

PLANNING REF: 253071

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 22 Canberra Lake Way, Charvil, RG10 9DH

SUBMITTED BY: Ms Sarah Beere

Objection to Reserved Matters Application 253071 - Proposed footpath connection to Canberra Lake Way

I do not object to the development of 75 properties on this site in principle, but I cannot support this Reserved Matters proposal as it stands. I'm writing to formally log my strong objection to the proposed development on the grounds set out below.

Please note that I reserve the right to submit further objections, evidence, and representations in due course.

Background – Canberra Lake Way

I have lived in Canberra Lake Way since October 2021. It is a quiet cul-de-sac located in Charvil, where residents pay annual maintenance fees to upkeep shared areas like the greens and borders. We are fully responsible for any wear, tear, or wider maintenance impacts over time, and do not benefit from the support or services that an adopted road receives.

Canberra Lake Way is a diverse, close-knit community with over 25 children living on the road. The central green serves as a vital community space where children meet, play together, and ride their bikes and scooters safely in a low-traffic environment. This space fosters safety, security, and a strong sense of belonging, hosting family activities, such as our annual Easter egg hunt and trail.

The introduction of the proposed footpath link is the sole catalyst for the severe negative impacts outlined below; consequently, I strongly object to this specific layout feature on the following grounds:

1. Geological Hazards, Site Stability, and Engineering Level Constraints

- **Policy Breach:** NPPF Paragraph 189 (Land Stability), WBC Core Strategy Policy CP3, and Borough Design Guide (Section 4 – Privacy).
- **The Engineering Dilemma:** Excavating, grading, and paving a heavy-use tarmac footpath link right through the narrow pinch point between numbers 10 and 11 poses severe, unresolved civil engineering issues regarding site levels.
- **The Excavation Risk:** If the developer attempts to dig down to match the path to our road's existing level, they will dangerously undermine the adjacent structural foundations. This would necessitate extensive, disruptive underpinning and heavy engineering to reinforce the existing garage structures at numbers 10 and 11.

- **The Privacy Hazard:** Conversely, if the developer decides to raise the levels of the path to avoid deep excavation, pedestrians using the shortcut will be elevated significantly and would be able to see over the existing fence lines of no. 10 and 11. This will result in a gross, unacceptable intrusion of privacy, allowing passing members of the public to peer directly over boundary fences and straight into the private, active living spaces and bedrooms.
- **The Harm:** Our existing residential infrastructure was engineered strictly based on current ground load profiles. Heavy groundworks, changes to the water table, and severe excavation right up to our private property line present a major risk of subsidence, lateral earth shifts, and structural failure to our borders. Neither engineering scenario is acceptable, and the lack of detailed cross-sectional level drawings proves this path is fundamentally unfeasible.

2. Tandem Parking Inefficiency and Parking Overspill

- **Policy Breach:** Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy Policy CP3, Policy CP6, and the Wokingham Borough Council Parking Plan.
- **The Material Issue:** The proposed Bellway estate layout relies heavily on tandem (in-line) parking configurations for residents. Empirical evidence shows that tandem parking creates significant daily friction, as residents must constantly shuffle multiple vehicles. This layout fatigue leads directly to drivers abandoning allocated spaces in favour of the nearest available on-road parking. Furthermore, the provision of only 12 visitor bays across the entire development is mathematically insufficient to absorb realistic visitor numbers.
- **The Harm:** Because the off-street allocation is inadequate, severe overspill parking will be forced onto the surrounding road network. The proposed footpath creates an effortless, direct pedestrian shortcut into the new estate from Canberra Lake Way. Consequently, drivers unable to find a space within the development will systematically exploit Canberra Lake Way as an overflow car park. This shortcut transforms a localised internal parking deficit into a severe, external burden, threatening highway safety and pedestrian movement on an established residential street.

3. Failure to Meet Garage Design Standards and Parking Displacement

- **Policy Breach:** WBC MDDL Policy CC07 and Appendix 2.
- **The Material Issue:** To be legally recognised as a functional parking space under the Wokingham Borough Design Guide, a single garage must meet a strict minimum internal dimension of 6.0m x 3.0m to allow modern vehicles to fit alongside cycle storage.
- **The Harm:** The standard developer dimensions proposed by Bellway fail this threshold, meaning they will realistically be used for domestic storage rather than vehicles. This artificial inflation of available parking spaces will lead to severe on-street parking

displacement within the new estate, exacerbating the overspill threat to Canberra Lake Way via the footpath shortcut. This directly threatens our residential amenity, meaning these structures must be relocated deeper within the internal layout of the new estate.

