



**Zöe Franklin MP**

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**Berkeley Homes**

**Berkeley Group**

Berkeley House  
19 Portsmouth Road  
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**FAO: Jack Nicholson and Rob Packman**

Dear Mr Nicholson and Mr Packman,

I am writing further to our recent meeting regarding your decision to withdraw from the long-standing commitment to deliver a new Howard of Effingham School.

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to meet with me. As I made clear during that meeting, the strength of feeling locally cannot be overstated. For more than a decade, the school, its pupils, and families across Effingham and the surrounding villages have been given repeated assurances that a new school would be delivered. On that basis, the school acted in good faith, deferring significant investment in its existing buildings on the reasonable expectation that a rebuild was imminent.

That promise has now been withdrawn.

The consequence is that an excellent school serving approximately 1,500 pupils is left managing an aging building for which there is need for investment in order for the physical space to match its great teaching provision. Yet now there is uncertainty of how or when that will be delivered.

Alongside the loss of a new school, the King George V Trust had expected to receive much-needed funding to support their ongoing work to improve the hall and playing fields for the benefit of Effingham and neighbouring villages. That wider community benefit has now also been lost.

During our meeting, you set out the commercial and viability challenges that led to this decision. While I recognise the broader economic context, it is important to be clear that this is not simply a commercial matter. It carries real, long-term consequences for the school community that relied on Berkeley Homes' commitments over many years.

In this context, I am asking Berkeley Homes to set out – urgently and publicly – how it intends to work with the school and community to address the situation now facing them.

Specifically, I would welcome clarity on:

- Whether Berkeley Homes will provide financial support to address urgent repair and refurbishment needs at the school?

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- If so, the earliest point at which the Berkeley Homes Board could consider costed proposals from the school, and the indicative timeline for any support to be agreed and delivered?
- How and when Berkeley Homes' senior leadership will engage directly with the school community to explain this decision, in particular engagement with students?
- How and when Berkeley Homes will engage with Effingham Parish Council, Effingham Residents Association, the King George V Trust and other relevant local groups on the decision and the way forward?

This community has waited more than 12 years for a school that was consistently promised. That expectation has now been removed, alongside other anticipated community benefits. It is therefore essential that Berkeley Homes demonstrates – through practical action – a clear commitment to rebuilding trust and repairing relationships, particularly if any future planning application is to proceed on a credible footing.

I will continue to work with the school, local partners and Government to secure the support that is urgently needed, and to work with them and with Berkeley Homes to identify a positive way forward for the community should a new planning application be submitted.

I look forward to a prompt response.

Yours sincerely,

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