

PLANNING REF : 250517
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Conifers
: 12 Winston Close Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire
: RG7 1DW
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Tess Mayne
DATE SUBMITTED : 06/04/2025

COMMENTS:

This objection is submitted in reference to the proposed development of approximately 450 new dwellings in the Swallowfield area, which is within the designated AWE (Atomic Weapons Establishment) Emergency Planning Zone. The following critical and specific issues are necessary and essential to address before the building of homes begins, to ensure the safety, sustainability, and suitability of such a development.

Proximity to AWE Burghfield and Emergency Evacuation Risks

The proposed site lies within the AWE Emergency Planning Zone. Wokingham Borough Council maintains a regular evacuation plan for this area due to the potential for fire or radiation leaks. It is essential that this plan and the associated risks are thoroughly reassessed before any residential building begins, given that such an emergency could result in the urgent evacuation of residents, including vulnerable groups.

Evacuation Route Direction and Suitability

All designated evacuation routes from the proposed development currently lead toward the AWE facility, not away from it. This directly contradicts basic safety protocols and must be addressed as a matter of urgency before any development proceeds.

Traffic Volume and Evacuation Delays

The existing road infrastructure is not capable of supporting current traffic volumes at peak times, let alone during an emergency evacuation. For example, during weekday mornings between 7:30 AM and 9:00 AM, the journey from the Swallowfield area to the A33 (a distance of approximately 3 miles) routinely takes 25-35 minutes, with significant queuing on minor roads. These delays are critical and necessary to resolve before the construction of homes begins, as they will be exacerbated by additional residential traffic.

Site Suitability Classification

The land in question is currently graded for moderate development. A development comprising 450 dwellings clearly exceeds this classification and must be re-evaluated prior to any planning approval being granted.

Surrounding Housing Supply and Demand

Adjacent developments remain incomplete, with substantial volumes of unsold housing. The absorption rate of housing stock in the area must be assessed and accounted for before any new properties are built.

Access Point Safety Issues

Proposed access from Basingstoke Road will create rat-run traffic patterns through Kingsbridge Lane, Back Lane, and Lambs Lane, crossing Beech Hill Road to White House Lane, and exiting at the

A33. This traffic flow will:

Compromise road safety near Lambs Lane Primary School, particularly during morning and afternoon pickup hours.

Overwhelm single-track rural roads (Kingsbridge Lane, Lambs Lane, and Whitehouse Lane) that lack passing spaces, footpaths, and lighting. Further endanger users at the Beech Hill Road cross junction, a known accident black spot with a long history of severe incidents.

These issues are essential to address before the development of any homes begins.

Transport Statement Misrepresentation

The transport assessment provided in the developer's proposal restimates the likely number of vehicles. In this locality, households commonly own 2-3 cars, not 1 as assumed. Accurate modelling is necessary before planning approval can be responsibly granted.

Inadequate Educational Provision

The current proposal does not resolve the ongoing shortage of school places. Lambs Lane Primary School is already at capacity and cannot absorb the additional intake. It is essential that school capacity is expanded and operational before any new housing is constructed.

Live High-Pressure Aviation Fuel Line Safety Hazard

The site is traversed by a live high-pressure aviation fuel line leading to Southampton, with multiple branches, including one that resulted in the rejection of the Grazeley Village development on safety grounds by the Ministry of Defence. This represents a major public safety hazard that must be fully assessed and mitigated before development commences.

Unsafe Pedestrian and Cycle Access Points

The Century Drive access directs foot and cycle traffic through an existing children's play area, posing significant safeguarding concerns.

The Barracks Lane access runs over private property, is single-track, unlit, lacks a footpath, and exits abruptly between high brick walls onto a pavement often encroached upon by speeding vehicles. These conditions are not safe and must be resolved before any residential construction proceeds.

Protected Wildlife and Habitats

The proposed development site is home to endangered and protected species, including red kites, bats, and badgers, all covered by environmental protection laws. Disturbance or destruction of their habitats must be avoided and assessed prior to any site clearance or building activity.

Substandard Utilities Infrastructure

Water pressure and electricity supply in the area are already below acceptable levels, with frequent reports of low pressure and power fluctuations. These deficiencies are necessary to resolve in full before the additional demand from new housing can be safely supported.

In conclusion, there are multiple, specific, and pressing concerns that are essential to address before the building of homes begins. These matters impact public safety, emergency preparedness,

infrastructure capacity, environmental preservation, and road usage. Failure to fully investigate and resolve these issues prior to development risks placing future residents and the wider community in significant danger and hardship.