EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

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Plans for 130 Kingswood homes ‘absolute disgrace’ as nearly 700 objectors speak

3 April 2026



Plans to build up to 130 homes on protected green belt land between Kingswood and Burgh Heath have sparked a fierce backlash, with nearly 700 objections lodged by residents.

Developers want outline planning permission for the scheme on 13 hectares of farmland off Canons Lane, with details like layout and design to be decided later. The proposal includes a mix of homes, nearly half classed as “affordable”, alongside green space, play areas, allotments and a community orchard.

Lightwood, the developers, state the land presents a “opportunity to create a high-quality, thoughtfully designed place to live, work and connect with nature”.

But the scale and location of the development have become the biggest flashpoints. The site sits in the Metropolitan Green Belt and an Area of Great Landscape Value, currently made up of open fields used for farming. It also borders existing homes and is criss-crossed by public footpaths used by walkers and cyclists.

Residents say building here would mean sacrificing one of the last stretches of countryside before Greater London.

One objector called the plans “an absolute disgrace”, warning they would “start the loss of the last remaining parcels of farming land” and harm wildlife. Others pointed to records of protected and declining bird species on the land, arguing the development would fragment habitats and disrupt migration routes.

Traffic is another major concern. Access would come from Canons Lane, with opponents saying the rural road is not fit for the extra cars likely to come with 130 households. Nearby routes, including the busy A217, are already under pressure at peak times.

There are also doubts about whether the scheme would genuinely tackle the housing crisis. Some residents argue that so-called affordable homes (typically priced below market rates rather than at social rent) would still be out of reach for many.

Despite this, developers say the site is in a sustainable location, within walking or cycling distance of schools, shops and transport links, including Kingswood railway station. They argue it would form a logical extension to the existing built-up area and deliver much-needed housing.

The plans also promise environmental measures, including new tree planting, upgraded footpaths, and sustainable drainage systems designed to reduce flood risk.

In planning terms, the application is only seeking approval ‘in principle’, with all detailed design matters reserved for a later stage except for the main access point.

Supporters say the benefits, particularly new homes and affordable housing, should carry significant weight. But with objections outnumbering supporters almost 175 to one, the council faces a contentious decision over whether those benefits outweigh the loss of protected countryside.

Emily Dalton LDRS

View of the outline of the proposed development site between Canons Lane and Doric Drive, Kingswood. (Credit: Lightwood planning documents)

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