

PLANNING REF : 250517
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 16 Hunters Way
: Spencers Wood, Berkshire
: RG7 1HW
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Geoffrey Woodvine
DATE SUBMITTED : 12/04/2025

COMMENTS:

Objection to Planning Application Number 250571.

I write to strongly object to this Outline Planning Application from Richborough, Stratford upon Avon, a sub division of Marrons. Application 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.

The Design and Access Statement from Richborough suggests a green space for new residents to enjoy living in e.g. orchards, woodland walks, decorative ponds and landscaping. However, their web-site states Richborough's interest is to "secure planning permission and best value for landowners". Quotes from grateful landowners endorse the purpose to maximise value for the landowner, not for the current or future local communities.

Put into perspective, the additional social and infrastructure impact on the surrounding three villages requiring ongoing support from

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) would be:

Data collected via www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/
Office of National Statistics (ONS) analysis of England and Wales census
2021/23

420 homes equate to average population increase of 991 persons. Average family size per home = 2.36, therefore population of 991. (This includes young adults 15-34yrs living at home ONS 2023) "Across England and Wales as a whole, 4.3% of households (1.1 million) had fewer bedrooms than required, 26.5% (6.6 million) of households had the required number of bedrooms, and the remaining 69.2% (17.2 million) of households had more bedrooms than required."

On average, up to 69% of the, as yet, undisclosed mix of housing on the proposed site could be under utilised.

Cars and vans per household:

1 vehicle 42% total 176

2 vehicles 26% total 109.2

3 or more 9% total 37.8

Average increase in number of permanent vehicles totals 323.

323 more vehicles entering/exiting Basingstoke Road plus an unquantified number of delivery and service vehicles and additional vehicles specifically attending the proposed school, GP surgery, commercial area etc. mostly on a daily basis.,

Some Objections to consider:

1) Proximity to AWE. The site lies within the Evacuation Zone of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE). The emergency evacuation plan, regularly reviewed by WBC, is in place should there be major incident, fire or radiation leak. The proposed evacuation routes from the development head towards AWE, i.e. towards danger, congestion and against the flow of other evacuees.

1a) Aviation Fuel Line. The hazardous nature and location of this high-pressure fuel line is a major security and safety risk just by being there. Any development disturbance would require significant risk mitigation. Recently the planning for Grazely Village development was rejected by MoD on safety grounds due to the location of a tributary fuel line.

2) Road Safety and access/egress. Proposed access points for the development introduce significant road safety issues, particularly on Basingstoke Road. The avoidance mentality to generate "rat runs" would use Kingsbridge Lane, Back Lane, and Lambs Lane, creating additional congestion and safety issues with particular impact around Lambs Lane School. Lambs Lane, Kingsbridge Lane, and Whitehouse Lane are predominantly single-track roads with no provision for passing places, footpaths or lighting, making them unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages. The Beech Hill Road junction with Lambs Lane and Whitehouse Lane is already a known accident black spot. The junction with the Swallowfield dual carriageway by-pass and originally for the use of farm vehicles, has no defined entry or exit slipways a major accident waiting to happen.

Every day along Basingstoke Road, from Hyde End Road to Beech Hill Road, cars and delivery vehicles can be found parked "half on the pavement" including double yellow lined areas. This is against the law. However, the drivers are forced to do this in order to use local facilities between the child care centre and the petrol station, as there is no adequate parking on a narrow rural road already congested during peak times and where 'The Transport Assessment' lacks adequate modelling of cumulative impacts overall.

2a) Access Points marked on plan with yellow stars. Proposed access points raise significant safety issues. The Century Drive access would have pedestrian and cycle traffic passing directly through a children's play area. The Barracks Lane access leads to private property and is a single track unadopted lane with no lighting or pavement. This lane exits onto a stretch of pavement that incorporates parking area for the bakery which is frequently used by vehicles, electric scooters, curbside parking ("half on/half off") that creates a hazardous area for pedestrians, especially those with prams and small children.

3) Insufficient Infrastructure Capacity. The proposal includes infrastructure elements (a school, GP surgery, care home), but no evidence that these will be delivered early enough or to a sufficient standard.

In the existing developed areas, supply of electricity is intermittent (recent cable breakage in Hunters Way, regular outages from the rack Lane sub-station), water pressure is low. The provision of these utilities must be upgraded before any development of the

proposed scale is allowed.

4) Flood Risk, Drainage. This year, the river Loddon again broke its banks, clearly visible from the Northern boundaries of the development site. The partially clay soil supports a high-water table and is liable to surface water flooding. The drainage strategy is vague and without detail on how surface runoff will be managed.

5) Suitability for Development. The land designated is currently graded as suitable for "moderate development" only. Construction of 420 dwellings; an 80-bed care home, employment land, primary school, local centre, GP Surgery, sports pitch and changing facility far exceeds the term 'moderate'. Nearby developments are still ongoing and have significant amounts of unsold capacity. Introducing another 420 dwellings requires proof of sustainable viability.

6) Agricultural Land. Except for when left deliberately fallow, the site has produced viable arable crops, meeting the government's published (08/2024) requirements for agriculture to establish UK Food Security. Destruction of this land will jeopardise this directive.

7) Environmental Impact - Flora and Fauna Conservation. The site enjoys an abundance of wild-life species, endangered, protected and commonplace, frequently listed in other objections to this application. New developments often require bee bricks, bat bricks and bird nest bricks to be installed during construction of every dwelling/commercial build etc. to mitigate some of the habitat loss. If this application were to be approved it should be made mandatory that facilities for wildlife are included.

Summary.

This location does not comply with the WBC policy on development limits (CC02); para.2, "Planning permission for proposals at the edge of settlements will only be granted where they can demonstrate that the development, including boundary treatments, is within development limits and respects the transition between the built-up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape".

The development is located within the AWE DEPZ and lies over a high-pressure aviation fuel line.

The Planning Application 250517, on a site of established agricultural land and countryside, with modest/limited development status, should not be allowed to proceed further.

If the WBC Planning Committee were to eventually grant permission to a revised application, committed and agreed safeguards and conditions must be in place to ensure

- a) no development to be undertaken until utilities infrastructure upgraded to cater for future capacity;
- b) implementation of radical solutions to close or prevent rat-runs in local lanes before commencing development.

- c) irrevocable commitment to build GP Surgery and a School to meet future needs;

- d) remove the employment area as there are already five in the nearby locality and the need is speculative only.

Yours sincerely
Geoffrey Woodvine