



**HACKBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT**  
**A response by Wandle Valley Forum to London Borough of Sutton**  
**Application number C2015/72418**

**September 2015**

*Wandle Valley Forum was established in 2005 and is the primary consultative forum on Wandle Valley issues for the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust; the London Boroughs of Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton and Croydon; Greater London Authority and other statutory bodies*

1. Wandle Valley Forum has reviewed the proposals for a new primary school on open land north of BedZED and we offer the following comments:

- The proposed site is part of one of the most important strategic opportunity areas in the entire Wandle Valley comprising a very large area of open land embracing Beddington Farmlands (equivalent to Hyde Park) and with the potential to be a gateway to the Wandle Valley Regional Park as a whole. The development of a masterplan for the whole area is long overdue and should be undertaken before permitting irreversible development of any of the sites within it
- The development would involve the loss of Metropolitan Open Land – equivalent in planning policy to Green Belt – and we have seen no evidence of the “very special circumstances” necessary to justify such inappropriate development (NPPF para 87). It would also develop a Site of Metropolitan Importance to Nature Conservation.
- This is a controversial “departure application” in conflict with London-wide and local planning policy (e.g London Plan Policy 7.17, Sutton Plan PMP7, PMP9). The London Plan specifically states that “*Development that involves the loss of MOL in return for the creation of new open space elsewhere will not be considered appropriate.*” The application should be determined by elected members and not delegated to officers. Given the sensitive location, conflict with Metropolitan Open Land and other planning policies and the fact of it being the local authority’s own development it could warrant a call-in by the Secretary of State or Mayor of London
- The need for additional primary school capacity should have been planned into the development of the Felnex site and could have been readily delivered through expansion of the existing Hackbridge Primary School. The very existence of this proposal indicates a worrying lack of forward planning by Sutton Council
- If development were to be permitted on this site then it should:
  - secure environmental improvements and public access to the entire area of land owned by Sutton Council to the north of BedZED over and above any mitigation for the loss of habitat;

General enquiries: [wandlevalleyforum@gmail.com](mailto:wandlevalleyforum@gmail.com)  
Web site: <http://www.wandlevalleypark.co.uk/The-Trust/The-Trust-Forum>  
Twitter: @WandleForum

Please respond to Chair, Wandle Valley Forum, c/o 43 Bramcote Avenue, Mitcham CR4 4LW

- provide public access to facilities within the school and its grounds which relate to its location within the Wandle Valley on terms to be agreed with local community groups
- be compatible with emerging plans to provide a new gateway to the Wandle Valley Regional Park.

2. We believe this development is premature and in conflict with London-wide and local planning policy for the protection of Metropolitan Open Land and should not be progressed until a masterplan for the area has been produced. We look forward to contributing to this process.

### About Wandle Valley Forum

Wandle Valley Forum brings together people and organisations that care for the River Wandle and its diverse network of open spaces. We provide support and an independent voice for over 80 community groups & voluntary organisations and for everyone who shares a passion for the Wandle. Wandle Valley Forum monitors planning applications for developments which impact on the special qualities and character of the Wandle Valley. We make representations on developments which raise Valley-wide issues by reason of their strategic significance or potential to set a precedent.