

Questions for your Councillors and MPs

27th February 2020

1. **Local Housing Need** – The October 2019 revised BFC Local Plan states that the Local Housing Need from 2021 to 2036 has already been met with existing sites without needing any contribution from Jealott's Hill. Why is BFC proposing this un-necessary Green Belt development?
2. BFC is making an argument of **"Exceptional Circumstances"** to justify surrendering 242 hectares of Green Belt, in order to support nationally important agri-tech research and development based in a new 13 hectare Science and Innovation Park. Yet the Syngenta existing built on area is around 25 hectares. Why is there any need to surrender over 200 hectares of irreplaceable agricultural Green Belt for housing which is not required within the Local Plan period?
3. Exceptional Circumstances for changing Green Belt Status require all reasonable **alternative options** to be evaluated and rejected before considering any change of Green Belt Status? What specific alternative options were considered and why were each of them rejected?
4. Surrendering Green Belt status at Jealott's Hill could deliver a massive £0.5 Billion uplift in land value to heavily indebted Syngenta, prior to the planned floatation of its owner, ChemChina, on the Shanghai stock market. At the 2019 consultation meetings councillors sought to justify their assessment of "Special Circumstances" allowing the Green Belt status on the land as being the price we have to pay to keep Syngenta as a local employer in the future. Yet when questioned not one of them were able to give a satisfactory answer as to why there do not appear to be any assurances or restrictions which would force Syngenta to **retain employment at the site**. What is to prevent ChemChina/Syngenta from getting the concession, selling the land at the higher value after the Green Belt is lifted and moving the jobs to China or Germany as their most recent brochure suggests they could?
5. The February 2018 version the BFC Local Plan had considered the **BFC Green Belt review** and **rejected development on the Jealott's Hill site** for Green Belt reasons. The Jealott's Hill site continues to contravene all of the 5 Green Belt purposes. The BFC housing background paper of October 2019 states "Development of the site would also effectively merge the historic settlements of Moss End, Jealott's Hill and Hawthorn Hill" and refers to "encroachment into the countryside". We have had the 2016 Green Belt Review, the 2018 Local Plan and the 2019 Housing Background Paper all of which variously said this land should be treated as Green Belt and left free from development. What suddenly justifies a complete reversal of all these findings?
6. The Council, working with Syngenta, commissioned a Transport report delivered in March 2018. This shows an expected peak traffic increase of over 14,500 journeys per day travelling to, from and past the Jealott's Hill site. Even after the suggested improvements to junctions in the area, **10 of the 16 junctions** studied will **still be operating over capacity**

- when construction is completed. This report forecasts traffic queues of quite literally HUNDREDS of cars at some roundabouts and junctions even after improvements that will only be made very late in the development project if at all. Why is BFC proposing a housing development which will condemn local residents to perpetual traffic chaos and gridlocked roads at peak times?
7. The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead lodged a formal objection because of the impact likely to be caused by traffic bound for the M4 junction and the Crossrail terminus in Maidenhead. Why are there no plans to work with RBWM and for **BFC/Syngenta to part fund a bypass round Holyport and a new junction onto the M4?**
 8. Should a development on the scale envisaged go ahead on Jealott's Hill if it is projected by the Council that it will run beyond the end of the "current draft Local Plan". When first published the plan end date was 2036. So the consequence is that for the next 16+ years, at least, development will be ongoing on the site with building materials delivered and earthworks removed almost daily. Based on the Woodhurst, Blue Mountain and Amen Corner developments what plans does the Council have to manage and minimise the traffic of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) into and out of the site?
 9. In its objection to the Jealott's Hill proposal in December 2019 the RBWM Highway Authority made reference to the larger issue of HGVs in the context of road restrictions on the A330 between Drift Road and the A308 junction at Braywick Roundabout. This restriction is required and continues in order to mitigate the impact of HGV traffic at Holyport. The objection points out that this restriction also applies to the B3024 between White Waltham and Fifield and to Fifield Road between the B3024 and the A308. In addition the restriction is to be extended along the B3024 to Water Oakley and along Fifield Lane. The effect of all these restrictions will be to force HGV traffic, to and from the site, to divert via Bracknell and Windsor to reach the M4. What does this mean for the residents of Maidens Green, Winkfield, Winkfield Row, Warfield, and Drift Road? What route will HGVs take to access the site?
 10. The impact of removing over 200 hectares of agricultural Green Belt along with its mature trees, vegetation, heritage assets such as hedgerows, open space and rolling fields and substituting a Business Park, 4,000 houses and over 6,000 cars will massively **increase carbon emissions** and **drive up air pollution**. How will this impact the Council's target to be carbon neutral before this development is due for completion?
 11. There is much talk of **cycleways and footpaths** to provide access to essential amenities such as supermarkets, the newly regenerated town centre, sports centres etc. Yet these are over 4km away and require the use of very narrow country roads which are potentially dangerous to cyclists and pedestrians. Surely BFC can see this is **not a feasible option** and that residents will drive their cars to town centre facilities, just like Whitegrove, Quelm Park and Woodhurst Park residents do today?
 12. There are miles of bridleways and rural amenities in and around the Jealott's Hill site used by horse riders and ramblers in relative safety today. In fact, it is so popular that people

