

A new home for The Howard: Frequently Asked Questions – February 2021

Following our series of webinar events, we have collated a list of some of the most frequently asked questions whilst providing context for the wider scheme.

Why should I complete the 'Your views' form online?

All comments received are collated in a planning document called the 'Statement of Community Engagement' which forms part of the planning application. This is reviewed by the planning committee and officers involved in the proposals. In addition, it helps Berkeley form the finer details of the masterplan and can help direct where S106 contributions should go.

You can also provide your comments directly to Guildford Borough Council and if you subscribe to the mailing list we will inform you when the application is available for comment.

BACKGROUND

How have we got to this point in the development process?

On 21 March 2018, the Secretary of State approved outline planning for the joint venture between The Howard Partnership Trust (THPT) and Berkeley to build a new home for The Howard funded by enabling residential development on three sites in Effingham.

In reaching his decision, the Secretary of State agreed with the Inspector that the existing school premises are not fit for the purpose of meeting modern educational and social need and that the replacement of the school to facilitate this carries very substantial weight.

So important were the benefits of the application that the Secretary of State determined that they clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, and so very special circumstances exist.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Why are we consulting with the community again?

Berkeley first proposed building a new much needed school in 2014, funded through enabling residential development at a cost of £32m, this assumed a planning consent and start on site in 2015. Now, over 6-years on the costs for delivering the school have risen by circa 35%.

The key challenge now is taking the project forward with increased build costs for the school.

How do we propose to cover the deficit of the school build costs?

Berkeley have taken time and explored many options in bridging the funding gap to deliver the new school. This has included a design review exercise with THPT which has resulted in the sports hall and sixth form centre being combined into one single building. This creates design efficiencies that drive a cost saving whilst not reducing the quality or total area of provision for these two separate uses.

Even with a school build cost saving achieved, there is still a significant funding gap which can only be bridged through the delivery of additional enabling homes on the Lodge Farm site. Importantly this has also given Berkeley the opportunity to review and revise the masterplan, with new proposals that enhance community amenities and provide additional public open space for new and existing residents of Effingham.

Are there no other sources of funding available for the school build?

With the discontinuation in 2010 of the government's 'Building Schools for the Future' initiative there is no other viable alternative to deliver a new home for the Howard. Through the proposed enabling residential development the school will benefit from a multi-million-pound new home.

How many additional homes are needed to cover the costs for the school?

It is proposed a further 110 homes be built to fund the costs of the school, and to avoid increasing the density of the consented housing an additional piece of land north of the Lodge Farm site was acquired by Berkeley in 2020 for additional enabling homes and community space.

What happens if planning permission for additional enabling homes is not approved?

Berkeley are working positively with Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and all stakeholders to secure planning consent for the revised masterplan which will deliver the new school, a fantastic place to live and valuable new community amenities. Only after the GBC Planning Committee decision will Berkeley determine their next steps in relation to delivering the development. However, if the application is not approved, we are likely to stop enabling works on site until a time when additional funding is available.

THE NEW MASTERPLAN

What is different in the new masterplan?

Berkeley strongly believes in adding community value. Not only do they wish to deliver a school with community use of facilities out of hours and contribution to the replacement of the KGV hall, the new proposals allow for a landscape-led approach that will enrich the environment;

- 110 additional tenure-blind enabling homes on 'North Lodge Farm'.
- Existing ancient woodland maintained and managed.
- Increased biodiversity and significant habitat creation.
- Community mixed orchards and growing gardens.
- A landscape green spine linking the residential parcels.
- Woodland glades with natural play areas and species rich woodland flower meadows.
- Lower Road pavilion and community facility.
- Village greens and community open space with views through to Thornet Wood.

Where are the additional enabling homes proposed?

Berkeley are not seeking to increase the density of approved residential areas but to provide a sensitive extension on land north of Lodge Farm.

The land north of Lodge Farm is enclosed by Thornet Wood, Effingham Common Road to the west and the consented development to the south and east. The location of the site allows it to be developed with limited additional harm to the Green Belt beyond that accepted on the Appeal site.

What is the Village Green?

The Village Green is an open space proposed along Lower Road, this will be in addition to the village green approved in the Phase 1 consented Effingham Lodge plans. The retention of this area as an open space was identified by residents and agreed by Councillors during the reserved matters planning application, to ensure that views are retained from Lower Road to Thornet Wood.

What is the Lower Road pavilion and community facility?

As part of the revised masterplan, a further area of open space is proposed on the existing school playing fields just to the east of the existing school site. The design concept could see additional community planting gardens along with a community orchard, leisure facilities and a community pavilion with parking. Our initial proposal is for a bowling green and small clubhouse with parking but we are asking the community to share their ideas on what is the best use for these facilities. The proposed

community pavilion lies within Mole Valley and an application to Mole Valley District Council will be made in due course.

NEW HOMES

How many homes are being built?

