

PLANNING REF : 241933
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Robins Roost
: Old Wokingham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG40 3BX
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Tracey Gibbs
DATE SUBMITTED : 21/02/2025

COMMENTS:

As residents of Old Wokingham Road (OWR) which sits to the south of the proposed site for urban expansion of the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SWSDL) and Southern Distributor Road (SDR) we feel we will be impacted by the planning application (241933) and wish to raise our objection

Appreciating that there is a great demand for additional housing in the area and WBC have specific government targets to meet, we recognise that appropriate development needs to happen. However this should not come to the detriment of the local environment, ecology, history, and character of the existing landscape

We have day-to-day experience of the OWR and Easthampstead Road (ER) infrastructure, I do not believe that the changes proposed are for the better considering the ongoing issues we currently experience living in the immediate area;

1. Position of closure of Easthampstead Road (ER)

a. the majority of our journeys are to Wokingham (as are our neighbours & visitors) turning left out of our properties and then right down ER. If the road is closed as suggested, we would be forced to turn right out of our properties for almost all of our journeys. This is already a hairy experience due to the blind bend and lack of adherence to the advised 30mph speed limit by road users.

b. The roundabout addition for entry into the new development although a logical addition, will not reduce the impact of traffic traversing further up ER and the currently notoriously dangerous blind bend/staggered crossroads/blind hill/concealed entrances of the ER/OWR/West Road junction. As promised by councillors this proposal is not considering this junction appropriately.

c. Traffic will still be using the existing junction, and with no considered changes to it as part of these proposals, the safety issues at this junction, the traffic incidents and injuries will remain.

Traffic will still use ER to access existing businesses and the new car park for the SANG (see separate note for concerns with this and learnings needed from Bucklers Park). Volume of the ER is irrelevant to the incidents that occur. Speed and volume of traffic on OWR

causes the issues for any vehicle trying to exit ER (whether that is 1 or 100). The topology and location of the junction with lack of visibility in both directions for those exiting ER - 3000+ people sharing their concern online recently can't be wrong. Developers, Planners and Councillors (WBC and BFC), please do not believe this proposal is your magic wand. This still needs to be resolved.

d. Closure of the road will create a potential black spot for fly tipping (as already happens on a regular basis at the "lay-by" created on the LHS of northbound ER). It could also create a "dead end"/road to nowhere allowing for unsociable behaviour (see

Bucklers Park learnings point).

2. Proposed Car Park by Priors Farm

a. Request for more information on the size of this car park and any security to be included as part of its installation. This will be the only space to accommodate non-residential parking at this part of the site.

b. Buckers Park SANG Car Park has suffered from many issues since it's implementation. Anti-Social Behaviour, Security issues and in turn needs for closure/improved gating. It has also had to be signed and resurfaced. I would request that all learnings be reviewed by developers before finalising plans for parking at this most rural side of the SANG please.

3. Proposed exits onto OWR;

a. The proposed cycle path and SANG path to exit and cross the OWR to link up with current PROW towards Park View Farm and Easthampstead Park - although a good idea to open up a wider public access to these pathways has been ill thought through. No-one has taken into account how dangerous a position that crossing is located. Even with a new roundabout, traffic will still approach/exit at speeds with limited visibility for pedestrians and cycles to allow them safe crossing. I would like to see the modelling of traffic flow to appreciate the displacement of vehicles from the "not yet built" SDR for Wokingham and the proposed link road from that down to OWR (and replacement of ER which is proposed to be closed).

b. Currently this road is used by extensive traffic, (since the introduction of the Jennetts Park A329m junction) using this route as a cut through rather than using more suitable roads via Bracknell e.g. Heavy Plant, articulated lorries etc. There are no additional proposals to slow down or discourage this kind of traffic. One roundabout will not suffice. Current recent (last 5 years) signage

changes have made little impact, as ancient trees were felled to improve sightlines - this has only given drivers a false sense of security and minimal changes to behaviours. WBC and BFC are more than aware, but as this junction falls between both, nothing has been resolved to date.

