

PLANNING REF : 243188
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Harrow Way
: Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG41 5GJ
SUBMITTED BY : Ms J McCurry
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/01/2025

COMMENTS:

Any environmental assessment needs to take account of the following:

1. Actual flooding that occurs annually in the area of the proposed development area rather than an unquestioning reliance on the "Flood Prediction Map" which suggests flooding in the area is an event that happens only once in one thousand years. Mill Lane which runs between Mole Road and Lower Earley Way floods several times a year. The road is currently closed for the second time in 2025 due to flooding and we are only in early January. Proper review of the actual frequency, level and impact of flooding in the area needs to take place. Mill Lane floods, the Showcase cinema carpark and roundabout floods more than one a year as does the car park of the hotel in Mill Lane and the Tesla EV charging point. The fields either side of the A327 flood as do the fields to the north of Lower Earley Way. By basing plans on a theoretical forecasting map the council is simply closing its eyes to the true nature of the impact of flooding in the area without any thought as to the impact on those residents whose homes and businesses will be put at high risk of flood if the development goes ahead.

2. The existing facilities will not be able to cope with the proposed number of new houses. Thames Water currently cannot manage waste water and sewage and leaks into rivers/brooks is a very frequent occurrence and no longer an emergency infrequent event. Surely it is unreasonable to agree to the development in the full knowledge that Thames Water cannot cope with current water and waste demand. The leaks into rivers/brook will become the norm and will have significant impact on both wildlife and residents. The new development in Shinfield (near Magpie & Parrot) is already suffering flood and sewage problems.

3. Massive loss of wild habitat. The area is home to a wide range of species, some of which are protected. We have Barn Owls, Badgers, Deer, Bats, Swallows, Woodpeckers, Mink to name but a few. Where will this wildlife go and how will it survive. By including the development of new habitats for different species does not protect the existing species. There is an abundance of wildlife at Hall Farm and I do not understand how the University is allowed to shout about its "green and environmentally friendly" ethos when it is destroying acres of farmland, capable of food production for commercial gain.

4. The natural country side and its tranquility will be lost in favour of development. At a time when we are all being encouraged to go outside and use the countryside to improve and maintain our mental

health, the Council wants to rip the countryside away from us and in its place give us a "Country Park". The proposed green area will be similar to that on the Hatch Farm Dairies development. Built on flood plains so only usable for less than 6 months a year and when it is walkable there is a main road running through the park, making the park anything but tranquil. The park itself is small, very dull with no interesting walks or anywhere to explore. Why would the residents want to exchange the beautiful, accessible country side

that we currently have to a man made park built of flood plains?

5. Traffic is currently horrendous especially when Mill Lane is closed and the new development will simply compound the problem. Traffic surveys need to be undertaken on normal days and on days that we have flooding so the true usage of the roads can be accurately measured. Surveys during school holidays or during lock down do not give a true picture. Additional infrastructure, bridges, roundabouts etc will not increase the capacity of, for example, Mole Road. It is an old farm road unable to cope with today's traffic let alone cars for another 3900+ houses.

6. Impact on local amenities and residents need to be considered. Given local surgeries currently have problems recruiting enough GPs how will the proposed new surgery be staffed? The plans talk about retail units yet we cannot even attract enough businesses to the centre of Wokingham to fill existing retail units. The plans try to sell utopia but in doing so they do not address or resolve any of the current issues which will create barriers to delivering the development as sold on paper.

7. We need to look at real and meaningful flood reduction measures, eg. Rainwater recycling, grey water collection and recycling, permeable surfaces.

8. Comments submitted by Natural England details a number of other areas which also need to be assessed as part of the environmental study.