Dear Jane,

RE: APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

The Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum wishes to submit an application for the designation of a neighbourhood area.

Part 2 Regulation 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 states the following:

Where a relevant body submits an area application to the local planning authority it must include –

a) a map which identifies the area to which the area application relates;

b) a statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area; and

c) a statement that the organisation or body making the area application is a relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Act.

We supply herewith the information required by the above regulations:

a. A map which identifies the area to which the area application relates

The area will be known as ‘The Deepcut Neighbourhood Area’. A map of the area to which this application relates is enclosed with this application. The boundary of the area is drawn as a red line on the map.

b. A statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area

Before addressing the subject of why this area is an appropriate one to be designated, we ask you to refer to the enclosed map for the following explanation of why the red boundary is so drawn.

The red boundary on the map encloses the area of the Mytchett and Deepcut electoral ward with the following exceptions;

1) It excludes all areas within Deepcut covered by the Planning Application for the Princess Royal Barracks (shown in blue on the map). This site is identified in the
Council’s adopted Core Strategy at Policy CP4 anh has an adopted Supplementary Planning Document to guide development of the site.

2) Although Deepcut forms part of a wider electoral ward named known as Mytchett and Deepcut, the two communities are physically separate. The boundary of the Deepcut Neighbourhood Area application excludes Mytchett as can be seen from the enclosed map. The Local Planning Authority advised us to draw the southern boundary for two reasons: firstly, in order to exclude the Special Protection Area (SPA) heathland to the south of Old Guildford Road which has greater geographical connection to Mytchett rather than Deepcut and which will not be included in our neighbourhood plan because it is afforded protected status as a European site and, secondly, in order to include the properties on Old Guildford Road which form part of the wider area of Deepcut. The area boundary line then re-joins the ward boundary going north towards Deepcut village.

3) It should be noted that our area boundary follows the Ward boundary in the vicinity of Aisne Road, Deepcut. Part of Aisne Road belongs to West End Parish and is therefore excluded from our area.

4) As shown on the accompanying map, and outlined in blue, two areas (1 adjacent to Tomlinscote School and 1 on the eastern side of St. Catherine’s Road at its junction with Lake Road) have been excluded after dialogue has established them as being inappropriate to a proposed Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum.

Our statement as to why the resultant area is appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area now follows:

**The area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area for the following reasons:**

1. Although Deepcut is part of a larger electoral ward, known as Mytchett and Deepcut, the two communities are physically separated. Thus our application will allow the community in Mytchett to have the opportunity, should they choose, to designate their own neighbourhood area in the future which reflect the needs of their locality.

2. It excludes all areas within Deepcut that are subject to the Planning Application for the re-development of the Princess Royal Barracks.

3. It does not overlap with any adjoining ward, parish, borough council or existing neighbourhood area.

4. It is a suitable area to be addressed by a neighbourhood plan for the reasons we give below.

First of all, we would like to explain the context in which the neighbourhood plan for the Deepcut Neighbourhood Area will be developed. The neighbourhood plan will be developed by the Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum with the support of Surrey Heath Borough Council. The plan will have as its overriding objective the promotion and improvement of the social, economic and environmental well-being of the neighbourhood area and those who reside, work and carry on business within its boundary.

The Localism Act determines both the content and the process for constructing our neighbourhood plan. The Act requires the plan to be in line with national planning policy, with the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local planning authority, and with other legal requirements. The plan will be required to comply with the Council’s Core Strategy and
will also make reference to the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Deepcut, taking into account the latter document’s expression of a vision of creating a sustainably connected rural village out of the existing settlement and the former Princess Royal Barracks site.

It should be noted that through neighbourhood plans, communities will be able to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. However, neighbourhood plans can also include projects which a community would like to see actioned. Projects are important as they can add momentum towards creating the kind of vibrant and sustainable community we want to see developed in Deepcut. The types of project which might arise from engagement with the community are likely to be varied and might include, for example, improving streetscapes, signage, tree planting, new cycle ways, road safety improvements, etc.

We would now like to provide justification for the inclusion of areas within our boundary which will be addressed by the neighbourhood plan. The proposed neighbourhood area encompasses two broad sub areas: the existing settlement of Deepcut, and the surrounding heathland and woodland.

Firstly the existing settlement is likely to benefit greatly from the development of a neighbourhood plan. Areas of the existing settlement suffer from a low quality built environment with poor urban design and the use of low quality materials. Some parts, notably the retail/business area on Deepcut Bridge Road have a rundown character. The community is split into military and civilian components with minimal contact between the two and with both communities having duplicated facilities. There will still be a substantial military element remaining in Deepcut even after the PRB site has been developed with the risk that this situation will persist. Together with the opportunities offered by the development of the PRB site, the process of developing a neighbourhood plan is likely to foster a greater sense of community and identity in Deepcut.

Secondly, why are we including heathland and woodland in our area outside the existing residential settlement, in particular the area to the west of Deepcut Bridge Road and Bellew Road, including the Defence Training Estate?

The inclusion of the heathland and woodland surrounding Deepcut village is seen as crucial to the viability of the neighbourhood plan for the following reasons:

1. They form a strategic gap separating Deepcut from the settlements along the Blackwater Valley, and from Frimley Green, Frimley and Heatherside. It is the “green lung” for Surrey Heath.
2. They help define the character of Deepcut.
3. They are an important leisure resource for the Deepcut community as well as for the wider Borough.
4. They are an important biodiversity resource for the Borough.

