

CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE SUMMARY NOTE

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/25/3364304

Land between Lodge Road and Tape Lane, Hurst RG10 0EG

Up to 99 new homes, green infrastructure, open space, pedestrian and cycle links, recreational facilities and other associated infrastructure and access points on Lodge Road and Tape Lane with required improvements.

Introduction

1. The case management conference was held on 1 July 2025 and was led by Guy Davies BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI as the Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to determine the appeal. The purpose of the conference was to agree procedural aspects of the inquiry; the merits of the proposal was not discussed.

Participation in the Appeal

2. The participants were provisionally confirmed as:

Appellant:

John Litton KC (advocate)
Stuart Slatter (planning)
Steve Jenkins (accessibility/transport)
Clare Brockhurst (landscape)
Marcus Adams (design – if required)
Andrew Dannatt (flood risk – if required)
Jamie Pratt (arboriculture/biodiversity – if required)
Emily Major (ecology/biodiversity – if required)
Chris Holme – for legal undertaking round table session

Council:

Matthew Lewin (advocate)
Mark Croucher (planning)
Stuart Ryder (landscape)
Ben Amey (accessibility/transport)
Environment Agency representative (flood risk – if required)

3. At the discretion of the Inspector Interested parties will be given the opportunity to make a short statement if they wish to do so, normally on the first morning of the inquiry. Anyone wishing to speak should therefore attend the first day of the inquiry or advise the PINS case officer if unable to do so.

Preliminary Matters

4. The description of development is agreed as set out above in the banner heading.
5. The access details which form part of the proposal were confirmed to be those set out in drawings 19328-GS-001 Rev D, 19328-GS-003 Rev C and 19328-GA-131 Rev B.

Main Issues

6. It is agreed that the main issues in this appeal are:
 - 1) The location of development in relation to the spatial strategy of the Local Plan, including scale and location of development
 - 2) The effect on landscape character and appearance
 - 3) Accessibility to facilities and services
 - 4) Flood risk
 - 5) The effect on best and most versatile agricultural land
 - 6) The effect on ecology and biodiversity
 - 7) The effect on infrastructure and public services, including vocational initiatives, affordable housing, highway works, provision of open space, and sport and recreational facilities.
7. It is likely that issue 6 (ecology and biodiversity) and issue 7 (infrastructure related matters) will be resolved prior to the inquiry, where necessary through the use of conditions and/or legal obligations.
8. On issue 4 (flood risk) the Environment Agency may withdraw its objection to the proposal, subject to a review of further modelling work currently being undertaken by the appellant. The appellant will share a copy of that modelling work and flood risk assessment with the Council and Inspector when available. Although the parties are working to finalise views as soon as possible, it may not be possible to do so prior to the exchange of proofs of evidence. In such circumstances, the Inspector will accept late submission of a statement of common ground, or proofs if the flood risk issue remains unresolved, but not later than ten working days before the start of the inquiry (29 July 2025).
9. The Council raises concerns about the scale and location of development in relation to existing housing. It will expand on these concerns as part of the spatial strategy and/or landscape issues. The appellant may call a separate witness to address these matters.
10. It will also be necessary to consider the benefits of the proposed development, the approach that should be taken in the light of the shortfall in housing land supply, and the weight to be assigned to the main issues and other considerations.

11. The extent of the shortfall in housing land supply is agreed to be 1.7 years' supply as shown in the Council's most recent five-year housing land supply statement, published 30 January 2025.
12. For all other matters, reliance will be placed on the written evidence submitted as part of the application documents, statements of case and any statements of common ground.

Procedural Matters

Procedure and venue

13. The appeal will be considered at a face-to-face inquiry, hosted by Wokingham Borough Council at the Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN.

