

MOLE VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL'S LOCAL PLAN (2018 -2033): IMPLICATIONS FOR BOOKHAM

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Briefing Posted on the BRA Web site and Social Media.

Peter Seaward – BRA Chairman

Mole Valley District Council are reaching the end of their work on the next Local Plan. Called "Future Mole Valley" a policy (once completed) sets out plans for development across Mole Valley for the period 2018-2033, includes targets for delivering new homes, identify locations for development and sets out areas which will continue to be protected. This will become available for us all to comment on in late June 2019.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan for Bookham (NDP) which was the subject of a village referendum in May of 2017 will form part of this plan although which of its policies will be continued or cease to exist will be decided on by our Councillors and MVDC. Although subject to five years of hard work by many here in Bookham it is disappointing that policies expected to be taken into account by MVDC Planners have on occasions been "trumped" by other planning policies.

The Council are charged by Government to build nearly 7,000 new dwellings throughout Mole Valley over the next fifteen years. This is an annual rate of over 400 dwellings compared with the present rate of around 190. If MVDC fail to convince the Government appointed Inspector that the new Local Plan is capable of achieving the required numbers then the Government can pass the responsibility to Inspectors or other bodies.

In the BRA we have been keeping as up to date as best we can on what is being considered and although we know broad details most of the important information about where these new dwellings might go is not available to us. Our Councillors and Council Officers are not allowed to provide such information until the public consultation begins.

Following a "Brownfield first" approach, we do know that some 4,100 dwellings of this requirement will be built within the existing built up areas of Mole Valley leaving nearly 3,000 units to go on "Greenfield/Green Belt" sites. At present MVDC are following an approach which would, enlarge the existing villages in the south (maybe at most 400 units), substantially enlarging one of the bigger villages again in the south with the rest of the developments going on selected greenbelt and green field sites elsewhere in the district. This could be around 1,500 to 2,000 units or more. We have asked often where these sites might be but MVDC will not release information until they have fully checked all the many sites for suitability and viability. We are obliged to await the public consultation.

However, in Bookham we know because of the work done previously on the Neighbourhood Development Plan most of the sites that MVDC are likely to be considering. Of these the larger ones would be Preston Farm (the area between Little Bookham Street and Water Lane). Bookham Fields (south of the Lower Road Recreation Ground to the A246 and between The Lorne and Rectory Lane), and Rolls Farm (between Rectory and Manor House Lanes). There are other sites too but these we believe are the largest in area.

If we consider the population of Bookham and the number of current dwellings and from these figures we extrapolated a proportionate share of dwellings we would expect to be built here, this could amount to around 800 new buildings (not all on green belt land). Population increase of probably circa 1,800 would also occur (an average of 2.25 people per dwelling based on the last census). Such an increase would have impact on many aspects of our infrastructure and in the BRA we have put some suggestions and facts to our Councillors and MVDC of what these might be. These would include schooling; primary care provision; drainage; power; roads and transport links. We accept that this is a major issue for Mole Valley and we along with everyone else in the District may have to accept a proportion of new dwellings which many would not like.

We have pressed MVDC and our Councillors to resist any new developments until assurances and practical plans are seen that address the infrastructure deficit that this potential volume of new building would cause. We should state that the potential building numbers and green belt sites we have surmised might be both an over or under estimate of what might occur, but these are the best we can arrive at without more concrete facts.

There will be a public consultation of six weeks after the Draft Local Plan is available and MVDC will be hosting road shows in Bookham and elsewhere. Our role in the BRA is to be a conduit for as much information as possible that we can gather and feedback especially to our Councillors what reaction there is within Bookham, about this Plan. Final decisions about what will eventually be forthcoming will rest with Mole Valley Councillors. Your views and interaction with our Councillors are important over the coming months before this plan is finalised so that they fully represent all our views on this significant process and plan.

Prior to the publication and commencement of the MVDC Local Plan consultation you may submit comments to the BRA. We will aggregate these and share with Councillors. [Click here to contact the BRA.](#) Or visit the BRA website: www.bookhamresidents.org.uk

Finally, we must reiterate that all the information facts presented here are those we in the BRA have deduced and may well be wrong but, in our opinion, we need to alert residents to the possibilities and make some estimates about and what the consequences for us all these might bring.

Further information on the Local Plan can be found on the MVDC website: <https://www.molevalley.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=33905>

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