The Deepcut vision in the Council’s Core Strategy and SPD talks about the new expanded Deepcut being “characterised by the rural heathland landscape in which it sits”. Indeed, the Core Strategy underpins this vision by including a policy on maintaining the countryside gap between Deepcut and the urban areas of Frimley, Frimley Green and Heatherside. This vision was developed in recognition of the historical context in which Deepcut village has developed over the years. The heathland and woodland, which surrounds and effectively isolates the village from urban areas, has been used as a training ground for the military in Deepcut from the late 19th century. Consequently, the local community maintain a close
connection with these lands, especially with regard to the Defence Training Estate (DTE) land, which many residents regularly access for recreation.

It is for these reasons that it is felt vital that the neighbourhood plan should address the environmental well-being of the heathland and woodland within which the village is situated, and from which it derives its character, including the Defence Training Estate currently used as a training facility by the Army. Although this Defence Training Estate land is currently under the management of Defence Estates, this may not be the case in perpetuity. Should this land be declared surplus to requirements in the future and come forward for disposal, its inclusion in the neighbourhood plan area will help secure its preservation as green space for the benefit of the residents of the whole Borough. Indeed, the Council’s Core Strategy assessment of these training areas identifies them as having a major role to play as a leisure resource for local people and what happens to them “key to the future well-being of the Borough’s countryside, and in particular the protection of its biodiversity.”

**Why are we including residential properties in our area which are in outlying locations, outside the settlement of Deepcut?**

As mentioned above, we largely base our area on the electoral ward’s boundaries. The proposed area includes areas of heathland and woodland which have close historical connections to Deepcut and which contribute to the setting of Deepcut. Within these areas of Deepcut there are some residential properties and landowners, the occupants of which are all Deepcut residents, and we intend to invite all of them to contribute to the development of the neighbourhood plan.

**c. A statement that the organisation or body making the area application is a relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Act.**

Section 61G of Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that a ‘relevant body’ means –

a) a parish council, or
b) an organisation or body which is, or is capable of being, designated as a neighbourhood forum (on the assumption that, for this purpose, the specified area is designated as a neighbourhood area).

The Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum qualifies as a relevant body. In its application to Surrey Heath Borough Council to be designated as a neighbourhood forum, the Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum supplied a written statement of compliance with the conditions listed in the Localism Act, Schedule 9 61F (5).

Schedule 9 61F (5) of the 1990 Act states:

“A local planning authority may designate an organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum if the authority are satisfied that it meets the following conditions –

(1) It is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area that consists of or includes the neighbourhood area concerned (whether or not it is also established for the express purpose of promoting the carrying on of trades, professions or other businesses in such an area),

(b) Its membership is open to –
I. Individuals who live in the neighbourhood area concerned,

II. Individuals who work there (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise), and

III. Individuals who are elected members of a county council, district council, or London Borough Council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned

(c) Its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom –

I. lives in the neighbourhood area concerned,

II. works there (whether for a business carried on there or otherwise), or

III. is an elected member of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned,

(d) it has a written constitution, and

(e) such other conditions as may be prescribed."

The Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum already meets these conditions and conducts itself in accordance with them as follows:

Schedule 9 61F (5a) – This condition is fulfilled by the listed objective of the Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum’s Constitution:

........ (ii) To promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area;

Schedule 9 61F (5b) - Membership of the Forum is open to all of the categories listed above with no exceptions.

Schedule 9 61F (5c) - At the date of this application, the Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum already has more than 230 members drawn from different sections of the Deepcut community and from a wide range of locations in the proposed neighbourhood area. These individuals already recognise and support the Forum as a means of expressing their interests in the development of the neighbourhood plan.

Schedule 9 61F (5d) – A copy of our written constitution is enclosed. It should be noted that, on advice from the Local Planning Authority, this has been recently amended by a vote at a Special General Meeting to delete Part 4(ii) (refusal of membership if considered detrimental to the objectives of the Forum).

Schedule 9 61F (5e) – No other conditions have been prescribed.

Furthermore, Schedule 9 61F (7) (a) (i-iii) states that:

A local planning authority –

(a) must, in determining under subsection (5) whether to designate an organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum for a neighbourhood area, have regard for the desirability of designating an organisation or body –

(i) which has secured (or taken reasonable steps to attempt to secure) that its membership includes at least one individual falling within each of the sub-paragraphs (i) to (iii) of subsection (5)(b),

(ii) whose membership is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area concerned and from different sections of the community in that area, and

(iii) whose purpose reflects (in general terms) the character of that area
The Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum meets conditions (i) and (ii) as it has members who fulfil at least one of the criteria listed in subsection (5)(b), and it has recruited, and continues to recruit - by means of its website, flyers, press releases, public meetings and word of mouth - members drawn from different sections of the Deepcut community, regardless of age, gender, disability and ethnic group, and from a wide range of locations in the neighbourhood area.

Furthermore, the Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum meets condition (iii). The Forum recognises the important role that the armed forces have played in shaping the character of Deepcut up to the present date, and will continue to play given that military accommodation will remain in Deepcut for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, membership is open to those serving in the military and/or residing in military accommodation in Deepcut. Following a meeting with the Brigadier commanding the Defence College, the officer commanding the Training Regiment has been asked to attend committee meetings to represent the military. In addition, we have recruited residents of the military housing in Deepcut to represent military families on the Forum committee.

We trust the information provided in this application is sufficient to progress the application for designation of a neighbourhood area. Please let us know as soon as possible if further information is required.

We would appreciate your confirmation of receipt of this application as well as confirmation that the application complies, to the best of your knowledge, with all the relevant legislation pertaining to designation of a neighbourhood area.

Finally, we would be grateful if you could inform the committee at your earliest convenience of the start date of the 6 week consultation period to publicise the application.

Thank you for your valuable advice and assistance in the preparation of this application.

Yours sincerely,

David Rushmer
Chair
Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum

Leighton Holme, Lake Road, Deepcut,Camberley, GU16 6QY

Enclosed: Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum constitution.
Map of the Deepcut Neighbourhood Area.