

Effingham Parish Council



EFFINGHAM

Press Release 21 March 2018

Immediate Release

Howard of Effingham Appeal Decision

Effingham Parish Councillors are devastated by the decision of the Secretary of State to allow the appeal by Berkeley Homes/Howard of Effingham School to give permission to build up to 295 residential dwellings as enabling development to fund the building of a replacement secondary school in Effingham.

Only a month ago, after five years of intensive studies and consultations with local residents, the residents voted by 93.5% in the referendum to approve the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan. The plan made provision for locally needed housing development in areas that would minimise impact on our rural village and more importantly minimise impact on the green belt wherein we reside.

The replacement school and up to 258 new dwellings will be built on green belt land, destroying a wildlife corridor and resulting in urban sprawl by joining the villages of Effingham and Little Bookham. No longer shall we claim to be the first village with a clear separation of green fields between the village of Effingham and surrounding villages as you travel out from London. A further 37 houses are to be built on land that the Neighbourhood Plan designates as Local Green Space. The development will lead to a 30% increase in the size of this rural village, eating into the green belt.

This decision by the Secretary of State brings into question the fundamental basis for the Localism Act – putting local decisions in local hands! Do Neighbourhood Plans actually carry any weight in upholding the wishes of local residents?

In the coming weeks, Effingham Parish Council will take advice from our own barrister and consult with Guildford Borough Council. If there is sufficient legal basis for challenging this decision, we shall pursue it if we possibly can.

Arnold Pindar
Chairman
Effingham Parish Council

Notes for Editors:

Effingham Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum version) is available at:
www.effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/