

PLANNING REF : 250678
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Morgan Centre
: Wellington Rd, Crowthorne, Berkshire
: RG45 7LD
SUBMITTED BY : Crowthorne Parish Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 02/04/2025

COMMENTS:

Crowthorne Parish Council recommends REFUSAL of the WBC observations on the grounds that cumulative increase of traffic accessing the Old Wokingham Road (OWR) by a further 558 dwellings will be detrimental to the current infrastructure.

The access to the OWR from Easthampstead Rd is considered to be dangerous with its proximity to a 90-degree blind turn. This has been highlighted in local press, social media and local television news.

The OWR is not capable of taking the traffic that would want to use it and will seriously impact residents of Crowthorne and the wider area of Wokingham Without which is part of Crowthorne although governed by Wokingham Borough Council.

Traffic Impact

- What plans are there to improve and widen the Old Wokingham Rd and has there been a joint effort between Wokingham Borough Council and Bracknell Forest Council to discuss and implement a feasible strategy?

We must bear in mind that the OWR is a BFC highway. If there is no strategy and the weight of traffic is detrimental to the current infrastructure, and further, that the BFC highway and traffic policies are not upheld then these applications cannot be approved.

Considering a further 558 dwellings accessing this road is folly and the reasoning is below:

- Traffic flow along this stretch of road is getting increasingly worse, following the Buckler's Park development, the impact of which has not yet been fully felt with more houses being planned. The approved development of 200 plus houses to be built at the Beaufort Park expansion will of course add to the vehicular movements and weight.

And with an increase of vehicular movements and weight there is the obvious increased risk of traffic incidents along this stretch. There have already been accidents which have been reported in the local press and on social media by nearby residents.

Statistics show a high number of accidents at both the Waterloo Rd/OWR and Easthampstead Rd/OWR junctions over the years, particularly at the latter junction. Many non-reported accidents have also occurred in these locations. Additional traffic at both these junctions will only increase the accident numbers at these dangerous junctions.

- Extra weight of traffic accessing this road which will be the result of this proposed development of 558 dwellings will further inhibit traffic flow contrary and impact the following

policies:

- BFC Policy LP61 - Development which is likely to generate a significant amount of movement will require a Travel Plan which mitigates any adverse transport impacts.
- BFC Policy LP 26 - Transport infrastructure provision.

Whilst the two policies above are BFC centric, it is not beyond the realms of probability that WBC have similar policies that should apply.

Please note:

NPPF 2021 point 14. introduces a new transport test for new settlements and urban extensions and revisions introducing at paragraph 73 a new requirement for new settlements and urban extensions that they should now include "a genuine choice of transport modes".

The NPPF is 'global' and would apply to both WBC and BFC

Climate Change and Air quality

- Upholding these applications does not contribute to WBC and BFC Climate Emergency/Change initiatives and the promise to their residents that carbon emissions will be reduced and reach their targets by 2030: More vehicle movement will only increase emissions and air pollution.

The Proposed Development will generate additional traffic on local roads, which may impact on air quality at existing residential properties along the affected road network. New residential properties within the proposed development may also be subject to air quality effects resulting from road traffic emissions from the adjacent road network. The main air pollutants of concern related to road traffic emissions are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}).

Green belt

- The planned development is adjoining green belt land that has already been built on and this has an adverse effect upon and is a danger to any remaining green belt close to this development and will be contrary to BFC policy: BFC LP34 Greenbelt. But assume that WBC has a similar policy.

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy (NPPF 2021 par138) is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Green Belt serves a number of purposes which include:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

These items clearly point to the threat that these applications lend to Crowthorne: with the danger of urban sprawl, with no control over the loss of strategic gaps; the loss of openness and the retention of ancient woodland in doubt.

The potential threat and loss of biodiversity is contrary to policies:

- BFC LP53 Biodiversity

- BFC LP54 Protection and enhancement of trees and hedgerows Again, assume WBC has similar policies.

REFUSAL therefore is recommended on the basis that the local infrastructure: roads, water, sewage, are already struggling with the demands of Bucklers Park, and will be further impacted by the development of Beaufort Park, an additional 200+ houses and flats.

A total of 558 houses on the south Wokingham SDL will be putting more pressure on this area.

There is no more capacity on existing infrastructure for additional local housing. The knock-on effect of impact to residents of Crowthorne will be a heavily congested conurbation with lack of amenities with a choked throughfare to Bracknell and the A329.