4. Severe Highway Safety Hazard and Proven Risk of Displacement Parking

- **Policy Breach:** NPPF Paragraph 114 (Safe and Suitable Access) and WBC Core Strategy Policy CP3.
- **The Real-World Evidence:** Our concerns regarding vehicle overspill are not theoretical; they are based on dangerous first hand experiences. When the Charvil Piggott school car park was recently closed, staff and parents flooded Canberra Lake Way, parking in the road and in private visitor bays, attempting to turn and manoeuvre in our narrow close. This occurred despite parking being offered at the Village Hall. During this chaos, I personally had my foot nearly run over by an outside driver trying to force their vehicle into a parking space on our road.
- **The Harm:** Forcing a permanent public path to discharge into our close will recreate this exact hazard on a daily basis. When Bellway residents or their visitors find internal estate roads full, they will choose the path of least resistance: parking in our turning head and walking through the shortcut. This will create an ongoing, severe highway safety hazard for existing residents and playing children alike.

5. Conflict with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Safety Mandates

- **Policy Breach:** National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 115 and Paragraph 116.
- **The Material Issue:** NPPF policy explicitly dictates that development should be prevented or refused on highway grounds if residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, or if the layout compromises highway safety. It further mandates that layouts must create places that are safe and secure, minimising the scope for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles.
- **The Harm:** By introducing a footpath that actively connects an under-parked development to Canberra Lake Way, the layout creates a clear mechanism for dangerous vehicle displacement. Obstructive parking on Canberra Lake Way will restrict visibility, compromise emergency vehicle access, and generate conflict between moving vehicles and pedestrians. The footpath link fails the NPPF requirement to create a safe residential environment and must be refused.

6. Highways Enforcement Vulnerability (The Parking 'Black Hole')

- **Policy Breach:** WBC MDDL Policy CC07 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

- **The Material Issue:** Canberra Lake Way is only partially adopted. A small strip at the entrance is a public highway, while the main cul-de-sac, brick turning head, and green are privately owned and maintained by the residents' management company.
- **The Harm:** While the Council could theoretically issue a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to install yellow lines on the adopted public strip, they have no legal jurisdiction or financial obligation to enforce parking restrictions on our private, unadopted section. The proposed footpath will actively channel overspill parking directly into this private turning head. This creates an unenforceable parking "black hole" that will block emergency vehicles, impede refuse trucks, and trap residents trying to reverse from their driveways.

7. Total Lack of Strategic Connectivity Value ("A Path to Nowhere")

- **Policy Breach:** Wokingham Borough Design Guide (Section 3A – Movement and Access) and NPPF Paragraph 114.
- **The Material Issue:** Local planning guidelines state pedestrian infrastructure must serve a clear purpose by connecting to local retail centres, public facilities, or active travel networks.
- **The Harm:** This path simply links one residential cul-de-sac directly to another. It provides zero strategic utility to the wider public, meaning the extensive damage it causes to our children's safety and privacy is entirely disproportionate and unjustified. The developer is forcing an intrusive link through an established close purely to tick a "permeability" checkbox, without delivering any demonstrable strategic benefit to the wider pedestrian network.

8. Direct Threat to Child Safety and Loss of Protected Community Space

- **Policy Breach:** NPPF Paragraph 135(f) (Creating Safe, Inclusive Places), Wokingham Core Strategy Policy CP3, and Wokingham Borough Design Guide (Section 4 – Designing for Safety).
- **The Impact:** Canberra Lake Way is a quiet, low-density, unadopted residential close. Part of our privately owned and maintained land includes "The Green," which functions as a vital, highly valued community space and safe sanctuary.
- **The Hazard:** By punching a continuous pedestrian footpath directly from a 75-home estate into the pinch point between numbers 10 and 11, this layout will instantly destroy this safe environment and active community asset. The path will flood our quiet close with high volumes of pedestrian foot traffic and, critically, inevitable overspill vehicular traffic. Our children will no longer be able to use this space safely, completely compromising our residential amenity and child safety.

