

Wokingham Planning Application number.... 252498

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Loddon Garden Village Development Ref 252498

I have read thru' this planning application & can only assume that whoever is promoting this development (assume some off-shoot of Reading University) is not aware of serious problems in developing the area, not only from the flooding point of view but also in relation to traffic movement.

Addressing the flooding.....You will see that I have included some photos of the flooding that happens when the river Loddon cannot accept any extra water.

Some of the photos I took myself, the ones showing the flooding of the Showcase cinema, the George public house, the (now) defunct park & ride site & views from the footpath on Lower Early Way, facing toward what is now the Hatch Farm estate.

Briefly touching on the Hatch Farm site.....When this was being developed I noticed that there were deposited on the site, some large concrete ducts", about 4/5 feet in diameter. I guess that these were to be installed to take any flood waters under Lower Early way and into the River Loddon.

Just a comment but goes to show what sort of protection from flood will be needed for any future development that may be needed to divert the Loddon flood waters.

Going back to the Showcase cinema site.....At least the developers of that site understood the possibility of flooding in that the cinema was built 'high' off the surrounding land. Ditto for the fast food restaurant currently being built on some of the cinema's car park. It to is being built high off the ground.

The aerial photo taken from, I presume, a drone showing, on the LHS of the photo, the flooding that has happened quite a few times on the field adjacent to Lower Early way between the Meldreth round-a-bout and the Sindlesham Mill hotel round-a-bout.

This is not a photo I have taken but one taken from the on-line files of the Reading Chronicle. There are LOADS of flood photos on their site.

Look at the photo. Not specifically about the flooding on the field adjacent to Lower Early Way but further into the distance. Look closely & you will see further witness of flooding (the whitish/silver coloured area) on the land which is the subject of this Loddon Valley Garden Village development. I do not have to hand any info of the date of this photo but judging by the lack of any sight of the EV charging point by Sindlesham Mill Hotel, it was not taken too many years ago.

As an aside, some years ago, during the run up to a local election, I was working in our front garden when I was accosted by one of the female local councillors. We chatted about many things but what sticks in my mind was that when the conversation turned to the frequent flooding of the field adjacent to Lower Early Way, she claimed never to have seen it in flood. Um!!!!!! She cannot get out and about much! Probably never saw the miniature white ponies on the field either. (Not a joke)

I have 'skip read' the report by the consulting company regarding their opinions on flooding. Apart from a few passages where they refer to sample 'drillings' to establish the viability of the proposed site to cater for flood waters, it looks to me to be nothing more than a 'cut 'n paste' job from their earlier contracts for other authorities. Did it cost a lot? Lovely generic graphics showing typical flood prevention efforts. Only, of course showing their successful attempts to manage flooding. No doubt it can be handled locally by the means of ponds, ditches etc but when they are overwhelmed where does the water go? I guess gravity takes over and the waters will run downhill to the River Loddon.....and flood.

I retired (early) from working in Mechanical Engineering on a contract basis. The very last contract

I undertook was for a company in Maidenhead. Just an 11 mile journey. This being 2008.

There are 2 reasons why I mention this.

Firstly....flooding. On not a few occasions I attempted to join Lower Early Way from Meldrith Way, turning left toward Sindlesham Mill but I was prevented from doing so by the road being flooded between the two junctions mentioned above.

The other reason I mention it is because, even in those days traffic congestion on Lower Early Way, in the morning rush hours was a concern. 16 years ago.

Normally I would leave the house at approx 6.30am & have a clear journey to the M4 junction 10. If I woke late or had decided to have some breakfast & not be ready to depart until, say 8.30 am I would not be able to join Lower Earley Way at the Meldrith Way round-a-bout due to static traffic between that junction & the Sindlesham Mill round-a-bout. (That round-a-bout can be seen in the aerial photo of flooding). So, I would turn round, go home & try a half hour or so later once the traffic had cleared..

Why do I mention this.....Well in the development plans I note that it is proposed to create a link road from the 'Garden Village' to join Lower Early Way and that such link would feed into Lower Early Way at the Meldrith Way round-a-bout.

Absolute bxxx madness!

