

Jealott's Hill - Maidenhead Traffic Impact Briefing Paper

as of March 11th 2020

1. The Land in Question

- 1.1 The land in question is a 240 hectre (600 acre) site situated 5km north of Bracknell and 9km from Maidenhead on the A3095 which is a two lane country road in the postal code of RG42 6EY. It is home to Syngenta's Jealott's Hill International Research Centre.
- 1.2 The Jealott's Hill site was established in 1927 by the amalgamation of three farms. In 1928 Jealott's Hill House was built and it opened in June 1929 as the offices, laboratory and library of Imperial Chemical Industries Agricultural Research Station.
- 1.3 In 1936 the Hawthorndale Biological Laboratories were opened in the converted mansion building on the site.
- 1.4 The site has been recognised by the Royal Society of Chemistry as a National Chemistry Landmark and was awarded a blue plaque in recognition of 80 years of scientific research leading to global developments in agriculture.
- 1.5 The entire site lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt and is predominantly agricultural land which lies on either side of the busy A3095. There is a "built on" area which comprises offices, laboratories, greenhouses and parking. On one corner of the site there is a Community Land-share.
- 1.6 In June 2016 Bracknell Forest Council published its most up to date review of the Green Belt (Copy of the Final Report Summary included as Appendix A) The review found that ALL parcels of Green Belt land in the Borough made a contribution to the overall Green belt objectives (Section 15 of the Summary) and Section 1 of the Executive Summary reported that "the report does not identify any lands for release or development."
- 1.7 The current "built on" area within the site amounts to approximately 25 hectares approximately 10% of the entire site.

2. The Syngenta Company

- 2.1 Syngenta AG is a, Swiss based, wholly owned subsidiary of ChemChina a Chinese State Owned Enterprise.
- 2.2 Syngenta was originally formed in 2000 by the merger of Novartis Agribusiness and Zeneca Agrochemicals. Its history, however, is considerably older and dates back to Imperial Chemical Industries which was founded in 1926. Syngenta was the subject of a failed buyout attempt by Monsanto in 2015 but in 2016 was acquired by ChemChina for \$43bn.
- 2.3 Syngenta's trading revenue in 2017 was US\$12.64bn with a net income of \$54m and net assets of \$20.33bn. The company employs 28,000 people worldwide and around 850 people at Jealott's Hill.

- 2.4 Following the ChemChina acquisition the combined group is reported to be working on a Shanghai stock market flotation in 2020/2021 with a valuation of approximately US\$100bn. A plan to list the company in approximately 2.5 years was alluded to by the Syngenta CEO in 2017 following the ChemChina acquisition.

3. The Bracknell Forest Draft Local Plan Part 1 - Strategic Revised Growth Strategy

- 3.1 In October 2019 the Bracknell Forest Council (“Council” or “BFC”), within whose Borough the Syngenta site is located, presented an update version of their Local Plan which covers the period 2019-2036 and which purports to address the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework of February 2019 (“NPPF”) in addressing Strategic as well as Tactical priorities.
- 3.2 The Council’s Draft Local Plan had been in development for some time and had gone through several drafting and published versions since 2015.
- 3.3 The October 2019 version introduced an Addendum to the Plan which said that “A new sustainable village community based on garden village principles will be in the process of being developed at Jealott’s Hill, including a new Science and Innovation Park with a focus on the agri-tech sector.”
- 3.4 An exposition of the plan for the Jealott’s Hill development is contained within Policy LP7 of the draft (Page 51-56), a copy of which accompanies this paper as Appendix B.
- 3.5 It should be noted here that the proposed Science and Innovation Park requires approximately 13 hectares which could easily fit within the current “built on” area of 25 hectares without impinging in any way on the surrounding Green Belt land.
- 3.6 As mentioned in paragraph 1.5 of Section 1 the entire site lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt and as such is subject to the Green Belt protections set out in Section 13 (paragraphs 133 to 147) of the NPPF 2019 (copy included in Appendix C)
- 3.7 The NPPF, in paragraph 134, restates the five purposes established for the Green Belt:
- 3.7.1 To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
 - 3.7.2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging.
 - 3.7.3 To assist in protecting the countryside from encroachment.
 - 3.7.4 To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
 - 3.7.5 To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.8 In paragraph 136 the NPPF states that “Once established the Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the preparation and updating of plans.”
- 3.9 In paragraph 143 the NPPF states that “inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.” Finally, paragraph 145 states that “a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt.” Although

paragraph 145 does set out 7 specific exceptions, none of these exempt anything currently being proposed for Jealott's Hill.

