



Effingham Parish Council

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF
LIZ HOGGER BSc BA MSc DIC ARCS**

In respect of

**APPEAL BY BERKELEY HOMES (SOUTHERN) LTD AND
THE HOWARD TRUST PARTNERSHIP**

**SITE AT LOWER ROAD AND BROWNS FIELD, BROWNS LANE,
EFFINGHAM, SURREY, KT24 5JR**

Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/Y3615/W/16/3151098

Local Authority Ref: 14/P/02109

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Effingham Parish Council

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QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

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Known as LIZ HOGGER

I graduated with a BSc in Physics from Imperial College London and a BA in mathematics and history from the Open University, and later completed an MSc in Foundations of Advanced Information Technology also at Imperial College London. I am now retired, following a career as a research scientist and university lecturer in computer science.

I have lived in Effingham since 1979, and my two sons attended the Howard of Effingham School during the period from 1992 to 2000.

I have been a member of Effingham Parish Council since 1995, and I am currently a member of the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group, set up to advise Effingham Parish Council on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

I have been the Guildford Borough Councillor for Effingham since 1999, and during all that time I have been a member of the Borough Council's Planning Committee. However at this Inquiry I am giving evidence as a Parish Councillor and I am not speaking on behalf of the Borough Council.

I am a Parish-Council-appointed Managing Trustee of the Effingham Village Recreation Trust (EVRT), which owns and manages the King George V Hall and Fields adjoining the Howard School.

I am very familiar with all the sites in the appeal proposal, and have been on site at the Howard School on many occasions, as a parent, in my role as councillor, and on the Planning Committee site visit in February 2016.

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 1.1 This appeal relates to an appeal against Guildford Borough Council's refusal of planning permission (ref 14/P/02109) for:

Hybrid planning application for outline permission (only access to be considered) for the erection of a replacement secondary school for Howard of Effingham and up to 258 residential dwellings with means of access at Howard of Effingham School and Lodge Farm, Lower Road following demolition of all existing buildings; and full permission for the erection of 37 dwellings, with access, parking and landscaping works on land at Brown's Field, Brown's Lane, Effingham.

Guildford Borough Council is hereafter referred to as 'GBC'.

- 1.2 Effingham Parish Council (EPC) objected to the planning application 14/P/02109 on the basis of the 2003 Guildford Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Effingham was designated as a Neighbourhood Planning Area in April 2014 and the draft Neighbourhood Plan was subject to a Regulation 14 consultation from 23 May 2016 to 18 July 2016 and submitted to GBC on 3 March 2017. GBC are carrying out a Regulation 16 consultation on the Submission Neighbourhood Plan from 20 March to 30 April 2017. The Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan now carries modest weight in planning decisions, and its policies are therefore cited here in support of the case for refusal.
- 1.3 This proof presents evidence in support of reason 1 in GBC's reasons for refusal of the application, which stated:

1. *The proposed development represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt and is harmful by this definition. In addition the level of development proposed would have a clear and substantially detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt and conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Very special circumstances to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt (and any other harm) have not been demonstrated.*

This proof presents evidence about:

- the harm to the Green Belt
- the conflict with spatial development policies of the Proposed Submission Local Plan and Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan
- the claimed very special circumstances relating to School Playing Field Provision
- the claimed very special circumstances relating to housing land supply and housing for local need

- 1.4 This proof also presents planning policy evidence in support of reason 3 in GBC's reasons for refusal of the application, which stated

3. *The application site is located in close proximity to the Thornet Wood site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and ancient woodland; the Environmental Statement and planning application submission does not assess the potential effects on the SNCI from either potential recreational access or the effects of urbanisation; no mitigation measures are identified to protect the SNCI/ancient woodland or surveying the existing flora and fauna; the local planning authority cannot therefore be satisfied that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the SNCI.*

This proof demonstrates that the appeal proposals would be contrary to Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan policy ENP-ENV2 on wildlife corridors, and would thus have a detrimental impact on the flora and fauna of Thornet Wood SSCI.

1.5 The overall appeal site comprises three separate land parcels:

Site 1 The existing Howard of Effingham School site, Lower Road: an outline application for up to 99 dwellings

Site 2 Browns Field, Browns Lane: a full application for 37 dwellings

Site 3 Effingham Lodge Farm: an outline application for up to 159 dwellings together with a new school building, car parking and playing fields.

1.6 Section 4 'Summary and conclusions' serves as my Summary Proof of Evidence.

2. PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The following planning policy and related documents are relevant to this proof.

a) Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (as saved by CLG Direction on 24 September 2007)

The relevant policies are:

- RE1** EXTENT OF THE GREEN BELT
- RE2** DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT
- RE3** IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS IN THE GREEN BELT

b) Guildford Borough Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017 (PSLP)

Under the Proposed Submission Local Plan (PSLP), Effingham village is proposed to be inset from the Green Belt as shown on the Proposals map for Effingham. Sites 1 and 2 would be within the inset boundary of the village, and Site 3 would remain in the Green Belt outside the inset boundary.

