

PLANNING REF : 242421
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Joseph.Barley@wokingham.gov.uk
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SUBMITTED BY : Councillor Joseph Barley
DATE SUBMITTED : 22/10/2024

COMMENTS:

This application is a major concern for a number of reasons, therefore in the event that this application this application is recommended for approval, I would like it reported to planning committee for the following reasons:

Planning history in relation to the site

Application 180596 was refused planning permission in 2018, this was an application for 120 dwellings on the same site, this figure is not much higher than the figure stated in this new application, the sustenance of the application has not changed significantly and the ways in which the stated reasons for refusal on the historical application have been addressed are vague. There are additional applications in very close proximity to this site on School Road for far less houses (including some in the single digit figures) that have been refused again for similar reasons.

Scale, design, layout and its impact on the character and landscape.

The application is outside of settlement boundaries and in land designated as countryside which will suffer considerable harm. It is out of keeping with Arborfield Cross's rural nature. The development encroaches on the strategic gap between Arborfield Cross, Barkham and Langley Common. It would result in 'urban creep' into the countryside and therefore it's location cannot accommodate a development, especially of this scale, without an unacceptable impact on the character and setting of the countryside.

On prior applications, officers have states that for developments on this site could not ever achieve an acceptable design, therefore it is the opinion of the officers that any application for a development on this site, no matter its design, layout or scale, should always be refused permission.

Additionally, the site has not been allocated for residential development in the Regulation 19 LPU either, further proving its unsuitability. It's development would also be in contradiction to the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Development Plan

School Road Closure and Traffic

School Road was temporarily closed using a TRO in order to reduce traffic passing the school which had become a danger to children. The consultation period to make this closure permanent has just closed and whilst at the time of writing a conclusion has not been announced yet, an analysis of the evidence suggests that there

has not been a material change that would warrant the road being reopened. This development would render the closure of school road useless as each household is likely to have at least one car due to the lack of suitable public transport provision in the local area (to be discussed later in these objections), therefore we would likely at the very least, see well over 100 cars going to and from the development during rush hour and many more throughout the day, especially when you take tradesmen, delivery vehicles, refuse vehicles, and other vehicles into consideration.

The requirement to even look suggests that the levels of traffic on the road when it is open already negatively harm the local area and that children attending The Coombes CofE Primary School are already at a heightened risk from said traffic, even if WBC concluded that School Road should reopen, the increased level of traffic from the development in conjunction with the returning traffic who will recommence using School Road as a cut through will bring significant harm and an unprecedented level of risk to children.

Failure to promote active travel and public transport.

The application overexaggerates the suitability of the development in regards to its access to and from via active/public transport. It takes over 40 minutes to travel by bus to Wokingham from its nearby stops. Buses into Wokingham only stop every hour, twice was WBC defines as 'good service'. This severe lack of public transport provision ultimately forces people into private vehicles, further congesting the roads, making them more unsuitable for cycling and walking. The planned Arborfield Green District Centre would be the closest centre to the site and is over a 30 minute walk away, much further than what is normally considered acceptable.

Impact on climate, wildlife and biodiversity.

The increased traffic and failure to promote active and public transport already proves that this development will certainly result in a negative effect on our climate and would go against WBC's commitment to combatting the climate emergency they declared in 2018.

Nonetheless, this sites development would result in a significant loss of agricultural land, additionally the development is in very close proximity to The Coombes Woodlands, designated as a local wildlife site, ancient woodlands, and an area of geological interest. The scale of the development will undoubtedly have a negative impact on these sites and the animals which inhabit them through both light and air pollution.

Impact on Setting of Listed Building

The proposed development will significantly compromise the rural setting of Langleypond Farmhouse, a grade 2 listed building.

Violation of Historic and Emerging Strategic Policies

Based on the evidence above, the applications documentation and planning policy, the approval of this application would at the very

least, violate strategic policies SS1, SS2, SS4, SS5, SS15, C1, C2 and C3 of the Regulation 19 Local Plan Update.

Based on the evidence above, the applications documentation and planning policy, the approval of this application would at the very least, violate strategic policies CP1, CP3, CP4, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy Development Plan and the numerous related strategic policies of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.