

PLANNING APPLICATION 261059

Outline application (with all matters reserved except for access) for residential development (Up to 660 residential dwellings) (Use Class C3), plus elderly care dwellings (Use Class C2/C3), associated open space, allotments, green and blue infrastructure including the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and other associated works.

REPRESENTATION PREPARED BY LEANI HAIM MRTPI, PLANNING DIRECTOR OF ONH
PLANNING FOR GOOD WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM COLIN MILES BSc CEng MICE MIHT,
HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT PLANNING ON BEHALF OF BARKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Summary

The Parish Council wishes to ensure that the proposed development functions well as part of the existing Arborfield Green SDL community. At this stage the Parish Council does not consider that the proposal has demonstrated this and therefore raises an **objection** to the proposed development. The Parish Council's principal concerns, which are developed in the body of this representation, are as follows:

- o the cumulative scale of the now substantially expanded SDL, and the consequent question over whether the infrastructure framework prepared for the original SDL remains adequate;
- o the submitted movement and access strategy has not demonstrated that the development would function as an integrated part of the existing Arborfield Green community, relying on a single point of vehicular access and providing no secondary vehicular connection into the wider SDL;
- o the submitted Transport Assessment does not adequately assess, and does not propose to mitigate, the impact of development and committed traffic on the local highway network, in particular on Barkham Road and its junctions, and places undue reliance on strategic traffic modelling that does not reflect the congestion experienced locally;
- o insufficient weight has been given to the permanent loss of a substantial area of best and most versatile agricultural land; and
- o matters of phasing, and of health, education, water and wastewater infrastructure, remain inadequately resolved.

The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to the development plan when read as a whole, and the material considerations identified in this representation do not, at this stage, indicate that planning permission should be granted. The Parish Council requests that the application be refused, or that it not be determined until the matters set out in this representation have been satisfactorily addressed.

1. Relevant Policies

1.1 The following adopted development plan policies are especially relevant for the Parish Council's representation:

Wokingham Borough Core Strategy adopted January 2010

- CP1 - Sustainable development
- CP2 - Inclusive Communities
- CP3 - General Principles for development
- CP4 - Infrastructure Requirements
- CP6 - Managing Travel Demand
- CP9 - Scale and location of development proposals
- CP10 - Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network
- CP11 - Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside)
- CP18 - Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location (including Appendix 7)

Wokingham Borough Managing Development Deliver Local Plan adopted February 2014

- Policy CC01 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy CC02 – Development Limits

Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan (NP) made April 2020

- Policy IRS1: Preservation of settlements
- Policy GA1: Minimise additional traffic on unsuitable roads
- Policy GA2: Implement local network of green routes for non-motorised users
- Policy GA3: Public transport improvements with long term viability

1.2 The applicant contends that there is only conflict with Policies CP11, CC02 and IRS1 listed above and attributes minimal weight to its provisions due to the absence of a five-year housing land supply, the provisions of §14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on NPs, and the dated nature of some of the documents. The absence of a five-year housing land supply may render these policies out of date and engage the tilted balance, but it does not automatically render other policies relating to the principle of development listed above out of date. Those policies remain part of the development plan and continue to attract weight unless there is a separate reason why they are out of date or inconsistent with the NPPF which is not the case here.

1.3 The development plan is the starting point for decision-making unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and the Wokingham Local Plan Update (LPU) currently at examination are material considerations.

