

PLANNING REF : 242067
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Maple Lodge
: Tape Lane, Hurst
: RG10 0DP
SUBMITTED BY : Mr John Saunders
DATE SUBMITTED : 17/09/2024

COMMENTS:

I refer also to my objections to the previous development application for this site Ref No. 2204588, most of which still apply.

My wife and I have lived in this house since April 1993, and over the seasons and the years have loved the pastoral outlook through the seasons across the hedgerows and field opposite. Each morning, we awake to see the horses and donkeys grazing and the rich wildlife of birds, insects, mature trees and flowers in the hedges. This rural and peaceful environment should not be destroyed. We object most strongly to this new, opportunistic, overdevelopment application.

First and foremost, the proposed development is outside the Hurst Village envelope and hence contrary to policy CP11 of Wokingham Council's Core Strategy, which states that proposals outside of the Development Limit will not normally be permitted. This alone should provide adequate grounds for rejecting this application forthwith, as there is no overriding need for such development nor any substantial grounds provided to except this site from the harmful nature of such a proposal.

This is supported by the explicit omission of this site from the local plan update as completely inappropriate, as being out of character with for Hurst Village, even though it was initially proposed for inclusion in the plan.

The proposal will be damaging to Hurst, both socially and environmentally. Ninety-nine houses will add substantially to motor traffic on narrow and unsuitable roads. The proposed mitigation measures - cycle ways on already busy roads, changed bus route (of which more later), part time minibus service (to be funded by a universal residential levy!) - will in no way suffice to provide adequate transport needs for this site. As has been mentioned in opposition to earlier proposed developments, Hurst is totally unsuited to cope with such extensive expansion. There is no doctors' surgery, no pharmacy, no dentist, no opticians, no cinema or other entertainment venue, no railway station, no supermarket - the nearest facilities are 2+ miles (>3km) away. Convenient access to any of these requires use of personal transport. Also, the idea of using a bus to bring home a supermarket shop is completely ridiculous. I would also point out that it is difficult enough to get a doctor's appointment at Twyford surgery, a situation which will only deteriorate with the new developments to be built in Twyford. Hurst Primary School is full, it already has mixed year-group classes - where will the provision be for children on this site? If they have to go to Twyford or elsewhere, this will only exacerbate the traffic issues. Likewise for secondary schooling - places at Piggot may well not be available, and no provision (other than private car use) appears to be made for transport to Forest School or the Holt. In short, this development

will lead to increased traffic and pollution, as well as potential safety hazards at the access points..

There is also a likelihood (probability?) that residents in the new development will use the southern part of Tape Lane - which is a very narrow single carriageway, with residents' drives being used as passing places - as a rat-run short-cut to their new homes.

Referring back to the proposed bus access to the site, Tape Lane is currently access-restricted for good reason. The idea of funnelling the 128 bus from this narrow lane into the new estate is absurd, and a probable safety hazard to residents in addition to restricting current residents from parking outside their own properties, with unsightly yellow lines and / or signage.

The loss of environmental diversity caused by removing hedgerows, even if some are replanted subsequently, is a concern, as is the loss of visible green space. This development could open the door to further house-building, completely destroying the rural character and village identity of Hurst. Incidentally, Hurst already has a Community Orchard.

The new development - with street-lighting - will cause unnecessary light pollution, affecting nocturnal wildlife, over much of the village.

The loss of green space to be replaced by hard impermeable surfaces will inevitably increase the flood risk in Whistley Green, Tape Lane and Martineau Lane. The north end of Tape Lane has been flooded already this year and the field often has excessive surface water. The sewage and wastewater provisions in Hurst are currently at capacity, so a concentrated development such as this may cause an overload and foul water overflow - most unpleasant for all.

Wokingham Borough has set a target to achieve net zero by 2030 as part of the declared "Climate Change Emergency". This development, leading to loss of green planting (carbon dioxide absorbing trees, grass etc.) and increased emissions from cars and other transport, is in direct conflict with this target.

So my wife and I both object in the strongest terms to this unsustainable development.