The policies in the Proposed Submission Local Plan which are relevant to this proof are:

- S2** BOROUGH WIDE STRATEGY
- H1** HOMES FOR ALL
- P2** GREEN BELT

An evidence base document particularly relevant to this proof:

Guildford Green Belt and Countryside Study, 2013 – 2015, Appendix 1, 'Green Belt Purposes Schedule', of the Volume II Addendum, published in April 2014.

c) Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan (SENP)

The relevant policies in the Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan (SENP) are:

- ENP-G1** A Spatial Plan for Effingham
- ENP-G5** Assessing Suitability of Sites for Residential Development
- ENP-H1** New Homes in Effingham
- ENP-H2** Mix of Housing
- ENP-ENV1** Local Green Spaces
- ENP-ENV2** Wildlife Corridors and Stepping Stones
- ENP-SA3** Previously-developed land at Effingham Lodge Farm

The Neighbourhood Plan received significant support from the Effingham community during the Regulation 14 consultation stage. 574 households responded to the parish-wide consultation survey representing a participation rate of 54% of all Effingham households. All policies within the plan were highly supported. Those most relevant to this appeal and the corresponding level of support are listed below:

- 80% supported the spatial development policy G1
- 93% supported policy G2 to sustain the open character and heritage of the village.
- 73% supported the proposed housing target H1 for Effingham.

- 78% supported the proposed mix of new homes H2 favouring smaller and more affordable units.
- 95% supported the Local Green Spaces designated in ENV1
- 96% supported the proposed wildlife corridors in ENV2 linking SSSIs via stepping stones including Thornet Wood
- Over 60% of respondents supported the sites allocated for housing development, with 66% supporting the site allocation policy SA3 for Effingham Lodge Farm.

d) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The most relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are set out below.

From *Chapter 6. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes:*

50. *To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:*

- *plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);*
- *identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand; and*
- *where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified (for example to improve or make more effective use of the existing housing stock) and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. Such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time.*

From *Chapter 9. Protecting Green Belt land:*

79. *The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.*

80. *Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

81. *Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.*

89. *A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

- *buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- *provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- *the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- *the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- *limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or*
- *limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.*

From Chapter 11. *Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment:*

109. *The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- *preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and*
- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

114. *Local planning authorities should:*

- *set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; and*
- *maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.*

117. *To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:*

- *plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;*
- *identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation;*
- *promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;*
- *aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests; and*
- *where Nature Improvement Areas are identified in Local Plans, consider specifying the types of development that may be appropriate in these Areas.*

3. AMPLIFICATION OF CASE

Harm to the Green Belt

- 3.1 All three of the appeal sites lie within the Metropolitan Green Belt under the 2003 Guildford Local Plan policy RE1, and outside the identified settlement area of Effingham village as in policy RE3.
- 3.2 It is Common Ground that the proposals constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt under Local Plan policy RE2 and NPPF paragraph 89. However the degree of impact and the extent of harm to the openness of the Green Belt from the proposals should be further considered when weighing the appellants' claimed benefits of the scheme against the harm to the Green Belt.
- 3.3 Both Site 1 (the existing Howard School site) and Site 3 (Effingham Lodge Farm) contain a limited amount of previously developed land which would allow the possibility of some development under para 89 of the NPPF; however in neither case could this justify the amount of development in this proposal. There is no existing development on Site 2 (Browns Field).
- 3.4 On Site 1, the existing school buildings are grouped over the western half of the site, and the eastern part is largely undeveloped green space. The amount of development proposed on Site 1, 99 dwellings stretching across the whole site including the undeveloped eastern part, would have a significantly greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing school buildings.
- 3.5 Site 2, is completely undeveloped apart from the small 'apple store' building on the western boundary. The proposals for 37 dwellings here would have a very significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 3.6 On Site 3, it is Common Ground that there is a limited amount of previously developed land in the south-west of the site, with some permanent buildings and hard-standing. However the existing glasshouses are temporary buildings and are not included in the previously developed land, as was made clear in the informative attached to the planning consent in 2000 for continuation of B1 use of three permanent buildings (GBC planning application 00/P/00022, Appendix 4 of the Effingham Parish Council Statement of Case). The amount of built development proposed on site 3 on the indicative plans would fill the whole width of the site along Lower Road and includes 159 dwellings together with a massive three storey school development made up of seven large buildings. This amount of development would have a very significantly greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and on the purposes of including land within it than the few existing permanent buildings.
- 3.7 The 'Green Belt and Countryside Study' (CD 4.9), commissioned by Guildford Borough Council, forms part of the evidence base for the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The defined land parcels in the Study were classified as high, medium or low sensitivity Green Belt, assessed according to the extent to which they clearly serve the purposes of Green Belt set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF. The classifications are included in Appendix 1, 'Green Belt Purposes Schedule', of the Volume II Addendum, published in April 2014. The relevant page of the Study concerning land parcel D10, containing Effingham Lodge Farm, is attached as *Appendix 1* to this Proof.
- 3.8 It is Common Ground that the Study classifies the land parcel D10 as 'high sensitivity' Green Belt. As set out in *Appendix 1*, parcel D10 satisfies four of the five purposes of Green Belt:

- Checks the sprawl from Effingham;
- Prevents the settlements of Effingham and Little Bookham from merging;
- Minimal existing development therefore safeguards the countryside from encroachment;
- Preserves the setting of the Effingham historic village and conservation area

3.9 The views over Effingham Lodge Farm from Lower Road and footpath 119A support the classification of this land as high sensitivity Green Belt. The land provides a clear visual green gap between the settlements of Effingham and Little Bookham, and an open green setting for the Effingham Conservation Area. This Green Belt gap is much valued by local residents in terms of our environment and landscape; it preserves the identity and character of Effingham as a distinct village clearly separated from the built-up area of Bookham.

