

Submitted by: Reshma Kachhwaha, Waingels Road, Charvil, RG10 0UA

Tuesday 18th March 2025

RE: Objection to Application 250407 for Permission in Principle for Residential Development at Land to the Rear of Oak Tree, Waingels Road, Charvil

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to object to the application for Permission in Principle for residential development at Land to the Rear of Oak Tree, Waingels Road, Charvil. While I understand the need for housing, I believe this application is fundamentally flawed, fails to address significant concerns and, ultimately, the area is not suitable for development. I believe this application should be rejected and my objections are based on the following grounds:

1. Conflict with Countryside Policies
2. Premature Application: Lack of Detail & Inconsistencies within the Planning Application
3. Road Safety Concerns & Access for Emergency Vehicles
4. Unrealistic Sustainable Transport Expectations
5. Overdevelopment & Out of Keeping with the Character of the Area
6. Inadequate Assessment of Service Infrastructure and Pollution Risks
7. Impact on Neighbouring Dwellings

1. Conflict with Countryside Policies

The application site is designated as countryside, and Policy CP11 of the Wokingham Core Strategy has a restrictive approach to development in such areas, aiming to "protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment." The Waingels Road provides the only green space between the developments of Charvil and Woodley. While the application argues that the site is well-contained and the development wouldn't harm the area's identity, the principle of allowing residential development in the countryside in this location is unacceptable. The agent (Woolf Bond Planning Ltd) relies heavily on the Council's housing land supply deficit to justify the proposal, but this does not override the fundamental importance of protecting the countryside from inappropriate development.

2. Premature Application: Lack of Detail & Inconsistencies within the Planning Application

This application is for Permission in Principle, from my understanding, this limits consideration to location, land use, and amount of development. As quoted in the planning document, there are crucial details, such as design, highways, drainage, ecology, dwelling mix, and affordable housing, which are deferred to the Technical Details Consent stage. It is impossible to properly

assess the acceptability of the development without these details! For example, the illustrative plan shows the access on a bend in the road, but this is a major concern that should be addressed at this stage. This lack of detail indicates that the application is premature and should be rejected until a comprehensive proposal is submitted.

Further questions about the application arise in closer reading of the application as there are several inconsistencies. For example, the proposal is for 9 dwellings on a plot of 0.99 hectares, however, the document quotes (section 6.25) “...*circa 10 dwellings per hectare across the whole site*”. This surely demonstrates that Woolf Bond Planning Ltd’s actual intentions for development at this location are ambiguous. And that they have narrowly adjusted the number of dwellings they are requesting and the area of land to avoid this application being considered as a major development.

Such discrepancies raise concerns about the accuracy of the submission but also regarding possible future amendments they would make to attempt to increase the density further. This misrepresentation should invalidate the current application and require re-evaluation. I believe this application should be rejected based on Woolf Bond Planning Ltd’s transparent attempt to disguise this development as a minor development when it should be classified as a major development.

3. Road Safety Concerns & Access for Emergency Vehicles

The application is premature due to a lack of a sufficient road safety assessment. As I mentioned above, the illustrative plan drawing number, SK01, shows access to a bend in the road, with blind spots and reduced visibility. This poses a high risk of collision for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 110 says there should be safe and suitable access to the development for all users. For cars accessing the site, the blind spot makes it very difficult to spot oncoming traffic and therefore unsafe when entering and exiting the site. Furthermore, for pedestrians, the footpath is on the opposite side of the road, therefore, due to the blind spot, poor lighting, and 40 mph speed limit, it is an incredibly dangerous place to cross the road. This footpath is also narrow and is unsuitable for wheelchair access or pushchair access. As a nearby resident, both my daughter and I struggle to cross the road safely and it deters us from walking to nearby friends houses. There is no analysis of these risks within the planning statement and therefore, I do not believe the proposed site provides safe or suitable access to all users (NPPF, para 110). This is a significant omission, especially considering the high 40mph speed limit on Waingels Road and the history of significant pedestrian injuries from collisions. This application cannot move forward without analysis of these very real risks that all users of the road would face.

I would also question if the access road is too narrow for emergency services and other large facilities vehicles (e.g. septic tank drainage trucks) to access safely. Please note, that along the proposed access road, there is a potential TPO tree that should not be removed without proper assessment. I raise this because there are nearby TPO trees that have been found unsuitable

for removal, for example, a tree on the North side of the Nikunj property was found unsuitable for removal as it was regarded as a TPO tree. While the planning document claims there are no TPO trees in the area (section 2.8), however, the data this is based on is not always accurate and the tree should be assessed due to its substantial size. If this tree is TPO and cannot be removed, it would limit the width of the access road and make it unsuitable for emergency vehicles and large facilities vehicles to safely access the site. This would also violate NPPF, para 110, which states that a development planning request should be refused if it creates an unacceptable impact on highway safety, which applies here.

4. Unrealistic Sustainable Transport Expectations

NFFP paragraph 111 says that specific applications for development should be assessed to ensure that there are appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes. The application claims the site is in a sustainable location, but this is highly debatable. While there are some transport links, the site is not within easy walking distance of services and facilities. The reliance on private car use will be high, which is contrary to sustainable transport objectives. The application mentions that this will be considered at the technical details consent stage, this should be considered within this application.

