

OBJECTION: Failure to Deliver Integrated Affordable Housing (Unacceptable Clustering)

Dear Planning Officer,

I am writing to formally object to the above-referenced planning application for the proposed development of 75 dwellings. While I support the delivery of affordable housing in the borough, I strongly object to the proposed site layout, which fails to comply with Wokingham Borough Council's policies regarding the integration and distribution of affordable homes.

Specifically, the applicant proposes grouping the 30 affordable homes into three segregated rows. This layout represents severe and unacceptable **clustering** rather than true integration. It directly contradicts the core principles of "pepper-potting" required to create a cohesive, tenure-blind community.

My objection is grounded in the following local policy failures:

1. Breach of Wokingham Borough Council's Affordable Housing SPD

Wokingham's *Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)* explicitly states that affordable housing must be integrated throughout a development to prevent social exclusion and ensure a tenure-blind design. For a major development of 75 dwellings, a cluster size of 10 contiguous affordable homes is disproportionately large. It effectively creates three isolated micro-estates within the wider site, rather than a well-sprinkled, integrated layout.

2. Non-Compliance with Core Strategy Policy CP5

Policy CP5 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy demands that affordable housing should be of a scale and mix that contributes to achieving sustainable, inclusive, and mixed communities. Concentrating 40% of the site's total housing density into three dense, uniform blocks fails to achieve a balanced community structure. It creates a visually distinct and socially segregated layout that harms the overall character of the development.

3. Conflict with the Borough Design Guide SPD

The *Borough Design Guide* emphasizes that the external appearance of affordable homes must be indistinguishable from market housing (tenure-blind) and physically integrated into the street scene. By arranging the affordable homes in long, unbroken rows of 10, the developer is using a layout shortcut that clearly identifies these zones as separate tenures. This design failure compromises the street-scene quality and creates artificial boundaries between residents.

4. Grouping

The applicant's proposed cluster profile consists of groupings of **10, 8 and 12 homes**. This means an overwhelming **83% of the affordable housing allocation (25 out of 30 units)** is concentrated in oversized blocks that fail any reasonable interpretation of pepper-potting. The blocks of 10, 8, and 12 create dominant, segregated enclaves within a development of just 75 homes.

To bring this application into compliance with Wokingham Borough Council's integration standards, the masterplan must be redesigned to a maximum cluster threshold of **5 to 6 units**. The 30 affordable homes should instead be redistributed across the site plan into an optimized, pepper-potted profile—such as **six distinct clusters of 5 units**, or a **mix of 4, 5, and 6-unit pockets**. These smaller groupings must be physically separated by market-rate dwellings and dispersed across different character areas of the site (e.g., the main avenue, edge lanes, and cul-de-sacs) to ensure a genuinely sustainable, tenure-blind community structure.

A Note on Parking

Even if the *number* of parking spaces meets Wokingham's standards, the **visual layout** of that parking still supports the clustering objection.

When 8 or 10 affordable homes are lined up, they often create long, unbroken rows of parking bays directly in front of the houses (sometimes called "parking courts" or "front-plot sea of tarmac"). In contrast, market-rate homes usually have garages or driveways tucked to the side of the house.

Conclusion

While a clustered layout of 10 homes may offer administrative and maintenance conveniences to a Registered Provider, this must not take precedence over Wokingham Borough Council's established planning policies for social integration. The developer must be required to revise the site layout to break down these three large blocks into much smaller, genuinely pepper-potted clusters (for example, groups of no more than 4 to 5 homes) interspersed seamlessly with market housing.

I respectfully urge the Planning Committee / Case Officer to refuse this application in its current form or require a comprehensive redesign of the site layout to ensure true housing integration.

Please keep me informed of any updates, committee dates, or amendments regarding this application.

Yours Sincerely,

Lee Cripps