Conflict with the Proposed Submission Local Plan (PSLP)

- 3.10 Effingham Parish Council and many Effingham residents protested strongly against the allocation of the appeal sites for development in the draft Local Plan that went to Regulation 18 consultation in 2014. In response to the large number of objections from across the borough about allocating Green Belt land for development, Guildford Borough Council made the strategic decision to revise the draft Local Plan to avoid, as far as possible, taking land out of the Green Belt that was classified as 'high sensitivity' in the Green Belt and Countryside Study.
- 3.11 This revision to the draft Local Plan was a proper democratic procedure followed by elected councillors taking account of the consultation responses. The fact that the Green Belt sensitivity analysis was known to the Borough Council before the consultation is irrelevant to the right and indeed the responsibility of elected councillors to change the site allocation strategy in response to that consultation.
- 3.12 The resultant Proposed Submission Local Plan (PSLP) now allocates sufficient land to meet both the objectively assessed housing need of the borough and the need for additional secondary school places arising from residential development in the east of the borough. Therefore there is no requirement for Site 3 to be removed from the Green Belt, in breach of the revised strategy to protect 'high sensitivity' Green Belt, in order to provide housing and an expanded school.
- 3.13 In line with this revised site allocation strategy, Site 3 remained in the Green Belt in the PSLP that went to Regulation 19 consultation in 2016. This is unchanged in the revised PSLP which will go out to a targeted Regulation 19 consultation in summer 2017 (subject to Council approval on 16 May 2017). This clearly reflects the majority of opinion from Effingham residents as demonstrated by the representations to the Regulation 18 consultation. The appeal proposal for Site 3 would therefore be contrary to policy P2 of the PSLP.

Conflict with the Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan (SENP)

- 3.14 Policy ENP-G1 of the Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan (SENP) steers development in the parish to be within the village settlement, on the allocated sites for residential development and on land assessed as suitable for residential development using policy ENP-G5. Policy ENP-G1 received the support of 80% of the residents who responded to the Regulation 14 Consultation Survey on the Neighbourhood Plan, and therefore has the strong support of the Effingham community.
- 3.15 The SENP followed a rigorous site selection process for allocating residential sites. Green Belt criteria for selection included:

- The site is currently in Green Belt but potentially satisfies the exceptions in NPPF paragraph 89: either it can be regarded as limited infilling within the village as a matter of fact on the ground and the site is substantially surrounded by development, or the site is previously developed land and is within or close to the settlement area defined in the 2003 Guildford Local Plan.
- Development of the site can be designed so as not to impact upon the open character of the village, as valued by residents and contributing to the permanence and openness of the Green Belt.
- Whether the site is 'High Sensitivity' Green Belt as defined in the GBC 'Green Belt and Countryside Study' and whether or not it is within the Inset Boundary of the 2016 Emerging Local Plan.
- The site is not currently a viable employment or community asset within Effingham, and is not proposed to be designated as a Local Green Space.

Using these criteria, none of the appeal sites are allocated in the SENP for residential development, except for a small area of Site 3.

- 3.16 Site 1 (Howard of Effingham School) is not allocated for residential development in the SENP, however policy ENP-C6 supports new developments, refurbishments or extensions to improve the educational facilities at the school. This could be done under the provisions of NPPF paragraph 89 relating to extensions of buildings and to previously developed land. All of Site 1 is proposed to be inset from the Green Belt in the PSLP, giving more scope for school redevelopment and extension, and the Parish Council did not object to this in the 2016 Regulation 19 consultation.
- 3.17 Site 2 (Browns Field) is designated a Local Green Space under policy ENP-ENV1, adding to its Green Belt protection. This land serves the purposes of Green Belt by preserving the setting of the historic part of the village as well as checking sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The Parish Council objected to the proposal to inset this land from the Green Belt during the Regulation 19 consultation on the PSLP.
- 3.18 Site 3 (Effingham Lodge Farm) is allocated by policy ENP-SA3 for up to six residential units on the 'Allocated Site', a small 1.21 hectare area of land fronting onto Lower Road. Allowing limited development on the Allocated Site whilst clearing the permanent buildings, hard-standing and redundant temporary structures on the remainder of Effingham Lodge Farm would represent a significant net improvement in the openness of the Green Belt and so would be compliant with NPPF paragraph 89.
- 3.19 Policy ENP-SA3 requires the remainder of Effingham Lodge Farm outside the Allocated Site to be retained as agricultural land or natural grassland with public access, so supporting the wildlife corridor across the eastern section of Effingham Lodge Farm as designated in ENP-ENV2. This would be positive planning to enhance the beneficial use of this Green Belt land in line with NPPF paragraph 81, by improving derelict land, and retaining and enhancing landscape, visual amenity and biodiversity.
- 3.20 Policy ENP-ENV2 identifies: *"woodland and grassland, both wildlife corridors and stepping stones, of suitable habitat for plants and animals to support movements of wild flora and fauna between designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Ranmore Common, Shepleas and Bookham Commons, as well as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) at Great Ridings Wood, Thornet Wood and Effingham Golf Course. Wildlife corridors*

