

To: Planning Services, Wokingham Borough Council

Re: Objection to Planning Application 253071 – Land West of Park Lane, Charvil

June 8th, 2026

Dear Kieran,

I write to lodge a formal application to list planning application '253071' and to request that, given the scale of the development and the material changes between the outline permission and the reserved matters now before the Council, the application be considered by the Planning Committee should officers be minded to recommend for approval.

In my capacity as a Borough Councillor for the Thames ward, I am not satisfied that the reserved matters as submitted would secure a high-quality, sustainable or policy-compliant form of development for Charvil. While I understand that the scheme is to be amended in terms of moving the substation to the other side of the development and exploration of incremental increases to the buffer, given that tomorrow is the listing deadline and there being in my view unresolved concerns in relation to layout, amenity, biodiversity, housing mix and sustainable movement, all of which are properly material to the Council's determination at this stage, the application should be listed.

My objections are based on the following material planning considerations:

- **CP1 – Housing Mix:** CP1 stipulates that development needs to be well integrated with existing communities and protect their amenity. The density of the development, especially following the identification of the flood risk area by the Environment Agency means that the scheme is attempting to sustain the same amount of housing in a much smaller area. This development is therefore in contravention of CH1 and CH2 of the Charvil Neighbourhood Plan, WBC Core Strategy Policy CP3, and Tree Strategy Policy NE4.
- **CP3 (General Principles for Development) – residential amenity, privacy and landscape buffer:** I have significant concern about the proposed relationship between the new development and existing residents both in Canberra Lake Way and The Hawthorns. While a modest landscape buffer appears to have been proposed adjacent to The Hawthorns, albeit with insufficient screening in my view, private rear gardens are proposed directly up to the boundary with Canberra Lake Way. That represents a marked departure from the earlier outline expectations and, more importantly, appears to be in conflict with the planted buffer approach associated with the adjoining Canberra Lake Way development. Additionally, requests by residents to shift the development slightly towards the Sonning Golf Course boundary would be in keeping with CNP Policy CH10 regarding Green Infrastructure.

Even leaving aside previous commitments made to residents, the detailed layout now proposed appears to rely on minimum back-to-back relationships between existing and proposed dwellings in circumstances where, given the scale of the site, a more generous and neighbourly form of separation could and should have been achieved. In planning terms, this gives rise to a clear concern under policy CP3 and sits uncomfortably with the Council's adopted planning guidance, including the Borough Design Guide, which is expressly intended to ensure that development is appropriate to its context, protects nearby properties from adverse effects, and minimises overlooking, loss of privacy and loss of amenity. The removal of the landscape buffer and the resulting degree of inter-visibility appear likely to cause a material and unacceptable erosion of privacy and residential amenity for existing occupiers on

both sides of the boundary. In my view, that conflict weighs materially against the grant of reserved matters approval.

- **CP3 – Biodiversity:** The proposals do not appear to result in a substantial net gain of biodiversity, contrary to the requirements of policy CP3. At a time when development is expected to deliver measurable environmental gain, that shortfall is a matter of considerable concern and weighs against approval.
- **CP3 – Community facilities:** The removal of the Park Lane crossing and the previously discussed play area for older children materially weakens the site's connection to a sustainable network of community infrastructure and reduces the overall quality and functionality of the scheme for future residents and existing families in the area. This also flies in the face of WBC's core strategy regulation CP1 regarding sustainable movement as a result of development.
- **CP5 - Housing Mix:** The market housing offer now comprises only 4- and 5-bedroom dwellings, with smaller units confined to the affordable housing element. That does not, in my view, represent a balanced range of dwelling sizes and tenures. Furthermore, the apparent clustering of smaller affordable units, rather than their integration throughout the development, gives rise to additional concern and does not appear to reflect the density principles shown in the applicant's own Opportunities and Constraints material.
- **CP6 - Managing Travel Demand:** While the overall quantum of housing was accepted at outline stage, the revised mix reportedly increases the total number of bedrooms from 446 to 506, an uplift of approximately 14%. That is likely to result in higher occupancy and a corresponding increase in vehicle movements. Given the site's proximity to the primary school, those implications are especially sensitive. The removal of the Park Lane crossing, previously included at outline stage, further weakens the package of measures intended to manage travel demand in a sustainable way.
- **CP3 / Borough Design Guidance - Parking provision and usability:** I also have significant concerns regarding the insufficient parking provision allocated within the scheme and the unintended consequences of its layout. Additionally, the dimensions of those spaces allocated does not adequately account for the practical needs of households. It appears as if a substantial proportion of the overall parking stock is also reliant on garages and tandem arrangements. In addition, the garage spaces are positioned behind other spaces, making them inherently less convenient and therefore less likely to function as effective day-to-day parking for households with multiple vehicles or differing travel patterns. Similar concerns arise in relation to tandem spaces more generally which materially reduce their practical usability. The amount of genuinely convenient parking available to residents appears materially lower than the headline figures suggest. That creates a clear risk of overspill parking on surrounding streets, with attendant consequences for highway function, convenience and the quality of the residential environment.
- **CP1/3 - Proposed pathway:** This is a divisive issue in Charvil for residents on either adjacent side of the development boundary. The fact that Thames Valley Police have stipulated that the pathway as currently devised is not fit for purpose coupled with concerns about the lack of a viable alternative, with community cohesion and interconnectedness stipulated repeatedly in the Charvil Neighbourhood Plan, therefore means that this application warrants a closer look by the committee.
- **CP4 - Local Infrastructure:** This development would place a significant burden on local infrastructure and services. The revised proposals do not demonstrate that adequate provision has been made to mitigate these knock-on impacts and is in keeping with the Infrastructure Delivery Contributions SPD. Approving development on this scale without a commitment regarding local infrastructure delivery would create a bad precedent locally.

This is, in my view, precisely the type of application that merits member determination rather than delegated approval if a recommendation for approval is made. The application concerns a major development in a sensitive village-edge location, has generated significant local concern, and now comes forward with material changes at reserved matters stage which, taken together, warrant transparent public scrutiny through the committee process.

I also reserve the right to submit further detailed representations before the close of the consultation period should it be extended and prove necessary given my understanding that the site scheme will now be reconfigured as a result of Thames Valley Police's comments in relation to the pathway and the decision, the right one, to move the sub-station to the other side of the development.

Yours sincerely,

Leon Cook
Wokingham Borough Councillor, Thames ward