

PLANNING REF : 241567  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 18 Woodmoor  
: Finchampstead, Berkshire  
: RG40 3TT  
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Steven Bland  
DATE SUBMITTED : 29/07/2024

COMMENTS:

understanding of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP), developed to establish a guiding vision for the parish, and to help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs for the plan period 2022 - 2036.

The stated objective of this plan is to avoid "unplanned speculative development" with no infrastructure improvements and instead, to deliver development in a structured and planned manner through which the community has made a positive, proactive and meaningful contribution, and around which infrastructure can be proactively planned and delivered.

It seems that this application shows a flagrant disregard for the stated aims of this local plan, developed by the Parish Council in consultation with local people, and endorsed by Wokingham Borough Council.

The development plan recognises that Finchampstead is a vital asset to conserve and support the need of surrounding communities for amenity, green space and leisure facilities.

Areas such as this field East of Longwater Road, are amongst the last remaining spaces between areas of settlement, and it is vital that they are retained and protected as countryside, in order to prevent the coalescence of these settlements. Regardless of the ongoing

development of the area once used for gravel extraction along the boundary with the River Blackwater, and the creation of a large nature reserve, this field with its surrounding tree line and hedges has

always provided a natural habitat for a multitude of wildlife. All of this can be witnessed regularly at both dawn and dusk, and you can set your clocks by the nightly flights of the bat population. The FNDP seeks to ensure that development proposals do not result in the loss or deterioration of habitats, including woodlands and habitats of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity and local wildlife sites. It further states that "Any residential developments must enhance the wildlife - friendly environment " - How can it?

The FNDP states that the countryside as defined on the policies map, will continue to be recognised for its intrinsic character and beauty in accordance with national policy. It says that "Development proposals will generally NOT be permitted except for ....." None of the stated criteria create grounds for a valid exception. Indeed one of the stated criteria is "except for Development in accordance with a made Neighbourhood Plan". This is clearly not the case here where this land is designated as countryside, and it sits outside any settlement areas, and any areas identified as Development Locations. The FNDP reflects upon the importance of Inter-connectivity with

adjoining parishes. Walking on Rights of Way is identified as an unde rused but effective way to move between parishes and towns avoiding public highways, bearing in mind the lack of public transport. It

states that future proposals need to take account of the advantages of developing better links between Finchampstead and the eight parish

neighbours. Crowthorne, Sandhurst, Yateley and Eversley can all be accessed by various walking routes, including the footpath adjacent to this field. Currently a pleasant aspect close to nature greets the walkers on this path (when it isn't flooded) and a housing development is unlikely to improve this "underused but effective way to move around".

In closing, I wasn't aware of the FNDP until recently but wholeheartedly support its content and objectives. It also seems that Wokingham Borough Council support both its content and objectives, which would suggest that this "unplanned speculative development" is destined to fail at the first, and all subsequent hurdles - I certainly hope so.

I am writing to object to this planning application based upon my