are designated to be 100 metres wide, and are made up of an unimpeded open green corridor which may include hedgerows as well as open land, grassland and woodland.”

3.21 The eastern woodland wildlife corridor is defined in ENP-ENV2 as follows:

Eastern corridor: Thornet Wood and land to the north, agricultural land on eastern part of Effingham Lodge Farm and the footpath and hedges along its eastern boundary, the eastern part of the Howard of Effingham playing field and its hedge along Lower Road (which connects to the corridor in Bookham comprising fields east of Manor House Lane, Rolls Farm and hedges, through to Chalk Pit Lane).

3.22 This eastern corridor is identified on the maps in Figures 7, 9 and 9A of the SENP (pages 59, 62 and 63) which show clearly that this corridor depends on a significant section of the eastern part of Effingham Lodge Farm on Site 3, along with the north-eastern corner of Site 2. It enables species to move between Ranmore Common and the Bookham Commons via the stepping stone of Thornet Wood. There is limited opportunity for wildlife to move north-south on the eastern side of Effingham parish due to the barriers already in place, including the residential properties along Lower Road and Water Lane, immediately to the east of the parish boundary. Hence the policy aims to keep open what remains including the narrow gap that crosses Lower Road, retention of which is important to the corridor. Although the southern extension of this corridor is not within the Effingham boundary, it passes through Green Belt farmland and playing fields in Mole Valley District where any proposed development would have to take account of NPPF paragraphs 109, 114 and 117.

3.23 Policy ENP-ENV2 received support from both Natural England and Surrey Wildlife Trust in their representations in response to the Regulation 14 consultation on the draft Effingham Neighbourhood Plan, which are given in Appendix 2. Surrey Wildlife Trust stated: *“EN 2: Wildlife Corridors and Stepping Stones. We welcome and support this innovative and precedential approach to the identification of wildlife corridors for purposes of protection in the planning system.”*

3.24 The appeal proposals are therefore clearly contrary to ENP-ENV2 and to NPPF paragraphs 109, 114 and 117. The proposals for Site 3 include a large school building and significant hard-standing including a car parks on the eastern section of Effingham Lodge Farm, which would destroy this section of the wildlife corridor, impeding the movement of wildlife to and from Thornet Wood between the SSSIs of Ranmore Common and the Bookham Commons. Further, the housing proposed for Site 1 would block the wildlife corridor across the north-eastern section of that site.

Claimed very special circumstances relating to School Playing Field Provision

3.25 The appellant’s ‘Educational Needs Statement’ (para 5.18) claims that the Howard School has only approximately 40% of the playing field space required to meet current standards, and that Browns Field is too distant from the school to be easily usable. However this does not take into account the extensive playing field space, amounting to 11.7 ha, available to the School at the immediately adjoining King George V Playing Fields (KGV Fields).

3.26 The KGV Fields are run by a long-established charity, now named ‘Effingham Village Recreation Trust’(EVRT), with charity registration number 305018, and the object of the charity is to provide facilities for recreation for inhabitants of Effingham and its immediate neighbourhood. Effingham Parish Council is the Custodian Trustee for the charity. Under a licence agreement with EVRT, the Howard School has the exclusive use, during school hours, of sports facilities at the KGV Fields which include 2 grass football pitches, 4 grass rugby

pitches, a cricket square, and a grass athletics track in summer. Use of these facilities outside school hours (evenings and weekends) is normally possible by arrangement in advance with the KGV manager. EVRT bears the costs of maintaining these facilities to the required school standard, and the Howard School pays to EVRT a licence fee which covers these costs.

- 3.27 The Howard of Effingham School can be especially confident of the continuing availability of the KGV Fields due to its long-established good relationship with the charity. The School, then named the 'Central School', was a close partner in setting up the KGV Fields charity in 1951. (The first formal agreement with the Education Authority for use of the fields ran from 1 October 1956, for £10 per year.) The School has had full use of these facilities since then, for over 60 years, with a licence agreement with the charity which transferred from Surrey County Council to the Howard School when it became an Academy. The EVRT charity and Effingham Parish Council considers that this arrangement is of mutual benefit to the Howard School and to the parish of Effingham, and anticipates its continuation into the future.
- 3.28 The availability of the KGV Fields means that the Howard School is well-provided with playing field space above the recommended standards, even without Browns Field. If an artificial grass pitch is required, there is space within the existing Howard School grounds; indeed some years ago the Howard School was given planning permission by Surrey County Council for a surfaced multi-use games area on the existing site, which was not implemented (GBC planning application 07/P/01311).
- 3.29 In summary, the Howard School already has access to ample playing field provision meeting the current standards for a school of this size.

