

Opposition to airport plan grows

Ottershaw: Society gets behind hangar objections

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THE Ottershaw Society has added its weight to protests over a private airport's plans to build a massive hangar on green belt land.

Fairoaks Operations Ltd has submitted a formal consultation in relation to proposals for a new 6,000sq m hanger development at Fairoaks Airport, which lies on Chertsey Road between Chobham and Ottershaw.

The company has permitted development rights for the site, which means they can go ahead with the build without requiring consent from the borough council - they only need to consult with it and can choose to heed its recommendations, or not.

The society submitted written objections to the plans, citing concerns over the 10m high development being in the green belt, increased aircraft movements and increased traffic - it is expected the development will lead to the expansion of both companies using a current hangar on the site.

Society vice-chairman, Brian Williams said the group was concerned the increase in staff would worsen already bad traffic congestion at the Ottershaw roundabout on the A320.

He said: "Any increase in manpower can only exacerbate that situation.

"They have said there will be an increase in aircraft traffic and that will be a concern again, particularly to people in the Brox Road area.

"Our main concern, though is the constant nibbling away at the green belt, which is happening at the DERA site and McLaren, so we are extremely concerned about that."

The airport has submitted the plans as it says one of the two large hangars on the site, a 6,000sq m unit, is no longer fit for purpose and beyond repair.

The new hangar will house two of the airport's existing tenants, Gama Engineering Ltd whose staff are expected to increase by 20% following the move, and Heli Air whose number of full-time staff is expected to rise from one to 11.

Former Chobham residents Jim and Joan Dakin, who now live in Runnymede, had concerns over noise from the increased numbers of flights but also had safety fears.

In their objection, they wrote: "There is the danger aspect from trainee flyers who repeatedly fly over residential areas.

"While there is plenty of ground to operate over, one must take seriously the risk attached to helicopters that cannot glide out of trouble

unlike fixed-wing aircraft".

Speaking of its position on the plans, a spokesman for Surrey Heath Borough Council, to whom the consultation has been submitted, confirmed: "Fairoaks Airport is a defined airport and Fairoaks Operations Limited are a relevant airport operator which receive permitted development rights for development such as the proposed hanger development, providing they have consulted with the council prior to construction.

"As such, the council is a consultee only and is not the determining authority for this proposal.

"The council can therefore only make comments on it and the decision to construct is with Fairoaks Operations Limited."