Unless of course there is to be a provision of dualing Lower Early Way from Meldrith to Sindlesham round-a-bouts and then continued onto the junction with the Hatch Farm estate. If the local road from Bearwood to Sindlesham Mill (Mill Lane going over the Bailey Bridge) is not closed, then the increased volume of static traffic will only get worse. Due to the traffic on Lower Early Way being forced to 'give way' to the small volume of traffic exiting from this local road onto Lower Early Way. (The give way to traffic on your right, rule).

One wonders if the proposers of this Garden Village knows the area well? If they did, why did they not propose the use of the un-used (except by foot & bicycles) bridge over the M4 at the Upperwood Farm location. How many millions were spent building that bridge!!!!!!

I do occasionally, of an evening, have cause to go to Junction 11 of the M4 to go south on the A33. What used to be a clear run (at about 5.45 of an evening) to J10 has now become a stop/go situation. No doubt caused by all the new estates built South of the M4 at Swallowfield/Arborfield/Ryish Green locations etc.

How much worse will be the traffic congestion be should the new 'Garden Village' be built?

Soon after I retired, I was presented with, as a Christmas present, a mountain bike. I used it to explore the local rural by-ways. Both North & South of the Thames.

One journey I took many times was to go over the M4 at the 'un-used' bridge, along Cutbush Lane & turn South just past Sindlesham Grange and onto the path to Old House Farm and then onto the ruined church at Arborfield. This was in the days when the whole area was rural, before the construction of the 'film studio' industrial site.

I have therefore cycled many times to the Uni of Reading Hall Farm site. (Never got chased off). The foregoing just to illustrate that I do know the area of this proposed 'Garden Village' development.

It is about time some organisation or other stood up to Whitehall and said **Enough is Enough**. For goodness sake has not Wokingham and its environs taken on more than its fair share of recent new developments!

You could say that I am also one of those spoiling our countryside, being resident of Lower Earley. But when we moved here c1986, there was no mention of the explosion growth.

Prior to moving here from Maidenhead, I took the trouble to look at the proposal for growth in this area. This was in the form of an landscape local government booklet which had various maps relating to the land use within Lower Earley. The house on the site where we had identified a

suitable plot was at the end of a cul-d-sac and the land to the side was to be the site of a school. Handy as our children would have been coming up to secondary school age and hence an easy 'commute'. Needless to say, the school did not materialise and the land was released for housing. So, not only did we now not live in a cul-d-sac but in a feeder road to new housing developments. And....of course our children had to be bussed away to Ryeish Green. So, I am a wee bit sceptical on the proposals of local area plans to be completed "as proposed" ..

If all this Garden Village goes ahead, has the outflow location of the River Loddon been considered? At the moment it runs to the Thames almost opposite Shiplake having passed through Woodley, Charvil and Twyford. All low lying areas. I note that there is also a proposal to build housing on some of this low lying land, (south/north?) of the A4 between Charvil and the Twyford round-a-bout. Will they also need flood protection from an over-full Loddon? I have seen traffic restricted on the A4 due to such flooding.

Maybe the Loddon could be diverted to feed the disused gravel pits currently called Dinton Pastures? i.e. use it as a buffer to absorb the waters of flooding River Loddon?

Many of my cycle journeys took me along the Loddon from The George public house by the View cinema, along the Loddon to Dinton Pastures and beyond. I never saw it being dredged. There is (was) one particular spot, just under the A329(M) by the redundant Park 'n Ride site where the river was at least full of vegetation for half its width. I wonder if that has since changed? If the Loddon is to be used to take the flood waters of this Garden Village development, I do hope that this restriction to flow is addressed. i.e. Dredging to take place.

Regards
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Area to the north of Sindlesham Mill 10 Feb 2014 009



Cinema roundabout looking toward Lower Early way



Flooding - Sindlesham Mill



Footpath by the eastern side of the Loddon 10 Feb 2014 007



From Lower Early Way toward the Hatch Farm development 10 Feb 2014 008



Looking across Lower Early way toward the Hatch Farm site 10 Feb 2014 002



Looking across Lower Early way toward the Hatch Farm site 10 Feb 2014 011



The George 10 Feb 2014 003



The old Park ' ride site 10 Feb 2014 006



Vue Cinema 10 Feb 2014 004

