



Dear

Waverley Western Planning Committee – 20th July 2021

Agenda Item 8.1: A1 – WA/2020/1213 – Land at Red Court, Scotland Lane, Haslemere

We write to you as Haslemere's largest single Residents Association with respect to a planning application (WA/2020/1213) which is being recommended for approval by Waverley's planning officers on a 'tilted balance' basis at the upcoming meeting of the Western Planning Committee on which you sit.

Please find enclosed the following documents:

- HSRA Statement of Objection
- Haslemere Vision letter of objection

As you consider whether or not to approve the planning application, we urge you to consider the following key points and to vote to reject the application:

- 1) This application **does not have the support of the town** (Haslemere Town Council rejected the application) or its residents (see the 536 letters of objection on the planning portal), notwithstanding that a minority of town and borough councillors have expressed their personal support for the application against the wishes of their constituents.
- 2) Haslemere's emerging Neighbourhood Plan, as approved by the Town Council, retains the **settlement boundary of the town to protect against this type of development** on the town's surrounding protected greenfield landscape on the border of the South Downs National Park. The development would destroy land which is to be treated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty under Waverley's own policy RE3. It would also prematurely undermine the current work being carried out by Natural England and Surrey Hills AONB with independent experts to extend the area of AONB to include the AGLV (candidate AONB) land on which the proposed development is located.
- 3) **Alternative development sites are available** on brownfield land for inclusion in LPP2 so that Haslemere's housing needs can be fully met without any need to develop land at Red Court as proposed in this application.
- 4) **Clearly it is premature to consider this application in advance of LPP2** and will result in prejudice to the democratic processes of finalising the local plan. Specifically, in conjunction with (3) above, this will short circuit the opportunity for the government's preference for brownfield sites over greenfield sites to be put to the Inspector of LPP2.

- 5) The proposed development will **not result in a 10% net increase in biodiversity**, contrary to the misleading summary of officers. Please note that officers have not taken into account the expert opinion of Professor Tom Oliver which confirms that the development will result in a net **decrease** in biodiversity.

- 6) The **Appropriate Assessment submitted is materially incomplete**, such that it actually presents more as an empty template with no substance of assessment at all. For example, there is no analysis of the historic data for protected migratory birds and it does not demonstrate how full 100% mitigation of ecological damage is to be achieved through the developer's proposed steps. **As you will know, you cannot lawfully permit this development while an Appropriate Assessment remains incomplete or inadequate.**

- 7) The transport and pedestrian provision in the proposal is misleading given the topography and narrow lanes in the vicinity. Walking to local amenities and transport links is not as easy as portrayed by officers. Virtual pavements on narrow lanes with high banks and residents parking are clearly impractical and **purely theoretical solutions that will not make the highways safe** for pedestrians.

- 8) It should be noted that in Natural England's latest letter on this application dated 30 March 2021 they advise that Clive Smith of Surrey Hills AONB must be consulted prior to the application being approved. We do not believe that such consultation has properly taken place and as a committee member you should ask the planning officers for the current status on such consultation, since it is understood that **Surrey Hills AONB is against this application being approved** at this point in time.

Thank you for your time in reviewing the above and enclosures.

Yours sincerely,

Howard Brown
General Secretary
Haslemere South Residents Association