

PLANNING REF : 252769
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Park Farm House
: Carters Hill, Arborfield
: RG2 9JJ
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Michelle Van de Velde
DATE SUBMITTED : 29/12/2025

COMMENTS:

I believe that the current proposed local plan fails to match the key criteria in order for it to be sound and deliverable within the desired timescales. I have a number of points as to why I believe this and will provide more detail in relation to a selection of them.

1. The proposed housing plan creates a coalescence between Arborfield, Swallowfield, Shinfield, Lower Earley, Winnersh and Reading, with no sense of separation between these settlements, and there being no appreciable sense of leaving one settlement before entering another

2. It does not sufficiently consider the effect on habitats

3. It does not adequately take account of clean water/waste water requirements resulting from the addition of over 10,000 individuals to an already highly populated area

4. It does not provide mechanisms for ensuring adequate/timely infrastructure delivery

5. It does not make provision for links to sufficient public transport capacity

6. It does not adequately consider traffic movements and saturation effects at key road junctions that would be impacted

7. It has rejected better alternatives - Twyford Gardens and Ashridge Manor, which offer good sustainable transport links unlike the Hall Farm site

There are three key areas of concern that are stated within additional documentation of the local plan that appears to have either been overlooked or ignored. One that could be considered as the most

impactful on our area, is that there appears to be a desire to increase the housing in the south of the borough, where there is already a chronic shortfall of waste water treatment facilities, a short fall of over 17,000 properties, which continues to climb. This is even more significant as Thames Water does not plan to increase capacity sufficiently to cope with the current demand, combined with their dire financial situation, begs the question of whether they are even able to facilitate an expansion of housing in this area.

Due to the shortfall in waste water treatment capacity, this will also negatively affect the habitat of the River Loddon with the potential for more sewage to be dumped into our river. The River Loddon is a rare example of a chalk river with numerous rare species living within it, it is therefore clear that the proposed development in the south of the borough around Hall Farm will have the most negative impact on our local environment. This in turn will impact our ability to tackle climate change and reduce our carbon emissions. This goes against the spirit and design of the Habitat's Regulations of 2017.

It is because of all these points that I believe the council should revisit the Twyford Gardens and Ashridge Manor sites, as it not only has spare waste water capacity, infrastructure and existing transport links, both road and rail, it is the least environmentally damaging of the proposed options that the council had considered. In relation to the fields labelled as "retained agricultural land" on the University's outline application, it is key to note the importance of these fields in the context of the LPU policy (SS13) - namely that measures need to be incorporated into the relevant applications in order to protect Carters Hill as a separate settlement. These fields flank the entrance road into Carters Hill and therefore form an integral part of the land needing to be protected from development in order to achieve the policy's goal. In my opinion, the "retained agricultural land" label within the University's outline application does not satisfy the requirements of the policy. It is critical that these fields be allocated as BNG/SANG in order to protect Carters Hill as a separate settlement. This application needs to be made urgently by the University for the fields to be allocated for BNG / SANG