Claimed very special circumstances relating to Housing Land Supply and Housing for Local Needs

- 3.30 There is no justification for a special circumstances argument for the proposal based on housing land supply. The Proposed Submission Local Plan (PSLP) expected to go to targeted Regulation 19 consultation in summer 2017 makes adequate provision in policy S2 for a five-year land supply for housing in the Borough, based on the Addendum to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) published in April 2017. The Addendum revised the objectively assessed housing need figure for Guildford, originally put forward in the 2015 SHMA, to take account of Brexit and revised demographic projections. The revised housing target is part of the spatial development strategy set out in policy S2 of the PSLP.
- 3.31 Details of all the sites that are expected to be delivered during the Local Plan period are set out in the Borough Council's latest Land Availability Assessment (LAA, *CD 4.10*). The PSLP assumes the provision of housing on three sites in Effingham which are identified in the LAA: land at Church Street (site reference 99), 'Orchard Walls, Beech Avenue' (site reference 1038) and 'The Barn, The Street' (site reference 1040), all of which would be within the proposed inset boundary. These three sites would accommodate 43 new dwellings.
- 3.32 The Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan (SENP) supports the provision of residential development on all these three sites (policies ENP-SA1, ENP-SA2 and ENP-SA4) and in fact sets a local target for Effingham of a minimum of 52 homes (policy ENP-H1), higher than the figure expected in the PSLP. The supporting text for ENP-H1 explains how the target of 52 new homes is expected to be delivered through site allocations, commitments on sites with extant planning permission, and windfall sites to be assessed under policy ENP-G5.
- 3.33 Thus the PSLP does not require or assume the provision of more than 43 new dwellings in Effingham in order to provide a five-year housing land supply, and the SENP proposes to

deliver a minimum of 52 new dwellings. Therefore there is no need for the development of 295 new homes as in this proposal, a 28% increase in the number of households in the parish, in order to provide a five year land supply for the Borough.

- 3.34 The strategy for allocation of housing sites is set out in paragraphs 4.1.6 and 4.1.8 of the PSLP. Sustainable locations within the town centre and urban areas, within inset villages and within identified Green Belt villages are preferred, and the three sites in Effingham identified in the LAA are within the proposed inset area of Effingham.
- 3.35 To meet the amount of housing development needed, the PSLP releases further land as set out in 4.1.8, including development around villages guided by Guildford Borough's 'Settlement Hierarchy' (CD 4.20). Effingham has a sustainability ranking of 7 and is classified as a large village within the Settlement Hierarchy, i.e. it is unsuitable for substantial growth but capable of accommodating a proportionate extension. The appeal proposal would result in an increase of at least 28% in the number of households in Effingham (295 new homes compared with 1054 households in the existing parish). This disproportionate increase would therefore be clearly contrary to the strategy for housing allocation used in the PSLP.
- 3.36 Analysis of results from the Housing Requirements Survey carried out by EPC indicates a requirement for 52 smaller homes to meet the needs of local people, and this target is incorporated in SENP policy ENP-H1. The 2011 census return and analysis of the Housing Requirements Survey demonstrate there is a shortage and a need for smaller one and two bedroom homes in Effingham, to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create a sustainable, inclusive and mixed community. SENP policy ENP-H2 therefore requires market housing developments to include at least 20% one bedroom homes, and at least 60% two-bedroom homes.
- 3.37 The proposal for Browns Field (site 2) includes 2 one-bedroom homes, 9 two-bedroom homes, 16 three bedroom homes and 10 homes with four bedrooms or more, ie just 5.4% have one bedroom, and 24.3% have two bedrooms, whereas 43% have three bedrooms and 27% have four or more bedrooms. This mix of sizes is totally inconsistent with the requirement for smaller market homes set out in SENP policy ENP-H2, and is also inconsistent with the mix of housing required across the borough, as set out in PSLP policy H1, paragraph 4.2.3.
- 3.38 In summary, there is no justification for a very special circumstances case for the appeal proposals based on either housing land supply or local housing need. The Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan already makes adequate provision for more housing than is expected under the Proposed Submission Local Plan, and the appeal proposals for 295 extra dwellings are clearly contrary to the spatial development strategy for the borough set out in policy S2 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The proposed housing mix for the appeal proposals does not meet the local housing need within Effingham as set out in policy ENP-H2 of the Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The appeal proposals would create substantial and irreversible harm to the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it as defined both by the 2003 Guildford Local Plan and by the Proposed Submission Local Plan.
- 4.2 The amount of built development proposed on site 3, Effingham Lodge Farm, would fill the whole width of the site along Lower Road and includes 159 dwellings together with a massive three storey school development made up of seven large buildings. This amount of development would have a very significantly greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and on the purposes of including land within it than the few existing permanent buildings. It would also completely destroy the Green Belt gap between the villages of Effingham and Little Bookham.
- 4.3 At present the eastern part of Effingham Lodge Farm provides a clear visual green gap between the two villages, and an open green setting for the Effingham Conservation Area. Effingham residents feel strongly that this Green Belt gap is essential to protect our environment and landscape; it preserves the identity and character of Effingham as a distinct village clearly separated from the built-up area of Bookham.
- 4.4 The housing development proposed for site 1, the existing Howard of Effingham School, would result in continuous built development on the south side of Lower Road between the existing Effingham village and the Bookham boundary. Together with the proposals for site 3 on the north side of Lower Road, this would result in continuous urban sprawl connecting Bookham through to Effingham.
- 4.5 Effingham Lodge Farm is classified as 'high sensitivity Green Belt' in the Guildford Green Belt and Countryside Study, as in Appendix 1 of this proof. The appeal proposals for this site would be clearly contrary to Guildford's Proposed Submission Local Plan which avoids allocating 'high sensitivity' Green Belt land for development.
- 4.6 The appeal proposals would completely undermine the Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan policies ENP-G1 'A Spatial Plan for Effingham', ENP-G5 'Assessing Suitability of Sites for Residential Development', ENP-ENV1 'Local Green Spaces' and site allocation ENP-SA3 'Previously developed land at Effingham Lodge Farm'.
- 4.7 The massive new school building and car park proposed for the eastern part of Effingham Lodge Farm, together with the housing proposed on the existing Howard School playing field, would destroy the eastern wildlife corridor designated in the Neighbourhood Plan policy ENP-ENV2, impeding the movement of wildlife to and from Thornet Wood between the SSSIs of Ranmore Common and Bookham Commons.
- 4.8 As set out in this proof, there is no case for very special circumstances for development in the Green Belt due to inadequate provision of playing fields for the Howard School, since the school already has access to ample playing field provision at the adjoining King George V Fields, meeting the current standards for a school of this size.
- 4.9 There is no justification for a very special circumstances case for the appeal proposals based on either housing land supply or local housing need. The Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan policy ENP-H1 already makes adequate provision for more housing than is expected under the Proposed Submission Local Plan, and the proposed housing mix

