



19th September 2023

E-Mail to development.control@wokingham.gov.uk

For the Attention of The Case Officer, Planning Application Ref.No: 232026

Land North of London Road and East of A329(M)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Outline planning application for the erection of up to 45 residential dwellings, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure, means of access will be considered (with Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale to be reserved).

Hurst Village Society (HVS) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this planning application particularly having regard to the background relating to potential future development on this site.

Despite HVS being aware that “this application has been submitted on the basis of a presumption in favour of sustainable development” the Society would wish to object to the application. It has to be accepted that Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) cannot currently demonstrate a five year land supply of housing, but the argument put forward by the developer, that as a result, the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are automatically considered out of date is challenged by HVS.

In a recent Planning Appeal Decision notice (Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/22/3309202, Land East of Lodge Road, Hurst) The Planning Inspector makes a number of important points that support HVS’s stance as follows;

- “I see no reason to dispute the Council’s (WBC) interpretation that it demonstrates a clear boosting of housing delivery to date, in line with Framework (National Planning Policy Framework) requirements.”
- “There is a very strong likelihood that the Council will achieve a significant oversupply of dwelling completions over the whole CS period. To my mind this does not signify a Council that is failing in terms of housing provision, but rather one that is performing well and managing to boost the supply of housing over that which it planned for.”
- “But being considered out-of-date does not mean that these policies can carry no weightThe Framework itself clarifies this point in its paragraph 219, where it explains that due weight should be given to development plan policies according to their degree of consistency within the Framework. The closer such policies are to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given to them.”

The Society in objecting to this application believes that CS Policies CP11 and CP20 are key to the consideration of this application particularly in relation to the above.

CP11 makes it clear that proposals outside of development limits (including countryside), will not normally be permitted. This site is outside such limits and HVS has consistently supported this approach in objecting to planning applications (except where it believes due to the position of a site, that it should be considered “Infill” rather than there being a need to protect the separate identity of settlements.). Whilst this policy does allow for some exceptions to this approach, none of these apply in this case.

In respect of CP20 WBC as the Planning Authority has identified “The need to maintain separation of Wokingham from Binfield/Bracknell and Winnersh reflects the Core Strategy’s Spatial Issues and Spatial Vision together with the adopted Bracknell Forest Core Strategy.” On the basis that the Council has found that the maintenance of the separation of Wokingham from the other settlements is essential, this would support the refusal of this application.

Furthermore the Society would suggest that WBC’s spatial vision accords with the requirements of paragraph 11(a) of the NPPF as it promotes a sustainable pattern of development and therefore again having regard to the above, CP9 should be accorded proper weight in the consideration of this application.

Accordingly HVS believes that the logical conclusion to our argument as set out above is that if proper weight is given to these Policies, the application should be refused as the “adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the framework (NPPF) taken as a whole.”

The Society is of course aware that WBC through HELAA has identified this site (5HU051) as potentially suitable for housing development, which identified capacity

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for 45 homes, in so much that it is bounded by roads on two sides, and on a third side is bounded by a recent housing development within Bracknell Forest. Further consultation is expected shortly on the Local Plan Update and so it remains to be seen if this site is still included as potentially suitable by the Planning Authority.

Clearly the local residents are very concerned that the existing road (in Bracknell Forest) which will form the access to this potential development site is inadequate.

Bracknell Forest Council is on record as saying that such development would compromise the strategic gap function, and Thames Water believes that the scale of this development is likely to require upgrades of the wastewater network.

I trust that these comments will be taken into account as part of your deliberations into this planning application.

Yours faithfully,

John Osborne on behalf of Hurst Village Society

