

Annex B



Surrey Heath Local Area Committee
Annex B – Written Public Questions, Responses and Supplementary questions

Q. Written question from Mr. Andrew Telford representing CPRE Runnymede.

Whereas:

1. SCC unanimously resolved on 19/3/13 "To use its power to protect Surrey's Green Belt".
2. CPRE Runnymede wholly endorses this resolution.
3. Runnymede Borough Council's draft Local Plan is inconsistent with the resolved position of SCC as it does not protect Surrey's Green Belt, removing, as it does, several hundred acres from the Green Belt at the DERA site to facilitate development.
4. Removing DERA from the Green Belt will have a direct and detrimental effect, not only on Runnymede Borough, but also on Chobham Common, and therefore the heritage assets within Surrey Heath Borough.
5. There is strong popular support for SCC's landmark resolution as demonstrated by CPRE Surrey's e-petition regarding this matter, administered by MySociety through the RBC website, which has comfortably passed the threshold number of signatures required to ensure a debate in Full Council at RBC regarding removing any of the DERA site from the Green Belt.

The question:

What action does the SHLC propose taking in prosecuting SCC's resolved policy of using its power to protect this part of Surrey's Green Belt, and will this include making a timely representation, as a neighbouring Borough, to Runnymede Borough Council raising a 'strong objection' to removing the land at the DERA site from the Green Belt?

A. Response from Chairman on behalf of the Committee:

At its meeting on 19 March 2013, the County Council unanimously resolved to use its power to protect Surrey's Green Belt, support the National Planning Policy Framework (section 9 – paragraphs 79 to 92) and the Government's policy of protecting the Green Belt, to make Surrey's MPs and the County's Districts and Boroughs aware of this resolution and for any Green Belt development in the County to be in line with the needs and wishes of Surrey residents.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework, it is for the Districts and Boroughs to set Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans with local consultation and independent examination of any proposed changes.

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Runnymede Borough Council is currently preparing its new Local Plan and recently consulted on a draft Pre-Submission version of its Core Strategy. Balancing the need for housing and employment growth and the need to protect the Green Belt is a matter to be decided at the local level through the Runnymede Local Plan.

Q. Supplementary question from Mr. Andrew Telford representing CPRE Runnymede.

Thank you for the response Chairman. This is word for word the same response that I had last week from the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Transport and, of course, doesn't answer my question - it merely repeats the resolution of SCC of 19th March.

The fact that planning matters are not within the remit of SCC does not prevent SCC making representations to RBC on planning matters. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 clearly makes this possible.

If SCC will not use its power in this instance of a clear and present threat to the green belt, exactly when will it use it, so my question is:

What action will this Committee take with respect to SCC's resolved position of using its power to protect the green belt with regard to the DERA site?

A. Response from Chairman on behalf of the Committee:

The Chair provided a response outside of the meeting.

Q. Written question from Mr. Richard Wilson, Windlesham

Surrey's Green Belt is under imminent threat. Neighbouring Runnymede Borough Council's draft Local Plan involves removing the entire DERA site at Chobham Common from Green Belt status. The development that this would then allow would be devastating for rare wildlife and heathland within Surrey Heath borough. On 19 March 2013 Surrey County Council resolved unanimously to use its power to protect the Green Belt.

Cllr Pitt and the former councillor representing Windlesham were absent from that meeting and two other Surrey Heath county councillors were elected for the first time at the 2 May election.

The question:

Do each of the current members of this committee, including Borough councillors, agree with the then members of Surrey County Council that no land should be removed from Surrey's Green Belt?

A. Response from Chairman on behalf of the Committee:

I refer to the answer given above. However the question also asks each member of the local committee - county and borough - whether they agree that no land should be removed from Surrey's Green Belt.

Annex B

My colleagues may wish to comment, but I am certain SCC members would reiterate support for SCC's full resolution i.e.

Council resolves:

1. To use its power to protect Surrey's Green Belt.
2. To support the National Planning Policy Framework (section 9 –paragraphs 79 to 92) and the Government's policy of protecting the Green Belt.
3. To make Surrey's MPs and the County's Districts and Boroughs aware of this resolution.
4. That any Green Belt development in the County is in line with the needs and wishes of Surrey residents.

Surrey Heath Borough Council objected to Runnymede's Pre-Submission Core Strategy, with concerns that RBC have not undertaken a borough wide review of the Green Belt as evidence that DERA is the most appropriate site to be removed from the Green Belt to help address housing needs, and over the transport impacts on Surrey Heath of development at DERA.

Q. Supplementary question from Mr. Richard Wilson, Windlesham

Is the Committee unanimous on this? Would the Chair of the Committee write to Cllr Norman, Chair of Runnymede?

A. Response from Chairman on behalf of the Committee:

The Committee is not a debating society. You are most welcome to contact individual Councillors for a response. I will speak to Cllr Norman and make him aware of the views expressed, but it is not the prerogative of this Committee to influence Runnymede. I would reiterate that Surrey Heath have objected to the development.

Q. Written question from Nigel Eastment representing The Chobham Society.

Whereas:

1. SCC unanimously resolved on 19/3/13 "To use its power to protect Surrey's Green Belt", and their stated position in limb 4 of the resolution is that any Green Belt development in the County should be "in line with the needs and wishes of Surrey residents".
2. Fairoaks Operations Ltd's proposal for a hangar at Fairoaks Airport, on any view, is major 'development in the Green Belt' that encroaches on the Green Belt, and therefore does not protect it.
3. Fairoaks Operations Ltd's has not demonstrated a need or wish of Surrey residents for a new hangar at Fairoaks.
4. Fairoaks Operations Ltd's has not demonstrated that a hangar is 'required' (See GPDO 1995 Schedule 2 Part 18 J), in particular no intention has been proposed to remove the existing hangar that is claimed to be obsolete.

The question:

What action does the SHLC propose taking in prosecuting SCC's resolved policy of using its power to protect this part of Surrey's Green Belt, and ensuring that any Green Belt development in the County is in line with the needs and wishes of Surrey residents, and will this include making a timely representation to SHBC raising an objection to this proposal?

A. Response from Chairman on behalf of the Committee:

At its meeting on 19 March 2013, the County Council unanimously resolved to use its power to protect Surrey's Green Belt, support the National Planning Policy Framework (section 9 – paragraphs 79 to 92) and the Government's policy of protecting the Green Belt, to make Surrey's MPs and the County's Districts and Boroughs aware of this resolution and for any Green Belt development in the County to be in line with the needs and wishes of Surrey residents.

The current proposals on Fairoaks Airport, a major developed site in the Green Belt, fall to be considered under Part 18 A.2 of the General Permitted Development Order. This allows a relevant airport operator to carry out development in connection with the provision of services and facilities on operational land, subject to the operator consulting the local planning authority before carrying out any development. The airport operator, Fairoaks Operation Ltd, has consulted Surrey Heath Borough Council in order to confirm that the proposal is permitted development. There is no requirement for the Borough Council to consult third parties, although a meeting with Chobham Parish Council has been arranged.

Q. Supplementary statement from Nigel Eastment representing The Chobham Society.

Since asking the question and receiving the answer, things have moved on a bit. Chobham society it to be a loophole that allows permitted development so that no mitigation measures can be enforced. We would urge Surrey Heath planners to impose mitigation measures. We would also raise concerns over the consequences of the development of aerodromes and will lobby Michael Gove MP on this. We look forward to Councillors support on this.