Format and running order

14. The provisional format and running order of the inquiry is as follows:
 1. Inspector's introduction
 2. Opening statements by the main parties
 3. Statements by other interested parties (at discretion of Inspector)
 4. The effect on landscape character and appearance – cross examination
 5. Accessibility to facilities and services – cross examination
 6. Flood risk – round table session (if required)
 7. Design – cross examination (if required)
 8. Ecology and biodiversity – round table session (if required)
 9. Infrastructure and services – round table session (if required)
 10. The location of development in relation to the spatial strategy of the Local Plan, effect on best and most versatile agricultural land, planning benefits and consequences of a shortfall in housing land supply – cross examination
 11. Legal undertaking and draft conditions – round table session
 12. Closing statements by the main parties
15. The main issues will be heard on a topic basis, with the Council's witness going first, followed by the appellant's witness.
16. The Inspector will finalise the running order when issuing the inquiry programme.

Timetable

17. The inquiry will open at 10.00am on **Tuesday, 12 August 2025**. Subsequent days will start at 9.30am. The inquiry is scheduled to sit for 8 days between 12-15 and 19-22 August 2025. The ability to shorten the inquiry will depend on how many issues can be narrowed or resolved.
18. Advocates are requested to provide estimated timings for opening and closing statements, evidence in chief and cross examination once proofs of evidence have been exchanged. It would be helpful to have those estimates no later than 10 working days before the start of the inquiry (**29 July 2025**).

Documentation

19. The Council confirmed that it will host the core documents library. The appellant will provide a draft list of core documents for agreement with the Council by 3 July 2025 to be finalised no later than 10 July 2025 to allow consistent referencing in the proofs of evidence. A recommended format for the core document library is attached at Annex A of the pre-conference note. Please provide the PINs case officer with a link once the library has been set up.
20. A copy of this case management conference note, subsequent post-conference summary note, and inquiry programme (when issued) should be included in the core documents library.
21. Proofs of evidence should be submitted no later than **15 July 2025**. The attached Annex B to the pre-conference note sets out the preferred format and content of proofs of evidence/statements and other material. Appendices, particularly where they contain large documents, should be broken down into manageable file sizes.
22. Rebuttal evidence, only if necessary, should be submitted no later than Friday, **1 August 2025**.
23. No hard copies will be required by the Inspector.

Statements of Common Ground

24. Draft statements of common ground covering general matters, landscape and accessibility/transport are being discussed. The main parties are encouraged to finalise these statements no later than **10 July 2025**, to avoid unnecessary work being included in the proofs of evidence.

Planning conditions

25. The appellant is considering a draft list of conditions provided by the Council. Without prejudice to the outcome of the appeal, a list of agreed conditions should be submitted for consideration no later than 10 working days before the inquiry (**29 July 2025**).

26. If there are any conditions that the appellant and Council cannot agree upon these should be listed in a separate schedule with an explanation of why agreement could not be reached on them.
27. If there are any pre-commencement conditions agreed, the appellant should confirm in writing that they are accepted in accordance with Section 100ZA of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Legal undertaking

28. A final draft copy of any legal undertaking should be submitted no later than 10 working days before the inquiry **(29 July 2025)**.
29. For those planning obligations that are agreed between the appellant and the Council, the Council should submit a statement explaining the need for the matters covered by planning obligations and how they meet the tests set out in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 and paragraph 57 of the Framework no later than 10 working days before the inquiry **(29 July 2025)**.

Site visit

30. A site visit will take place during the course of or immediately after the inquiry. If any interested party wishes the Inspector to view the site from a particular viewpoint they should say so during the inquiry.

Costs

31. Costs applications are not being invited, but parties are reminded that any costs application must be made before the inquiry is closed. As a matter of good practice costs applications should be made in writing before the start of the inquiry.

Guy Davies
INSPECTOR

1 July 2025

Summary of deadlines

Statements of Common Ground	10 July 2025
Proofs of evidence	15 July 2025
Time estimates	29 July 2025
Draft legal undertaking	29 July 2025
Draft planning conditions	29 July 2025
Rebuttal statements (only if necessary)	1 August 2025
Inquiry opening	12 August 2025