1.4 The following draft LPU policies (including the schedule of proposed modifications dated February 2025) are especially relevant for the Parish Council's representation:

- Policy SS1: Sustainable development principles
- Policy SS2: Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy
- Policy SS11: Arborfield Green Strategic Development Location
- Policy SS15: Securing infrastructure
- Policy SS17: Transport improvements
- Policy C1: Active and sustainable transport and accessibility
- Policy C2: Mitigation of transport impacts and highways safety and design
- Policy C3: Active travel
- Policy C8: Utilities
- Policy HC1: Promoting healthy communities

1.5 The applicant contends that significant weight should be given to draft Policy SS11, relying on the advanced stage of the LPU and the alleged absence of substantive unresolved objections under NPPF §49. However, the LPU remains under examination. Although the Stage 2 Matters, Issues and Questions suggest the broad principle of the allocation was considered at Stage 1, they do not endorse draft Policy SS11 or its development guidelines. The Inspectors are still considering the specific provisions of draft Policy SS11. Accordingly, while the emerging allocation may attract some weight, the policy requirements relevant to Barkham Square remain unresolved and should therefore attract no more than moderate weight.

1.6 A consultation on a revised NPPF took place early in 2026 with a new version anticipated to be published by summer 2026. The December 2025 consultation version of the NPPF makes it clear that its content will be a material consideration from the day of its publication and its provisions could therefore be relevant when a decision on this application is made.

2. Key Issues

Principle of development

2.1 Before turning to the detail of the scheme, the Parish Council draws attention to the cumulative scale of development now proposed in this part of the Borough. The SDL has already been extended once to incorporate Hogwood Park. The Parish Council remains concerned that the infrastructure framework prepared to support the original SDL is now dated and may no longer adequately reflect the scale of development being proposed. This reinforces the need, addressed further below, for the Borough Council to satisfy itself that the transport, health, education and utilities infrastructure on which the expanded SDL depends remains deliverable and properly aligned with the quantum of development now coming forward.

2.2 Whilst it is recognised that the application site is proposed to form part of the extended Arborfield Green SDL under LPU draft Policy SS11, the acceptability of any further expansion is dependent upon whether the development would function as an integrated part of the existing Arborfield Green community, rather than a separate or inward-looking extension. That requires more than internal permeability within the red line boundary. It requires direct, convenient and attractive connections to the services and facilities upon which future residents would rely.

2.3 The Parish Council is not presently satisfied that the submitted movement and access strategy achieves this. In particular, the proposal appears to fall short in the following respects:

- There is no secondary vehicular connection through to the wider Arborfield Green SDL weakening the opportunity for efficient bus routing;
- Outward pedestrian and cycle connections to existing and proposed facilities are not shown to be sufficiently direct or attractive;
- Allotment location and access arrangements encourage car-based trips rather than embedding active travel as the first natural choice.

2.4 The absence of a secondary vehicular connection is of particular concern. Without it, movement between the proposed development and the existing Arborfield Green community would be less direct, less legible and less capable of supporting internalised trips. It would especially limit the ability for future public transport services to pass efficiently through the development and connect onward to the wider SDL, rather than serving the site as a more peripheral or disconnected extension.

2.5 This concern is reinforced by Wokingham Borough Council's own written statement during the examination for the LPU which explains that a secondary access would *"encourage internalised trips and provide the opportunity for sustainable transport, such as bus routes, to be provided both through and beyond the SDL"* specifically *"to ensure the Barkham Square development integrates effectively with the wider Arborfield Green SDL"*. The Parish Council is concerned that any deliberate reluctance to provide practical vehicular connectivity with the wider Arborfield Green SDL would not, in itself, secure sustainable travel behaviour. Future residents will continue to require private vehicles for many ordinary day-to-day trips, including shopping, carrying children or equipment, journeys at unsociable hours, and trips where public transport or active travel is not practical. In the absence of meaningful alternatives, restricting connectivity is likely to displace traffic onto less suitable local roads rather than reduce car use. A strategy which assumes that residents will simply give up car-based travel, without early delivery of attractive public transport, direct active travel routes and practical internal connectivity, would be unrealistic and risks embedding precisely the car-dependent travel patterns that policy seeks to avoid.

