Peaslake Farm Development

Summary of meeting with English Rural Housing RGP Flood Engineers and the Peaslake community on 12 October 2026

In attendance:

- Rebecca Carmichael (ERH), Debby Booth (flood engineer, RGP), Nick Jeavons (flood engineer, RGP), Andrew Cowlard (architect, MEB Design), Sam Long (builder, Atmos), Sam Wilkinson (builder, Atmos)
- Nicola Davidson, Rural Housing Enabler at Surrey Community Action
- Shere Parish Council (**SPC**) Councillors T Florent (Chair of this meeting), G Reffo, P Tompkins, J Cross and Q Jayne
- Surrey County Council (**SCC**), Guildford Borough Council (**GBC**) & Shadow West Surrey Unitary Authority (**West Surrey**) Councillor B Hughes
- West Surrey Councillor V Sena
- Residents of Peaslake and neighbouring villages

1. Development proposals

English Rural Housing (**ERH**) confirmed that the proposal had been revised to provide **10 rented homes**. The two proposed shared-ownership homes were withdrawn because their market valuations made them unaffordable.

2. Flood Risk Assessment

ERH confirmed that a Flood Risk Assessment (**FRA**) had been prepared by RGP to support the planning application. However, ERH was unwilling to make the assessment available to the general public.

Residents, including some Chartered Surveyors, expressed disappointment that they could not examine the assessment directly and understand the evidence behind the proposed flood mitigation measures.

The assessment identifies a **high risk of surface-water flooding** at the site, but the site is classified as being at low risk of flooding from rivers and the sea.

RGP had calculated the impact of 1-in-30 year and 1-in-100 year events and provided to attendees long-term flood risk maps indicating potential flooding during both types of events (copy attached). It was pointed out to ERH that there had been more serious surface water flooding on several occasions in the last few years than was shown on the RGP maps.

RGP confirmed that it had reviewed Surrey County Council's reports on the 2020 and 2021 flooding events. However, it was unaware of the flooding in November 2024, when residents' gardens downstream were flooded up to their front doors. Although this

information had previously been given to ERH, it had not been passed on to RGP. Photographic evidence of the flooding was provided to RGP during the meeting.

RGP was also unaware the note sent by SCC to GBC planners after planning permission had been granted for the Greenoak development (available on the GBC planning portal) and of the agreed note of the meeting between SPC and SCC in April 2025. Again, this information had previously been given to ERH.

The Chair proposed resending the full package of flood related documentation to ERH and RGP.

The FRA estimates **existing** flood storage at approximately 143 m^3. To compensate for the impact of the development, ERH proposes underground storage pipes and a large swale (a vegetated drainage ditch – 3m wide by 2m deep), providing approximately 146 m^3 of storage. To take account of future increases in rainfall and surface water, ERH proposes a tank under part of the development.

Flood storage and downstream impacts

A councillor highlighted that the development involved the loss of 900 m^2 of permeable land which currently soaks up and stores surface water. RGP was asked whether the **additional 3 m^3 of storage was sufficient.** They proposed to discuss this with the Local Authority Flood Risk Team. RGP was asked if they would look again at their figure of 143 m^3 once they receive the flood documentation mentioned above. They said they would take all necessary information into account.

In relation to the tank, RGP was asked (1) how big it would be - no decision had been made yet, (2) how they proposed to deal with the contamination in the ground – Atmos said that anything they dug out of the ground would be taken away, (3) what material it would be made of – it would be made of hard plastic and lined, (4) whether there was a risk of groundwater pressure affecting the tank – no, because there would be small holes in the tank, it would be a bit like an egg box, with various sections added depending on the required size of the tank, and (5) whether there was a risk of groundwater filling the tank – no, because it would be lined.

A councillor asked how the proposed development with mitigation would impact the peak water flow into the village after the one-in-30-year and one-in-100-year storms. In particular, what would be the release rate of the water held in each of the pipes and the tank. RGP said it would be 1 litre per minute, which is the slowest release rate possible. RGP was also asked whether they had taken into account the size and capacity of the pipe in the centre of the village into which all water flowing downstream would go. RGP said they had not done so as they are not required to do so.

RPG confirmed their proposals are focused on the impact of the development and does not take into account wider catchment flows.

A resident asked whether ERH and RGP were aware of proposals by SCC and SPC's independent consultant for flood attenuation measures. While the FRA referenced SCC reports from 2020 and 2021, it was unclear whether RGP had seen those proposed in 2025. The limited space available was noted.

3. Loss of the Community Garden

ERH explained that the proposed swale would be approximately 8 metres long, 3 metres wide and 2 metres deep. It could not be accommodated within the proposed development layout, and ERH has therefore asked Shere Parish Council (SPC) to make additional land available from the area allocated for the Community Garden. The Chair noted that the Community Garden was mentioned for the first time a few days earlier, that there had been no mention of the size of the proposed swale and that nothing had been agreed. The Chair also reminded ERH that the Community Garden Land was not part of the site and that they could not assume that it would be available.

Residents highlighted the time, money and volunteer effort already invested in the garden, including planting and maintaining hedges, installing fencing and caring for the area during the hot summer. The garden was described as a valued community asset.

An alternative suggestion was made by a member of the public: move two properties currently bordering the Community Garden further into the development, potentially allowing the swale to be located behind the housing. Alternatively, the number of units on the development could be reduced from 10 to 8.

A resident also pointed out that broadband pipes run beneath the Community Garden.

