Statement for Planning Inspector Ms Mary Travers at the Runnymede Local Plan-Independent Examination

I represent West Addlestone Residents’ Association (WARA) on behalf of our members.

We have made representations to Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) during the various consultations during the last two years.

We recognise the need for additional housing in Runnymede and assume the projected numbers required are an accurate forecast (approximately 500 dwellings per annum).

We are concerned that the Green Belt boundaries are going to be altered without due justification. This is in spite of the stated Government policy of only changing the Green Belt and developing the land released in exceptional circumstances. We do not feel RBC has explored all possible alternatives sufficiently such as use of brownfield sites, empty office and commercial space and high density multi-storey accommodation in the Addlestone town centre.

The Green Belt is there essentially to prevent urban sprawl and prevent the unchecked joining up of urban areas. It has achieved this so far. Whilst it might be convenient to tidy up the present boundary and fill gaps it will cause areas to become joined together.

Our association is concerned in particular with Policy SL11: Vet Land Site, Addlestone which designates land owned by the Central Veterinary Laboratory (DEFRA).

Why has this site been chosen and once selected been designated for housing despite the hundreds of letters of objection sent in by residents? RBC seems to have ignored these objectors whilst purporting to have consulted residents.

This is a greenfield area in the present Green Belt which has been actively farmed for many years (sheep and cattle grazing and hay harvesting). If no longer required by the Vet Lab it should be retained as an open green space.

It acts as a natural habitat for many varieties of flora and fauna. It also acts as the “green lungs” for the surrounding area.

This site has no road access at present. A new road access would need to be made.

The site is open and elevated and not shielded by any trees. It will thus be visible from the south and be a blot on the landscape.

We feel the Row Town area has already born its share of new housing with the building of the Strawberry Fields site with 350 new dwellings and the already approved site of Coombelands for 43 dwellings. Enough is enough.
The site is designated to have two Traveller Pitches. We cannot understand the logic behind this. RBC seem to have distributed Traveller Pitches randomly amongst the allocated housing sites. Have they consulted the travelling community and will the latter agree to isolated pitches rather than one or two exclusive Traveller sites in Runnymede?

The A320 study on behalf of Surrey CC shows this route is already congested at peak times. The development of the sites proposed at Longcross Garden Village, Vet Lab Site, Ottershaw East, Brox End Nursery, Chertsey Bittams sites, St. Peter’s Hospital, Pycroft Rd. Chertsey and Fairoaks airfield will all cause further congestion and gridlock.

The impact on local services and infrastructure does not seem to have been adequately assessed and costed.

The environmental impact on air quality and noise levels in our area will be severe. This is without the future impact of a third runway at Heathrow.

Mike Twelftree

For West Addlestone Residents’ Association (WARA)