

Mark Leedale Planning

Chartered Town Planning Consultants

The Head of Planning,
Wokingham Borough Council,
Council Offices,
Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1WR.

Our Ref: FR/25/188
1st September 2026
Marcus.watts@wokingham.gov.uk

Dear Mr Watts,

Land at Forest Road, Hurst, Wokingham RG40 5SA 261841 and 261842

I write in respect of the above and note the comments of the Parish Council on which I do not intend to respond in detail, preferring to refer to Framework26 and the approach to be taken to development outside of a settlement policy boundary. The issues are:

1. The approach to decision making and sustainable development
2. The approach to considering development proposals outside of a settlement boundary
3. The locational characteristics and use of the car
4. The issue of harm
5. The effect on landscape and biodiversity

Sustainable development and proposals outside of settlement policy boundaries

Framework26 identifies an alternative approach to that set out in the superseded NPPF. The presumption in favour of development is reasserted at policy S3 and category (b) refers the decision maker to S5 where a development proposal is outside of an identified settlement boundary. This is the case here and the policy approach falls to be adopted.

For ease of reference S5 states:

S5: Principle of development outside settlements

1. Only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework:

Category J applies in so far as the local authority cannot, at this time, demonstrate a deliverable supply of housing land pending the adoption of the new Local Plan. Whilst the position might change on adoption and this has not been objectively tested; the current position is clear and the 5-year supply is in deficit.

Furthermore, S5J(i) refers to whether the application site is “physically well-related” and the proposals are not “isolated” housing in the terms of policy HO11. Policy S5(3) cross references this approach and states:

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3. Development proposals comprising isolated homes, which are those lying outside settlements or groups of houses, should not be approved other than in accordance with policy HO11.

By any reasonable judgement, Framework26 does not envisage that these proposals constitute isolated housing. On the contrary, they are a logical continuation of the linear housing along Forest Road, as well as that opposite.

The locational characteristics of the housing site

On the matter of locational characteristics we have had discussions on use of the private car and encouragement of sustainable forms of transport. Policy TR3(a) specifically refers to development proposals “which could generate a significant amount of movement” should be located in sustainable locations where there are alternatives to the private car. I concur that this is a sound objective and these proposals would not generate a “significant amount” of movement.

TR3(e) refers to development in rural areas and the opportunities to encourage walking, cycling and wheeling. In the Planning Statement, I refer to the opportunities for cycling and these are indeed feasible options to the private car. As you know, the adopted standards of the local authority require secure cycle parking with development and this must, by implication, expect use of this mode of transport. Details of this will be part and parcel of the TDC applications.

The issue of harm, ecology and landscape

I refer above to Framework26 policy S5 and the key statement is that development proposals in one of the categories should be approved “unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects”. This position is reinforced in Framework26 which does allow for housing outside of settlements and in the circumstances described in the submissions.

Without repeating the arguments set out therein, there is no harm to the Ancient Woodland; biodiversity interests or habitats; or a Protected Landscape (Framework26 N4). On the Parish Council comments in regard to identified birds, this will form part of the detailed surveys at TDC stage. Wenman Ecology are an acknowledged expert and their survey and report should be afforded weight. In short, the benefits of the proposed housing will not be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.

We maintain the views expressed in the submitted applications and will respond to any matters arising. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Leedale

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cc Client

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