The previously consented scheme will see 295 enabling homes built across three sites, the revised new masterplan will include a further 110 enabling homes to the north of the Lodge Farm site.

What will the mix of additional enabling homes be?

A range of quality new homes for everyone, including 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom homes. These homes will be tenure-blind, this means that the homes are purposefully made similar in design to help social integration.

Will you be providing any affordable housing?

The percentage of affordable housing has already been determined for the consented enabling homes. The proportion of affordable homes included in the additional enabling properties will be discussed with GBC through the determination process based on an assessment of the viability of the development.

When will the new homes be built?

There will be a phased approach to delivering the new homes. Work on the current school site will not commence until the school has successfully relocated to its new home on Effingham Lodge Farm.

What will the new homes look like?

The houses being built will be a mix of sizes carefully designed to complement the rural architectural character of the Effingham community. They include the use of traditional robust materials typical of the area to create a unique yet familiar style allowing the new development to sit comfortably within its surroundings.

What proportion of the homes will be accessible?

The consented homes at Lodge Farm will provide eight wheelchair user dwellings and 16 accessible and adaptable dwellings as approved by GBC. The proportion of accessible homes included within the new proposals for additional enabling homes will adhere to GBC policy.

NEW SCHOOL

Why does The Howard need a new school?

The Howard has far out-grown its current site, built in the 1940s for 340 pupils with many 'temporary' buildings added over the past 70 plus years. It is no longer feasible to upgrade the facilities, the layout is inefficient and creates wastage of school funds in maintenance costs. The Howard is already oversubscribed with 1600 students.

Do the new plans mean that the school is smaller?

The school boundary remains as was approved by GBC during the reserved matters application in January 2020 and has **not** reduced in size under the revised masterplan.

In November 2020 as part of the measures to reduce costs, Berkeley submitted an application to combine the sixth form and sports hall into one single building. This does not reduce either facility in any way, it simply creates design efficiencies. This amendment has also allowed Berkeley to reconfigure some of the outdoor learning spaces which have become more relevant in this new pandemic environment.

What are the benefits of the new school?

The Howard will benefit from a multi-million-pound new home that will transform the learning environment for all Howard students and staff.

- New school fit for the 21st Century
- Delivery of the Cullum Centre specialist teaching for 20 autistic children.
- Enhanced landscaping around the school
- Reduction in maintenance costs and energy consumption
- New 26 place nursery
- Helps overcome localised traffic congestion at peak school times
- Careful consideration of community use in design
- Provides flexible and outdoor learning spaces in support of adaptable school management aligned to Covid-19 recovery
- Transform the learning environment for students and staff
- Significantly improve facilities across the curriculum
- Efficiencies in design already made including combining sports hall and sixth form into a single building
- Safer access for students.

When will the new school open?

Berkeley are looking to commence enabling works on Lodge Farm in Spring 2021 to provide a head start on the development. If consent is given in late Summer 2021, they will be in a position to commence construction immediately with a target completion of the new school of September 2023.

How many students will the new school have?

The Howard of Effingham will have 2000 students, it has 1600 today. The Cullum centre will have 20 places for pupils with autism and the nursery will have 26 places.

Will the catchment area for the school change due to the additional enabling housing?

Based on Surrey County Council metrics the increased school size will allow for additional pupils who might move into the new homes. How other developments in the area and PAN calculations are determined going forward is not in the scope of this project.

What is the Cullum Centre?

The new school will provide a specialist centre for up to 20 autistic pupils. This will help to meet the growing demand for SEND places within the area.

What facilities are there for the community on the school site?

THPT already offer their facilities to community users and the public and are excited to be able to offer significantly improved facilities once they move to the new school. THPT hope that the new facilities will act as a community hub at the centre of the development offering varied opportunities for public use. Hiring of sports facilities, internal spaces for adult learning and for other clubs will be set out in a community use agreement.

Facilities available outside of school hours will include music rooms, theatre, sports hall, changing rooms, gym and both all-weather and grass sports pitches.

How is the school minimising its impact on the local environment?

A number of biodiversity improvements have been incorporated into the landscape strategy for the new school, including creation of species rich flower meadow, species rich wet meadow, new waterbodies and extensive hedgerow planting. These newly created habitats will offset the species poor abandoned agricultural land. A 15m buffer zone will be created along the southern boundary of Thornet Wood in line with the latest advice from Natural England.

Is the building sustainable?

The building has been designed to meet the latest energy efficiency standards and reduce energy consumption. It will be constructed in concrete for improved heat storage and have solar PV panels. In 2018 Berkeley became the first carbon positive UK homebuilder and was named sustainable housebuilder of the year in 2019 and 2020

Will the building work disrupt students' learning in the current school?

Students will not be impacted as construction work on the current school site will not take place until the school has relocated. Berkeley has considerable experience in managing large scale builds and working with communities during construction and THPT have experience in moving pupils to a new site from the successful Three Rivers School build in Walton-on-Thames.

Will floodlights be included on the new sports pitches?

