

PLANNING REF : 241567
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Woodmoor
:
: RG403TT
SUBMITTED BY : R R
DATE SUBMITTED : 24/07/2024

COMMENTS:

I strongly object to this application because of the impact on the environment, transport, traffic, flooding, local amenities and overall unsustainability of the site.

The site is not included in WBC's own long term development plan. The proposed site is outside of the village boundary and does not comply with cp9 of WBC's local plan, or the 2023 Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan. Finchampstead parish has already met the

requirement for affordable housing included in the developments in Arb orfield and Gorse Ride, both of which are more sustainable locations. Environment - The new Manor Farm nature reserve (former Cemex site) is home to three protected species of bird which have to be provided with open space, which is not provided in this development. Construction of 40 houses and the introduction of 70 cars (based on the number of proposed parking spaces) will also have a detrimental impact on the general wildlife.

The proposed development would impact on quality of life for existing residents and visitors. This is a popular site for walking and the development would increase urbanisation in the area, making it less attractive for walking. The development would also remove the buffer between Finchampstead and Eversley, again impacting quality of life for residents and visitors, as well as being detrimental to nature in this buffer area. When I moved to the area almost 20 years ago, the rural nature of the village was a significant factor, including this field behind my house which was home to horses at that time. Having this green space replaced with a housing development would have a significant impact on my daily life and desire to remain in the area. This urbanisation is also increased by the inclusion of street lighting which is uncharacteristic for the area. Lighting will also impact the wildlife, such as badgers and barn owls, which live in the field. The development would bring a significant change to the character of the village and the feel would be more semi-urban than to day.

The developers state that they will provide a footpath. A public footpath already exists in this field, despite attempts to hide it in recent months, with the removal of the fence and the blackberry bushes by the field's owner on 27 February. There would be a deterioration to the existing footpath as it would become a form of alley between two residential areas.

Transport - there are no regular public transport links to Wokingham, Yateley or other surrounding towns. There is only one bus per week to Wokingham. Each household will need a car(s) to access all

amenities. It is not possible to walk safely out of the village with minimal footpaths to central locations. There is no footpath or verge to walk to the doctors' surgery or nearest retail in the centre of Finchampstead. It would be dangerous for families to walk on Jubilee Road to access these. It would be even more dangerous to walk in the other direction to Yateley.

Traffic - Longwater Road is a fast road, despite the lower speed limit at the northern section. It is well documented that police

and the parish council often monitor the road for speeding. The school bus stops on this road and it is not safe to have children waiting on this busy road with 70 more cars. This is a popular location for cyclists and with no designated cycle lane, the cyclists will have to negotiate the additional traffic. The Finchampstead Development Plan committed to keeping certain roads in the area quiet. Additional traffic from residents in this proposed site would impact on this commitment in roads such as Lower Sandhurst Road.

The proposed entrance for this development is positioned just as Longwater Road changes to the national speed limit, alongside a public footpath and directly opposite the entrance to the allotments and

another public footpath. This means cars will be turning in and out where others are travelling at speed. Cars from this new development would also add to the rush hour congestion into Wokingham and beyond. WBC's policy is that no development should make traffic pinch points worse and this site would have a direct impact on traffic at a WBC pinch point at the old War Memorial site. Flooding - The proposed site and the former Cemex site are at risk of flooding. I have personally suffered from flooding to my front door on more than one occasion and the main road of Woodmoor has flooded due to lack of drainage around the kerbs. Removing this green space off Longwater Road will mean that the ground water will have nowhere to go and will be left on the hard surfaces. This increases flood risk in the surrounding roads such as Woodmoor and Burnmoor Meadows as well as in the proposed development itself. The soil bund at the edge of the formal gravel pit has been removed and with the clay soil in this field and the addition of hard surfaces in the development, flood risk will increase. Local walkers are familiar with the waterlogged spaces and flooding which has increased over the years.

Amenities - the developers refer to providing housing for growing families. There are no school places for these families as the village school as it is traditionally over-subscribed. The developers assume all children from this development will find a space in this school and will walk there. There are no other local schools in walking distance. This will contribute to increased traffic in the area as parents will have to drive children to other schools.

There are few jobs in Finchampstead so it is more than likely that the new residents will have to drive elsewhere to work, again contributing to traffic.

There are no supermarkets, libraries or chemists within walking distance and the local infrastructure is not set up to support 40 additional houses. The local doctors' surgery is already stretched and I have noticed a change in wait time since I have lived in the area. It is now not unusual to be 14th in the queue when calling for an appointment.

The developers refer to a village shop but there is one small retail unit in the Greyhound pub that provides luxury goods only and is not a shop for daily essential goods. Since the last attempt to develop the site, the village has lost the village shop (which did provide essentials), the post office and the petrol station.

The Thames Water sewage station cannot handle additional properties. Any additional pumping stations would be located next to the nature reserve which is damaging to the protected species and the reserve.