4. Meeting with the Local Authority Flood Risk Team

RGP have asked SCC for a meeting but have not heard back yet. The Chair asked RGP to let SPC know once the meeting was set up as SPC was keen to be present. RGP and ERH would not agree to this. RGP stated that minutes of the meeting would be produced and shared with SPC.

5. Sewage capacity

RGP considered that the addition of 10 homes should not create a significant additional demand on the sewage system.

Residents challenged this view, pointing out that the local sewage system had been under pressure for many years.

It was also noted that **Thames Water had not yet responded to the RPG's enquiries about the capacity of the sewage system to accommodate the additional properties**. RPG said that, as part of the planning process, they would ask for the houses to be connected to the sewage system and Thames Water would either say "yes" or "no" depending on capacity.

6. Indicative rents and eligibility

ERH provided indicative weekly rents based on what the properties might be let for if occupied today:

- **One-bedroom property:** £116 per week
- **Two-bedroom property:** £139 per week
- **Three-bedroom property:** £158 per week

Residents were surprised and encouraged by the affordability of the rents.

These figures need to be checked, as they appear to be based on Guildford Borough Council 2025/26 (rather than 2026/27) social rents.

ERH explained that rents would increase annually in accordance with Government rules, for example CPI plus 1%.

The homes would be allocated to people with a local connection, but applicants must also be registered on the Guildford housing register to qualify.

Anyone who may be interested in applying for one of the properties was advised to register on the housing register as soon as possible.

7. Maintenance of drainage infrastructure

Residents stressed the importance of regular maintenance of the swale, pipes and underground storage system, particularly because heavy rainfall can carry significant quantities of sand and silt down the hillside.

RGP acknowledged that regular maintenance would be essential.

However, it was not clear whether responsibility would rest with ERH or a management company. The cost of maintenance would be passed on to tenants through a service charge.

ERH is currently estimating this charge at approximately **£9 per week.** Residents questioned how this figure had been calculated and whether it would be sufficient to cover the maintenance required for the swale, pipes and underground storage system.

A resident cited emails from ERH to SPC stating that the scheme would struggle financially without shared ownership homes and that the viability was already at the

upper limit of approval criteria. They asked how ERH could guarantee delivery of sustainable drainage infrastructure without cost-cutting. ERH acknowledged the financial pressures but said planning permission was expected to require the drainage infrastructure to be fully installed, independently verified and accepted before any homes could be occupied. RPG assured residents that inspection of the installation would be robust.

A resident asked how the 100-year commitment to maintain the SUDS would be honoured if ERH ceased to operate. ERH confirmed that insurance was in place and that responsibility for the estate and its obligations would transfer to another Registered Provider.

8. Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed

A resident living next to the site asked how the invasive species Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed would be removed.

ERH and SPC are working on a plan, with a specialist contractor appointed to cover a designated area and insurance taken out.

The resident expressed concern that previous reports supplied by SPC appeared to show additional outbreaks across the site. SPC and ERH agreed to review the records to check whether all affected areas had been identified.

9. Groundwater springs

RGP's groundwater assessment had been undertaken following a record-breaking dry summer.

Residents highlighted that groundwater springs are common across the area during winter and early spring, when conditions are very different from those experienced during the summer.

Concern was expressed that the assessment might not adequately reflect seasonal groundwater conditions, and it was unclear how these differences might affect the effectiveness of the proposed flood mitigation measures.

A resident asked whether the potential impacts of piling, including water displacement and effects on groundwater, had been assessed. It was not clear to what extent this had been done, although Atmos said that concrete would be poured in as the ground was being dug out.

10. Parking provision

A resident was concerned about on street parking as a result of the development. ERH confirmed the following proposed parking provision:

- One parking space for each one-bedroom property.
- Two parking spaces for each two- and three-bedroom property.

ERH acknowledged the risk of overspill parking onto the road and said tenancy agreements would include a requirement not to park on the road.

11. Construction traffic

Atmos explained that construction deliveries would be scheduled to avoid peak road-use periods. They also confirmed that piling would be required for the properties. The equipment needed for piling would be delivered the day before it was used, at a convenient time. Ultimately however Atmos would be limited by the size of the site and by the surrounding area, and they would have to do what they could with it. It would be a condition of any planning permission that a Traffic Management Plan be prepared.

12. House design

In response to a resident's question, ERH confirmed that air source heat pumps would be installed at the rear of each property.

Concerns were raised that the solar panels proposed for the west-facing roofs would generate relatively little energy. ERH also confirmed that the chimneys were purely decorative and would not be functional.

13. Public consultation

A resident asked about the commitment to establish an online platform for residents' views. ERH confirmed that it was up and running and could be accessed through the SPC website. They advised residents to submit their concerns through it.

A resident pointed out that the platform was not as expected, as questions and answers were not visible. ERH said that questions would not be published individually, and residents would not receive individual responses. Instead, questions would be grouped and answered collectively after the consultation. The consultation was due to close in 5 days.

A Councillor pointed out that this meeting was the first occasion on which the community had received substantive information about the proposals and mitigations. In response to concerns that there was insufficient time to consider the information and submit meaningful questions, ERH agreed to extend the consultation period. The meeting Chair proposed an extension of two weeks.

Residents reiterated that they had not been given access to the Flood Risk Assessment, making it difficult to understand and scrutinise the proposed flood attenuation measures or formulate informed questions.

14. Planning application and local government reorganisation

ERH said it hoped to submit the planning application by early November. The Chair said that SPC would do its best to meet this timetable, but emphasised that there were still numerous issues to resolve.

Councillor B Hughes explained that the move to a new Unitary Authority would mean that many of the same officials would remain involved in planning matters, although new area planning boards would be established.