



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Written Representations Appeal Statement by the Local Planning Authority

Appellant:	Hasheeb Mahmood
Site:	1 Halstead Close, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4LD
LPA Reference:	251470
Planning Inspectorate Reference:	APP/X0360/W/25/3375029

3 December 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This appeal statement relates to the refusal of planning application 251470 on 14 August 2025 at 1 Halstead Close, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4LD. See **Appendix 1** for a copy of the Decision Notice.

1.2 The full planning application was for the proposed subdivision of the site and erection of a first floor side extension to form 1 no. three bedroom dwelling with associated parking and amenity space. The Council refused to grant planning permission for the following reason:

“By reason of the unacceptable position of the proposed dropped crossing, the proposal would fail to meet satisfactory visibility splays and would not provide a safe or suitable vehicular access for the proposed dwelling. This would create unacceptable impact on highway safety for future occupiers and other users of the highway and footway contrary to policies CP6 of the Core Strategy (2010) and CC07 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014) and paragraphs 115 & 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).”

1.3 A copy of the Officer’s Report is attached in **Appendix 2** which includes a full description of the site and its surroundings.

1.4 The basis of the Council’s contentions is contained in the Officer’s Report (see **Appendix 2**) in addition to commentary in this statement and a response to the appellant’s documentation.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 Information relating to the site’s planning history is provided with the Officer’s Report (see **Appendix 2**).

3. PROVISIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

3.1 The Development Plan for the Borough comprises the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy 2010 (“CS”) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 (“MDD”). Policies and guidance of relevance are listed in the Officer’s Report (see **Appendix 2**) and the relevant sections have been sent to the Inspectorate.

3.2 The Local Plan Update (“LPU”), which will supersede the adopted Core Strategy and MDD Local Plans, is at Regulation 22 stage as it has been submitted for examination. As a whole, the LPU is still given limited weight despite its advanced stage of preparation. This is owing to unresolved objections to a great number of the policies contained within it.

3.3 The site’s planning constraints are listed in the Officer’s Report (see **Appendix 2**).

Development Plan and Weight

3.4 The starting point for decision making is the development plan. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.5 As stated in the Officer’s Report (see **Appendix 2**), it is acknowledged that the Council are unable to demonstrate 5 years’ worth of deliverable sites to meet housing needs (“5YHLS”). Therefore, the relevant Development Plan policies are considered out-of-date in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the ‘tilted balance’, applies.

3.6 The Council has published an updated Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement at 31 March 2025 (published August 2025) which establishes that

the Council can demonstrate 2.5 years' worth of deliverable site against the Local Housing Need of 1,316 houses per annum, attached in **Appendix 3**.

3.7 Notwithstanding the above, the contents of the relevant policies are otherwise consistent with the NPPF and should be afforded full weight. Paragraph 232 of the NPPF clarifies that *“existing policies should not be considered out-of-date because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).”*

3.8 Regardless of the Council's 5YHLS position, the development plan policies have a high degree of consistency with the Framework and therefore the weight afforded to these policies should not be reduced.

4. STATEMENT OF CASE

4.1 The main concern behind the reason for refusal is the failure of the proposal to provide a safe or suitable vehicular access for the proposed dwelling due to the unacceptable position of the proposed dropped crossing, with resulting unacceptable impact on highway safety for future occupiers and other users of the highway and footway.

4.2 The proposal is to subdivide the existing dwelling with 11 no. habitable rooms into two dwellings with 6 and 7 no. habitable rooms respectively. A new dropped crossing is proposed onto Halstead Close proximal to the bend. A total of four driveway parking spaces is proposed within the red line. The footway along the site frontage provides direct access to Woodford Park.

4.3 The Appellant's Statement has been produced by a Transport Consultant (Evoke Transport) which includes additional highways assessment not submitted during the application process. The Council's Highways Officer's appraisal of this appeal, including their response to the Appellant's Statement,

is attached at **Appendix 4**. This appraisal includes a re-examination of the visibility splays and interrogates the Appellant's rebuttal to the highway safety concerns and should be read alongside this statement which summarises the content only. The Highways statement at Appendix 4 fully assesses and provides measurements of the visibility splays and assesses this against the stopping sight distances for the 30mph road, Halstead Close.

4.4 It is the Council's opinion that the proposed visibility splays are insufficient for the proposed development and cannot be adequately provided in this location therefore resulting in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, particularly for pedestrians. While the position of the proposed dropped crossing may have already been utilised for vehicle access, the proposal would intensify the use of a substandard access encroaching across a public footway which is unacceptable.

4.5 Notwithstanding this, driveway/off-street parking is a minimum expectation for all new residential properties. Without the access, the property does not have any available off-street parking as it cannot use the existing access at 1no. Halstead Close. The proposal remains in conflict with policies CP6 of the Core Strategy and CC07 of the MDD Local Plan and paragraphs 115 & 116 of the NPPF.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The benefits of the proposed development would be the provision of a single dwellinghouse towards the local housing stock however the introduction of a single dwellinghouse to the Council's Housing Land Supply position would be negligible. In respect of the overall balancing exercise, taking into account the reasons discussed in this Appeal Statement and the Officer's Report (see **Appendix 2**), it is considered that the adverse impact of granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited economic, social and environmental benefits of delivering a single dwelling

5.2 The concerns raised with the position of the proposed dropped crossing have not been resolved under this appeal. As such, there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety and significant weight should be given to paragraph 116 of the NPPF.

5.3 It is not considered that the identified harm could be mitigated through amendments to the appeal scheme as the proposed access has been deemed to be wholly unacceptable and there is no scope to reposition the proposed dropped crossing given the corner position of the site without materially amending the proposed development.

5.4 The Local Planning Authority respectfully requests that the appeal is dismissed. In the event that the Inspector is minded to allow this appeal, the LPA has suggested a number of conditions in **Appendix 5**.