



National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 25-01) Formal Recommendation to an Application for Planning Permission

From: Hermes Luli (Head of Planning & Development)
Operations Directorate
South East Region
National Highways
Planningse@nationalhighways.co.uk

To: Wokingham Borough Council,, FAO: Development Management & Compliance

CC: transportplanning@dft.gov.uk
spatialplanning@nationalhighways.co.uk

Council's Reference: 250517

Location: Land Off Basingstoke Road, To the south and west of Spencers Wood

Proposal: Outline planning permission is sought with all matters reserved for future determination, save for the means of access via Basingstoke Road, for: up to 420 dwellings (Use Class C3), an 80 bed care home (Use Class C2), 1ha of employment land (Use Class E(g), primary school (Use Class F1), local centre (Use Classes E(a), (b), (c), (f)), GP Surgery (Use Class E(e), sports pitch and changing facility, public open space, SANG provision and associated infrastructure

Our Reference: NH/25/11245

Referring to the consultation on a planning application dated 19 May 2025 referenced above, in the vicinity of the M4 motorway that forms part of the Strategic Road Network, notice is hereby given that National Highways' formal recommendation is as follows:

- ~~a) offer no objection (see reasons at Annex A);~~
- ~~b) recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted (see Annex A – National Highways recommended Planning Conditions & reasons);~~
- c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);**
- ~~d) recommend that the application be refused (see reasons at Annex A)~~

Highways Act 1980 Section 175B is not relevant to this application.¹

This represents National Highways' formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should the Local Planning Authority propose not to determine the application in accordance with this recommendation they are required to consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Affecting Trunk Roads\) Direction 2018](#), via transportplanning@dft.gov.uk and may not determine the application until the consultation process is complete.

The Local Planning Authority must also copy any consultation under the 2018 Direction to Planningse@nationalhighways.co.uk.

This response and all comments outlined herein are made in respect of planning matters only in National Highways' position as a statutory planning consultee, and does not confer any proprietary rights nor amount to the giving or refusal of consent, assent, approval, or awareness of or by National Highways in or of any other aspects or matters (including, but not limited to, the use of property belonging to National Highways). If anyone wishes for National Highways to consider any aspects which do not relate to planning submissions, they should call our contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Signature:



Date: 5 March 2026

Name: Mrs Beata Ginn

Position: Assistant Spatial Planner,
Area 3

National Highways

Ground Floor, Building 1000, Cathedral Square, Guildford, GU2 7YL

www.nationalhighways.co.uk

¹ Where relevant, further information will be provided within Annex A.

Annex A **National Highways' assessment of the proposed development**

National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

National Highways is concerned with proposals that may have the potential to impact on the safe and efficient operation of the SRN, in this case the M4 motorway, and in particular M4 J11.

As detailed in section 5.9 of the Transport Assessment (TA), the trip generation previously produced for pre application advice has been used despite changes to the scheme since this time. In particular, there has been a reduction of 60 dwellings and the addition of an 80-bed care home. Having reviewed the changes to the scheme, we agree that they would not significantly alter the trip generation of the proposals and therefore agree that the trip generation as presented in Table 14 of the TA is reasonable.

Strategic VISUM modelling has been undertaken for the proposals. This has also been used to calculate distribution and assignment of development trips. It is shown in Appendix H of the TA that the development will result in the addition of 37 AM and 28 PM trips to the M4 eastbound off-slip and 50 AM and 39 PM trips to the M4 westbound off-slip. Section 6 of the TA has reported on available capacity at several junctions based on the VISUM modelling. However, for M4 J11 this is only provided for the A33 approach, not the M4 off-slips. As a first step, National Highways requests that further information regarding the capacity and queueing at the M4 J11 off-slips is provided. Noting that a significant number of development trips are being added to the off-slips which are known to experience severe peak time congestion resulting in mainline queueing, a full junction capacity assessment of M4 J11 may be required.

We previously requested a meeting with the applicant and West Berkshire District Council representatives to enable us to understand how the strategic VISUM model has been used to form the TA supporting this application.

The applicant has now submitted a Transport Assessment Addendum (TAA), responding to comments raised by Active Travel England and the local highway authority. The TAA states that the applicant is working with Wokingham Borough Council to provide the model to National Highways for review, and that the model will be provided in due course.

National Highways will not be able to provide a final response to this application until we have received, reviewed, and agreed the model.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the Local Planning Authority does not grant planning permission for the application ref: 250517 until 4 September 2026 to enable applicant to supply required information and for us to review it. This does not prevent the authority, if they so wish, to either refuse the application or agree an extension of time beyond 4 September 2026.

Reason:

To allow National Highways to understand the impact of the development on the safe and efficient operation of the Strategic Road Network and provide the Local Planning Authority with fully informed advice.

Standing advice to the local planning authority

The Climate Change Committee's [2022 Report to Parliament](#) notes that for the UK to achieve net zero carbon status by 2050, action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel. The NPPF supports this position, with paragraphs 77 and 110 prescribing that significant development should offer a genuine choice of transport modes, while paragraphs 109 and 115 advise that appropriate opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be taken up as part of a vision-led approach.

Moreover, the carbon reduction hierarchy (avoid-switch-improve) as set out in clause 4.3 of PAS2080:2023 promotes approaches and measures to minimise resource consumption and thereby reduce carbon emissions.

These considerations should be weighed alongside any relevant Local Plan policies to ensure that planning decisions are in line with the necessary transition to net zero carbon.