4. The "Exceptional Circumstances" Relied On

- 4.1 BFC appears to rely on an assertion that the work carried on at the site in question is of "national and global importance." The Council further asserts they are acting "in accordance with the Government's Industrial Strategy and the wish to support such an enterprise" as the basis for establishing the "exceptional circumstances" required to release the site from the Green Belt protection it enjoys today. They state that this is in order to "accommodate the built form for the long term development of a Garden Settlement, incorporating measures to create a sustainable community including high standards of design that mitigate and adapt to climate change."
- 4.2 Leaving aside what Paragraph 4.1 may actually mean when better defined in the fullness of time, what is intended by the Council is to allow the site to be developed over a projected 30 year period to accommodate an, as yet undefined Science and Innovation Park, 4,000 houses, schools and a small community centre. The Council is quite specific in stating "The future operation of the site (Jealott's Hill) is dependent on significant investment being made which will require enabling development to help fund it."
- 4.3 The decision to allocate this site for development on this scale will greatly enrich Syngenta due to the increase in the land value. There will be no guarantee that Syngenta will remain on the site as no enforceable guarantee to this effect is possible.
- 4.4 If Government wishes to support Syngenta it is better that support comes from Central Government than have the Green Belt eroded with no commitment from the company to remain there once the land is sold for development.
- 4.5 We believe the entire scheme has actually been developed in response to an approach, to the Council, by Syngenta, which comprises both an argument and a threat to leave the area if they do not get what they want. Syngenta, needs to upgrade and convert their facilities at Jealott's Hill in order to remain relevant in the agri-tech business. What Syngenta will get is 240 hectares of development land worth hundreds of millions of pounds. We also know that Syngenta has been working on this since at least 2017 and it is on a Syngenta Traffic Consultant Report that we will now rely for a discussion of the impact on traffic in the area of Maidenhead should this development ever go ahead.

5. The Long Term Traffic Threat

- 5.1 Leaving aside the "Exceptional Circumstances" argument, which will fall to the local community to contest, the purpose of this paper is to make you aware of the potentially catastrophic impact on traffic congestion in the Holyport, Bray and Maidenhead area from the increase in traffic attributable to this development in the medium and long term.
- 5.2 We have based our analysis on a Transport Consultant's report dated March 2018 prepared by SYSTRA Consultancy for Syngenta.

- 5.3 Various assumptions are used in the report which do not directly relate to the Maidenhead side of the development although we would contend that some of the assumptions used do have a tendency to make the report seem to express the “best possible case.”
- 5.4 A commonly used assumption relating houses to cars is to assume 1.76 cars per household and using that formula we can project that the 4,000 house development alone could generate an up to 7,000/7,500 additional cars excluding any inbound traffic to the proposed Science and Innovation Park.
- 5.5 The major junctions on the Maidenhead side of the development are 1) the A3095/A330 Junction, which the report shows to operate in excess of its possible capacity following the Jealott’s Hill development and 2) the A330/Drift Road Roundabout which is shown to operate very considerably over its capacity today and to rise in a level of gridlock by 2036 with queues of between 150 and 200 vehicles at peak time.
- 5.6 Following the development of Jealott’s Hill the theoretical peak traffic figures become unsustainable and major work, above those already proposed would be required to allow the A330 to function on the Maidenhead side of the A3095 junction.

6. The Maidenhead Council Assessment of the Proposal

- 6.1 That being said there are some key points to note in The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (“RBWM”) objection submitted to BFC in December 2019 a copy of which is in our possession.
 - 6.1.1 The statutory “Duty to Consult” with RBWM by BFC has NOT been met.
 - 6.1.2 The RBWM Council has grave concerns around the sustainability of the development.
 - 6.1.3 Carbon emissions associated with both construction and future use will be very significant and will contribute to a worsening situation in terms of climate change rather than an improvement.
 - 6.1.4 The development seems both excessive and early in terms of meeting BFCs identified housing needs in future years. This carries with it the risk of a “stop-start development” further prolonging the development period.
 - 6.1.5 The RBWM does not believe the site to be sustainable and the BFC proposal gives them significant cause for concerns as to its likely impact on highway and transport along the A330/A308 network.
 - 6.1.6 The development is not considered to be consistent with the NPPF 2019 as it does not focus development within the most sustainable locations and it is hard to see how traffic impacts could be fully mitigated.
 - 6.1.7 The proposal will have a significantly detrimental impact on the roads in the surrounding areas of Hawthorn Hill, Holyport, Bray and Ascot. The A3095/A330 roads around Drift Road are busy today at rush hour and on

through Holyport and Bray leading to M4/A404M/M40 with a knock on impact to air quality due to traffic congestion in the area.

- 6.1.8 Restrictions on the weight of HGVs on the A330 and B3024, designed to protect Holyport, and around White Waltham, and Fifield are due to be further extended to Water Oakley and along Fifield lane. This will have a knock on effect on rerouting construction traffic during the build out of the development (and maybe for as long as 25 years) causing re-routing diversions via Bracknell and Windsor in order to reach the M4.
- 6.1.9 The A330 feeds onto the Braywick roundabout to access the A308 and on to both the M4 (J8/9) and the A404m towards the M40. Both the Braywick roundabout and M4 Junction8/9 experience severe congestion, even today, at peak hours.

7. Communication to Members of Parliament

7.1 We have communicated the contents of this paper to the following MPs:

Adam Afriyie MP - Windsor Constituency (which includes the Jealott's Hill site).

Theresa May MP - Maidenhead Constituency (which will be impacted by the traffic through Holyport, Bray, Fifield and Oakley).

James Sunderland MP - Bracknell Constituency

John Redwood MP - Wokingham Constituency