

PLANNING REF : 242067
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 2 NURSERY CLOSE Hurst
: Reading, Berkshire
: RG10 0EQ
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Patricia Kiddie
DATE SUBMITTED : 11/09/2024

COMMENTS:

My husband and I have lived in Hurst for over 30 years, and our two sons went to St Nicholas Primary School. We enjoy the rural atmosphere, although we find that the recent huge developments in nearby Wokingham are increasing traffic flows through the village and destroying that atmosphere.

In his rejection of the original Appeal APP/X0360/W/22/3309202 for 200 houses on this same site the Inspector, Mr. David Wildsmith, stated that "...I consider it self-evident that the appeal proposal would have an adverse effect on the rural character and appearance of the appeal site" Despite the reduction in numbers this Application would have the same adverse effect.

Mr. Wildsmith also noted that "...the [original] proposal would be at odds with the spatial vision for the Borough, set out in Section 3 of the Core Vision, and would clearly conflict with a number of adopted policies such as CS Policies CP9 and CP11, as well as MDDL Policy CC02". He went on to state that development should be concentrated in towns and villages "...that either have a significant range of infrastructure including facilities and services now - or will have them as a result of the development proposed through the CS" ((Page 4, Para 19-20).

Hurst has no bakery, chemist, GP, secondary school, vet, dentist or optician. In Mr. Wildsmith's words "...I consider that the range of facilities and services within Hurst has to be categorised as basic rather than good, especially when seen in the context of the size of the village...". Any residents will have to travel to Twyford or beyond to reach these facilities. When they get there, they will find all these basic facilities and services are already overloaded, and Twyford is becoming a traffic bottleneck. Twyford crossroads is already over and above acceptable NOx levels.

Any attempt to catch a daily commuter train at Twyford will show that the car park is full by 07:00. Adding busloads of additional commuters, as proposed, is hardly likely to improve the situation. Commuters have recently taken to parking a kilometre away, where the parking restrictions end at the junction of Hurst Road (A321) and Broad Hinton. The queue of parked cars grows daily and is a hazard to anyone driving in either direction.

Earlier this year the Hurst village shop was sending out appeals to residents to "use or lose" the shop. It simply didn't have enough customers to remain viable. The reason is quite simple: it is a convenience store with a limited range of goods, and anyone in the village doing a weekly shop will simply go to Sainsburys at Winnersh or Waitrose at Twyford. They will travel by car as it is simply unrealistic to expect anyone to carry a week's shopping by bus. Similarly, residents will travel to the doctor, dentist etc. by car.

I see the number 128 bus regularly in Hurst and I have never seen it carrying more than one or two passengers. It is often empty. The reason is simple: like me the residents of Hurst prefer to use their own private car. Is it realistic to expect anyone to cycle from Hurst to Twyford on a cold winters day to see the doctor (assuming they can get an appointment)? Without huge (and uneconomic) incentives this will always be true.

Earlier this year significant parts of Hurst were again subject to flooding. Notably, the area around the proposed vehicle access point in the northeastern corner of the plot flooded badly and was impassible to traffic. The Flood Risk Assessment states that SuDS will ensure that that the site does not flood. In so doing it pays no heed to the surrounding area.

In his rejection of Appeal X0360/W/22/3309202 Mr. Wildsmith commended Wokingham Borough Council on its housing provision over the whole Core Strategy period. "To my mind this does not signify a Council that is failing in terms of housing provision, but rather one which is performing well and managing to boost the supply over that which it planned for". (Page 6, Para 32). This proposal would therefore appear to be an overdevelopment and completely unnecessary.

In view of the above I strongly believe this application should be rejected.

Patricia Kiddie.