The approved school plans do not include floodlighting.

INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY

Can the redevelopment lead to improved traffic management at peak times?

The plans will help overcome localised traffic congestion at peak school times through junction improvements and highways works, including;

- Student drop off/pick up and coach drop off contained within the site.
- 300 staff and student parking spaces and generous cycle storage provision.
- Traffic will be diverted away from Lower Road via a new link road to and from Effingham Common Road.
- Six different pedestrian access points to the site and two on site access points to the school.
- Safer pedestrian crossing routes and footways on Lower Road and The Street.
- Mini roundabout introduced at Old Lane/Horsley Road/ Effingham Common Road/Forest Road junction
- Upgrade Guildford Road/The Street junction to minimize stops and delays to traffic.

Will there be cycle lanes provided to improve safety for students cycling to school?

The existing footpath along Lower Road to the front of the development will be widened to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.

How many dedicated pedestrian crossings will be provided on Lower Road?

A toucan crossing was approved across Lower Road as part of the already consented proposals.

What is the impact on highways of additional enabling homes?

Berkeley are currently in discussion with Surrey County Council (SCC) in relation to further possible improvements that could be made. We are exploring improvements to bus services and or the provision of a community bus service and the creation of a residents Car Club. A school Travel Plan will be established and improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure will be made on Lower Road.

How will construction traffic be managed?

A construction traffic management will be agreed with GBC prior to work commencing on site.

Why have plans for drainage not been finalised?

The Berkeley drainage engineers have been working with Thames Water regarding the site drainage.

Foul drainage from homes on Lodge Farm will be drained via a gravity system to Effingham Common Road, and the new school will be drained via the pumping station to an existing manhole on the Rectory

Lane roundabout then further east along Lower Road. This has been agreed with Thames Water and ensures that the flow off into Water Lane is reduced.

What about surface water drainage?

The new masterplan includes additional attenuation ponds and swales. This is in addition to the approved plans which determine surface water to drain to the north of the site via an attenuation pond and discharging into a watercourse adjacent to Effingham Common Road. The sports pitches will also include pitch drainage systems.

Are there issues with the gas supply? No

The capacity at local GP's is already insufficient, can you build a new surgery in Effingham?

Even with the new homes, demand arising would be for less than one GP based on government calculating metrics. However, Berkeley are happy to discuss this with the Council and/or existing surgeries as part of their S106 contributions.

How will Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 agreements be utilised?

The S106 Agreement for the consented scheme secures financial contributions including £2.65m for the redevelopment of the KGV community building. Berkeley will continue to work with GBC and SCC to determine other S106 requirements such as contributions to local primary schools, infrastructure and other improvements that may be required for the additional homes.

Please let us know if there are any areas in the community where you feel these will be best spent which we can raise in our discussions with GBC officers by completing the '**Your views**' form.

What consideration has been given to Effingham's dark skies policy?

The additional enabling homes will meet the same standards as the Phase 1 consented homes on the Lodge Farm site. They will have velux blinds fitted to any ground floor sky lights. This has been secured via a condition on the reserved matters permission which requires a scheme which includes detailed drawings and specifications to minimise light spillage.

A sensitive lighting management plan is also required by condition of the reserved matters permission, so should also be a requirement of any additional development.

62% of the site will be retained for community use open space and an appropriate buffer is being given to the woodland.

What consideration has been given to sustainability and green energy?

The consented school plans deliver a building designed to meet the latest energy efficient standards and reduce energy consumption. It will be constructed in concrete for improved heat storage and have solar PV panels. GBC conditions on the reserved matters school plans require a 20% carbon reduction.

We build energy efficient homes by taking a fabric first approach. This means designing new homes with energy and sustainability in mind, from water and energy efficient fixtures down to enhanced insulation to minimise energy consumption in our new homes to reduce carbon emissions.

In terms of wider sustainability measures across the development, a travel plan will be put in place to encourage pedestrian and cycle usage and we will be providing electric charging points for homes and charging points across communal car parking areas.

NEXT STEPS

Why should I complete the 'Your views' form online?

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Are there outstanding conditions that need to be met prior to commencement of works on site?

Berkeley hope to finalise the details of the few outstanding pre-commencement conditions with officers at GBC in the coming weeks so that enabling works can commence in March 2021.

What further plans have been submitted to Guildford Borough Council?

In November 2020 as part of the measures to reduce costs, Berkeley submitted an application to combine the Sixth Form and Sports Hall blocks. This does not reduce either facility in any way, simply it means only building one set of foundations and one roof rather than two. Making a financial saving of £500k on the school build. This amendment has also allowed Berkeley to reconfigure some of the outdoor learning spaces which have become more relevant in this new pandemic environment.

Will work commence if this new proposal is yet to be approved?

Enabling work will commence on site in March 2021 but will be unable to proceed further unless the new permission is granted.

Planning applications that relate to the new masterplan will be shared on the project website and communicated to subscribers.