



**Zöe Franklin MP**  
Member of Parliament for Guildford  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
[zoe.franklin.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:zoe.franklin.mp@parliament.uk)

Vivien White - EFFRA  
Chair  
King George V Hall  
Browns Lane  
Effingham  
Leatherhead, Surrey  
KT24 5ND

Our Ref: ZF13916

19 May 2026

Dear Ms White,

**Re: Howard of Effingham and Berkeley Homes**

Thank you for your detailed letter of 11 May and for sharing the views received from residents to EFFRA. I fully recognise the strength of feeling within Effingham following what has been a long, frustrating and deeply disappointing process.

I want to be absolutely clear that I understand the depth of concern in the community. The collapse of the Berkeley Homes scheme after twelve years has caused understandable anger, not only because of the loss of the proposed new school but also because of the significant financial and emotional cost borne by residents over that period. I acknowledge the time, effort and resources committed by EFFRA, the Parish Council and many individuals in challenging the scheme and representing the interests of the village.

As you note, I have consistently opposed inappropriate development on Green Belt land. I publicly criticised the 2018 decision to override local planning refusal, and I stand by that position. I also recognise that many residents objected to the original and subsequent applications, particularly on the grounds of Green Belt impact, infrastructure constraints, and the scale of both housing and school expansion.

You raise important concerns about whether my recent correspondence fully reflects the views of Effingham residents. My intention was not to minimise opposition, but to address the current situation following Berkeley Homes' withdrawal and to focus on securing the best possible outcome moving forward. I agree that the conduct of Berkeley Homes has been deeply unsatisfactory. In particular, the use of viability arguments to repeatedly revise commitments, and ultimately withdraw from delivering the school, is unacceptable and raises serious questions about the planning system.

I also note your comments regarding The Howard Partnership Trust. While I understand your frustration with how events have unfolded, my focus now is on ensuring that the school receives the investment it urgently needs. As I stated previously, I am actively supporting the school in seeking funding from the Department for Education and will continue to press for a solution that delivers improved facilities for pupils as quickly as possible.

With regard to your request about correspondence, I agree that transparency is important. Both letters you refer to can be found on my website [News - Zöe Franklin MP](#) dated the 20<sup>th</sup>

**Constituency Office:**

Old Mission Hall, 53a Woking Road, Guildford, GU1 1QD • 01483 610581 • [zoe.franklin.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:zoe.franklin.mp@parliament.uk)

of April which is the date that they were written.

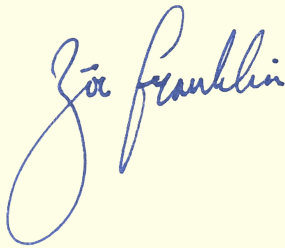
You also raise a critical point about the separation of future planning applications from the issue of school funding. Planning rules are clear that any future application by Berkeley Homes, including for the Lodge Farm site, must be considered on its own merits under current national and local planning policy. I also share your concern that the provision of education infrastructure should not be used to justify inappropriate development, particularly on Green Belt land. I will continue to advocate for a fair and robust planning process, and to challenge any attempt to use financial contributions as a means of circumventing proper constraints.

More broadly, I have already raised concerns with the Secretary of State about how planning reforms and “viability” arguments can be used to reduce or remove infrastructure commitments after permission has been granted. This case illustrates those risks very clearly, and I will continue to pursue this issue at a national level.

Thank you again for taking the time to write and for the constructive and detailed way in which you have set out your concerns.

I was disappointed to not have the chance to sit down with you to discuss this a few weeks back and would still be happy to do so.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Zoe Franklin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'Z'.

**Zoe Franklin MP**  
**Member of Parliament for Guildford**