for the appeal proposals does not meet the local housing need within Effingham as set out in policy ENP-H2 of the Submission Effingham Neighbourhood Plan.

4.10 I have provided evidence that the housing development proposed would constitute disproportionate growth beyond the sustainability constraints of Effingham village, and that the inclusion of a high percentage of three and four bedroom homes in the appeal proposal would fail to meet local housing needs.

4.11 In conclusion:

- The proposals would cause substantial harm to the openness of land serving the purposes of Green Belt, and would destroy the Green Belt gap which preserves the identity and character of Effingham as a distinct village clearly separated from the built-up area of Bookham.
- The proposals would damage biodiversity by destroying the wildlife corridor to Thornet Wood.
- The harm to the Green Belt from the proposals would not be outweighed by special circumstances arguments about inadequate playing field provision for the Howard School or the supply of land for housing across the borough.
- The amount of housing proposed would be disproportionate and contrary to the sustainability ranking of Effingham within the Settlement Hierarchy.
- The housing proposed would not meet the housing needs of the local community.

APPENDIX 1

Green Belt and Countryside Study, Appendix 1, 'Green Belt Purposes Schedule', of the Volume II Addendum, published in April 2014. Land parcel D10 includes Effingham Lodge Farm.

Land Parcel	Purpose 1 To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Purpose 2 To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Purpose 3 To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Number of Purposes Met	Green Belt Sensitivity
D4	Does not check the sprawl of large built up areas.	Prevents the settlements of East Clandon and West Horsley from merging.	Minimal existing development therefore safeguards the countryside from encroachment.	Preserves the setting of the East Clandon historic village and conservation area and preserves the setting of Hatchlands registered park and gardens.	3	High Sensitivity
D5	Checks the westward sprawl from West Horsley.	Prevents the settlements of East Clandon and West Horsley from merging.	Minimal existing development therefore safeguards the countryside from encroachment.	Preserves the setting of West orsley historic village and conservation area and preserves the setting of Hatchlands registered park and gardens.	4	High Sensitivity
D6	Checks the sprawl from East Horsley and West Horsley.	Prevents the settlements of West Horsley and East Horsley from merging.	Does not assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Preserves the setting of the East and West Horsley historic villages and conservation areas.	3	High Sensitivity
D7	Checks the eastward sprawl from East Horsley.	Prevents the settlements of East Horsley and Effingham from merging.	Does not assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Preserves the setting of the East Horsley historic village and conservation area.	3	High Sensitivity
D8	Checks westward sprawl from Effingham	Does not prevent neighbouring settlements from merging.	Does not assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Preserves the setting of the East Horsley historic village and conservation area.	2	Medium Sensitivity
D9	Checks the sprawl from Effingham and East Horsley.	Prevents the settlements of East Horsley and Effingham from merging.	Minimal existing development therefore safeguards the countryside from encroachment.	Preserves the setting of the Effingham historic village and conservation area and preserves the setting of a scheduled monument at the medieval moated site and fishpond at Greatlee Wood.	4	High Sensitivity
D10	Checks the sprawl from Effingham.	Prevents the settlements of Effingham and Little Bookham from merging.	Minimal existing development therefore safeguards the countryside from encroachment.	Preserves the setting of the Effingham historic village and conservation area.	4	High Sensitivity
D11	Checks the westward sprawl from Little Bookham.	Prevents the settlements at Little Bookham and Effingham from merging.	Minimal existing development therefore safeguards the countryside from encroachment.	Does not preserve the setting and special character of an historic town.	3	High Sensitivity
D12	Does not check the sprawl of large built up areas.	Does not prevent neighbouring settlements from merging.	Does not assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	Does not preserve the setting and special character of an historic town.	0	Low Sensitivity
D13	Does not check the sprawl of large built up areas.	Prevents the settlements of Little Bookham and Effingham Junction from merging.	Minimal existing development therefore safeguards the countryside from encroachment.	Does not preserve the setting and special character of an historic town.	2	Medium Sensitivity

