**19-05882-PRE WRS**

When the original plans for this site came out, I engaged with the developer at a public presentation. We councillors decided at the time not to submit any formal comments because the development was roughly in line with the local plan which pencilled in up to 119 units. We accepted that it was not unreasonable to develop the site given its high PTAL and closeness to the district centre, although we regretted the demolition of an attractive terrace of Edwardian homes with what the officer’s report dismisses as “modest” gardens. As it happens, homes with gardens and car spaces are exactly the type of accommodation which are much sought after in these days of lockdown at a time when people’s mental health is suffering so badly.

What we have tonight is something COMPLETELY different and I cannot possibly let this evening pass without speaking out strongly against it.

I realise that this agenda item does not require the committee to make a decision either way tonight, but I would be appalled if the committee as a whole endorsed the wild enthusiasm expressed in the officer’s report, and I’m conscious that I’m repeating some points made by committee members.

* Page 15 para 3.1 freely admits that this application exceeds the policy target for this site by over 100%, up from 119 to 262, and glibly refers to these new homes as being “actively welcomed” – by whom? Certainly not the local councillors
* Page 26 para 6.4 dismisses the fact that the habitable rooms/hectare metric comes out for this site at 350 as compared with a recommended number of 45-260 - that is roughly a DOUBLING of the recommended number.
* It dismisses the fact that the maximum height at ten storeys is greater than the local plan guidelines by arguing that the full height can only be seen from certain angles. This is always true of any construction, but what’s the point of having standards if they are only selectively applied?
* Quite apart from the overintensive development of the site as a whole, I’m appalled by the mix of units proposed: MORE THAN HALF of them, 126, are proposed as one-bed units, 113 as two bed and only 23 as three-bed units. This will create a very undesirable ghetto of a large number of single people cooped up in a huge complex with no public communal spaces (because we’re told that it has been removed), and the residents will be stuck in a noisy location with high speed trains running day and night just yards from their windows. This cannot possibly be described as a satisfactory mix of housing.

Transport: the planning department’s hostility to cars is well known and fully documented. This hostility evidently extends to not providing any parking spaces for those residents who need vans or even motorbikes for their daily employment as electricians, plumbers, Deliveroo couriers etc. By its planning policy, the Council is excluding such residents from this development, and the diversity of the community will be adversely affected.

I’m also concerned by the proposal to reduce the number of spaces in the car park by 20 without any evidence to show what impact this reduction will have. It’s absurd to justify this reduction on the basis (page 39, para 6.57) “that planning policy generally seeks to reduce reliance on car use”. Does that policy include removal of car parks from stations? If residents need to travel by train, they either need to live near the station or they need somewhere convenient to park near the station; if neither of these options is available, they will probably choose to travel the whole journey by car, because parking is too much hassle.

I will finish by referring to the cumulative impact of this and a plethora of other recent developments in Purley. In the last 18 months, planning permission has been granted for about 60 homes to be replaced by blocks of 9-40 units, Mosaic Place will add a further 220, and this proposal adds another 262, taking the total to about 1100. This is some 50% of the annual requirement for new homes for the WHOLE OF CROYDON. Why is such excessive development being encouraged in Purley without any increase in social infrastructure such as schools, surgeries etc, and even while the Purley Pool remains closed? What about the other 26 wards? It’s true that this scheme generates some CIL/S106 funding, but experience has shown that this always gets spent elsewhere in the borough and not in Purley where it’s so desperately needed.

I urge you to consider these points extremely carefully.. Thank you.