

PLANNING REF : 252430
PROPERTY ADDRESS : The Croft
: Charlton Lane, Swallowfield, The Croft Charlton Lane, Swallow
: RG7 1RT
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Charles Andrew Pailthorpe
DATE SUBMITTED : 12/11/2025

COMMENTS:

Dear Sir/Madam

12 November 2025

City and County are proposing to develop 79 houses on the land east of Trowes Lane abutting Charlton Lane to the south. Planning application number 252430. I have the following comments:

1. The Land:

- a. The land has been used for agricultural purposes for many years so it can be considered as ALC grade 1.
- b. The development would violate the principle of the village envelope.

2. Flooding:

- a. Surface water on Charlton Lane and Trowes Lane collects in the ditches on both roads and runs down to the Lodden river. Building a new housing estate on the proposed land increases the risk of flooding because the surface would become impermeable due to the construction of houses, tarmac roads and concrete pavements. Surface run-off would increase leading to a rapid increase in a river's discharge and from the map below significantly increase the risk to the properties to the east and north of the area. The risk of flooding can be found from the following Government link: <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map?easting=472066&northing=164579&map=SurfaceWater> but it does not indicate the extent of surface water collection. The Stantec assessment 4.1.10 recognises that the analysis does not take account of any specific local information on below-ground infrastructure and infiltration.
- b. Is the development suitable for a Flood Protection certificate?
- c. In the 'Managing Development Delivery Plan' 2014 it is stated that 'a new development in areas of flood risk will be supported where it can be demonstrated that a) The development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk - (what sustainability benefits are there?) and b) The development will: i. Be safe for its lifetime, taking into account the vulnerability of its users ii. Not increase flood risk in any form elsewhere and where possible will reduce flood risk overall'. This is not possible.
- d. A sustainable drainage system to divert the surface water would have to pass through land further east of the proposed site but would increase the potential for flooding on Part Lane which regularly floods.

3. What is the effect of the increased sewage from the new development on the existing system in Swallowfield? Has a sustainable drainage system been devised?

4. Transport factors:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that we should be building places that engender healthy lifestyles and that we should encourage active travel and reduce the carbon footprint. That would be impossible to achieve with the proposed development in Swallowfield for the following reasons:

- a. Residents in Swallowfield are almost completely reliant on using

their cars for transport.

b. There are no safe bicycle routes available to ride towards Reading or indeed anywhere else. In the Transport Assessment para. 2.39 'Given the low/number of cycling users generated by the application site, it would not be appropriate for the scheme to fund all the improvements identified in this Audit'. As the proposal for the residential development is for 79 dwellings, this is likely to result in an additional 150-160 adults and an indeterminate number of children. There will be a requirement for safe walking and cycle routes which are not currently available.

c. Most school children will have to be taken to school by car as there are no viable alternatives. There is a bus into Reading which school children of a certain age may use unattended by their parents but none to Ryeish Green or Farley Hill.

d. The bus services run about once an hour. Considering both Trowes Lane and Charlton Lane are effectively single lane roads it would be impossible to introduce a bus service to the development. Also, the roads are not wide enough to construct pavements that would not interfere with the ditches' drainage. The bus would have to be boarded on The Street.

e. The lack of public transport and safe cycle paths means an inevitable requirement to use the car to go to work.

f. How do teenagers obtain lifts to attend their extra-curricular activities? Most families now require two cars increasing even further the transport congestion and upping the carbon footprint.

g. Public services to low density village developments produce a higher council cost due to the need to cover the wider area and affects services such as waste collection, police and emergency response and any potential school transport.

h. The concept of urban extension housing producing 'garden villages' promotes car-based living. WDC should be looking where best to locate new homes to minimise the need to travel to work and to amenities

such as shops and schools. Clearly the proposed new development in Swallowfield cannot achieve that concept. It can only increase car emissions whereas WDC should be looking to ensure that transport is low emission and sustainable.

5. Climate factors:

a. The Climate Change Committee have recommended that by 2025 no new homes should connect to the gas grid and should be built with low-carbon heating systems such as heat pumps and low-carbon heat networks. There is an increased energy requirement for this type of heating and potentially a significant space factor for the networks.

b. All the new developments proposed by Wokingham District Council will increase the demand for water. If climate change increases the temperature during the summer then the demand will continue to escalate. Thames Water have recently announced that as a result the growing population and climate change there is 'lots of pressures on our available water supplies' and there will be a roll out of water meters. Can Thames Water cope with this demand?

c. In order to meet the Fifth Carbon Budget, 60% of new car and van sales must be electric vehicles by 2030. Charging points must be installed in homes with off street parking. Thus, promoting the use of electric cars will increase the electricity demand. Can the current powerline infrastructure cope with the extra demand?

d. The size of the development will have little opportunity to provide any 'greenspace' to promote climate adaptation. The

Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have accessible natural greenspace. This means that for a development of at least 2 hectares in size, there should be greenspace available no more than 300 metres away. This is not possible.

e. A biodiversity plan would promote retaining mature trees and hedgerows to preserve the local habitat.

f. The 'urban sprawl' that WDC is proposing destroys the natural ecosystem for wildlife. Whilst the field is for agricultural use, it is frequented by a diversity of wildlife including deer, rabbits, pheasants, partridges, kites, buzzards, owls, bats, in the winter fieldfares and in the summer a variety of warblers. The development could interfere with their breeding grounds.

g. The hedgerows attract robins, blackbirds, thrushes and a variety of the tit family and also the finch family.

h. The increase in population from the development would interfere with the natural breeding ground of the adjacent woodland as there would be an increased number of people and dogs walking around the woodland.

6. Medical facilities:

a. Swallowfield Medical Practice provides an excellent caring service to the community but will struggle if new developments keep on increasing the number of potential local patient numbers.

7. Schools:

a. What contingences are in place to accommodate the increased requirement for schooling at all ages?

Whilst I appreciate that WDC has a government requirement to build new houses surely there must be some brownfield sites that could be utilised before destroying prime agricultural land with its rich biodiversity? The urban sprawl destroys any village personality.