APPENDIX 2

Responses from Natural England and Surrey Wildlife Trust to Regulation 14 consultation on the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan.

Date: 02 June 2016
Our ref: 186969
Your ref: Effingham Neighbourhood Development Plan



The Neighbourhood Plan Team
Effingham Parish Council

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

BY EMAIL ONLY

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Effingham Parish Council

Publication of the Effingham Neighbourhood Development Plan – Draft For Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 30/05/2016.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England only have one minor comment, other than that we are supportive of the produced document.

Policy EN2 – please can you remove the reference to Natural England from the policy itself regarding widths of green corridors

We are more than happy to see reference in the supporting text of the policy as you already have it, and we agree it reflects the conversation from earlier in the year. This policy is your policy, so we don't think it is necessary to reference us within it. We are very rarely referenced in policies as a whole, only normally when it comes to Thames Basin Heaths and SANG agreement.

For clarification of any points in this letter, please contact Marc Turner on 02080267686. For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Marc Turner
Senior Planning Adviser

Thames Valley Area Team

Email from Surrey Wildlife Trust

From: Mike Waite <Mike.Waite@surreywt.org.uk>

Date: Fri, 8 Jul 2016 11:05:02 +0100

To: Jon Short <clerk2010@effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk>

Cc: Sarah Jane Chimbwandira <SarahJane@surreywt.org.uk>, Dan Knowles <Dan.Knowles@guildford.gov.uk>

Subject: Effingham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation

To the Parish Clerk, Effingham Parish Council:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on your emerging Neighbourhood Plan. These comments may be viewed as both those of Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) and the Surrey Nature Partnership. We (SWT) communicated our early desire to work with you on your Neighbourhood Plan in a letter to Guildford Borough Council, dated 19/02/2013 (attached). We have corresponded with your Neighbourhood Plan team more recently on developing policy for Wildlife Corridors.

We have some comments on the earlier sections, but will mainly comment on Chapter 6c. Environmental Policies, and specifically on policies EN1-2 & EN4. Suggested insertions and corrections are indicated in red font.

1. There are a number of places within the plan where 'Sheepleas' has been misspelled as 'Sheapleas' (inc. Fig. 2 , p.9).
2. p.10, para.2; ..serving as an alternative **recreational open space** to the **unit of the Thames Basin Heaths** Special Protection Area (SPA) of Ockham and Wisley Commons to the north of the parish (and see similar mis-reference on p.16). And later.. **skylarks** (ie. one word).
3. Fig.2 & Fig.3; these maps usefully locate relevant SNCI, but with no adjacent reference to this acronym/designation (the first mention is on p.15, section 3c.).
4. We welcome and support Specific Objective 5b., bullet 5 (p.18).
5. We welcome policy G4 Flooding, with its requirement for SuDS. Perhaps mention might be added here to the parish presence within the catchment of the River Mole (in contrast with the rest of Guildford borough within the River Wey catchment).

6. p.40, A (or perhaps better at C.) Great Ridings Wood – reference could be made to the section of Great Ridings Wood being SNCI, primarily for its botanical and ornithological interest. Part of the wood is owned/leased by the Woodland Trust, we believe. We especially welcome your proposed application of the new LGS designation on Effingham and Banks Commons, given their biodiversity interest and in the absence of an adopted SNCI designation.

7. EN 2: Wildlife Corridors and Stepping Stones. We welcome and support this innovative and precedential approach to the identification of wildlife corridors for purposes of protection in the planning system. We do have some suggestions for enhancing the clarity of the policy however, as follows;

The Plan identifies woodland and grassland both wildlife corridors and stepping stones of suitable habitat for plant and animal to support movements of wild flora and fauna [or plants and animals] between designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Ranmore Common, Shepleas and Bookham Commons, as well as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) at Great Ridings Wood, Thornet Wood and Effingham Common Golf Course. Wildlife corridors should aspire to be a minimum 100 metres wide, as advised by Natural England, and made up of an unimpeded, open green corridor which may include hedgerows as well as open land grassland and woodland.

..Harm is likely to be caused by the introduction or enlargement of barriers such as buildings, roads, hard landscaping and artificial lighting, and by the re-direction of water sources or water courses, that would effect the severance or narrowing of wildlife corridors.

