

PLANNING REF : 242067
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 12 Nursery Gardens Whistley Green
: Reading, Uk, Berkshire
: RG100GN
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Penny Clarke
DATE SUBMITTED : 14/09/2024

COMMENTS:

Despite this application being significantly modified from the one that was turned down by the planning inspector at the highest level, it still conflicts with the current WBC Local Plan which I believe is valid until 2026. The National Planning Policy Framework, states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Any proposed developments that conflict, should be refused and whilst it may be argued that this rule doesn't apply currently if WBC do not have a 5 year housing land supply, which currently it does not there should be consideration given to the significant over delivery in the area and therefore designated lower tier limited development areas should not be utilised without very good reason.

This development will add further to the transport issues the area is already struggling with. The site is poorly served by other transport modes. Locally we have the highest car ownership in the country with 91% owning a car (and Hurst car ownership is even higher) - this development will only add to a reliance on car ownership with many houses having multiple cars. Case in point being the Nursery Gardens development that i live on.

The proposal of a new 16 seater mini bus is frankly laughable and will be financially unviable putting an increased financial burden on the future residents including potentially those in the 'Affordable' housing. The service charge for the bus alone in the first year will be at least 770 per household per annum; Assuming a modest increase each year, by yr 5 the service charge could be in the order of almost 1000 per household per annum and who knows what would happen after the 10 year term is up. It also proposes only to go towards twyford and the piggott. What about the girls school, and people working in Woodley and Winnersh? In addition, this will take away business from the existing 128/129 bus service which already is heavily reliant on subsidies and where would we be if that ceases running altogether.

The proposal is to route all the bus services through the new development which will be less convenient for the core village residents.

Hurst village only has basic facilities, they are not 'good' as the ap plicant states in thier proposal. The village shop is only a small convenience store almost closed last year and we are fighting to keep it going, the sub-post office is part time, there is no bakery, no chemist, no GP and those locally are very stretched, no secondary schools within walking distance and no vet, dentist or opticians. The future occupants of the properties would be very reliant on their own cars to access basic amenities and services. This is contrary to WBC policies CP1, CP3 CP6 and CP11 of the Core Strategy the core planning principles of the NPPF sections 5, 9, 12 and 15.

Nearly all the local schools are at capacity or indeed above. This development cannot ensure that there is sufficient choice of School places available to meet the needs of existing and new communities which is contrary to National Planning Policy Framework. The local village primary school is up to capacity. All other primary schools are beyond reasonable walking distance and the 128/129 bus service is infrequent and the proposed new minibus service will not provide for those families whose primary school children need to attend schools further afield either in Woodley, Winnersh or Wokingham. Those that might expect their children to secure a school place in Twyford may find there a strong chance that due to the new 200 Bridge Farm

development there will not be any places any primary schools in Twyford as that proposal did not include a new primary school to deal with capacity. On Nursery Gardens (16 houses on a brown field in fill) there are 16 children all of school age who weren't here 3 years ago. That is not including the front smaller properties. For some time, Hurst children have been finding it increasingly difficult to gain a place at Wargrave Piggott Secondary School (we know as we struggled to get our own now grown up kids in several years ago) and the application is naive to think that this will improve in the future due to large future developments between Hurst and Wargrave yielding more pupils for that School. Plus there are no continuous safe cycle or safe walking routes to the secondary schools coupled with the infrequent and poor public transport provision means most kids like our did get driven to school adding further to the burden on the roads.

This proposal is also a complete over development of a countryside location. The density of the village settlement is approximately 13 dwellings per hectare (dph) and this site is located in the countryside, where the dph is 0.7 dph. The proposed application is entirely excessive and not in keeping with the village at approximately 25 dph for the location in density and scale, and will massively encroach on the village. The introduction of 2 urban clusters does not relate in any way to the organic growth of Whistley Green and Hurst.

It is highly likely that this proposal would contribute to flood risk on site and/or elsewhere, as any excess from the Sustainable Drainage System and overflow from the attenuation basins will run into the Hatch gate River drainage ditch on the site which feeds into Twyford Brook/River Loddon, which floods the wider area.

The Thames Water sewerage pumping stations in Hurst are already at capacity. There are frequent issues caused by excessive rainfall and overwhelmed sewers resulting in flooding along Broadwater Lane, Sawpit Road, and the wider area. Development would lead to increased pressure of the water infrastructure, overwhelming the drainage network causing damage to existing residents' homes. The applicant's FRA has incorrectly worked on the principle that Hurst (and this site) has a flooding event of 1 in either 30 or 100 years. We have lived here for 25 years and seen for ourselves many more

events than what should have been seen on that basis. Indeed WBC produced a S19 Flood Investigation Draft Report in March 2024 which reveals that Hurst has a flood event risk of 1 in 3 years at land to the north of Hurst, Whistley Green which includes this application site area.

This report identified inadequate channel capacity and that many of the drainage assets, which this application proposes to use, are in

poor condition and do not drain effectively. Many of the ditches in the area are badly maintained and no longer fulfil their planned function, which causes flooding in the area.

The introduction of a further 99 dwellings to the network, with a SuDS draining into the Hatchgate Ditch will further contribute to the flooding already acknowledged and experienced in the area every 1 in 3 years. In addition the proposal for all the foul drainage to be directed into the Tape Lane connection, will overload the pumping station at Broad Hinton which the WBC S19 Flood Investigation Report describes as 'Woefully inadequate'. This will not only be harmful to the existing residents of Hurst, who already fairly regularly experience malfunction of domestic lavatories in Whistley Green, Sawpit Road and Martineau Lane, but also inevitably the new residents will also experience the very same malfunction. It is not nice to be in the receiving end of a malfunctioning toilet!

Finally (although I could go on....

The proposal will need to remove over 200 metres of existing hedgerow for the proposed Lodge Road entrance, which will remove an important wildlife corridor and any replacement hedge will not provide shelter or food for wildlife for some considerable time so this action will therefore cause harm to habitat and wildlife. WBC have declared a climate emergency and are aiming to address this with their actions, so we need to act and protect mature trees, ancient hedgerows and greenfield sites like this, which play key role in helping sequester atmospheric CO₂. This site is less than 25m from the Defra designated Hurst House Priority Habitat under the Natural England Wood-pasture and Parkland Inventory Update under the UK

Biodiversity Action Plan. The habitat from this site is linked to the development by Hatch Gate Ditch (River) wildlife corridor. The development will cause substantial harm to this important connection. The Ecology Assessment i provides only a snapshot of the ecological conditions at the site and does not record plants or animals that are present on-site at different times of the year. By their own admission the applicants state that the 2024 surveys for Bats is incomplete and therefore of little to no value, relying on the survey for the previous application (2022). According to that previous Ecology Assessment within 2 km there are a minimum of 69 protected species including Bats, Water Voles Hedgehogs, Grass Snakes, Toads, Frogs, Great Crested Newts, Barn Owls, Peregrines and Stagbeetles. It was also stated in the same document that there are a minimum of 47 priority species including the many birds that visit, nest and feed on these fields all through the year.