



6<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Planning Dept.  
Mole Valley District Council,  
Pippbrook  
Dorking, Surrey,  
RH4 1SJ

Dear Sirs,

**Re. Planning application MO/2021/1472 Change of use from Use Class F1 (education) to F2 (outdoor recreation) for the provision of public open space on land south of Lower Road, Great Bookham, Leatherhead, including areas of planting, a feature pond, community orchard and outdoor recreation.**

Effingham Residents Association (EFFRA) objects to this Change of Use application.

The application is inextricably linked to the GBC application 14/P/02109 approved at Appeal for a new school for the Howard of Effingham with 295 enabling homes and to the recent GBC application for a further 110 homes on Green Belt and to 21/P/01283 which seeks to vary a condition of 14/P/02109. These later applications are still under deliberation and subject to a very high level of objections from local residents, both in Guildford Borough and Mole Valley and to objections from Effingham Parish Council and EFFRA. Due to resource issues at GBC, most of these objections are not yet visible on the GBC website. As part of the Landscape Masterplan for 21/P/01306, there is mention of 'Mole Valley Community Land' – the so-called Public Open Space referred to in this MVDC application. The applicant, Berkeley Homes, claims that application 21/P/01306 is needed to make the approved scheme (under 14/P/02109) financially viable and has stated that the new school will not be built unless approval is given for 110 more homes.

EFFRA believes that the applicant is being disingenuous in claiming that the hybrid application (21/P/01306) would generate "sufficient cross funding to allow the community land proposals to come forward". The land in question is currently Class F1 Education use and will be surplus to the school's and the applicant's requirements if the new school and enabling development goes ahead. As the land is Green Belt and there are no exceptional circumstances, it will remain green space. The application presents a possible cost effective solution to the developer for this piece of land but which would not be without possible problems for the local community.

The application does not address the ownership of the land and whether this would change after the Change of Use. Nor does it address the responsibility for long term maintenance. The plan involves a number of different areas requiring regular maintenance – lawn areas, pond, community orchard and wildflower areas. EFFRA believes the design is over complicated and has in-built design problems such as the trees around the pond. This type of space will quickly become overgrown and unkempt if not properly maintained. EFFRA believes these issues would first need to be resolved in a way that is acceptable to Mole Valley District Council, with binding conditions, if permission were to be given to use the land in this way.

A Change of Use usually takes immediate effect but, in this situation, it could not do so as the land is still required for use by the school. Thus the Change of Use would need to be dependent on the completion of the new school and the full operation of the new playing fields which would be a minimum of two years away. If Mole Valley District Council was to approve the Change of Use, EFFRA would request a binding condition to this effect.

It is proposed that the implementation of the Change of Use will be subject to a variation to the GBC S106 agreement attached to 14/P/02109 and EFFRA is concerned how this could be adequately monitored between two different councils.

EFFRA requests that Mole Valley District Council does not add any credence to the inappropriate planning application 21/P/01306 submitted to Guildford Borough Council. This is considered unacceptable on planning grounds because of the damage it would cause to the Green Belt, Ancient Woodland, local ecology and the local community.

Yours faithfully

Vivien White  
Chairman, Effingham Residents Association

cc John Busher, GBC Planning Officer responsible for 14/P/02109 & 21/P/01306  
Liz Hogger, Guildford Borough Councillor for Effingham  
Effingham Parish Clerk  
Bookham Residents Association