1. Shepleas = Shepleas

..wildlife stepping stones, which are patches of habitat..

2. Important Woodland stepping stones are:

Oldlands Wood, Horseclose Copse (Ancient Woodland), Kiln Field Coppice (Ancient Woodland), Hermitage Plantation, Greatlee Wood, Great Ridings Wood, Effingham Common, Bank's Common, including Bank's Lane, Thornet Wood (Ancient Woodland).

3. Grassland stepping stones are:

Effingham Golf Course (a Site of Nature Conservation Importance), Effingham Common (SANG) and Banks Common, supported by grassland corridors that include grass verges are identified as particularly important to the movement of grassland-dependent wildlife.

Justification. Roads, railway tracks...

Effingham sits within a wildlife triangle with an where SSSI occupy each apex (Ranmore Common, Sheepleas and Bookham Commons), making wildlife movement across the parish a particularly important issue for biodiversity conservation. Large parts of Effingham also fall within two Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, Thames Basin Lowlands BOA TBL02 and North Downs BOA ND02; where the maintenance and enhancement of connectivity for wildlife movement both within and between BOAs, through the protection, restoration and creation of priority habitats is a primary aim.

..This is particularly relevant to the Effingham Neighbourhood Plan..

Wildlife corridors and stepping stones of suitable habitat in the parish help sustain and preserve wildlife in the recognised biodiversity 'hotspots' (SSSI and SNCI), by enabling species to move between and occupy colonise new areas when their populations expand or food sources or other natural resources are lacking in their core habitats can no longer support them, and to enable animals to find new mates in neighbouring regions so that further genetic interchange diversity can increase and have a positive impact on the overall population.

Much of England's biodiversity is now restricted to the remaining protected wildlife sites, which consist largely of semi-natural habitats, where less-mobile species are increasingly vulnerable to chance-driven, local extinction. However, surviving in small, isolated sites is difficult for many species, especially in view of future the longer term and given climate change. Wildlife corridors allow exchange of individuals between populations.

This policy recommends a wildlife corridor width of a minimum 100 metres, in recognition of advice from Natural England and specialist international research. The corridor should be 100 metres of open green land, hedgerows or woodland. This width is based on communication and email advice from Natural England to the Effingham NP Steering Group [E 5], and research sponsored by the US Dept. of Agriculture (National Agroforestry Center) which recommends a width of 330 feet (100 metres) for small mammals and birds.

From the suggestions for textual improvements above, it can be seen we

are recommending that SSSI and SNCI should be viewed on relative parity as 'building blocks' in the ecological network, to which the wildlife corridors and stepping stones are then essential in providing connectivity. In justification of this, NPPF para.117 states; "...planning policies should: identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and **locally designated** sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and **stepping stones** that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation [ie. BOA]. This clearly implies 'locally designated sites' (ie. SNCI) should not in themselves be viewed as stepping stones, as they have an elevated importance.

We feel the following section 'Protected Sites' is largely superfluous and potentially confusing. This is partly as the 'light touch' explanation (or misplaced detail) of which the following is an example; ..In 2005 parts of Ockham and Wisley Commons were included in the Special Protection Area (SPA) of the Thames Basin Heaths to protect the Dartford Warbler, Nightjar and Woodlark.. just provide grounds for additional confusion on behalf of the reader. The methodology for identifying wildlife corridors across Effingham parish is well-researched, reasoned and otherwise sound, but probably should be saved from appearing in the core of the Plan.

Fig.7. Sheapleas = Sheepleas. If our recommendation above is taken up, ie. to equate the importance of SSSI and SNCI as building blocks (ie. not demoting SNCI to stepping stones), then Figures 7-10 may require some adjustments. Some of the differentiating colours for the various types of stepping stones appear more-or-less identical.

p.45. This explanatory information on the identified wildlife corridors is very helpful, especially to assist interpretation of the Figures 7-10 (but see also the need for some correction here should our recommendation be taken up on the elevated role of SNCI).

8. EN4. Dark Skies, p.51. ..it can cause health problems and **can also impact the normal behaviour** of wildlife.

9. R1 Car Parking, p.58. Mention could be made here to the preference for permeable surfacing for car parks, cross-referenced with Policy G4 Flooding.

10. Schedule of Evidence and Supporting Documents. These might also

include Biodiversity Opportunity Areas: the basis for realising Surrey's ecological network (Surrey Nature Partnership, December 2015), as well as Biodiversity & Planning in Surrey (Surrey Wildlife Trust, May 2014).

11. Glossary (your 11., not 10.) You may need to revisit the definitions of Wildlife Corridor and Wildlife Stepping stone in regard to our comments above. The definition from 'A Living Landscape for Surrey' (SWT 2010) is as follows; "A chain or series of physically connected wildlife habitats/sites, offering a potential conduit for colonisation and dispersal of species populations through an otherwise hostile landscape. Most wildlife corridors will vary considerably in their effectiveness for different species or species groups." I hope these comments are useful, Yours sincerely,

Mike Waite MCIEEM

Living Landscapes Manager (Strategic)

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Chair Biodiversity Working Group

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