This is supported by the Council officer's statement in section 2.10 which states *"levels of accessibility for residents of the existing nearby properties and the future occupiers of the development would be similar"*. As a current resident of Waingels Road, I can confirm that all residents use private transport (cars) to access local amenities and other travel. The bus routes available offer transport to limited areas*, are infrequent and take at least 3 times longer than it would take to use private cars to get to Reading or Woodley. For example, travelling to Woodley Centre from the site location via bus is 22 minutes (most of which is walking). However, the distance to travel via car is 6 minutes. Please also note that drawing SK05 attempts to show the walking distance to Woodley Centre would be less than 10 minutes, but it is a 35-minute walk from the site. Logically, individuals will be using cars/private transport in this area and therefore cannot be considered a sustainable location.

**They have claimed that there are bus routes to Select Car Leasing Stadium (section 2.9). This is false as the bus route only offers access to Woodley and Reading, and you could not reach the Stadium without taking another form of transport. It is worth noting that the buses also run only two times every hour and take a long route into Reading (45 minutes to Reading Station via bus/walking).)*

The planning document (section 2.9) also states "...there is good pedestrian access to nearby settlements of Woodley and Charvil, which contain a range of shops and services". This implies that it would be easy to access shops and services via pedestrian access, which is very inaccurate. The nearest local shops are Premier Brecon Stores (very limited food selection) which is 17 minutes walking and Tesco Express is 27 minutes walking. This is not a suitable distance to walk, especially in poor weather conditions, with the poor lighting on Waingels Road, and the unsafe crossing (blind spots) for pedestrians. This development is not aligned with

NPPF para 111 as development in this area will only increase the use of private vehicles in the area.

5. Overdevelopment & Out of Keeping with the Character of the Area

This area is characterised by large plots (between 1/2 to 2 acres), making this high-density development out of character with the surroundings. NPPF, Paragraph 130 states that developments must be “*sympathetic to local character*”, which this proposal is not as it is clearly overdevelopment of this area. The planning statement outlines the intention to build 9 dwellings on 0.99 hectares (2.446 acres). After accounting for the additional access road, each dwelling would occupy approximately 0.1-0.2 acres. This contrasts sharply with the nearby dwellings! To be in character with the area, the site would only be suitable for a maximum of 3 dwellings. This planning application should be rejected to protect the existing character of this area and the valuable green space this area provides between Charvil and Woodley. This development will diminish this green space, thereby contributing to the loss of green space in the wider area

6. Inadequate Assessment of Service Infrastructure & Pollution Risks

The application fails to adequately address waste management for this development which is a concern as existing dwellings on Waingels Road rely on septic tanks.** There are restrictions on the distance a septic tank can be from a dwelling and therefore this needs to be factored into this planning application. Furthermore, the soakaways/drainage system for the septic tanks has a high chance of contaminating the lake due to how close the properties are to the lake. My understanding is that the council has a duty under Section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to prevent environmental harm, which includes land contamination and habitat destruction. This development risks long-term damage to the local environment, including pollution of the nearby lake and destruction of green space. The impact of additional septic tanks on the nearby lake and local watercourses requires assessment and this application should be rejected as this further illustrates that it is premature and lacks significant details.

*** (Although there have been plans to get mains sewage on Waingels Road, these works have been put on hold indefinitely, so it is very likely that septic tanks will be required for each new dwelling).*

The proposal fails to adequately consider the ecological impact of the development and how this land acts as a protected habitat for wildlife. The land is currently inhabited by wildlife e.g. rabbits, deer, birds (nearby bird sanctuary should be consulted, Norris Copse Bird Sanctuary - [Local Green Spaces Assessment Appendix 8](#)), and there are protected bat species in the area. The development would breach the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as increased human activity, pollution, and construction will disrupt this ecosystem. To further support this, NPPF Paragraph 180 states that planning permission should be refused if development causes significant harm to biodiversity. This project risks violating that requirement and therefore, a rejection should be strongly considered for this application.

7. Impact on Neighbouring Dwellings

The development will have a detrimental impact on the amenity and privacy of neighbouring properties, especially the Nikunj dwelling (directly north of the site). Town and Country Planning Act 1990, emphasises the importance of sustainable development and the well-being of the communities. This high level of overlooking should be considered a detriment to residential amenities, which falls under this broad principle. To illustrate this, the proposed development would border the Nikunj property from 3 sides, west, south and east and the access road will be in close proximity (approximately 2 meters) to the 'Nikunj' dwelling. This proximity will result in overlooking private rooms, including a bedroom and bathroom, from the new road, compromising the privacy of the residents. Existing fence panels are insufficient to mitigate this overlooking, and any additional screening in this area would further reduce natural light to the dwelling.

As all properties in this area have a reasonable degree of privacy, especially for the back rooms of their property, this is not in character with the other properties on this road. It would be more accurate to describe the site as "Land to the Rear of Nikunj" and therefore it would be wholly unfair to not consider the impact on the Nikunj dwelling as part of plans to develop around this dwelling.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, **I believe this application for Permission in Principle request should be rejected. The proposal is contrary to planning policies, premature in its lack of detail, unsustainable in its location, detrimental to the character of the area, and fails to adequately address the impact on neighbouring amenities.**

I urge the Council to refuse this application.

As the property closest to the site, I have thoroughly researched the issues that this development would face and therefore, I hope you will carefully consider my objections.***

Kindest Regards,

Reshma Kachhwaha

(Resident of Waingels Road, Charvil, RG10 0UA)

****Please be aware that the notification for this application was dated 28th February, but we received it on 11th March and the deadline for submissions was 20th March. As the property that will be impacted the most by this development, we have not been given sufficient time to review the application. We should have been notified earlier and given proper time to consider.*