2.6 The Parish Council is also concerned that the submitted scheme does not yet demonstrate that outward pedestrian and cycle links would be sufficiently direct, attractive or convenient for day-to-day use. Internal routes, greenways and recreational paths are valuable, but they are not a substitute for clear, practical and well-connected routes to schools, shops, community facilities, public transport stops and other services. For active travel to become a genuine alternative to the private car, the shortest and most intuitive routes must connect residents to real destinations beyond the application boundary. At present, the strategy appears stronger in terms of internal circulation than in demonstrating how future residents would be drawn into the established movement network of Arborfield Green.

2.7 The proposed arrangements for the allotments raise a further concern. These facilities should help embed healthy lifestyles, community use and active travel from the outset. However, the allotments are proposed in a location that is some distance from the

residential element of the scheme. There is a risk that it will become a car-accessed destination rather than a facility naturally reached on foot or by cycle. The Parish Council considers that the location of the allotments should prioritise walking and cycling access, with any vehicle access clearly subordinate and justified by operational need. It should be noted that the Parish Council supports the provision of SANG in a location that provides a settlement buffer between Barkham Square and the community at Barkham Street as proposed.

2.8 These provisions and omissions are significant because they undermine the ability of the development to properly connect into existing movement patterns, limits opportunities for efficient future bus routing, and weakens the relationship between the proposed development and the existing Arborfield Green community. This is particularly important in Arborfield Green given the settlement's continued reliance on surrounding settlements for access to services and facilities due to the under-delivery of health infrastructure originally anticipated as part of the SDL. It increases the need for any additional development to be exceptionally well connected.

2.9 Accordingly, the Parish Council considers that the current application has not yet demonstrated compliance with relevant policy expectations for integration, accessibility, sustainable transport and creating healthy communities including Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4 and CP6, LPU draft Policies SS1, SS11, SS15, C1, C2, C3 and HC1, Neighbourhood Plan Policies GA2 and GA3 and the provisions of the NPPF (and national decision-making policies of the consultation version of the NPPF) insofar as they relate to these objectives.

Transport, highway impact and the package of mitigation

2.10 The Parish Council has commissioned a technical review of the submitted Transport Assessment (prepared by i-Transport and dated 25 March 2026) from its highways and transport advisers, Highways & Transport Planning ("HTP"), dated 6 June 2026. That review, together with the local knowledge of the Parish Council and its members, informs the concerns set out below. The relevant policy test is well established: paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the network would be "severe", and that significant impacts should be capable of being cost-effectively mitigated through a vision-led approach. These considerations are reinforced by Core Strategy Policies CP6 and CP10, by draft LPU Policies SS17, C1 and C2, and by Neighbourhood Plan Policy GA1, which seeks to minimise additional traffic on unsuitable roads. The Parish Council does not consider that the submitted Transport Assessment has yet demonstrated that these tests are met.

2.11 The assessment of impact on the local highway network relies almost entirely on the output of the Wokingham Strategic Transport Model (WSTM4). No recent local traffic surveys, including turning movement counts and queue and delay surveys, have been commissioned at the links and junctions of greatest concern to the Parish Council. The Parish Council has consistently questioned the validity of the model flows in the Barkham area, including through representations and a technical note submitted

to the LPU examination in November 2025. Its concerns are heightened by the fact that the model base data are understood to have been collected shortly after the Covid-19 pandemic, when traffic levels were materially suppressed by lockdowns and home working, and there is no confirmation that the model has since been updated to reflect current flows and all committed development. Traffic data collected by the Parish Council over an extended period indicate flows on Barkham Road and Langley Common Road averaging some 5,206 vehicles per day, which are higher than the flows relied upon in the assessment. Against this background, the modelled delays of only two to three seconds across the network, including along Barkham Road, are not considered to be a credible representation of conditions on the ground.