9. Elevated Crime Risk and Anti-Social Behaviour

- **Policy Breach:** NPPF Paragraph 135(f) and Wokingham Borough Design Guide (Section 4 – Designing for Safety).
- **The Material Issue:** The proposed path creates a narrow, enclosed corridor running directly between the garages, fences, and blank elevations of numbers 10 and 11. It is entirely devoid of passive surveillance ("eyes on the street") from active rooms.
- **The Personal Escalation:** Security is already a major concern for our close. My own car had items stolen from it on 16th May 2026 as part of increased crime in Charvil. Furthermore, neighbourhood video footage already shows suspicious individuals walking around the road scoping out properties. Introducing an unmonitored footpath link acts as an open invitation for criminals. It provides a quick, concealed escape route directly into another estate, which will drastically worsen opportunistic crime, vehicle theft, fly-tipping, dog fouling, and anti-social behaviour.
- **The Harm:** This layout designs opportunities for crime, running completely counter to the Secured by Design principles advocated by Thames Valley Police. Furthermore, it creates an unresolvable design paradox: if the developer installs artificial lighting to make the path safe, it will cause unacceptable light pollution into the bedrooms of numbers 10 and 11. If left unlit, it becomes an inherently dangerous, blind alleyway.

10. Gross Institutional Contradictions and Flawed Council Strategy

- **The Adoption Contradiction:** Wokingham Borough Council previously had the explicit opportunity to fully adopt Canberra Lake Way, but deliberately chose not to. As a result, the financial burden of maintaining this infrastructure falls entirely on the residents through private maintenance fees. It is completely contradictory and unjust for the Council to refuse adoption and ownership of our road, yet now seek to forcibly open it up as a public thoroughfare and access point for a new 75-home estate. The Council cannot treat our road as private for maintenance, but public for convenience.
- **The Park Lane Safety Contradiction:** The Council's justification for this footpath exposes a severe logical paradox regarding Park Lane. The Council has consistently purported that Park Lane is a safe pedestrian route. In fact, they previously declined to implement stringent traffic calming measures outside the local school, offering nothing more than a painted pedestrian crossing. If Park Lane is as safe as the Council claims, why is there a sudden, desperate need to create a new footpath to reroute pedestrians off it? If it is not safe, why was the school left without proper traffic calming? The Council must answer this: is Park Lane a safe zone or not? They cannot maintain both arguments simultaneously to suit this development.

11. Preemptive Refusal of Alternative Layout 'Compromises' at No. 22

- **The Material Issue:** While no pedestrian route adjacent to number 22 Canberra Lake Way has ever featured on any submitted site plan, this objection explicitly extends to cover, and completely reject, any hypothetical, late-stage layout variations or "compromise" amendments that may be attempted to bypass resident objections.
- **The Harm:** Re-routing or looping a pedestrian shortcut along or near the boundary of number 22 would not resolve the fundamental flaws of this application; it would simply displace the severe privacy violations, structural risks, and child safety hazards onto another part of our unadopted close. To prevent any tactical attempts by the developer to shift the location of the link rather than delete it, I log my absolute refusal of any layout variant that impacts the boundary lines, curtilage, or immediate vicinity of number 22. The link must be removed entirely, not relocated.

12. A United Community Standing Against Flawed Policy

- **The Weight of Resident Voices:** Bellway informed residents of Canberra Lake Way on 26th March 2026 they were ambivalent about the footpath and that it was Wokingham Borough Council requesting it. The residents of Canberra Lake Way are entirely united in their absolute objection to this proposed footpath. This is not the isolated complaint of a single household, but the collective voice of a whole neighbourhood defending their safety and community. The lived experience, safety, and security of an established community must carry significant weight over rigid, abstract, and deeply flawed planning policies that fail to account for real-world impacts.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the proposed layout fails to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy, and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDDLDP). The inclusion of this footpath introduces severe engineering, highways, safety, and privacy risks to an unadopted close that the Council refuses to maintain.

Given the flawed arguments supporting a footpath and that the developer doesn't require it as part of their plan for the site, I urge the Planning Committee to refuse this Reserved Matters application as currently drafted and require the developer to completely remove the Canberra Lake Way footpath link, and any proposed boundary variations at number 22, from all future site plans.