

EFFINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL REJECT PLANS FROM BERKELEY HOMES FOR MORE HOMES

Effingham Parish Council last night decided to lodge a formal objection to plans by Berkeley Homes for an additional 114 homes on the Lodge Farm site in Effingham.

Berkeley Homes claim that an additional 114 homes are now required to plug a funding gap that has arisen in their plan to build a new school for the Howard of Effingham with funds generated by the construction of 295 homes in the village. That scheme was allowed at appeal by the Secretary of State in March 2018. However, the Parish Council rejected Berkeley Homes' claims that the 295 homes are no longer sufficient to cover the build costs. A working group presented evidence from ONS demonstrating that whilst the cost of building in the public sector had increased by 14%, this was more than offset by the 29% increase in house prices the scheme would benefit by for new build properties in the borough.

Parish councillors heard further evidence highlighting that the additional housing failed to meet the standards set out in the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan and the Guildford Local Plan both of which had been formally adopted since consent had been achieved for the original scheme.

“Taken on its own merits, the weight and balance of the argument against the 114 homes is very substantial. In its favour it cannot claim that the benefit of the homes proposed meet the requirements for very special circumstances to outweigh all the harms and conflicts with planning policies set out in the Local Plan and the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan. The homes are not necessary, are of the wrong mix to address local needs and do not contribute sufficiently to affordable housing. It would be entirely inappropriate to allow such a proposal to go ahead on a site that has been designated as high sensitivity greenbelt land.” (Paula Moss - EPC councillor and member of the working group)

Councillors also heard that the proposed scheme represented a material change to the original consent allowed at appeal, and as such justified a wholesale review of the entire plan.

“ By requiring an additional 114 houses on green belt land in order to deliver the original scheme, amending the boundary of the consented development and changing some of its use, the applications take the approved scheme out of its original permission, and should therefore be treated as a material amendment (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) which requires a whole new application. “(Bronwen Roscoe, EPC councillor and member of the working group.)

Chair of Effingham Parish Council, Ian Symes, thanked the working group for their considerable effort in researching the applications and presenting such a clear and reasoned presentation. **“Tonight, Effingham Parish Council has considered a wide ranging and in-depth review of all the evidence impacting the applications from Berkeley Homes. We have made a reasoned and well-informed decision and will be strongly objecting to these plans on behalf of our residents.”**

Full details of the Parish Council's response are available on the parish council website:

<https://www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

Residents wishing to comment on the plans (Reference: 21P/01306 and 21P/01283) can do so either by using the Borough Council's public access portal at:

<https://www.guildford.gov.uk/commentonaplanningapplication>

or by email to: planningenquiries@guildford.gov.uk

The closing date for comments is 5th August.

Additional information for press.

Date of the Parish council Meeting:meeting: 27th July 2021

Application details: Berkeley Homes 21P/01306 and 21P/01283

Planning portal for submission of comments by residents:

<https://www.guildford.gov.uk/commentonaplanningapplication>

Closing date for applications: 5th August 2021

Parish Council website: <https://www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

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