



NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday, 31st July 2019

RESIDENTS JOIN FORCES TO CHALLENGE INAPPROPRIATE NEW DEVELOPMENT

STONELEIGH residents have launched a crowdfunding campaign to appoint an independent planning expert to challenge an inappropriate development to be built in the Surrey suburb.

Woolbro Homes Ltd have applied to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council to build a seven-storey block of flats containing 23 apartments, in the middle of three and four-bedroom 1930 two storey houses, in Station Approach, Stoneleigh.

The developers who originally made an application to build a more modest nine-bedroom three floor development were actively encouraged to increase the 'size and density' of their build by planning officers from the council to help meet Government targets.

Richard Harris, Chair of the Stoneleigh and Auriol Residents' Association (SARA), said: "There is immense anger locally at this proposal. What has become clear in documents we have seen and discussions we have had is that planning officers have actively encouraged the developer to increase the size of their build as part of a new strategy adopted by the council to 'talk up' planning applications.

"This is part of a so called 'master plan' purely driven by numbers to meet Government targets of 579 new builds developments across the borough each year. It concerns us greatly that this new strategy is being implemented without proper or full disclosure to Epsom and Ewell residents and without the full implications that this action will have being understood and fully shared. The council have shown a complete disregard for the damage that such developments will do to our communities."

At the end of June over 200 Stoneleigh residents and businesses attended a public meeting to voice their opposition to the planning application and almost 600 objections have already been raised with the council, with over 99 percent being made against the proposal.

Mr Harris added: "We do question where the council's new strategy sits with existing planning policies and regulations and if their position is actually lawful. SARA has decided to appoint an independent planning expert who has experience of contesting such applications and if necessary this will be followed by legal action. We are now seeking support from the public to help fund this.

"If we don't contest this development it will set a dangerous precedent for more inappropriate expansions of this type to be built across the whole of our borough. This will impact on us all and will change the face of Epsom and Ewell forever. We cannot allow that to happen."

Please donate to this campaign by visiting www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/saracampaign

ENDS

For further information or interviews on this issues please contact Natalie Rogers on 07775 826595



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The new development will see a seven-storey block of flats built in the middle of three and four bedroom houses in the commuter suburb.



Stoneleigh and Auriol Residents' Association have launched a crowdfunding campaign to fight the development.

