

PLANNING REF : 250517
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 1 Loddon Court Farm Cottages
: Lambs Lane, Spencers Wood, Berkshire
: RG7 1JG
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Michael Dick
DATE SUBMITTED : 05/04/2025

COMMENTS:

I write to object to the outline planning application to land Off Basingstoke Road to the south and west of Spencers Wood -

Application Ref. 250517

My reasons for objection are as follows:

1) Local Development Plan

The proposed development is not included in the Wokingham District Local Development Plan. The LDP is the outcome of a process to plan sustainable and appropriate development, following local consultation, integrated with related facilities, services and infrastructure

provision. As this development falls outside this process it is inevitable that it does not comply with these related plans for local service and infrastructure provision. It is therefore significantly detrimental to these service and infrastructure elements, which I will comment on in detail within the objection.

I understand that the Government has recently increased the housing target that Wokingham. I assume that this will require Wokingham District to re-open the local planning process. This would be the proper time to assess this outline planning application in conjunction with the review of local infrastructure and facilities needed to meet this increased development target.

2) AWE Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ)

I understand that the DEPZ requirements means that there should not be further large scale development within the Zone. Even if the hazard is unlikely and the impact low, as proposed by the Developer in the Environmental Statement Section 6.10.4, it does not make sense to

deliberately plan to expose residents, including vulnerable persons in the new school and care home, to that risk. On that basis the application should be rejected.

In addition, the proposed Development increases risks to the control measures that would be in place in the event of an emergency. These are:

a) Although the Environment Statement, Section 6, states that evacuation is unlikely, this could be needed. In that event the Development increases risk as egress is to the west ie towards the hazard - ref. Development Parameter Plan. This does not appear to be mentioned in the Environmental Statement.

b) The proposed Development would bring vulnerable people eg. to the Care Home and school, into the DEPZ increasing risk to them in the event of an emergency. Also, should evacuation be needed, health risks are increased due to the likely inability to evacuate the care home, at least without causing increased risk to others. There would also be the difficulty in providing staff to the care home if the area is in a lock down. It does not seem sensible to plan a Care Home within the Zone, which goes back to my assertion that inappropriate proposals have been included in the Development as it has not been through the Local Planning process.

c) The Environmental Statement requires a Management Company (ref. 6.7.25) to be provided. Given the challenge to Local Authority budgets it seems extremely unlikely that this would actually happen.

This means that a number of the mitigation measures proposed by the Developer would not be provided.

d) The Environmental Statement also requires the Community Buildings to fulfil an emergency planning role (ref. 6.7.27). As there does not appear to be any mechanism that ensures these facilities would be provided in advance of housing, the care home and school, it means that the proposed mitigation measures are highly likely not to be delivered.

For all the reasons above the Development should not be approved.

3) Type of Development

Spencers Wood has a Moderate Development Status, and Swallowfield, to the south, has a Limited Development status. This very large proposal, a 420 house development with a range of facilities, is not in keeping with either of these existing statuses. In addition, the style of Development is very intensive and it totally out of keeping with the existing southerly edge to Spencers Wood. It also closes the gap to Swallowfield which has to be maintained between the existing villages.

There are also schemes in the Shinfield and Arborfield Strategic Development and also Hall Farm Garden Village, with integrated infrastructure schemes for roads and services that would make a significant impact on housing demand. As set out above, the impact of this Proposal on Wokingham's development target needs to be assessed against the wider strategies through the Local Planning process. As this has not happened, this Proposal should be rejected.

The amount of affordable housing proposed is not in keeping with the Local Plan. This should be increased to 50% in line with the Local Plan and will also need associated facilities such as improved public transport. This is not included in the Development, and is a significant risk given the problems in getting the 600 route re-instated and also the risk in maintaining the bus service over the long term.

There is also a fuel pipeline running across the site. This, together with the DEPZ, were reasons why a development in Grazeley was rejected and the same approach should be made here.

4) School Provision.

The Proposal includes the provision of a new school. How will this work alongside existing school provision in the Spencers Wood area? Does it form part of an approved plan owned, funded and resourced by the Education authority? The proposal does not appear to meet the needs of the Development, given that demand already exceeds provision, and therefore the school facilities would need to be significantly expanded. It would also have to be built at the beginning of the construction phase to ensure capacity was available as the demand further increases.

Therefore, the Application should not be approved as currently envisaged as the school provision does not meet demand.

5) Traffic Impact

The proposed Development includes a roundabout at Back Lane. This would reinforce the 'rat run' route to the A33 via Lambs Lane and White House Lane further increasing traffic past Lambs Lane primary school and also to the crossroads between Lambs Lane and Beech Hill Road, already an accident black spot. There are recently introduced 30 mph and 7.5t limits on sections of this route which is part of the means to reduce traffic. The Development will significantly increase traffic in this area increasing risk of accidents. The

Development

should not be approved as the additional vehicle movements it would create on this route to the A33 cannot be accommodated safely on the existing lanes and in the area around Lambs Lane school. In addition, the Proposal does not have any safe pedestrian crossing points between the Development and the west side of Basingstoke Road. These would be needed if there are school facilities are linked to the existing Lambs Lane primary school as set out in the Education Landscape Review.

6) Environment

The site largely falls from north to south and therefore poses a risk to the River Loddon of run off and pollution. Although there were

statements in the Flood Risk Assessment that the flood waters and surface runoff would have to be addressed, I couldn't see the plans on how this will be done without increasing load on local sewage treatment and other runoff discharge points. This is important given the impact of climate change on already limited local resources. There will also be a displacement and loss of wildlife from the area, for example the deer that are regularly seen there together with red kites and also migrating birds such a redwing. There is no provision for alternative large scale wide open space to replace the lost land. The proposed green spaces are also insufficient for the number of new residents. The lack of adequate community facilities, for example a community hall and allotments, is particularly important given the demand and current limited provision in the wider area.

7) Facilities

As the Proposal is not part of the Local Plan, the facilities that are proposed include things not required by the community. For example. There are already sports pitches in the Shinfield development. In addition, the facilities would drive the need for car parking provision which is not adequately provided for in the development plans.

8) Medical Facilities.

The GP Surgery would have to be supported by the NHS for resources and operating costs and it is not clear whether that is the case. It would also have to be provided early in the Development as demand for medical services already exceed capacity.

9) Business Park

There is already a Business Park at Lambs Lane. This has been advertising vacant units for occupancy for a considerable time which says that the area is over capacity now. There is already other Business Park provision near by - for example Wellington Business Park in Spencers Wood and Heron Industrial Estate. There is no need for an additional estate.

In addition, if there is an increase in heavy vehicle movements, this would greatly increase road safety risks around Lambs Lane Primary

School and along the Basingstoke Road, particularly in the area of the blind bend to the south of Back Lane.

For the reasons set out above this Proposal should be rejected or at the very least altered substantially to address the impacts it will result in.