

Objection to Planning Applications 241933 and 242279

Submitted by: David Sleight, 114 Ellis Road, Crowthorne, RG45 6PH

I wish to object to the allied planning applications, 241933 originally submitted by Lightwood Strategic and 242279 submitted by Nicholas King Homes. As the Local Plan Update has not yet completed its examination by Planning Inspectors it seems premature that these applications are being brought forward again at this stage. I note that there are only detailed changes to these applications and that the Planning and Design Statements are the originals. The grounds for objection are identical for both applications. This is a refreshed submission, I had previously objected with my comments submitted on 23rd October 2024.

Gap between Wokingham and Crowthorne. These applications, particularly the extension of 241933 to the south of Easthampstead Road, will destroy the gap between Wokingham and Crowthorne. Application 260720 for 136 dwellings on the Johnson & Johnson, if approved and an earlier application for 109 flats on the site had been approved, will effectively extend the Pinewood area of Crowthorne to the north and would be little more than a stone's throw from the southern part of 241933.

Crossing the Railway. Although this SDL Extension is planned as a southern extension of Wokingham with much stress on active transport, Wokingham Borough Council (the council) has no plan to provide an uninterrupted crossing of the railway on the 'desire line' of travel along Easthampstead Road into Wokingham and St Crispin's School. The council has failed to properly address the vital safety issues at the Star Lane level crossing for schoolchildren and other users in crossing over the Wokingham to Bracknell railway which has 3rd rail electrification and where the Council's adopted Local Transport Plan calls for frequency enhancements in the train service.

School Places. I am unaware of the 'trigger' for the building of the two form entry primary school close to the SDR or whether demographic trends will mean that the single form entry primary school in the 241933 application will ever be needed. The council needs to make this clear. The former rule of thumb is understood to have been that 1,000 homes would generate a form entry of 30. The total house number planned for the South Wokingham SDL with these 2 and other applications is now c3,000 (which explains the planned primary school provision). With the Edgbarrow School in Crowthorne (a Bracknell Forest school) at capacity, it is essential to clarify the provision of secondary school places for children from homes in the SDL and where children are expected to find school places, if not at St Crispin's School. If there is insufficient capacity at St Crispin's School then transporting children to other schools will be a major cause of traffic congestion.

The cumulative Effect of Other Housing. It is not apparent that sufficient note has been taken of the additional housing proposed in the adopted Bracknell Forest Local Plan where house building is still proceeding in Buckler's Park and with housebuilding well underway in Beaufort Park off Nine Mile Ride. Together with the proposed 136 house on the Johnson & Johnson site, these developments will add significantly to traffic on roads particularly Old Wokingham Road and Nine Mile Ride.

Transport Assessment. I note that the Transport Assessment prepared by the Abley Letchford Partnership is listed only with application 242279 although it also relates to application 241933. The traffic modelling appears to indicate that Old Wokingham Road will be able to cope with the additional traffic generated by these developments. There are often long tailbacks during peak hours in Old Wokingham Road as well as Peacock Lane with traffic heading for Berkshire Way suggesting that the traffic modelling was unrealistically optimistic.

Vigar Way. Vigar Way is the very short dual carriageway link road from Peacock Lane to Berkshire Way and the Transport Assessment informs that a 3rd northbound lane is planned with these developments. A 3rd northbound lane will not solve the problem of the delays at the roundabout at the south end of Vigar Way on Peacock Lane as right turning traffic from Bracknell has priority leading to the tailbacks previously described. This needs to be resolved with Bracknell Forest Council with either traffic lights on that southern roundabout or a 'fly through' lane for west to north traffic from Peacock Lane.

Old Wokingham Road roundabouts. I understand that work will start this September on the roundabout at the Old Wokingham Road/Waterloo Road/Peacock Lane junction although I have not seen any traffic management plan to enable that work. It has not yet been announced whether this work will be done under a blockade or with 3 way temporary traffic lights. Either way, this will result in long delays for users of Old Wokingham Road which forms the main access from 'Greater' Crowthorne to the A329(M). I note that a second roundabout on Old Wokingham Road is now planned for the eastern end of the spine road serving these 2 developments. I appreciate that the plans show the roundabout being largely constructed off the line of route but inevitably the construction will need traffic management on Old Wokingham Road resulting in months of delay for road users with the final result extending journey times for motorists.

Point Closure of Easthampstead Road. The point closure is the proposed stopping up of Easthampstead Road to the west of the entrance to Prior's Farm and is, of course, related to the hazardous junction of Easthampstead Road with Old Wokingham Road which has restricted sight lines for traffic turning out of Easthampstead Road and where north to west traffic can result in delays for southbound traffic. Some remodelling of the junction is proposed but this and the point closure could be avoided by simply making Easthampstead Road one way from Old Wokingham Road as far as the entrance to Prior's Farm and only allow south to west traffic from Old Wokingham Road to enter. With the Healthlands Link road now

opened this low cost change could be introduced now which would then, at a stroke, eliminate the conflicting movements into and out of Easthampstead Road thus solving the main problem at this junction.

The western junction of the proposed spine road. The current plan makes the proposed spine road turn sharp left to join Easthampstead Road at a priority junction just before the traffic lights with Heathlands Road which seems to be the sub-optimal solution compared with the Nicholas King proposal to continue the spine road to a priority junction on the recently opened Heathlands Link road. As the majority of the traffic will wish to turn towards the SWDR this option should be taken.

Links to Wokingham Without and Crowthorne. It appears that these 2 proposed developments being conceived as a southern extension of Wokingham (despite the difficulties of crossing the Wokingham to Bracknell railway) have neglected links to the existing settlement in Wokingham Without and to Crowthorne for shopping, leisure, churches and access to Crowthorne Station. Consequently there are few walking or cycling routes other than using Old Wokingham Road. Such links are needed and the development on the Johnson & Johnson site offers such a possibility that need developing.

Public Transport. I appreciate that bus services are not straightforward. I understand that the Council plans a service from Wokingham via Tesco along the SWDR, Waterloo Road and Peacock Lane by extending the existing Jennett's Park service from Bracknell bus station to Wokingham but no details have yet been published as to when this service might commence or the 'trigger' for house occupancy. The Lightwood application talks hopefully of some services diverted off the SWDR to run via the new spine road and then Old Wokingham Road to Bracknell which would then disadvantage most of the Bovis Homes and the Miller Homes developments as well as complicating the timetable. An alternative would be for a new service, complementing the Wokingham to Bracknell service, to run from Wokingham via Tesco, the SWDR, the Heathlands Link, the new spine road, Old Wokingham Road then Dukes Ride to Crowthorne railway station potentially offering connection to Farnborough (for the 6th form college), Guildford and Gatwick Airport. As well as serving these proposed developments this service would also benefit residents in the Johnson & Johnson site, Oakham Park, Buckler's Park and the proposed development at Derby Field in Crowthorne (in the BFC Local Plan) and would serve existing housing in the Wokingham Without and Finchampstead parishes as well as the Crowthorne ward in Bracknell Forest.

I request that these 2 applications are refused.