2.12 The Transport Assessment does not adequately acknowledge existing traffic conditions and congestion in the Barkham area. In particular, it does not record the heavy eastbound queues on Barkham Road during the morning peak, which regularly extend at least 500 metres from the Barkham Road/Barkham Street junction towards School Road. Instead, the applicant suggests that the site is well-connected, with Wokingham rail station just a 7-minute drive from the site. This is almost impossible at normal times let alone at peak periods and does not take into consideration the railway crossing and state of the narrow, rural and residential roads accessing these routes. Many of the affected roads are narrow rural lanes, such as Barkham Ride, Commonfield Lane and Barkham Street, while Barkham Road and Langley Common Road are already carrying significantly increased flows arising from the continued build-out of the Arborfield Green SDL. The closure of School Road has resulted in Langley Common Road now carrying all traffic from the west towards Wokingham. The impact of up to 660 dwellings at Barkham Square resulting in 2707 per day vehicles accessing the site adding 52% more to Langley Common Road, taken together with other committed and emerging development including the proposals expected at Arborfield Studios, would compound this position, particularly along Langley Common Road and Barkham Road. The absence of any meaningful description of existing conditions undermines confidence in the conclusion that the development would not have a severe residual cumulative impact.

2.13 The individual junction modelling itself discloses a significant impact that the Parish Council does not accept has been adequately addressed. The Barkham Road/Bearwood Road roundabout, as per table 8.6 (page 63) of the submitted i-Transport Assessment, is shown to be considerably over capacity in all three future scenarios, with modelled queues of between 64 and 184 vehicles on the Bearwood Road approach in the morning peak, and the modelled ratios of flow to capacity exceed the conventional theoretical threshold of 0.85 both there and, to a lesser extent, at the Barkham Street/Barkham Road roundabout. Notwithstanding this, the assessment characterises the change attributable to the development as a “modest increase in junction throughput” and concludes that the development does not result in the need for mitigation at this location. It is well established that, where a junction is already operating at or beyond capacity, even a small increment of additional traffic can have a material effect on queues and delays. The Parish Council therefore considers that the development does have a material impact at a sensitive junction that is already under serious strain, and that this impact cannot safely be discounted as less than severe simply because the modelled proportionate change is presented as small.

- 2.14 The Parish Council also notes two matters of assessment scope. First, it would have been reasonable to include the Barkham Road/Edneys Hill roundabout within the study area, given its potential to be affected by queues associated with the Bearwood Road/Barkham Road junction; it has not been assessed. Second, the proposed site access roundabout has been tested only against an indicative 50/50 directional split. A robust assessment would test a range of directional splits, or replicate the observed distribution on the adjoining road, in order to establish the sensitivity of the junction. These omissions further limit the weight that can be placed on the conclusion that no severe impact would arise.
- 2.15 The only highway mitigation contemplated by the Transport Assessment is a queue-responsive signal head on the eastbound Barkham Road approach to the Bearwood Road/Barkham Road roundabout. The Parish Council has significant reservations about this measure. Signal control was previously trialled at this junction in the 1980s, caused queuing in all directions, and was subsequently removed in favour of the present mini-roundabout. There is a real risk that the proposal would simply transfer queuing from the Bearwood Road arm onto Barkham Road eastbound towards the bridge, rather than resolving the underlying problem of excessive traffic on a rural B-road network to which no new road capacity is being added. The measure should be re-modelled using current surveyed flows together with committed development and appropriate growth to the 2040 design year, in order to establish whether it is genuinely feasible and effective.
- 2.16 Of particular concern, the Transport Assessment does not commit the applicant to funding even this single measure; it is left as something that the Borough Council may consider as a future intervention. The Parish Council does not consider it acceptable for the conclusion of no severe impact to depend upon mitigation that the applicant does not itself propose to deliver or fund. If, following further modelling, a junction improvement is shown to be necessary and effective, it should be secured and funded by the developer through a Section 106 obligation, including provision for its subsequent removal or adjustment should it fail to operate as modelled once implemented.
- 2.17 The single point of vehicular access also raises a highway resilience concern that reinforces the integration concern addressed earlier in this representation. The scheme proposes a single main access from a new four-arm roundabout on Langley Common Road, together with an emergency vehicle access, and would provide up to 660 dwellings. In the Parish Council's experience, a development of this scale would ordinarily be expected to provide two independent points of vehicular access onto the external highway network; the threshold at which a second access is commonly required falls well below this figure, typically in the range of 150 to 300 dwellings.
- 2.18 The Public Transport Strategy refers to the existing good quality bus provision available within Arborfield Green but makes no mention of the possibility of linking services into Barkham Square. The latter could be achieved if considered desirable by including a 'bus gate' which precludes non-public transport vehicles. Should the Borough Council nonetheless be minded to approve the outline application, the Parish Council considers that the reserved matters should secure a sufficiently wide or looped principal access road to ensure that residents are not cut off in the event of the access

