

Planning Application 242067 – Land Between Lodge Road And Tape Lane Hurst RG10 0EG

Duncan Kendall

6 Tape Lane, Hurst RG10 0DP

19th September 2024

I am writing to OBJECT to this planning application which proposes an excessive development on a valuable open space in our village.

I have lived in Hurst for over 30 years and have brought up a family in the village.

There are many reasons why the application should be refused; I have listed several of them below.

The most recent development in the village (Nursery Gardens, 15 houses) is fully occupied, with at least two cars per household. It is not unreasonable to believe that the proposed 99 dwellings will have a similar number. The addition of at least 200 motor vehicles, with several hundred traffic movements each day as residents travel to work and shops, and take their children to and from the schools, would have a serious impact on the safety of the local roads and be detrimental to the environment.

Tape Lane is an Access Only road, and is designated a “Safe Route to School” for children walking to the village primary school. The proposed access onto Tape Lane, supposedly for the use of busses is likely to have an impact on the safety of this road. The access would most likely be used by residents of the housing estate as a short cut for anyone heading towards Wokingham. Many drivers are happy to ignore any signage indicating that they should not use the access; there are many such restrictions in the borough that are regularly ignored and abused.

The proposal is for a development on land that lies outside the Development Limit and does not meet any of the conditions required by WBC policy CP11, which states that proposals outside the limit will not normally be permitted.

There is no evidence that additional housing on this scale is required in Hurst. There are a number of properties across the village that have been on the market for a considerable time, at a range of prices, indicating that there is low demand for properties in the village.

The local secondary schools are currently at full capacity. Access to school places is primarily based on distance from the school, with those living closer given priority. Hurst is a long way from all of the secondary schools, and with new developments closer to schools, such as Bridge Farm in Twyford, Hurst children may find themselves with a real problem trying to find a place.

Over the last 30 years I have walked up and down Tape Lane, adjacent to the site, many, many times. There is always an abundance of wildlife that inhabit the hedgerow and benefit from the open field beyond. The warmer weather brings numerous bats in the evenings, and many stag beetles can be seen at the height of summer. The winter months welcome field fares. All year round the field and hedge, despite being poorly maintained for the last few years, is home to a plethora of sparrows, starlings, blue tits and other birds – key indicators of the abundance of insect life in the field.

The environmental impact of the proposed development cannot be overstated. The light pollution alone would bring unwanted urbanisation to this rural area. As a bell ringer at the village church, I often walk home along Tape Lane in the dark, enjoying the glorious spectacle of the night sky with the occasional chance encounter with a fox or deer heading into or out of the field. This development would kill that joy forever, as well as destroying an important wildlife corridor with a huge detrimental impact on the biodiversity of this area.

The field is subject to regular flooding. The attached photographs were taken during recent flood events, which are happening more frequently. The first image shows the typical extent of the pooling of water, some of which overflows into Tape Lane. Drainage ditches can clearly be seen across the field, and it is clear that these are ineffective and unable to cope with the flood. The addition of 99 dwellings with associated hard surfaces will only exacerbate the field's inability to handle the volume of rainwater. The second image shows the runoff from the field causing severe flooding in Tape Lane, at the point of the proposed bus access. This flooding has become worse in the last two or three years, and makes the lane difficult to access on foot.

The local drainage infrastructure is already at capacity. Any attempt to divert the surface water into the drains would be disastrous for the system which barely manages to cope in times of heavy rain. Add to that the foul water from 99 new homes and the system would be completely overwhelmed.

Many of the homes in Tape Lane and Sawpit Road, in the vicinity of the proposed development, have a communal foul drain shared amongst several houses. These have the habit of backing up in times of heavy rain. Any additional load on the local sewerage system could be catastrophic for these residents, leading to extreme misery and expensive costs and compensation claims for the appropriate authority.





In conclusion, I assert that this proposed development is totally inappropriate for the reasons above and I urge the council to REFUSE the application.

Duncan Kendall
6 Tape Lane
Hurst
RG10 0DP