

# WARFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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**Mon-Thurs 9.30 – 12.30**  
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Mr B Hindle,  
Chief Officer Planning & Transport  
Environment Culture and Communities  
Bracknell Forest Council  
Time Square  
Market Street  
Bracknell  
RG12 1JD

Dear Mr Hindle

## **SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT PREFERRED OPTION CONSULTATION**

Warfield Parish Council has carefully considered the Site Allocations Development Plan Document Preferred Option (SADPDPO) documentation and wishes to make specific representations concerning aspects of the document generally and also specifically how they relate to Warfield. This response does not include comments on the Sustainability Appraisal that is too lengthy for us to respond to meaningfully within the consultation time frame although we appreciate the deadline for submissions has been extended to 17 January 2011.

### **Consultation time frame**

It is clear from the SADPDPO that it is intended to replace sections of the adopted Core Strategy when it is adopted. As the Warfield development area is included within it, it is appropriate for Warfield residents to be engaged and be given the opportunity to respond to it. However, you have declined our invitation to hold open sessions in Warfield as have taken place in Binfield and Crowthorne, despite Warfield being a much larger proposed development than any of the other proposed sites. Furthermore, there has clearly been a significant failure in the Borough Council's delivery of the Town and Country newspaper that should have been delivered in November. It appears that very few of the Warfield Parish Councillors have had copies delivered to their homes. On this basis it is fair to conclude that the majority of Warfield residents are unaware of the consultation and there is thus a failure in process that would not withstand scrutiny. We therefore request that Bracknell Forest Council takes remedial action to ensure that Warfield residents are properly aware of their opportunity to respond to the three concurrent consultations, namely this Preferred Option consultation, the Warfield SPD consultation and Local Transport Plan 3 consultation.

### **Core Strategy housing numbers**

The figures used for housing projections were set in 2004 during the preparation of the Core Strategy. They are out of date since they predate the financial crisis of 2008 and the depressed economic conditions that have been with us since then and are expected to continue for several years.

Furthermore, they do not take account of the nature of the job losses within the Thames Valley in general and Bracknell Forest in particular. For example, the Hewlett Packard Company, with European headquarters at Amen Corner, has shed over 2000 jobs. It is unlikely that those jobs will be recreated in the UK when economic conditions improve as there is an increasingly strong migration of skilled IT work from western economies to Asia, where India and China between them produce over 100,000 IT graduates per annum. This, coupled with Bracknell remaining an unfavourable location to choose for business due to the run down Town Centre suggests strongly that past performance provides a grossly over-optimistic projection of housing demand into the future. Therefore, statistical models that project housing deliveries year on year until 2026 are just as nonsensical as it would be to plan the Borough Council's budget over this time frame.

Given the Government's commitment to localism and removal of central control over planning, it provides an opportunity for Bracknell Forest Council to review housing numbers in the light of the uncertainty described above. Whilst it is possible to demonstrate land availability to 2026 as required, it is not possible to guarantee delivery of the housing year-on-year and we would suggest that it is not desirable to do so, as it would impose planning blight on too many sites over the plan period.

### **Warfield site**

Although the Warfield SPD document differs, it is important to point out that the Illustrative Concept Plan for Warfield in the SADPDPO document does not coincide with the area detailed in the Core Strategy consultation. Specifically, land to the west of West End Lane is protected under policy EN10 (ii) (a) as a defined area of local landscape importance that serves additionally as the natural gap separating Binfield from Warfield. Similarly, land between West End Lane to the west and Avery Lane and The Splash to the east, as well as Garth Meadows to the south is protected as open landscape under policy EN14 as a river corridor. The Illustrative Concept Plan shows eight low density housing areas and a primary school within this area.

Whilst it is recognised that some compromise may have to be made to allow the broad area as a whole to be delivered, this protected land needs to be retained and enhanced to the maximum extent possible and development in this area must have the minimum impact.

Additionally, the existing bridleways and byways Quelm Lane, Avery Lane and Hedge Lane must be retained as green corridors though any new development. These are ignored on the Concept Plan.

The secondary school must be delivered first since Garth Hill College is already oversubscribed. However, the proposal to site the school at Blue Mountain appears to deliver the school in too late a time frame to support the proposed Amen Corner and Warfield developments.

Given these environmental constraints, it appears that the projection for 2200 houses is unrealistically high: the lower figure of 1700 cited both by your department and by the developers' consortium seems more realistic and in keeping with the existing urban extensions in Warfield. A total of 1700 dwellings is more sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the community but would still make it by far the largest planned urban extension. The balance should be distributed equitably across other developable sites in the Borough, including land being brought forward in the south of Bracknell Forest.

**Bracknell Town Football Club**

The relocation of Bracknell Town Football Club is welcomed, as it frees central land for high density and affordable housing. However, the proposed new location of the club at Blue Mountain is inappropriate. Firstly, there are existing long established football clubs in Binfield that would be compromised by such a development, namely Binfield FC (in same league as Bracknell Town FC) and FC Bracknell. Secondly, it is understood that the existing ground-share agreement with Wokingham FC would continue, resulting in a home fixture every weekend during the football season. It is wholly inappropriate to bring such match-day traffic into a residential area away from a major route, which would necessarily bring traffic through Warfield along Harvest Ride. We would suggest that the most appropriate location for this facility would be on the Bracknell - Wokingham border near Jennett's Park or failing that, within the proposed Amen Corner North development, both with excellent access to A329 (M).

Please can you acknowledge receipt of this response, we look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Janis Harding  
Clerk