



Dear Councillor,

Following our general letter to you last week, we are now going to start regular briefings on significant issues that are relevant to the building of a Garden Village in Tandridge.

We would like to start with Godstone station, where Cllr Fisher has made it clear that a commitment from Network Rail to an upgrade of the train service to London was a 'Red Line' issue for him to support South Godstone as being a suitable site for a Garden Village. Cllr Jecks made a similar comment at the March planning policy committee.

When Cllr Fisher made this commitment there were in fact two direct trains an hour from South Godstone to London. However, following the recent timetable changes, there are now no direct trains to London. This loss of any direct trains to London means that commuters are now driving to Oxted and other stations, more than even before. This makes South Godstone a totally unsustainable location for a garden village as it will, as we have always argued, be a town almost totally dependent on cars.

The loss of service also weakens the case for a garden village at Blindley Heath, which would be even more dependent on the car, since Taylor Wimpey proposes to try to alleviate this by running buses to Godstone station.

We have researched the railway situation in great detail and a more detailed, fact based note that summarises our analysis sits behind this letter. It is comprehensive, and therefore long, but do read it as it is quite illuminating.

The reality is what has been said from the start - commuters from the area will not choose to use Godstone as their preferred commuter station given the increasingly poor and deteriorating service. They will use other local stations such as Oxted, Hurst Green and Lingfield - a service that is already swamped and with inadequate parking at each location. This will also put more cars on our roads. This is definitely not sustainable development. And it will not be enough for TDC to simply secure investment for Godstone station itself - it needs timetabled services to be permanently and dramatically improved and increased to pass TDC's self-imposed 'red line'.

In light of this, we would argue that South Godstone, as a potential site for a Garden Village, has failed Cllr Fisher's Red Line test, and that the case for Blindley Heath has been rendered even weaker than before. We sincerely hope that these facts will be reflected in any decision on the location of a garden village, if one is proposed at all – after all, as the Council has said, if none of them pass the necessary tests then none should be selected.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Hughes", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David Hughes  
For and on behalf of TLAG  
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