

Submission to Planning Inspectorate

30 September 2013

Dear Sirs,

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/A/2202134

Appeal By: Redhill Aerodrome Ltd

Appeal Site: Redhill Aerodrome, King's Mill Lane, Surrey, RH1 5YP

I am a Councillor on Reigate and Banstead Borough Council representing Redhill East ward, which adjoins Bletchingley and Nutfield ward in Tandridge District Council, where the appeal site is located. Residents in the south eastern part of my ward are directly affected by noise from the Aerodrome.

I have served on the Reigate & Banstead Planning Committee for two years and have attended training and read guidance on planning matters. I have visited Redhill Aerodrome on many occasions.

I spoke against this application at the Planning Committee meeting on 5 June 2013, supporting the officer's recommendation to refuse permission. I append the text of the speech I wrote for the meeting; in the event I did not read the speech in full, as previous speakers had made some of the same points and there was no need to repeat them. However I would like the Inspector to take all these points into consideration in the Appeal.

The Committee agreed with the officers' recommendation and refused permission, believing that the proposals would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, both because of the extent of hard standing and related infrastructure detracting from the character and openness of the Green Belt, and the increased intensity of use, with a greater number of aircraft movements and potential for larger aircraft types, flying over longer hours.

I believe the Planning Committee members' judgement was reasonable and therefore respectfully request the Inspector to dismiss the appeal.

Cllr Sarah Finch

Redhill Aerodrome: Planning Committee speech by Cllr Sarah Finch

This is very similar to the application we refused last year. The changes amount to tinkering with the details. It will still mean longer flying hours, larger planes and year-round flying.

From the residents' point of view it means more noise, more disruption on the road network, an urbanisation of the area, including 35,000 square metres of hard-standing and approach lighting including lighting at night.

Noise

The extension of flying hours will increase the noise endured by residents. The current grass runway ensures local residents a certain amount of respite from noise at night and during the winter. They will now face year-round flying, with bigger, noisier planes.

The hard runway is being sought to encourage light jets and turbo props, specifically from business clients, which would inevitably mean an increase in early morning and late evening flights.

The owners are aiming at 85,000 flights a year = 233 a day or one every 6 minutes.

Traffic

Kings Mill Lane and the other immediate access roads are dangerous, narrow, winding country lanes which see frequent accidents. The Transport Assessment says that 19 accidents occurred on Kings Mill Lane over the past three years, of which three were vehicles entering or leaving the aerodrome entrance. I understand there have been at least nine recorded accidents since January this year just on the stretch of road from Masons Bridge Road to the Aerodrome, including one serious accident near to the aerodrome entrance.

The Highways Authority has advised that with certain mitigation measures its objections are overcome. However the development would result in an increase in traffic to and from this rural site – when forecasts show the road network will already be operating in excess of capacity in 2014 and will get gradually worse over subsequent years.

The Transport Assessment by Campbell Reith says that the A23 Horley Road/Three Arch Road / Maple Road junction currently operates at capacity with queuing predominantly on the northbound A23 in the morning peak time. And the Mid Street / A25 junction operates over-capacity in the morning peak hour and will be compounded by future traffic growth which sees the junction operating above capacity for longer periods.

The additional traffic generated by the proposed aerodrome development would only aggravate this in the surrounding network. And the mitigation measures proposed would urbanise these pleasant rural lanes.

The key issue is Green Belt

The Aerodrome lies within the Green Belt, where development is not permitted unless harm to the Green Belt is ***clearly outweighed by very special circumstances***.

The applicant has put forward what they consider to be very special circumstances relating to employment, generation of added value to the economy, stimulation of economic growth, all important things which planning policies seek to support – where appropriate.

Committee members have not had an opportunity to study the applicant's business case which backs up these claimed special circumstances, as it was judged to be commercially sensitive.

To assist them to fully consider the merits of this argument, Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge councils jointly commissioned Portsmouth University to examine the Business case and test whether the very special circumstances criteria had been met.

The Portsmouth report does not support the claims made by the applicant. It shows that the applicant's business case:

- Falls short of academic rigour
- contains optimistic bias
- confuses time periods
- has significant omissions, and
- comes to unexplained conclusions,

The Portsmouth economists did not agree that the Aerodrome will need to close if this application is not granted.

After full consideration, the Planning professionals of both Tandridge and Reigate & Banstead Councils decided that the very special circumstances criteria had not been met and the scale of the harm to the Green Belt would be unacceptable.

They both recommended REFUSAL and the Planning Committee at Tandridge has already voted to refuse it – with nine votes for refusal and one abstention.

In conclusion, I believe that we too should refuse this application which contravenes our own Planning Policies (Policy Co1 – Green Belt, and EM12 – which states the Council will normally resist any development at Redhill Aerodrome which is likely to result in the intensification of flying.) and the National Planning Policy Framework

The Green Belt should be protected unless very special circumstances can be proved and this has not happened.

With potential house building to the East of Redhill, the Green Belt is under threat and cannot be allowed to be further reduced. The restriction of urban sprawl, prevention of neighbouring towns merging and safeguarding the countryside must be of paramount importance.

Nothing has changed since the last application to cause this inappropriate development to be acceptable.