- come from the nearby parishes to take advantage of these amenities safely. Building 4,000 houses will destroy this network of bridleways and **force horse riders out** of one of the few areas in North Bracknell which are safe to use. Will it take death or serious injury from traffic on these inadequate roads to make BFC realise how unreasonable the proposed Jealott's Hill development is?
13. BFC have produced a very sound employment policy in their revised local plan which takes account of the views of local employers to have these sites adjacent to the town centre facilities and not require car or bus journeys at lunch time and evening by employees. Surely locating 2,000 employees nearly 5km away from the town centre **flies in the face of this employment policy** and will drive up vehicle journeys with the attendant pollution, traffic congestion and road safety implications? How does BFC justify going against this Local Plan policy?
 14. For most of January, February and March 2020 Wellers Lane south of the proposed development has been almost impassable due to flooding. As stated by BFC, "**surface water flood risk present**". Site has not immediately passed the Sequential Test, Level 2 SFRA required". Adding a Science Park and 4,000 houses will only make this worse. How does BFC justify an un-necessary development in Jealott's Hill Green Belt when flooding is a key risk to residents nearby?
 15. Jealott's Hill is the highest point locally and is very visible to residents who live to the south as far as Bracknell Town centre. Surely a development of 4,000 houses on this Green Belt location will ruin the tranquil rural character and be a **real eye sore visually from as far away as the Chiltern Hills**. Imagine a typical, edge of development, 3 story affordable housing block (like Woodhurst Park) sticking up into the sky. Why would BFC promote such a visual disaster?
 16. If BFC is so focussed on **affordable housing**, why is the proposed allocation **no more than the statutory 35%**? How do we know that this number will not be compromised by developers complaining about lost profits like virtually every other major site?
 17. BFC state there are several UK priority (**biodiversity**) habitats present, good quality intact hedgerows, lowland mixed deciduous woodlands, ponds and recently established traditional orchard. These support an array of species. There are species present (Great Crested Newt and Stag Beetle) which are listed within Annex II of the Habitats Directive (2010). These will not survive if the habitats are removed even with some minor SANG provision which does not encourage biodiversity. What steps would BFC take to protect the biodiversity in this area?
 18. Is there potential for some site contamination from historic use of the site (as shown in BFC report) when strong chemicals, pesticides and other noxious chemicals were widely deployed in field trials? Is there a **nuclear radioactivity risk** from the use of radio isotopes which may have been used for scientific testing? Going back to the 1980's there have been concerns about what was going on at this site and a complete absence of transparency on



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the part of successive owning companies. What detailed analysis has been carried out on the ENTIRE site to establish that no significant residual pollution issues exist?

19. How much public money has been spent up to the end of 2019 and how much further money is planned to be spent by BFC in order to get this proposal through and how much expenditure is being either assumed on BFCs behalf or reimbursed by Syngenta or its corporate group or other group companies?