

Planning application 242067 – Land between Lodge Road and Tape Lane RG10 0EG

I object to yet another speculative application in Hurst. Referring to WBC's policy CP11 of the Core Strategy, it states that

“proposals outside of the Development Limit will not normally be permitted” unless, by exception, specific conditions are met.

Having read the proposal, I don't see how any of those conditions have been met.

I have picked some specific points below, and highlighted some of the comments from the proposal pack which I found interesting.

Jamie Lake

Proposed mini-bus service

An interesting concept, however this is only to cover when the 128/129 is not in service, and only available to residents of the new development. This highlights the unsustainable location of the proposed development. If it was in a sustainable location, there wouldn't be a need for this at all.

In addition this will mean quite a hefty charge to the residents of the proposed dwelling (I understand 50% affordable housing), meaning a charge of around £750 per household initially, and assuming a small increase per year, likely nearer £1,000 by the tenth year. When it will stop. The service is not offered on Sunday and does not help those who may need to commute to Wokingham or Winnersh. It may also take away from the currently offered 128/129 service, which is already subsidized, and potentially put this at risk for the other residents in the area.

It is also worth noting that many of the service proposed rely on additional funding and permission from third parties, and not just reliant on S106 payments.

Facilities

Developers really do need to come and visit Hurst ahead of stating that there are plenty of facilities. They are basic at best, with a local shop (the post office is a sub-post office) that runs slightly longer than standard hours, there is no bakery, there are some pubs and a church. For anything more than a pint or loaf of bread, one must travel to Twyford.

It must be remembered that with all the recent development plans submitted, the answer to a lack of facilities is to go to Twyford. Twyford has its own problems. Forget NHS dentists, there is a very long waiting list. Schools are over-subscribed and will only

get worse taking into account the new developments approved in Twyford. The GP surgery is also at capacity. Before using Twyford as a solution to lack of facilities in Hurst, it is not much better there.

Transport

Despite a list of advisory cycle lanes and routes, local people do not cycle to Twyford for doctor's appointments, weekly shops, the school run, or anything else. It is simply not a practical or realistic proposal to suggest that new residents will opt for a bicycle rather than a car to travel. Especially on a Sunday when the proposed mini-bus service isn't running.

The transport assessment seems optimistic. I would expect conservatively that 99 houses would bring 200-250 additional cars to the area. The assessment does not take into account delivery vehicles, the mini-bus, the proposed change in route for the 128 bus. Tape Lane is access only, and will no doubt see a large increase in traffic. The proposal to restrict parking on Tape Lane detracts from those current residents who have limited off-street parking.

The station parking at Twyford is at capacity by approx. 07.00, following the new Elizabeth Line opening, resulting in the local council having to implement new yellow lines along many residential streets. This has moved commuters onto Hurst Road, which has no restrictions. This will make it extremely dangerous for cyclists on the way to Twyford as the extra space on Hurst Road is now taken up by parked cars (there were 11 parked cars at the junction of Broad Hinton at midday on Friday 13-Sep-24).

Schools

As a resident with young children, bearing in mind the now approved development at Bridge Farm in Twyford for 200 dwellings (APP/X0360/W/22/3309202), there is little chance the children in the area will be able to get into local schools, let alone in Twyford. They are already at capacity, the one school in Hurst is already over-subscribed, as are those in Twyford. This makes it increasingly difficult in terms of logistics for getting children to school in Twyford or surrounding areas, and the proposed bus service only caters for Piggot and none of the other schools. The timetable is also not suitable for children to use these services. Regardless of what the developer hopes, private cars will remain the top choice of transport. The schools are too far away to be feasible to walk to/from, especially when there is not a continuous paths from Twyford/Wargrave to Hurst.

Character of Hurst

The proposal in no way adds to, retains or improves Hurst. The development will lead to a loss of a key element of Hurst and Whistley Green, characteristic of the area, and identified as such by the Inspector at the recent appeal for 200 dwellings (APP/X0360/W/22/3309202).

The development is located in countryside and the density far exceeds the current village density. It is overdevelopment of the site and introducing two urban groups does not represent the way either Hurst or Whistley Green have evolved.

Flooding

The area is prone to flooding – as a resident I can confirm this. By not only removing open ground and adding 99 dwellings worth of waste water and sewage to the system, this will only be exacerbated. We have flood events every year, serious ones every other year. Tape Lane is no exception, having been impassable earlier this year. This was raised in the previous planning application appeal, and needs to be taken seriously. See photos below of the Broadwater end of Tape Lane – this is just a few examples).

Further Comments (referenced to MAC MIC Planning Statement)

3.15. The Inspector referenced that a development of the size and scale proposed was not sustainable but did not rule out that some level of development could be sustainable in this location.

[JL] The Inspector (Mr Wildsmith) did not rule out development, but neither did he say there was a case for development on this scale.

3.20. Overall, the proposals were deemed to “have a moderate adverse impact, at the upper end of the scale, on the rural character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area, and would fail to conserve the low-density pattern of settlement centred around Hurst and Whistley Green.”

[JL] 99 dwellings in that space does not conserve the low-density pattern of development in Hurst.

3.29. The main issues of the Appeal were: The spatial objectives of the Local Plan as regards the location of new development; Landscape; Accessibility to facilities and services; Housing land requirement and supply

[JL] These issues have not changed. As pointed out during the appeal against 200 dwellings (APP/X0360/W/22/3309202), there is considerable over-supply of housing within Hurst and surrounding areas. Only last month, a further 45 house development was approved by WBC in Hurst. There is no urgent need for housing, in fact development in the area has already exceeded expected targets, which was discussed at the hearing (APP/X0360/W/22/3309202).

4.22. The internal site layout is not for determination at this stage and the future Reserved Matters application will detail and demonstrate the suitability of the proposed site layout, including providing evidence on street geometry, surface treatment, visibility, service vehicle access, refuse arrangements and emergency vehicle access.

[JL] As seen with the Sawpit Lane development, what we see is not what we get, and often changed by subsequent alteration requests which seem to have no problem getting approval.

Tape Lane Flooding, 2024

January





March





Tape Lane flooding, April 2023

