

WEST HORSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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5th March 2007

Cllr David Davies
Chairman
Surrey County Council
County Hall
Kingston
Surrey

Dear Councillor Davies,

Re: Secondary School Allocation 2007

I am sure you are aware of the dismay and consternation that exist at this time within West and East Horsley as a result of the County Council's Secondary School allocation notified to parents last Friday, 2nd March, in particular the lack of places made available at The Howard of Effingham.

The Parish Council is appalled at the new policy that has been introduced without consultation or prior warning. Last year 100% of children from West and East Horsley were allocated their first preference school, this year none have been allocated either their first or second choices unless they have an older sibling at the Howard of Effingham. Instead the twenty-four children affected have been allocated one of three schools:

- Thurfield, Leatherhead
- Christ College, Guildford
- Bishop David Brown, Sheerwater

This allocation has had a devastating effect on parents and will in due course on their children. Instead of walking to the end of their road and catching the school bus, they will be commuting up to 100 miles a week, 4000 miles a year, in rush hour traffic to schools where they have no links or friends.

In Nightingale Crescent alone children will be attending four different secondary schools! The County Council will be providing transport by way presumably of taxis at a cost to the ratepayers of Surrey, whilst the Howard of Effingham school buses will be running with spare seats. Has the School Allocation Selection Team taken this into account?

Surrey County Council has a policy of supporting environmental causes and principles; these school allocations go against any 'green' policy. Recently SCC have supported and invested in a footpath linking the Horsleys with Effingham through Great Ridings Wood to

enable children to walk and cycle to the Howard of Effingham. That investment will be wasted unless the new policy and current decisions are reversed. Where is the joined up government we hear about?

This community is united in its opposition to Surrey County Council's decision. As you know it is a cohesive and caring community, this decision to send children to so many different schools will potentially cause fragmentation of friendships and disillusionment amongst parents who have supported one another during their children's young lives at The Raleigh School. After school child caring groups will not longer function and new friendships formed at schools will not flourish out of school when children are tens of miles apart.

Over the years both the Howard of Effingham and The Raleigh School have worked in harmony within the Effingham Learning Trust. Much of that good work will be rendered inert if the anticipated beneficiaries, namely children of Horsley, are not going the The Howard.

We ask that you investigate how such an allocation came about and whether the School Allocation Criteria has been strictly and correctly applied?

It is not acceptable that the lack of allocation of places to The Howard of Effingham be allowed to stand. The Howard is the only local secondary school for the children of Horsley and if necessary a temporary classroom and additional teaching staff made available for the twenty four children currently without a place there.

We strongly request that you represent the residents of West and East Horsley at the Education Committee Meeting at County Hall on Tuesday 6th March, together with Cllr Bill Barker, and advise this Parish Council of the outcome.

Yours sincerely



R.A. Spackman
Chairman, West Horsley Parish Council