

Langley Parish Council

Position Statement

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Langley - an historic rural Parish of 580 homes - is already taking the brunt of the proposed development in the Maidstone Local Plan, including over 1,000 homes on three Greenfield sites on the Sutton Road, doubling the size of our Parish.

We have asked for protection of the Langley Fruit Plateau, a rich agricultural area of important landscape character with a network of well-used footpaths extending north of Horseshoes Lane to New Road, which is highly valued by our residents, as evidenced by Langley's Parish Plan. It revealed that 95% of residents wanted no more housing developments or roads in Langley if the fields or orchards were to be sacrificed. Replies showed that the features, most valued and which should be preserved are the rural setting, the peace and quiet, fields, woods and orchards.

The Parish Council would obviously not be able to support the proposed development sites in the Local Plan if it opened the way to a Leeds Langley bypass route in Langley in a location that would act as a magnet for infill development along its length, (in addition to Local Plan sites), destroy the fruit growing area we seek to preserve and engulf Langley Heath. It would also join Langley to Parkwood, which we have opposed in our Parish Plan and will continue to oppose.

Given a new road in an area where practically every field has been offered for development in the Borough's three Calls for Sites, the Local Plan housing number for Maidstone could rise to over 30,000 homes (90,000 additional residents), as further building could not be restricted without Highways constraints.

It would trigger the development of all the sites put forward in the Call For Sites in Langley, Leeds and Otham, including the 15,000 Golding Homes scheme. This is an issue which will determine the future quality of life for all Maidstone residents, not just Langley. Such irresponsible development bringing massive population growth would impact exponentially on the Borough's water supply, sewerage system, roads, schools and hospitals. It is therefore unsustainable.

Any Langley Leeds Bypass should be just that, a bypass around, and not a road through, our Parish. Langley already has two major roads running through it, the A274 Sutton Road and the Leeds Road, creating considerable traffic noise and air pollution for our residents. Adding a third major road through our Parish approaching from the Sutton Road near Horseshoes Lane would turn Langley Heath into a traffic island, bringing more traffic noise and air pollution for residents, and its fields and orchards would be in-filled with housing.

Such a route would not ease traffic congestion on the Leeds Road or the Sutton Road in Langley, according to Kent County Council, as most the traffic comes from the south and the west and would still use the Leeds Road at the Five Wents crossroads to reach the M20, rather than drive on through Langley to reach any new road crossing the countryside north of Horseshoes Lane.

If a new road in Langley is considered necessary, then Langley Parish Council would expect to be involved with others in the mapping of any route before a decision is made, as the Parish Council is able to provide valuable local knowledge.