

PLANNING REF : 250517
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Airthrey
: Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, England
: RG7 1PH
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Eleanor Curtis
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/04/2025

COMMENTS:

Planning Application Objection: 420 Homes at Body's Farm, Spencers Wood

Application Number: 250517

Dear Planning Committee,

We are writing to formally object to the planning application for the development of 420 homes at Body's Farm, Spencers Wood. My objections are based on several critical concerns that we believe will significantly impact the local community and environment.

Access and Connectivity

Pedestrian and cyclist access routes need improvement:

The footpath between the existing farm entrance at Body's Farm and the traffic lights close to Beech Hill Road is narrow (less than the 1.8m mentioned in the travel plan). This would require improvement seeing as this would be a main route between the site and the pedestrian crossing.

Barracks Lane is unsuitable for access due to its narrowness and danger to pedestrians.

Footpaths from Hyde End Road require maintenance to ensure year-round usability.

Recreational walking routes should be established to enhance connectivity and promote outdoor activities.

Traffic and Road Safety

The development will exacerbate existing traffic issues:

Lamb's Lane, Back Lane, and White House Lane need significant upgrades to handle increased traffic safely.

The blind spot on the B3349 near Back Lane should be realigned to improve visibility and safety.

A pedestrian crossing near the proposed school site is essential for child safety.

Public Transport

Enhanced public transport services are crucial to serve the development and reduce pressure on local roads:

Support for the 600 (or equivalent) service to enable more frequent connections to Reading, and serve the new facilities, including services on a Sunday (which the area currently does not have).

Sufficient access and a turning circle within the development to facilitate bus routes.

Public Facilities

The development should include robust public facilities:

A community building for meetings, activities, and nursery services is essential.

A small supermarket, rather than a convenience store, will better serve the growing population.

Again, these should be agreed with funding in place prior to house building to ensure the facilities materialise.

Environmental Impact

The southern edge of the development, adjacent to the solar farm, compromises the view and rural character of the area. The literature provided by the developers is misleading regarding this aspect. Mature trees and hedgerows must be preserved.

School Provision

The development must address the urgent need for primary school places in the area.

A new school should be built early in the development to accommodate the growing population. This should be agreed and included prior to house building. It does not make sense to have 2 schools in such close proximity - and if the new school is to merge with Lambs Lane, the new school needs to include sufficient provision. It is not clear if the current plan has sufficient provision, or any buy-in from Lambs Lane Primary school for any such merger.

The S106 agreement should include substantial funding for the expansion of Oakbank School to meet future secondary demand.

Commercial Development Concerns

The proposed commercial development in the south-west corner of the site, opposite Lambs Lane Business Park, raises several issues: The height of the buildings will exacerbate the already dangerous conditions on the B3349 due to the blind bend.

This area already hosts multiple business parks, and additional HGV traffic will further strain the inadequate road infrastructure.

Maintaining this section of the site as open space would preserve the area's rural nature.

Affordable Housing

If the development is to proceed, the proportion of affordable housing should be increased to 50% in line with the draft local plan. This will enhance the viability of public amenities such as transport and retail facilities, ensuring the development benefits the wider community.

DEPZ (Detailed Emergency Planning Zone) Issues

The site's location within the DEPZ presents significant challenges: Evacuation routes are limited and lead towards Burghfield, with no eastern exit.

The proposed care home is impractical within the DEPZ due to evacuation difficulties and potential staff shortages during emergencies.

The ambiguity surrounding the 'Refuge' and stockpiles for emergencies raises concerns about their accessibility and effectiveness.

The local authority must include plans for a radiological emergency.

If the application proceeds in the DEPZ, facilities must suit this zone, and houses lacking these facilities should not be permitted.

Miscellaneous Concerns

Additional considerations include:

Provision for allotments, as there are none south of Hyde End Road.

Adequate parking for visitors to the care home and SANG.

In periods of high rainfall, there is flooding in the current entrance to Body's Farm, presumably from the existing drain as marked on the map. This must be improved, particularly given the expected

additional run-off from hard-standing developed land.

In conclusion, while recognizing the need for housing, I urge the Planning Committee to consider these objections seriously. The proposed development, as it stands, poses significant risks to safety, infrastructure, and the quality of life for current and

future residents. I request that these concerns be addressed comprehensively before any approval is granted.

Thank you for considering our objections.

Sincerely,

Eleanor & Richard Curtis