

PLANNING REF : 250517
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Parkside House
: Lambs Lane, Spencers Wood, Berkshire
: RG7 1JE
SUBMITTED BY : Mr James Bull
DATE SUBMITTED : 02/04/2025

COMMENTS:

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development at Body's Farm, and I would like to raise several concerns related to its impact on the local community, infrastructure, and the environment. While some of the issues raised have been addressed by the developers, I feel that these matters require further scrutiny and consideration.

I strongly urge that the proportion of affordable housing be increased to 50%, in accordance with the draft local plan. This would not only improve the overall viability of the development, but it would also ensure that essential public services and amenities, such as transport links and local shops, are more likely to be provided. It is crucial that the community benefits of this development, such as the creation of a school or medical facilities, are secured through these additional provisions.

The site's location within the DEPZ raises significant safety concerns, particularly regarding evacuation routes and the feasibility of servicing a care home in the event of an emergency. There are no clear, safe evacuation routes leading eastward from the estate, and the potential lockdown during an emergency could hinder access to essential services for vulnerable residents, including those in the care home. I question the wisdom of approving a new care home within such a hazardous zone, and I am concerned that the developers have not adequately addressed these issues.

The development's impact on local traffic infrastructure is deeply concerning. Roads such as White House Lane are already inadequate, being narrow and prone to accidents. If the development proceeds, I strongly urge that major upgrades be made to these roads, particularly the dangerous crossroads at Beech Hill Road/Back Lane. Furthermore, the road leading to the A33 from the site should be either closed to prevent it becoming a rat run or completely realigned.

Additionally, should the development include a school, I recommend that pedestrian routes and a dedicated crossing be included, especially along Back Lane, to ensure safe access for children and families. A significant amount of funding from the developers should be allocated to improving local roads and pedestrian infrastructure as part of the S106 agreement.

The current local primary school provision is already under strain, and with the addition of this new estate, it is essential that a new school be planned to meet the demand. I am concerned that the developers' plans for a new school do not adequately account for the anticipated numbers, and I urge that a three-form entry school be included as part of the development. The school should be built early in the development process, and funding should be provided for the enlargement of Oakbank School to accommodate growing numbers.

I believe that the developers should be held accountable for providing adequate public facilities and green spaces within the development. This includes not only a convenience store but a full-scale supermarket to meet the needs of the new residents. In addition, there should be a multi-purpose public building for meetings, children's activities, and other communal uses. The developers should also ensure that sufficient allotments are provided for the community, as there are currently none in the area south of Hyde End Road.

With the proposed development, it is vital that public transport services are enhanced to cater for the additional population. I would urge the developers to support the improvement of the 600 service or its successor to provide a half-hourly service to Reading, as well as an extension to Swallowfield and Riseley. Additionally, a turning circle should be provided within the development to allow buses to safely turn around.

In conclusion, I believe that while some aspects of this development have been addressed, there remain critical concerns regarding infrastructure, safety, and the provision of community facilities. I therefore urge that planning permission is rejected.