

PLANNING REF : 252430
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Northcote
: Swallowfield Street, Swallowfield, Wokingham
: RG7 1QX
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Barbara Stanley
DATE SUBMITTED : 10/11/2025

COMMENTS:

I wish to point out that a great deal of infrastructure is needed to cope with the influx of people which the building of extra houses will create. This applies particularly to

- Sewage - already inadequate, regularly requiring removal by tanker.
- Flooding potential - the proposed mitigation scheme includes runoff pipes which are below the high water level.
- Road networks - overcrowded
- Primary School provision - non existent
- Doctors' surgery - already significantly overstretched
- Bus service - very limited, not guaranteed into the future and not sufficient to make it a practical alternative to most car journeys
- Retail - the one small shop is too basic to avoid most shopping trips being by car; and it is too expensive for anyone in social housing.
- Community cohesion - damaged by the scattering of primary aged pupils to any school which happens to have a space' and the lack of facilities inevitable in a village but less than residents expect in the suburb it is becoming.

CP4: Infrastructure Requirements

- The new housing already and the proposed developments are overwhelming the already overloaded infrastructure.
 - o Despite official platitudes, most Swallowfield residents are aware of the inadequate sewage situation, already under strain with the existing population. This already needs to be urgently addressed.
 - o The tanker pumping away the excess is already a regular feature of Swallowfield Street.
 - o The low lying nature of this proposed site means that flooding is likely at times of high run-off, as the proposed pipes are below high water level.
- Our road network is inadequate even for the current volume of traffic. From 7.20 till 8.50, it can take half an hour to clear the Three Mile Cross mini roundabout traffic. The alternative is to add to journey distance by trying to join the dual carriageway at the Riseley/Wellington estate roundabout, but the queues there make this also a slow bottleneck.
- Crucially, there is no primary School in Swallowfield parish. Since one-form-entry Lambs Lane is at capacity from children living much nearer than Swallowfield, every primary age child in the parish should qualify for free school transport - a very expensive option for the borough - as every school is more than 3 miles away.
 - o The current de facto situation will become de jure when the new plan to abolish school catchments and rely totally on straight line distance, with priority given to those nearest the school. A Swallowfield parish child is always going to be on the end of the list and will often not get a place.

- o As well as being beyond the 3 mile 'walking distance' laid down in DfE statute, no primary school outside of Reading town centre can be reached by public transport.
- o The spreading out of our children over multiple schools is breaking down community cohesion and being detrimental to well-being.

- While possibly beneficial in one way for the one small local shop, its site and nature are inadequate to provide for the needs of the new residents, hence travel outside of Swallowfield, using the inadequate road network, will be the norm.
- Our bus service is only hourly, goes only to and from Reading and is not guaranteed for the future. It cannot therefore take the place of most car journeys and makes it an unsustainable location for anyone without a car, or short of money to run one.
- We have a good village hall but the facilities were not designed nor are they adequate to cope with a suburban, as opposed to village, population; again necessitating car journeys and lowering quality of life for the new residents.
- The surgery is already overstretched with well over the number of patients per doctor considered viable; and it is very difficult to see how it can cope with the influx. Yet why should new local residents have to travel (by car) to distant surgeries?

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CP 6: Managing Travel Demand

This has already been mentioned above, as all the parts are intertwined. I really cannot see how the road network is going to cope; we already feel 'marooned' at certain times of the day.

We suffer from:

- Inadequate public transport to get to work or leisure activities.
- therefore the narrow road network will come under even greater pressure.

CP1:11 Demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car in line with CP6.

- This has been covered above and is a very important factor in this semi rural area with local services inadequate for this influx.

CP2: B Children, young people and families, including the co-ordination of services to meet their needs.

The housing is most likely to attract young families, but the only service within acceptable (though still driving) reach is Oakbank secondary school.

- As mentioned in CP4 and CP1: 11 above, there is no primary School in Swallowfield and no school within the 2 mile radius under 8s are supposed to travel and also no primary school within the 3 mile radius 8 year olds and over are expected to be able to travel.
- The majority of services lie outside Swallowfield and this development would not increase any of the amenities within Swallowfield.

- All the points made above, especially about lack of services and public transport, make this an unsatisfactory location for affordable housing, unless WBC is prepared to invest very significantly in the local area - and I think this is beyond their financial means.

I therefore ask that these aspects are given very serious consideration before yet another development is built to overstretch still further already creaking or non-existent services.