

**SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF PETER J. LEE, DIP. GEOG, BA
(HONS), PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT TANDRIDGE DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Appeal by Croydon
and District Education Trust, Land to the South of Kenley
Aerodrome, Victor Beamish Avenue, Caterham, Surrey,
CR3 5FX**

PINS Appeal Ref No.: APP/M3645/W/24/3354498

LPA Ref No.: TA/2023/878

February 2025

The appeal relates to application TA/2023/878 for Outline planning permission for the following description of development: *Development of the site for 80 no. residential dwellings including 50% affordable housing, associated landscaping, amenity space and car parking (outline application all matters reserved aside from access)*. The application was received on 11th July 2023 and was refused under officer delegated powers on the 13th May 2024.

There were seven grounds for refusal:

- 1. Loss of playing field;
- 2. Inappropriate development within the Green Belt;
- 3. Site is unsustainably located;
- 4. Impact on highway safety;
- 5. Loss of protected trees;
- 6. Impact on heritage assets;
- 7. Lack of information regarding ecological impact.

During the lead-up to this Public Inquiry the appellant has sought to address the reasons for refusal in reasons 5, 6 and 7 through the provision of more detailed information and by increasing the level of replacement and compensatory tree planting. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has accepted that these changes have addressed reasons for 5, 6 and 7 and no evidence will be presented with respect to these grounds.

The case of the LPA is that harm to the Green Belt will result from the proposed development as the proposal would not accord with any of the exceptions to inappropriate development detailed within the Framework. Parts of the appeal site are considered to constitute 'previously developed land' as defined within the Framework, but this only relates to less than one-third of the total site area and the majority of the site is formed of landscaped areas and woodland. As such, the proposal does not fall within the remit of paragraph 154 g) of the Framework. Whilst the site is considered to constitute 'grey belt' within the terms of the definition in the Framework, the proposal is not considered to accord with the requirements laid down in paragraph 155 as the appeal site is not located in a sustainable location and the proposal would not accord with the 'Golden Rules' specified in paragraph 156 as the development does not incorporate the necessary improvements to local infrastructure to promote movement by means other than the private car. The proposal would also have an adverse impact on openness in both spatial and visual terms due to its scale and would also conflict with some of the purposes of the Green Belt specified in paragraph 143, namely b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another, c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

The proposal is therefore considered to constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The 'very special circumstances' put forward by the appellant are not

considered to be of sufficient weight to outweigh the substantial weight than paragraph 153 of the Framework requires to be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. It is acknowledged that the provision of 80 dwellings should be given substantial weight in favour of the development, as should the provision of 50% affordable homes. However, it is considered that the proposal would be in an unsustainable location that would only be realistically accessible by the private car due to surrounding topography and the distances to facilities such as retail outlets, and public transport facilities and the quality of footway and cycle links. In addition, it is considered that the proposal does not incorporate the necessary improvements to local infrastructure to facilitate alternative modes of access. This therefore limits the weight that can be afforded to these matters. The other very special circumstances put forward are not considered to be of such weight, either individually or cumulatively, to outweigh the harm caused by the development in Green Belt terms.

In addition, the proposal would result in the loss of a playing field which would not be replaced and this would conflict with relevant development plan policies (Policy CSP13 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy 2008 and Policy DP18 of the Tandridge Local Plan – Part 2: Detailed Policies 2014), would conflict with the requirements of paragraph 104 of the Framework and has resulted in a statutory objection to the proposal from Sport England.

For the reasons set out above, the appeal proposal does not comply with the development plan or national policy in the Framework. Material considerations do not indicate that planning permission should nevertheless be granted. The appeal should therefore be dismissed in accordance with the guidance in paragraph 48 of the Framework.