4. Water Courses - concern on adequacy

a. I would like to be reassured that the considered watercourses to be added to the development area are adequate for the additional run off water in an already saturated green agricultural area.

b. The neighbouring part of the Golf Course is constantly battling both standing and flooding water. I fear that as the Emm Brook is located here, water run-off from this new development will inevitably end up here also and increase flooding risk.

c. Have these calculations taken into account that the new SDR and additional houses built in prior phases to this proposed development? There will be displacement of water from that phase too towards this area.

5. Maturity of Planting

a. It is good to see considered planting and replacement of trees in the area. This is currently an extensive greenfield site, and although agricultural in nature it has many ancient specimens which need to be protected for future generations and local wildlife.

b. I have concern over the maturity of planting included in the "woodland mix" - these trees are only 60-200cm in height. This does not feel anywhere near mature enough for this space and to offset the additional impact of the buildings and additional vehicle emissions that will come with them. I would hope this would be

re-assessed and more mature specimens included to better blend in with the surrounding maturity at the boundaries.

6. Green Bridges - safer travel for wildlife in the area

a. The displacement of existing wildlife concerns me in this area. We have herds of deer, some of which are sadly involved in RTAs along with other wildlife on OWR and ER. All phases of the proposed development in this area will displace wildlife further - having already been disrupted by Jennetts Park, Bucklers Park etc over the last decade - nothing has been given a chance to re-establish itself.

b. Have green bridges or green links been considered for anywhere in this area - things built across roads and railways to allow

wildlife movement to stop our local species from becoming isolated and reduce the number of traffic accidents? Stories of deer cornered by

dogs at Bucklers Park need to be avoided. Only this morning I saw a herd of 8 deer on the field where the new 850 houses will be built. Where can they now go? We are reducing the spaces they have left - can we not create new corridors for them in this proposal?

c. As referenced on the Gov.uk website these things should be taken into account - especially as our green areas separating Crowthorne, Wokingham and Bracknell are rapidly shrinking;

- creating a safe crossing point for wildlife movement
- joining up habitats and connecting colonies, as they are also used by wildlife as a home in their own right

- creating a crossing point for people and benefit pollinators
- integrating roads and railways into the surrounding landscape

d. I think an opportunity has been missed by the first few phases of SDR development by WBC - these should be included for all developments now - once our wildlife has gone our local ecology & environment is dead

7. Traffic Volume increases

a. 850 houses added to this particular area will need to accommodate at least 2000 additional vehicles. Most households now have at least 2 cars. Pick any development in the area in the last 15 years and you can see inadequate planning for these vehicles. Jennetts Park has parking issues and Montague Park shows signs of lack of parking already.

b. This area has no dedicated public transport links. No buses stop on ER or OWR in this area. It is equidistant from Wokingham, Crowthorne and Bracknell Train Stations - this is 2 miles, which cannot be walked/cycled safely. I am not convinced a few pathways add within the boundaries of this development will change attitudes and people not owning cars here.

c. Parking for residents and visitors (to houses and the SANG) has to be fully considered plus the additional volume of through traffic from the new SDR, that is an unknown quantity until it is built and used. Where is the modelling data for traffic from SDR, especially if ER is closed - the traffic has to go somewhere?

8. Green space between Wokingham, Bracknell & Crowthorne

a. Without the green corridors between these 3 towns, we will be merged into one big soulless metropolis. We need to keep more green areas safe from development and look to unused and ugly brown field sites first.

b. This is further reducing our beautiful Berkshire countryside in the immediate area, reducing what is left of unspoilt and rewilded areas. Why does everything have to be manufactured and forced developed by humans?

9. Typos/inaccurate information

a. Some of the attached reports contain errors, typos, inaccurate information. This can be considered unprofessional and careless, leaving the question "What else is potentially missing/misrepresented?".