being blocked, and should pursue a secondary vehicular connection, or at the very least a bus gate, through to the wider Arborfield Green SDL to enable internalised trips and efficient public transport routing, consistent with Neighbourhood Plan Policy GA3 and draft LPU Policies SS17 and C1.

2.19 In pressing for a secondary vehicular connection, the Parish Council wishes to be clear that it is referring to a purpose-built link into the Arborfield Green SDL, and not to any use of the existing rural lane network. In particular, the Parish Council objects to any increase in vehicular traffic on Commonfield Lane, which is one of the narrow rural lanes referred to above, has only passing places, and forms part of the walking and cycling route towards Bohunt School via the California Greenway. The Parish Council shares the concern raised by Finchampstead Parish Council that Commonfield Lane should not be used to provide access to the allotments, to serve the proposed SANG car park, or as a secondary vehicular access to the development. Any secondary connection sought by the Parish Council should accordingly be provided through to the wider SDL, and not onto Commonfield Lane or the other narrow lanes serving Barkham.

2.20 The favourable conclusions of the assessment rest in part on assumptions about behavioural change that the Parish Council considers optimistic. The trip generation incorporates a ten per cent reduction in private car trips to reflect modal shift, and the multi-modal assessment relies on 2011 Census travel-to-work data rather than the more recent 2021 Census. The strategy further relies on the borough-wide target of a fifty per cent reduction in internal combustion engine private car mileage, with a substantial contribution anticipated from electric vehicles. The Council's own 2025 progress reporting indicates an internal combustion engine private mileage share of around 78.8 per cent, and electric vehicles remain a small proportion both of new registrations and of the existing fleet. Placing significant weight on assumed modal shift in order to conclude that the residual impact would not be severe carries a real risk that, if that shift does not materialise, car dependency becomes embedded from the outset; a risk closely connected to the phasing concerns set out below.

2.21 The Parish Council acknowledges that the examination of the five-year personal injury collision record discloses no particular existing safety concern, and that the proposed site access roundabout would introduce a welcome speed-remediation feature on the long, straight section of Langley Common Road. Nevertheless, the introduction of substantial additional traffic onto rural lanes has the potential to increase collision risk over time. The Parish Council considers that a package of developer-funded preventative measures should be secured, including improved pedestrian and cycle facilities, speed reduction measures, village gateway features and improvements to verges and kerbing along Barkham Road, Langley Common Road, Barkham Street and Barkham Ride.

2.22 The proposal relies heavily on future mitigation measures, sustainable travel assumptions and integration with Arborfield Green SDL, but given the existing highway network it is not clear how much mitigation can be done to materially lessen the impact on congestion. In light of this, the Parish Council considers that the following package of further assessment and mitigation should be secured before the application is

determined or, if permission is granted, through appropriate conditions and planning obligations:

- re-assessment of the Barkham Road/Barkham Street, Barkham Road/Edneys Hill and Bearwood Road/Barkham Road mini-roundabouts using current surveyed traffic flows and recorded queues, together with committed development flows and appropriate growth to 2040, in order to test the validity of the strategic model outputs;
- a developer commitment, secured by Section 106 obligation, to fund any junction improvement shown to be necessary and effective, together with its removal or adjustment if it does not operate as modelled;
- a secondary vehicular connection, or at least a bus gate, into the wider Arborfield Green SDL, and a sufficiently wide or looped principal access road; and
- a funded package of active travel and road safety improvements along Barkham Road, Langley Common Road, Barkham Street and Barkham Ride.

