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REMHAM & WARGRAVE

Former PM's fears over 250 homes plan for Hurst

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Theresa May has stepped in to the fight over proposals to build up to 250 homes on a green field.

The Maidenhead MP visited an exhibition about the scheme for land between Lodge Road and Tape Lane in Hurst last Thursday. The exhibition at Hurst Village Hall was staged by the plan's promoters, Mactaggert and Mickel.

Hurst Village Society, which is fighting the proposals, is in touch with Mrs May who has told Wokingham Borough Council of residents' concerns.

The HVS website quotes from Mrs May's letter to WBC saying: "My constituents are concerned that the current development plans will have a disproportionate impact on the village and its residents. The current proposals would see 300 more homes in a village of roughly two-thousand people..."

The impacts of large developments on small communities need to be reviewed closely and any development should enhance the existing community."

On Tuesday the village society said they would make the "strongest possible objection" to the plans when a planning permission application was made to Wokingham Borough Council.

The society criticised the "very lack lustre exhibition". In many instances it had lacked "important



LAND: A horse grazing in land by Tape Lane. A proposal for up to 250 homes will be showcased at an exhibition taking place in Hurst Village Hall. *Picture: Sue Corcoran*

accurate factual information."

The exhibition revealed that 50 homes have been cut from the original 300 suggested.

Wokingham Borough Council has challenged some information given by the promoters at the exhibition as being incorrect.

Mactaggert and Mickel claimed that their proposals should be given planning permission, given certain circumstances. This was because the council couldn't show there was a five year supply of land to build housing in the borough.

But Cllr Wayne Smith, WBC executive member for planning

said: "The reference to not having a five-year housing land supply is incorrect. The most recent monitoring report, from March 2020, found a deliverable housing land supply of 5.23 years.

"The report is on the planning policy evidence page of the council's website."

Mactaggert and Mickel said on Tuesday: "We were pleased by the level of turnout at our public exhibition, considering that a local group was recommending to Hurst residents that they not attend."

Protect Hurst Action Group had urged residents not to go.

They said that unless residents said they were emphatically against any development on the site, any other comments would be used to imply support. Mactaggert and Mickel denied that.

M&M did not answer some of Wokingham Today's questions.

The exhibition displayed points raised earlier by residents and changes made responding to them. M&M declined to say how many people had raised each point, how visitors had reacted to the changes and how many attended the exhibition.

But they did say: "The proposals on show at the exhibition responded to the most common issues raised by respondents during our initial online consultation over the summer and initial advice from Wokingham Borough Council's Highways team.

"We have arranged for follow-up meetings with individual adjoining property owners, and we will reflect on where the concerns expressed can be accommodated within the proposals before we submit an outline planning application at the end of this year or the beginning of next year."

WBC has said the location for a second access road [in a narrow, access only road, Tape Lane] now included in the plans was not discussed with M&M.

The exhibition and an online feedback form can be seen at www.landeastoflodgeroad.co.uk