

PLANNING REF : 241567
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 20 Cricket Hill
: Finchampstead
: RG40 3TN
SUBMITTED BY : Gilmore Barry
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/12/2024

COMMENTS:

Objection to Planning Application ref: 241567 - recent amendments
Site Address: Land East of Longwater Road, Longwater Road,
Finchampstead. RG40 3TS

Description: Full application for the proposed erection of 40no.
dwellings (Use Class C3), together with associated outdoor space
and landscaping, drainage infrastructure, hard and soft
landscaping, parking, access, and associated works.

I write to maintain my formal objection to the above-mentioned
planning application as recently amended by the applicants for the
construction of 38 dwellings on this unallocated greenfield site
outside the village settlement boundary of Finchampstead.

My objection remains based on the following material planning
considerations:

1. Contrary to the Local Development Plan

The proposed development lies outside the defined settlement
boundary for Finchampstead as designated in the adopted Local
Development and Neighbourhood Plans. This site is not allocated for
residential development, and the adopted plans set out clear
policies to protect unallocated greenfield land from inappropriate
development.

Allowing this application would undermine the strategic policies of
these development plans, (contrary to National Planning advice &
Guidance) and those policies which aim to direct housing to more
suitable, sustainable, allocated sites.

These policies specifically limit development outside settlement
boundaries to those that can be justified by extenuating exceptional
circumstances, which this proposal has not demonstrated.

I understand that the Council is not one that has had its housing
target increased by recent Government reconsiderations of housing
land supply aspirations and that the Council's latest local plan
which provides sufficient allocations to meet need is soon to be
adopted.

2. Loss of Greenfield Land and Harm to the Character of the
Countryside

The development would result in the irreversible loss of greenfield
land, contributing to urban sprawl and damaging the intrinsic rural
character of the area. The site currently provides an important
visual and ecological buffer between the village and the
surrounding

countryside. This proposal would erode this boundary, setting a
harmful precedent for future developments.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises that the
countryside should be protected and enhanced for its landscape,
recreational, and biodiversity value (NPPF Paragraph 174).

3. Unsustainable Location

The development site is located outside the settlement boundary and
is poorly connected to local services and infrastructure. Despite
the

applicants claims to the contrary, new occupants would rely heavily
on private vehicles to access employment, education, healthcare, and
other essential amenities. This conflicts with the NPPF's core

principle to promote sustainable development and reduce reliance on car travel (NPPF Paragraphs 8 and 105).

Public transport provision is limited in the area and walking and cycling opportunities to and from the site are insufficient due to the absence of suitable pathways and infrastructure. The proposed development would increase traffic on local roads, exacerbating existing issues with congestion and road safety.

4. Impact on Local Services and Infrastructure

The proposed housing would place significant pressure on already overstretched local services and infrastructure. Finchampstead has limited capacity in its schools, healthcare facilities, and utility services. These concerns are not adequately addressed in the application.

Additionally, local roads are narrow and unsuitable for accommodating the increase in traffic generated by the development. This would result in safety risks for pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users.

5. Ecological and Environmental Impact

The development of this greenfield site risks significant harm to local biodiversity. The site and its surroundings support protected species and priority habitats here and nearby. I do not believe that sufficient ecological survey or mitigation strategy has been provided to address these impacts.

Furthermore, the development would contribute to increased flood risk and water runoff. Greenfield sites play an important role in natural drainage, and the loss of this permeable land would exacerbate surface water management issues in the area.

6. Precedent for Future Developments

Approving this proposal would set an unacceptable precedent for further speculative developments on unallocated greenfield sites in the area. This would undermine the plan-led system, which is critical for ensuring sustainable, managed growth in accordance with local policies and community needs.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development conflicts with the Local Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the principles of sustainable development. It would harm the countryside, place pressure on local infrastructure, and undermine the strategic planning framework.

I therefore respectfully urge the Local Planning Authority to refuse this application.