

PLANNING REF : 243114
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Arborfield Green Community Centre
: Arborfield, Reading
: RG2 9ND
SUBMITTED BY : Barkham Parish Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/01/2025

COMMENTS:

Barkham Parish Council (BPC) understands from Section 1.8 of this EIA Scoping Opinion Report that Crest Nicholson (CN) are seeking to influence Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) as to the scope of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in advance of any such plan being required.

BPC has many concerns about the development of Barkham Square and has already voiced these in its response to the Local Plan Update (LPU) consultations submitted on Tue 12 Nov 2024. These will be expanded upon in response to any formal planning application that may follow for the development of this location. BPC would highlight - but not exclusively:

- 1) There is variance in the number of dwellings proposed in the scoping document submitted (660) vs that included in the LPU (600). It is also not clear whether the 50 Elderly Care Class C2 dwellings are included or are additional to these numbers.
- 2) The LPU does not confirm the sustainability of the proposed development at Barkham Square with particular emphasis on public transport, medical facilities and proximity to other population centres where crucial services may be available. This suggests a high use of private cars will be required that would be detrimental to the overall environment. This draft scoping exercise does not give confidence that these will be fully addressed.
- 3) CN have a poor record of delivering social infrastructure across the Arborfield Green Development, most of which lies within the parish of Barkham. This exacerbates the points made under section 2) above and will undermine any good intentions to mitigate the negative impact on the environment.
- 4) The performance of the Arborfield Sewerage Treatment plant has deteriorated over many years with respect to pollution and that is before many planned residential and commercial developments have been completed or even approved. There needs to be a clear and enforceable plan to correct this before commencing the development of Barkham Square.
- 5) A third-party assessment of the impact of additional traffic from any future development of Barkham Square and, indeed, other developments in the immediate area highlighted the woeful lack of specific traffic assessments using relevant data relating to Barkham's recently updated road layout and junctions. This does not only raise the question of congestion but also the associated noise, pollution and stress of travelling through the parish.
- 6) The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is not complete. For example, the viewpoint from the elevated section of

the B3349 from 'Greenacres' to Barkham Bridge has not been discussed. It should also be noted that the screening from BA7 (PROW from Barkham Street to junction of Barkham Road/School Road/Langley Common Road) comprises an artificial frieze attached to an existing fence which is not attractive nor a viable long-term solution. Any other omissions should be identified by reference to the Joint Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan.

7) The EIA asserts that the majority of the Barkham Square site is not agricultural land of productive value although the source of this finding is not apparent. This statement does not reflect the reported historical use of the land - the Local Planning Authority should require CN to substantiate commission a third party report to support this statement.

Hopefully any future revision of the EIA scope will seek to address these concerns.