.4ha Indicative capacity: 8 dwellings Policy Map Designations: Green Belt, Non-inset Village, Designated Rural Area (affordable housing) Relevant Planning History: None
In addition to meeting the policies in the plan, any developer of this site will be required to:	
1. Conserve and, where possible, enhance the character and setting of heritage assets, including the Leigh Conservation Area, the Grade II* Church of St Bartholomew and Grade II Priest's House.	8. Maximise the retention and safeguarding of existing trees and hedgerows and incorporate them into a coherent landscaping strategy.
2. Undertake archaeological investigations in accordance with policy EN6, taking account of the site's location within an Area of High Archaeological Potential.	9. Create clearly defined boundaries between the village boundary and the wider countryside, using features which are recognisable, likely to be permanent and consistent with the character of the surrounding environment.

3. Liaise with Thames Water to ensure that necessary upgrades to wastewater infrastructure can be delivered and engage in pre-application discussions on phasing.	10. Liaise with Thames Water to ensure that necessary upgrades to wastewater infrastructure can be delivered and engage in pre-application discussions on phasing.
4. Incorporate sustainable drainage measures to address and mitigate the risk of surface water and fluvial flooding in line with policy INF3 and site-specific guidance in the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.	11. Incorporate sustainable drainage measures to mitigate the risk of surface water flooding in accordance with Policy INF3.
5. Maximise retention and safeguarding of existing trees and hedgerows and incorporate those features in a coherent landscaping strategy.	12. Continue the existing building line along Tapner's Road in the interest of road safety and village character.
6. Retain and if necessary reinforce native tree and hedgerow planting along the eastern boundary where the site adjoins open land beyond the village boundary.	13. Design a scheme with only one entrance and sufficient internal circulation for vehicles to park and turn within the site in the interests of road safety.
	14. Consider how the development will relate to parked cars dropping off children at the nearby school.
Any developer of this site should, where possible:	
7. Incorporate opportunities for flood risk betterment to reduce flood peaks downstream.	