2.23 For these reasons the Parish Council considers that the Transport Assessment has not demonstrated that the proposal would avoid an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or that any residual cumulative impact on the local highway network would not be severe, and that the package of mitigation presently relied upon is neither sufficiently certain nor secured. The proposal accordingly conflicts with paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework, with Core Strategy Policies CP6 and CP10, with Neighbourhood Plan Policies GA1, GA2 and GA3, and with draft LPU Policies SS15, SS17, C1, C2 and C3, insofar as they relate to these matters.

Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land

2.24 The applicant's weighting of the loss of agricultural land appears understated. The submitted application documents confirms that the site contains a substantial area of the best and most versatile agricultural (BMV) agricultural land (16.9ha Grade 2 and 14.7ha of Grade 3a amounting to 31.6ha of BMV agricultural land). Recent appeal decisions¹ demonstrate that such a loss remains a material planning harm capable of attracting meaningful weight, particularly where the loss is permanent. The fact that the land is currently used for occasional sheep grazing does not remove its inherent agricultural quality. Accordingly, the harm should not be reduced simply because the land is not currently farmed to its full potential or because it represents a small proportion of the Borough's overall BVM agricultural land resource. It is considered that a more appropriate assessment would recognise the permanent loss of a sizeable area of BMV agricultural land as a distinct adverse impact that is capable of attracting meaningful weight, to be weighed alongside the proposal's other harms and benefits.

3. Other matters for consideration

Phasing

3.1 Phasing is particularly important in this location as proposals rely on and form part of the wider Arborfield Green SDL, where key elements of infrastructure and community

¹ APP/U2750/W/24/3343998; APP/L3815/W/24/3341520; APP/Z2260/W/24/3351846

provision have historically lagged behind residential delivery. In these circumstances, there is a significant risk that additional housing could reinforce unsustainable travel patterns if movement connections are deferred to later phases. This is especially relevant in relation to public transport integration, active travel connectivity and vehicular connection into the wider Arborfield Green SDL. If such infrastructure is not secured and delivered at an early stage, there is real risk that car dependency becomes embedded from the outset, undermining the ability to shift travel behaviour at a later date. The Parish Council therefore considers that infrastructure necessary to support sustainable movement and effective integration with the existing community should be frontloaded and linked to clear trigger points, rather than deferred to later phases where delivery becomes more uncertain.

- 3.2 The Parish Council notes that Farley Hill Primary School is the closest primary school to the site and is already understood to be operating at or near capacity. Whilst it is acknowledged that funding and land may exist to facilitate a future expansion of the school, there appears to be limited clarity at present regarding the timing of any expansion, the trigger for delivery, or how it would align with the occupation of dwellings proposed through this application. This creates a risk that residential development could proceed ahead of the necessary education capacity being available, placing additional pressure on existing school places and increasing the likelihood of unsustainable travel patterns as families seek access to schools further afield. The Parish Council therefore considers that the phasing of development should be closely tied to the confirmed delivery of sufficient primary school capacity, with clear trigger points secured through planning obligations or conditions to ensure that education infrastructure is delivered in step with occupation rather than retrospectively.

Health infrastructure

- 3.3 The Parish Council is aware, from work it is currently undertaking in updating the made NP, that existing GP premises in the area is operating at or near functional capacity, and that there is a lack of funding to support new premises or to support the improvement of existing GP premises. While the development will be liable for CIL as part of future reserved matters applications, there is no planned allocation from CIL toward healthcare. Funding can therefore only be secured through developer contributions. Whilst it is anticipated that the ICB will make their own representations on the application, the Parish Council wish to highlight this matter as a concern to ensure that appropriate contributions are secured to deal with the effects of additional development on already strained health infrastructure services. It should also be noted that the Parish Council supports the inclusion of obligations and/or conditions to ensure that the development remains liable for CIL.

