

261059: Land South of Langley Common Road (Barkham Square)

1. Finchampstead Parish Council (FPC) objects in principle to the proposed development of this site. The original Strategic Development Location (SDL) has already been extended to include Hogwood Park, and approval of this site would increase the overall SDL by approximately 25%. As a result, the infrastructure plans that were developed to support the original SDL are now outdated and no longer adequately reflect the scale of development being proposed.
2. FPC remains concerned about the eroding of gaps between settlements and expects any application for development in this location to demonstrate clearly how that harm would be avoided or satisfactorily mitigated in relation to Finchampstead Parish.
3. FPC objects to any proposal that would increase traffic on Commonfield Lane. This is a narrow rural lane with passing places and forms part of the route to Bohunt School for children walking or cycling from Finchampstead via the California Greenway. That objection includes access to allotments via Commonfield Lane, the proposed SANG car park, and any use of Commonfield Lane as a secondary vehicular access to the development.
4. The site is proposed as part of the extended Arborfield Green SDL under LPU draft Policy SS11. Any further expansion must function as an integrated part of Arborfield Green, not as a detached or inward-looking extension. This requires direct, convenient and attractive links to the services, facilities and transport links on which future residents would depend.

FPC does not consider that the submitted movement and access strategy meets those requirements. In particular, the proposal fails to demonstrate the following:

- A secondary vehicular connection to the wider Arborfield Green SDL, capable of supporting efficient bus routing.
- Pedestrian and cycle links to existing and proposed facilities that are sufficiently direct, attractive and convenient for daily use

The absence of a secondary vehicular connection is a serious weakness in the proposal. Without it, the development would not integrate effectively with the existing Arborfield Green community, would be less capable of supporting internal trips, and would constrain the efficient routing of public transport through the site and into the wider SDL. The result is a pattern of development that reads as peripheral and insufficiently integrated.

Wokingham Borough Council's own written statement during the LPU examination states that a secondary access would *"encourage internalised trips and provide the opportunity for sustainable transport, such as bus routes, to be provided both through and beyond the SDL"*, specifically *"to ensure the Barkham Square development integrates effectively with the wider Arborfield Green SDL"*.

On the material provided, the proposal is strong on internal circulation but weak on genuine integration with Arborfield Green.

5. The proposed allotment arrangements raise a further concern. These facilities should support healthy lifestyles, community use and active travel from the outset. Instead, their location, at some distance from the residential area, risks making them a car-accessed destination rather than a facility reached naturally on foot or by cycle. The scheme therefore fails to show that the allotments have been planned around active travel principles, with vehicle access kept clearly secondary and justified only by operational need.

6. For those reasons, FPC considers that the current application fails to demonstrate compliance with the relevant policy requirements for integration, accessibility, sustainable transport and healthy communities, including Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4 and CP6, LPU draft Policies SS1, SS11, SS15, C1, C2, C3 and HC1, Neighbourhood Plan Policies GA2 and GA3, and the relevant provisions of the NPPF (and the consultation version of the NPPF).

The application also fails to demonstrate the ability of utility and health services to meet the needs of the growing population.