

PLANNING REF : 243188
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Spring Copse
: Carter's Hill, Arborfield, Berkshire
: RG2 9JJ
SUBMITTED BY : Janet Ann Heard
DATE SUBMITTED : 14/01/2025

COMMENTS:

Comments regarding this Scoping Opinion;

Wokingham has experienced huge population growth in the past thirty years or so, often ahead of targets, leading to a general lack of infrastructure and a consequent erosion of the 'gaps between settlements' situation. This development massively increases these tensions and has implications for highways, flooding, schools, health - nearly everything which ensures a good quality of life for residents.

The interconnectedness of communities is therefore a huge issue for future building projects in this area, and typically developers claim their rights to only cater for the needs of incoming residents inhabiting the new builds, rather than remedying existing problems. Nevertheless, these problems need to be understood and factored into the picture. Traffic congestion does not stop at the bottom of Mill Lane, flood water does not recognise Borough boundaries and these days children need to be delivered to school in a car as parents are typically en route to work in locations such as Reading, Bracknell or London, some of which involves a train journey too. Past surveys for the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan prove this situation, and the nearest station is miles away. Historically it is reported

that some of Reading housing targets were being met by Wokingham. A new survey by Insurance Company Tempcover shows that Reading traffic has the lowest average speeds in England. This despite much investment in road infrastructure to encourage green travel, by both Wokingham and Reading. For the viability of Wokingham, as a good place to live and to attract business, a wider view must be taken and the Borough seen in the context of its neighbouring towns. Furthermore, it is known that although much new development in recent years within Wokingham has provided a range of housing, it is mostly within the mid to lower price range, and there is a dearth of high

quality new build in the south of the Borough. This has created a societal imbalance within Wokingham, and the northern area 'green belt/high quality' has not taken a share of the more affordable development. As settlements become closer, it is important for social cohesion that these issues are factored into building projects, especially those with numbers running into thousands like Hall Farm.

More to follow.