

PLANNING REF : 243099
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Joseph.Barley@wokingham.gov.uk
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SUBMITTED BY : Councillor Joseph Barley
DATE SUBMITTED : 11/01/2025

COMMENTS:

In the event this application is recommended for approval, I would like to report this application to the Planning Committee.

The application is outside of settlement boundaries in land designated as countryside, it is out of keeping with the rural nature of Arborfield.

The site has not been allocated for residential development in the regulation 19 LPU and its proximity to both the proposed Loddon Valley Garden Village and Arborfield Cross would shrink the future strategic gap between the two settlements from 1,000m to 550m. Whilst the Loddon Valley Garden Village is yet to be built, the current administration at Wokingham Borough Council's continuing commitment to an SDL at Hall Farm means that it is extremely unlikely that the Loddon Valley Garden Village will not be built. A reduction of nearly 50% in the future strategic gap is a major erosion of the separation between the settlements. If this site did not erode the separation, then the boundary of the LVGV SDL would not have been agreed to extend no further than its proposed boundary at Church Lane.

Given the Local Plan is at a late stage and approaching adoption, WBC's issue of providing housing supply will be resolved, and both these points should be given greater weight by the officers. The site also contradicts the spatial strategy of the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan.

This development would harm the character and appearance of the countryside through the loss of open fields through its replacement with a housing development and associated roads and infrastructure.

The development would contradict the purposes of the Arborfield Cross Traffic Calming Measures. These were introduced to discourage traffic from driving through Arborfield Cross via Reading / Eversley Road. This site is directly on Reading Road and driving on it from the site straight through Arborfield Cross would be the only suitable way for future residents to access nearby services.

Related to the topic of nearby services, this application fails to promote active travel and public transport as it takes 36 minutes to travel by bus to Wokingham from the site, almost double what WBC defines as good service. The increased traffic movements, of which would likely be far into the hundreds, having to weave around Arborfield's traffic islands, would make it more unsuitable for cycling and walking. The pavement between the site is extremely thin and completely unsuitable for disabled persons and children, it takes just over 15 minutes to reach Arborfield Cross where there are limited services available. The site is a 45-minute walk away from the Arborfield Green Community Centre site which is much further than what is considered acceptable.

The above information, existing evidence and documentation supplied by the applicant shows that this application at the very least would violate SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS13, SS15, C1, C2 and C3 of the Regulation 19 Local Plan Update and CP1, CP3, CP4, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy Development Plan and its numerous related strategic policies of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.