**For the attention of Kim** **Tagliarini**  14 January 2023
**Head of Planning** **and Environmental Health**

(**by email) to:** tplan@elmbridge.gov.uk

Dear Ms Tagliarini

**Redevelopment of Hersham Green Shopping Centre**

Our members continue to be extremely worried about what the above possible development might mean for the future of Hersham.  You will have seen our previous letter to the developers which was copied to you and highlights the very real concerns raised at a large public meeting we held in November last year. For your reference here is a link to the letter and flip charts used at the meeting which have been posted on our blog <http://www.hershamresidents.info/blog/>

Fundamental to our concerns is the inclusion of the centre of Hersham in the Local Plan with a density of suggested residential units which appears totally inappropriate and completely out of character for a village environment.  Any development on that scale and density, with all the associated parking issues would be utterly destructive to Hersham Village, no matter how well it was designed.  Many local people frame the proposals put forward over the summer as something that would ‘finish Hersham.’

It is the sheer density suggested in the draft version of the Local Plan which appears so intolerable to most people, and this has been a point of discussion at many recent HRA meetings, and indeed at the public meeting at the Watermans Arms in November last year.  It was therefore with interest that we heard that there have been some issues raised in recent local discussions about exactly how and why these staggering over-massing densities were included in the Local Plan - when initial Local Plan densities were at least a bit more reasonable. The increased densities which seem to have appeared in a later version of the plan were certainly not in consultation or by agreement with the people who actually live here, and nothing like them were mentioned or implied at any of the meetings with residents of Elmbridge over the previous 4 or 5 years of meetings as far as we are aware.

The local discussions I refer to are, I understand, about procedural anomalies in making the upward change to the local plan density levels originally proposed, and on the face of it, this looks to have occurred following a request by the developers. I understand others have outlined these anomalies in detail and these are now being considered.  This letter is to highlight this matter and express on behalf of the local people we help represent, that now is the time to re-examine the Local Plan densities before the document is sent to be considered by the government planning inspector.

We wish to add our voices to the suggestion that the densities are adjusted substantially downwards so that they are fully in line with the requirements of planning guidance and consultation arrangements - but also so they represent the needs of Hersham as a village and community centre with appropriate car parking etc, rather than outcomes put forward by developers and investors. We would like urgent reassurance that densities will be changed to provide a more reasonable benchmark within which any future planning application might be considered.

As an association, we have a long history of engaging positively with the council on planning on other matters, and we would of course like this to continue.  However this is a matter of such concern that to retain our members’ positive approach an early response and significant reassurance on this matter is needed.

I therefore look forward to hearing from you.

**Bill Cowap**

Chairman HRA

(Hersham Residents Association)