Water and wastewater infrastructure

- 3.4 The examination of the LPU highlighted the need for upgrades to existing water and wastewater infrastructure which has not yet taken place. The Parish Council therefore considers that any permission should include Grampian-style conditions to prevent the development from proceeding ahead of any confirmed deliverable water and sewerage capacity. This is supported by the provisions of LPU draft Policy SS11.

Off-site sports contribution

- 3.5 It is noted that the application proposes an off-site contribution towards sports and recreation provision. The Parish Council considers that the Section 106 agreement should include sufficient precision to ensure that funds are directed toward suitable projects within the parish area, rather than being absorbed into wider Borough-wide spending, to ensure that the development contributes meaningfully toward maintaining and improving local infrastructure.

Governance matters

- 3.6 The Parish Council notes that the applicant anticipates the delivery of allotments, play provision and other community infrastructure as part of the development. The Parish Council wishes to be actively involved in Section 106 discussions on the allotments at an early stage and would be interested in taking on the future ownership and/or management of the allotments, subject to appropriate terms, funding and long-term maintenance arrangements being agreed. Given the importance of these facilities to the successful integration of the development into the existing community, the Parish Council also wishes to be closely involved in the detailed design and delivery of community infrastructure through future Reserved Matters applications, particularly in relation to play areas, public open space and other community-facing elements of the scheme.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 For the reasons set out above, Barkham Parish Council objects to the application. While the Parish Council recognises that the site is proposed to form part of the extended Arborfield Green SDL under draft LPU Policy SS11, it is not satisfied that the application as submitted has demonstrated that the development would function as a genuinely integrated and sustainable part of the existing community, or that its highway impact has been properly assessed and mitigated.
- 4.2 The Parish Council's principal concerns are: the cumulative scale of the now substantially expanded SDL and the consequent doubt over whether the infrastructure framework prepared for the original SDL remains adequate; the inadequacy of the movement and access strategy, including the absence of a secondary vehicular connection to the wider SDL and the reliance on a single point of vehicular access for up to 660 dwellings; the location of the allotments at some distance from the residential element of the scheme, which risks their becoming a car-accessed destination rather than a facility naturally reached on foot or by cycle; the failure of the Transport Assessment to assess and mitigate the impact of development and committed traffic on the local highway network, in particular on Barkham Road and its junctions; the understated weight given to the permanent loss of best and most versatile agricultural land; and the unresolved questions of phasing and of health, education, water and wastewater infrastructure.

- 4.3 Taken together, these matters mean that the proposal does not presently accord with the development plan when read as a whole, including Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP6 and CP10, Neighbourhood Plan Policies IRS1, GA1, GA2 and GA3, emerging policies identified in this representation, and the material considerations do not indicate that permission should be granted in advance of these matters being resolved.
- 4.4 In any case, even if the absence of a five-year housing land supply renders the most important policies out of date and engages the tilted balance in paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the NPPF, that balance does not favour the grant of permission in this instance. Paragraph 11(d)(ii) requires permission to be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The Parish Council considers that the adverse impacts identified in this representation – in particular the unmitigated and inadequately assessed impact on the local highway network, the failure of the scheme to integrate with the existing Arborfield Green community, the permanent loss of a substantial area of best and most versatile agricultural land, and the unresolved infrastructure and phasing constraints arising from the cumulative scale of the expanded SDL – would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal. The tilted balance therefore reinforces, rather than displaces, the conclusion that planning permission should be refused.
- 4.5 The Parish Council therefore requests that the application be refused. In the alternative, should the Borough Council be minded to grant permission, the Parish Council requests that it first secure the further transport assessment and the package of mitigation, infrastructure and phasing measures identified above through appropriate planning conditions and obligations, and that the Parish Council be closely involved in the design and delivery of community infrastructure, and in the Section 106 discussions, including in relation to the allotments, at the earliest opportunity.