

PLANNING REF : 253071
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SUBMITTED BY : Councillor Katrin Harding
DATE SUBMITTED : 19/01/2026

COMMENTS:

Further detailed comments to supplement my listing request from 8th January.

Travel/transport

The site has not been designed to encourage active travel. As per Charvil Neighbourhood Plan design guide, introducing pedestrian/cycle links between and within developments to travel shorter distances than cars use promotes non-car forms of transport. This is very successfully demonstrated by the cut-through between Pennine Way and East Park Farm Drive which sees a large amount of foot and cycle traffic while cars have to go the 'long way round' to get to Twyford.

Furthermore, supporting cycling, walking and wheeling away from cars encourages particularly young people to be active in their local environment. This design has far fewer off-road paths than that proposed at outline, and introduces shared carriageways with no pavements further away from the entrance to the site. The lack of a path to the west side of plot 75 is a missed opportunity to improve non-car connectivity within the site. While shared spaces can be appropriate for dead-end residential roads (as we see on Newbury Close), further traffic calming would be welcomed. The roads present reasonably long straight sections which could benefit from traffic calming as is in place in East Park Farm Drive.

I also note that the required walking strategy to support sustainable access to Twyford station has not been submitted at this stage, which is a shame and reinforces the impression that designing for health and sustainability has not been a priority in these designs.

I now

understand the previous crossing of Park Lane included at Outline is still a condition, but reiterate requests for this to be replaced with a more formal crossing emphasising pedestrian priority. Given the

challenge of the width of the carriageway, I would like to see consideration of a one-way priority restriction which would help slow traffic on Park Lane, and could enable a zebra crossing to link the new development to the facilities at East Park Farm, the rest of the village, and the Primary School. Existing one-way priority on Waingels Road which is used by the majority of cars travelling down Park Lane seems to work well.

Parking provision

A number of the parking places are only 2.5m wide, which is the MINIMUM recommended size in car

parks. Most people parking at home have a greater need to load children/car seats/bags in the car. I also note that the recommendation for EV spaces is 2.8m wide to allow for charging equipment, but there are chargers provided here.

52/225 spaces are in garages – we know that these are very rarely actually used for car storage, placing greater pressure on unallocated spaces or parking on streets. Quite apart from the

additional space challenge of parking in the garage, all garage spaces are behind other car parking spaces, making them very awkward for families with multiple jobs or other commitments at different times. In general, tandem parking is also much less likely to be usable for residents. Of the 112 allocated non-garage spaces, 37 are behind another space. We see the impact this has on East Park Farm Drive, with increasing numbers of cars parked on the street even when a space is available as they would have been blocking or blocked in by in another car. Discounting garage spaces and blocked tandem spaces (a conservative measure) this leaves only 75 easily usable parking spaces for 75 homes, plus the 42 unallocated sites which will only be convenient for a few properties

Open Space

The development proposes including a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP). With a new, larger play area designed for children up to age 11 over the road at East Park Farm Drive, this duplicates provision in the village while leaving gaps for older children. The Parish Council and planning officers had discussed provision of a facility designed for older children such as a pump track which could be well integrated with the landscape on site, and which is difficult to deliver elsewhere in the village due to space and flooding challenges. I would welcome discussions to ensure that the facility delivered complements rather than duplicates other nearby facilities.

Housing mix and distribution

I note the change in housing mix since the outline plans, and have a few concerns.

Only 4 and 5 bedroom homes coming forward as market housing – the draft Charvil Neighbourhood Plan shows the lack of 2 and 3 bedroom homes in the village,

particularly as existing residents often extend rather than move home, gradually raising the average house size in the village. This makes it even more important that smaller properties are delivered in new

developments – to allow people to get onto the housing ladder and to potentially downsize while remaining in their community.

Overall,

around 10% additional bedrooms are being delivered due to upsizing of the market homes proposed.

Shared ownership and affordable housing has been clumped together in one side of the development, rather than a mix of housing sizes and tenures throughout.

Impact on neighbouring residents

While a significant landscape buffer has been provided between the new development and The Hawthorns, gardens are proposed right up to the boundary with Canberra Lake Way. As well as being a major departure from the outline plans, this is also in conflict with a planted buffer that formed part of the plans for Canberra Lake Way, and was promised to residents moving into that development since 2021. Even putting aside previous commitments to deliver a landscape buffer, minimum back-to-back distances appear to have been proposed between houses, which given the scale of the site is entirely unnecessary and unneighbourly. These distances result in a significant loss of privacy for existing residents, who were sold these homes on the basis of tree planting softening any future

neighbouring
development.

The applicant's own 'gradient' figure on pg 14 of the Design and Access Statement for density of development appears to have been totally disregarded, with highest density of development being against the CLW boundary.

Some Canberra Lake Way residents have also raised concerns about potential loss of light from houses situated side-on next to their boundary - I trust these will be looked into in detail.

Look and Feel

The materials palette and designs show relatively little variation, especially when compared to East Park Farm Drive, the most recent large development in the village.

Sustainability.

Very disappointing that designs do not commit to rooftop solar, though the sustainability statement does confirm they could be appropriate. This is totally inappropriate for a new development of homes, to reduce future carbon emissions and bills for residents. This is not in line with the emerging local plan, which requires developments to deliver at least the amount of electricity they are expected to consume, and I question whether this is line with the applicable Future Homes Standards? I also note that many of the homes have dormers on the south side of the roofs which makes it much more inefficient and expensive to fit solar panels -whether by the developer or future owner.

Air Source Heat pumps are proposed which I welcome, along with the fabric-first approach to insulation, though I request officers to look into compliance with the most stringent applicable standards noting the emerging local plan. I also welcome the provision of EV charging points, including to serve the unallocated parking places, though question how these will be connected and electricity used paid for.

On a biodiversity side, I

note that this application has a lower positive contribution to hedgerow creation than the outline plans, though both were reliant on off-site habitat units to meet the minimum biodiversity net gain requirements. The loss of a habitat buffer/corridor between Canberra Lake Way and the new development significantly reduces routes for wildlife to traverse the site, especially away from roads.

Drainage

The drainage report showed no existing 'dissolution features' or sinkholes on site, but did not mention the multiple sinkholes that have occurred over the road, including the most recent large sinkhole that occurred in the car park in November 2023. Given the issues in very close proximity, it is essential that any potential impact of water management on the wider area is considered in detail.

Consultation and engagement

The design and access statement mentions consultation, but this is only in relation to the outline plans and no consultation has taken place by Bellway or their agents as the new owners/developers. There are major differences between the Outline plans and these current proposals, none of which are in line with feedback received during the previous consultation and represent a significant step backwards in creating a coherent, sustainable

addition to the village. I welcome further engagement to revise the designs to achieve a higher quality development for existing and future Charvil residents.