

Effingham Residents Association's Statement

made by:

Vivien White, Chairman

In the Appeal by:

**Wisley Property Investments Limited Appeal Reference Numbers:
APP/Y3615/W/16/3159894**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Vivien White and I am Chairman of Effingham Residents Association on whose behalf I am making this statement.
- 1.2 The Effingham Residents Association **object** to the development at Wisley and urge that the Appeal be dismissed. If the development was to be allowed Effingham, as a close neighbour, would be seriously affected.
- 1.3 We fully support the case being put forward by the Horsleys, (that is East Horsley and West Horsley parish councils) and recognise in their case, and in the evidence given by Keith Robinson and Roger Miles, many of our own concerns and fears about the proposed development.
- 1.4 Today I will provide the Inquiry with the assessment by Effingham residents of the proposed Wisley development and how it will affect our rural village. Effingham Parish Council and Effingham Residents Association jointly conducted a survey to understand the opinions of local residents regarding the proposed development at Wisley Airfield. The survey was carried out between the 13th June and 7th July 2017 and conducted using a paper questionnaire.
- 1.5 354 completed questionnaires were returned. Over 24% of the households in Effingham participated by returning at least one completed questionnaire. The strong views of residents on this proposed development are demonstrated by the return rate of 24% of households, which is high considering that residents had to personally return the paper questionnaires to the parish office or to a local newsagent. In the 354 surveys returned there were 953 comments with an average of about three comments per survey, again showing the strength of opinion in the parish.

- 1.6 96% of those returning the survey do not support the proposed development. This is an overwhelming number which matches the numbers opposing the development in neighbouring villages.
- 1.7 Residents commented that very special circumstances have not been demonstrated by the developer to build 2068 dwellings in the Green Belt.
- 1.8 They see the proposed development as a complete over-development of the site – a development leading to what is effectively the construction of a new town in the midst of rural villages. The new town would have a population of 5000 people or more, and up to 4000 vehicles. This massive new influx of people and vehicles on our border is an alarming prospect for local people.
- 1.9 The overcrowding of the site is also a great concern. The five storey buildings and the density of dwellings will be out of character with the surrounding area, in addition to the inability of the rural infrastructure to cope with a population increase of over 5000, and up to 4000 additional vehicles. To put this into perspective, Effingham has 1054 dwellings in 1198 hectares, this development will have 2068 dwellings in 115 hectares, twice the homes in 10% of the area. The density in the proposed 'developed area' will be 33 dwellings per hectare typical of a London urban area but totally out of character and keeping with the rural environment here.
- 2.0 There is a good deal of criticism of the developer's inadequate plans to protect public services in the neighbouring areas - 122 residents commented on this. They are aware of the offer by the developer to build new public services on site, for example, schools and a medical centre, but believe there are totally inadequate plans for these to be built in a timely manner and not before great pressure is put on existing local school places and GP surgeries. The current phasing and commitment by the developer to the proposed through-school and medical centre will create a number of years of excessive pressure on primary and secondary school places in Effingham and on the GP surgery in East Horsley used by 50% of Effingham residents.
- 2.1 Respondents see totally inadequate proposals to mitigate traffic congestion and road safety dangers, especially during the school day, and to overcome the pressure on an already overburdened parking situation at Effingham Junction railway station where the carpark is already often full on weekdays.

- 2.2 There is a great deal of nervousness about the increased demand for seats on trains on the Guildford, to and from, London Waterloo lines as trains are already very crowded. It may currently be possible to get a seat at Effingham Junction but many commuters at stations up the line have to stand. The increased numbers will exacerbate this situation and standing for 45 minutes or more on the return journey is seen as an unpleasant prospect.
- 2.3 Effingham residents see the rural road infrastructure as inadequate to support the number of added vehicle journeys implied by a development of this size. The roads in the area, including in Effingham, are often not wide enough to take two lorries passing without one or both lorries having to go onto the pavement to pass each other. Many of our country lanes have no pavements at all creating a dangerous situation for pedestrians when used by lorries.
- 2.4 There is also concern about the possible closure of roads during the development, and afterwards, leading to increased journey times, congestion and road safety issues, especially for school children, cyclists and pedestrians.
- 2.5 Wisley, and the neighbouring areas, have a great diversity of wildlife which will be irreparably harmed by the development of such a large community. Many residents mentioned a rise in air pollution from the many additional vehicle journeys.
- 2.6 The main findings from the questionnaire are:
1. Effingham residents overwhelmingly, that is 96% of respondents, oppose the proposed development at Wisley Airfield.
 2. 78% of respondents believe that the development will make it harder for Effingham children to secure school places in Effingham.
 3. 89% of respondents believe that the development will significantly add to traffic congestion in Effingham and lead to severe traffic impact on the local road network and road safety issues throughout the area.
 4. 83% of respondents will be inconvenienced by the proposed closure of roads caused by the proposed development, both during the building phase and afterwards, leading to increased journey times and adding to congestion and traffic pollution.
 5. Respondents overwhelmingly see the proposed development causing the overcrowding of public services: 94% see a severe effect on parking at Effingham Junction station, 79% see a severe impact on them getting a seat on the Guildford, to and from, London Waterloo

services at peak times and 80% see the waiting times at local GP surgeries increasing.

- 2.7 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the concerns of Effingham residents and explaining why these concerns exist. To reiterate the Effingham Residents Association speaking on behalf of Effingham residents **objects** to the proposed development at Wisley and urge that the Appeal be dismissed.