

PLANNING REF : 242067
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 1 Old Police Cottage
: Broadcommon Road, Hurst, Berkshire
: RG10 0RE
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Nicki Ratcliffe
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/09/2024

COMMENTS:

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I write to object to PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 242067 - Land East of Lodge Road Hurst RG10 0EG "Outline application for the proposed erection of up to 99 no. dwellings, 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. (All matters reserved except for means of access.)

The site is not within the development limit of the parish and village of Hurst and goes against the Wokingham Borough Council's core strategy Policy's CP1, CP3, CP6, CP11 and sections 5,9,12 and 15 of the core planning principles of NPFF. It is a green field site. Government planning policy states that development should be on brownfield sites to prevent rural destruction. Hurst has limited services and facilities and so is defined as a minor settlement.

For the last 17 years I have been a resident of Hurst and I alone make 2 to 6 car journeys a day as my child didn't get into our designated first choice school The Piggott with it being oversubscribed at the time as are most in the borough and was 29th on the waiting list a few years ago. Since then, there have been hundreds of houses built in Wokingham and more with planning in Twyford yet to be built, The Forest school has no foot paths or cycle lanes making it a treacherous journey for any adult let alone an 11-year-old child. Therefore, a car is a necessity to travel to any secondary School. The girl's school The Holt is a popular school for girls in Hurst but due to all the new houses being built between Hurst and the school no one got in this academic year. WBC have stated there are not enough places in the senior schools for children already living in the borough for the next few school years. The Bridge Farm development in Twyford for 200 houses was granted permission in February 2023 by WBC. Therefore, when these houses are completed, no child from Hurst will get into the Piggott School, therefore making any proposed minibus service irrelevant.

There is no primary school in the major development at Bridge Farm so they will go to the Twyford schools leaving no places for Hurst children, so a car is essential to travel out of the area to other schools, in the borough putting more cars on the road to travel longer distances.

Currently WBC provides free transport in the form of taxis to vast amounts of children who don't have local school places at a huge financial cost to the borough and therefore the taxpayer, 99 houses will no doubt add even more costs.

Over the years we have seen the traffic considerably increase through the centre of Hurst especially with cars coming through

Hurst to

access the station from Wokingham, Winnersh and further afield with all the recent local major development taking place within the local area/borough with thousands more scheduled in the next few years. With 2 to 4 cars per household there would likely be, well in excess of 800 movements a day without any delivery vans, handy men, gardeners or visitors making the road more dangerous for present residents, dog walkers, joggers, horse riders and for parents with children trying to make their way down Tape lane to the village primary school which has an intake of just 20 children per year group and is full. The only preschool in Hurst has a year long waiting list.

Hurst has a poor, unreliable bus service, the first bus, route 128 is at 7.22am with the next not until 2 hours later at 9.23am.

Neither

coincide with school timetables and involve long walks and waits for a bus to and from school. They are then hourly. The last bus on Saturday is at 17.12pm, no evening service and no service on Sundays or bank holidays.

At the last Tape Lane appeal Thames valley buses confirmed that the route 128 can be less reliable due to unpredictable traffic conditions on the A329 at Reading & Sonning leaving the inflexibility of the limited service an unrealistic travel option for most senior school children or working/Commuting parents, leaving the car the favoured mode of transport in a borough which has one of the highest car ownership rates of any local authority.

The proposed 16-seater minibus is financially unviable as there will be a yearly service charge of at least 770.00 to all the new houses, including the affordable housing residents, even if you don't use it. If the charge increases by 5% per year the charge within 5 years would increase to 986.00 and within 10 years would increase to 2846.00. This would be an extra service charge on top of any other service

charges. There would be no evening service and no Sunday service so no different to the 128/129 service already in existence. This will also take business away from 128/129, which is reliant on subsidies and could cause this service to cease altogether. The time limit for the minibus is 10 years and could then cease with no future funding in place and if the residents decide not to pay who would foot the bill? Will it be paid for with an increase in council tax or down to the parish council? If only 25% of the new homes had one child, even then 16 seats is not going to be nearly enough and not every household will be happy to contribute a vast amount of money every year for their neighbour's to use a service they can't.

It is a 3km/30-minute walk from the site to Twyford station, with no continuous footpaths, unlit roads and having to cross the busy A321 several times so walking is unappealing, especially on dark or rainy days/evenings.

The station car park is now full-on weekday mornings at 7am. It is so full that the same cars are now regularly parked all day on the bend on Broadwater Lane just after the yellow line and parking restrictions finish, this morning at 8.30am there were 12 cars parked there and the number is increasing every week causing congestion and danger for drivers coming from Twyford.

Cycling is not for the faint-hearted in Hurst. Cars on the roads are fast and regularly break the speed limit. The roads are poorly lit

and often icy or flooded in winter. Bike theft is rife at Twyford station so is an unattractive mode of transport. The proposal of 'advisory' cycle lanes along the B3030 (Lodge Road) & A321 (Broadwater Lane) are unenforceable and vehicles are still able to drive and park in them. It was brought up at the 2024 Safety Audit that there is insufficient space available for opposing traffic and traffic will dodge in and out of the advisory cycle routes. They consider they are too narrow, and the advisory lanes will have to be used in places with only signage warning drivers of the designated lanes, causing potential accidents. The safety Audit also expressed safety concerns regarding the shared cycle way and pedestrian footway towards Twyford due to the large number of driveways that do not have a good level of visibility when accessing the highway from their driveways. There are no safe cycle paths to any of the schools or any other proposed cycle lanes to Winnersh, Wokingham, Woodley, Bracknell or Maidenhead and will do little to encourage cycling or walking.

The proposal to widen the pavement on the high street by creating a one-way system would remove on street parking for the cottages and houses that don't have driveways, pushing them into additional side roads eg Tape Lane or Hogmoor lane. It would also stop customers parking on the high street accessing the shop which relies on passing trade during the working day from van and car drivers, potentially driving it out of business.

Local roads in the area are rural, narrow, winding, and dark at night without continuous footways. They are often flooded and are getting worse year after year. The drainage system needs a complete overhaul, and the Thames Water pumping stations are already at full capacity and won't cope with another 99 houses.

WBC produced a S19 Flood Investigation Draft Report in March 2024 which reveals that Hurst has a flood event risk of 1 in 3 years at land to the north of Hurst, which includes the site of this application and not the applicant's report stating the flood risk is 1 in either 30 or 1 in a 100 on the Tape Lane site.

All the possible proposals put forward in this application will be reliant on permissions from third parties, resident service charges and would be reliant beyond any S106 contribution and would not be guaranteed. They won't happen once the land is sold to a developer with outline planning, they will say costs have increased and it is no longer viable, we can't get the permissions from the third parties, the residents won't pay the service charge, so we don't want to do all those things now just as they did with the recent Sawpit Road development! Oh, and we no longer want to build as many or any affordable homes either.

Since the recent appeal in 2023 when the inspector declared Hurst as an unsustainable location for a large build nothing has changed. Hurst doesn't have the infrastructure to cope with the number of residents and vehicles, Hurst is a village with one small shop, no dentist, no doctors, no Senior schools, no butchers, no bakers, no supermarkets, all things which are reliant on a car. Without creating new infrastructure in Hurst including new schools in the

area it is not a sustainable location as the inspector concluded at the appeal.

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