

****Proof of Evidence Hodson Appeal Feb 2025****

I am Vice Chairman of Shadoxhurst Parish Council (SPC), and I wish to give evidence regarding the effects of the loss of Section 106 money on the village and residents of Shadoxhurst. I have lived in the village since 2012 and became a Parish Member in 2015, I chaired the Council between 2016 and 2019, and am currently the Vice Chair. I also represent the Weald South ward of Ashford Borough Council but am here solely as a member of the SPC and a resident of Shadoxhurst.

You are familiar with the development's proximity to Shadoxhurst, as shown in various plans and the masterplan. The development of Chilmington Green has been long considered and planned, well before my time in the village. My Parish Council predecessors have always shown great interest in the development as it abuts our Parish boundary and importantly, impacts our village's separation and identity.

The Chilmington masterplan included a boundary change north of Tally Ho Road, absorbing part of the parish into Great Chart and Singleton to facilitate the development designated as a green buffer. One day, Chilmington is expected to become a separate parished authority.

Section 106 and its agreements took two years to be signed, and SPC continued to take an active interest throughout the process. SPC believes the masterplan and agreements provided the best options for maintaining a satisfactory buffer and the legacy of separation of the two settlements in perpetuity. The 106 is crucial to retaining the integrity of our community, as well as Great Chart, Singleton, Kingsnorth, and the surrounding settlements.

Any changes to primary and secondary education provision, bus and cycle improvements, and Discovery Park plans will directly impact our residents. It is vital that

the agreements in place are honoured to safeguard the legacy of the necessary infrastructure for our future generations, that this appeal currently puts in doubt.

The development subject to the appeal is related to the South Ashford Garden Community, including Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green, which all impact Shadoxhurst. SPC always takes a great interest in these proposals due to our close proximity. It is essential that the obligations drawn up in good faith are fully honoured, as planning and placemaking are crucial. All residents, existing and future, must expect surety that the agreed-upon delivery is maintained. Trust and integrity are at stake here, as well as setting a dangerous precedent, that established needs and requirements can be jettisoned or reduced.

If this appeal is allowed, the knock-on effects will be profound, opening the way for wholesale changes to the masterplan and layouts. Two key aspects for Shadoxhurst are:

1. ****Green Buffers****

The masterplan allows for a significant agricultural buffer separating Chilmington and Shadoxhurst. Allowing the appeal could lead to changes in phasing and layouts, potentially building on the agreed buffer land. The proposal and subsequent appeal for the Wastewater Treatment Works at Stubbs Cross will already see a reduction in buffer land, which could increase if tertiary wetland mitigation is required by the Environment Agency.

It is crucial that the 106 agreement ensures that the necessary obligations for various communities within Ashford Borough are apportioned as planned and agreed. The Possingham Farm appeal has already changed matters, and this development will bring

Chilmington closer to Shadoxhurst from an unexpected direction. It also raises questions about the future phases of Chilmington.

2. ****Roads and Traffic****

I am sure you will hear much about the impact of traffic in the appeal, much will centre on the vital A28, but I wanted to explain the problems from Shadoxhurst's point of view. Drivers often choose to travel through Shadoxhurst and Woodchurch to get from Ashford to Tenterden and vice versa, avoiding the A28. This route impacts Shadoxhurst significantly as right through the heart of the village.

Drivers use the A2048 past the Designer Centre, onward to Kingsnorth and on Ashford Road (to Hamstreet), and the A2070 to avoid the A28 through Ashford. Once on this route, they turn right at the dangerous Steeds Road crossroads into Magpie Hall Road, then left into Tally Ho Road. Tally Ho Road is a 30mph road, but many drive at higher speeds. The road weaves down Woodchurch Road and eventually leads to rural roads to Woodchurch and Tenterden.

The impact of through traffic affects Woodchurch as well, with narrow roads due to residents parking on the street. The growing traffic will worsen this situation as well. As the South Ashford Garden Community grows, residents will also favour Shadoxhurst as a preferred route to Tenterden and beyond. The 106 agreement refers to traffic calming measures on four of our village roads aimed to deter drivers from using them and thus ensuring the A28 is optimised, it is noted that these are subject to removal from the agreement and this will impact Shadoxhurst in a very detrimental way.

Improvements to the A28 and dualling as well as traffic measures on local roads are therefore essential to make the A28 more acceptable for local and through traffic. The

promised dualling work's failure to materialize disappointed many, not just in Shadoxhurst.

Under the agreements, developers must carry out traffic surveys and flow predictions before and during each phase of development. The initial survey on key roads affecting Shadoxhurst was conducted by Vectis but has not been released. SPC requests that these results be released and that future traffic counts are carried out correctly and made public to account for the rise in traffic levels through our village.

Finally, Criol Lane, connecting Chilmington Green Road with Shadoxhurst, is due for an upgrade in phase four as it becomes a major entrance to Chilmington Green. Its current condition is poor, and any changes will impact the village. The road is narrow and frequently used by lorries, causing continual damage to the edges. The sat nav choice for many reduces some traffic on Tally Ho Road, but locals rarely use it due to the difficulty of meeting oncoming vehicles. Improvements are now in doubt with the appeal proposals.

In conclusion, the growth of housing as part of the bigger picture will worsen our situation, but fully meeting the 106 obligations in the agreed timescales will assist local communities. As a matter of principle there is a clear need to safeguard this and future 106 agreements to prevent developments being a free for all, without vital and very necessary mitigation. Please dismiss this appeal.

--- David ledger, February 2025