

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION**

Session 9: Transportation (CP6 and CP10)

Additional statement by Barkham Parish Council

The purpose of this document is:

- a) to comment on the new evidence submitted by WBC at Session 9;
- b) to comment on issues that have arisen during the Examination in Public;
- c) to propose changes to the Submission Core Strategy on Transportation.

Part A

Comments on the new evidence submitted by WBC at Session 9

Having analysed the document tabled by WBC entitled "Session 9 - Transportation - Additional Questions", we regret that this another example where the transportation evidence aims to put a positive spin on issues rather than explaining the difficult problems as they really are. Consequently the evidence is not as robust as it ought to be.

Question 2.1 Cycle network

We do support the development of cycle routes. However it should be stressed that many of the routes shown in Appendix A are only suited to leisure use (and indeed are well valued as such) but cannot realistically be considered as potential commuter routes.

Taking the specific example of Coombes Lane/Sandy Lane/Doles Lane, the following should be noted:

- The surface of Coombes Lane is very poor and is impassable to cyclists in wet weather.
- The route is also well used for horse riding, which exacerbates this problem, creating large muddy stretches in bad weather.
- Doles Lane is heavily pot holed.
- Upgrading to a satisfactory all weather surface will therefore be expensive.
- The western end of this route is a considerable distance from the Arborfield and South of M4 SDLs, thus requiring additional investment to create a safe through route.
- Similarly there is not a safe route from the eastern end of the route at Evendons Lane into the town centre, though potentially this could be provided as part of the South Wokingham SDL infrastructure.

Question 2.2 Improvements at Wokingham Railway Station

- There is no doubt that the traffic arrangements around Wokingham Station need to be improved. That said, it is doubtful that the arrangement shown in Appendix B is the best solution and this does seem to be recognised by the consultants.
- The following specific comments are made, which hopefully are helpful in developing a solution.
- It seems likely that Network Rail will wish to close the level crossing once train frequencies are increased. Therefore medium term planning should be based on this assumption.
- It would seem to make more sense to operate a two way traffic system along the New Station Link Road, with Station Road not being available for through traffic (except buses and cyclists). This would improve the environment in the vicinity of Shute End.
- Although the proposal makes it possible for all buses to stop adjacent to the station, this is at the expense of some lengthy deviations. For example the 190 (Reading/Winnersh/Wokingham/Bracknell service) heading eastwards would have to travel one and a half times round the new one way system: this would significantly increase travel times for other users. A better solution would surely be to create a pedestrian crossing in conjunction with a stop on the north side of the New Station Link Road.
- The New Station Link Road will take land from the existing station car park. This begs the question as to how additional parking will be provided; it should be noted that the station car park has recently been almost doubled in size and nevertheless is full on weekdays.

Question 2.3 A327/A33 link

It would appear that this link road is essential, as traffic generated in the eastern part of the South of M4 SDL, as well as from further south along the A327 will need to access the M4. The route to the M4 via the Blackboy roundabout to Junction 11 is indirect, while heading east through Lower Earley uses roads already heavily congested at peak times. Without such a link road, there will be considerable rat running on less suitable routes such as Hyde End Road and Mole Road.

Indeed, the A327/A33 link should be a higher priority than the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road, especially as the route north from the Blackboy Roundabout is not being treated by Reading Borough as a priority route for improvement.

Question 2.4 A321/A329(M) Ashridge Interchange

The real value of an interchange at Ashridge would be to gain improved access to the M4. However this is not proposed, presumably on the grounds that the juxtaposition with Junction 10 does not make this possible.

Improving the links in the Bracknell direction would not seem to be a priority if Wokingham benefits from both northern and southern relief roads.

As a general comment, the additional interchange would represent a further downgrading of a road with dubious safety standards. Given that all the existing junctions are poorly designed with joining traffic entering the road with poor sight lines and short slip roads, it is surprising that the safety record of this road is not worse than it is.

Question 2.8 Effects of relocation of Emmbrook School to Arborfield

The maps in Appendix H clearly demonstrate the need for a secondary school in the south of the borough. As it appears that Building Schools for the Future money will not be available, it is far from clear how the removal of Emmbrook School to Arborfield can be financed. The possibility of reopening Ryeish Green surely has to be put back on the agenda. (The real issue here seems to be a catchment area that is shared with Reading.)

Part B

Comments on issues that have arisen during the Examination in Public

Traffic capacity at Arborfield Cross

Paragraph 1.36 of the Statement of Common Ground between the Arborfield Consortium and WBC says:

"In the longer term the impact of public transport investments/improvements and implementation of demand management measures will need to be monitored/assessed to review the need for the provision of a link road to by-pass Arborfield Cross, and when provision is needed. Both parties agree on the basis of current evidence, that up to 750 additional dwellings could be developed at this SDL without the need for a link road and based on the SCS Appendix 6 housing trajectory, this could mean that the link road will not be needed before 2016 thereby giving more than sufficient time to allow the link road to be provided".

We agree that the capacity of the roundabout at Arborfield Cross limits the scope for development. Consequently building at the Arborfield SDL should be limited to 750 dwellings until such time as the Arborfield by-pass is completed.

It is not acceptable that residential roads, such as Barkham Road, Bearwood Road, Barkham Ride and Nine Mile ride, be treated as major transport arteries, and this a further reason why the Arborfield by-pass is such a priority.

Barkham Bridge (B3349)

On the grounds of safety, it is essential that there are improvements to the single lane bridge crossing Barkham Brook near the Langley Common Road end of the B3349 Barkham Road. A particular problem exists because eastbound traffic has to give way to westbound traffic, which often comes down the hill in an intimidatory manner. As an intermediate solution it would be desirable to provide some kind of traffic calming for the westbound traffic, possibly in the form of a pinch point or speed hump. Widening will become necessary once substantial development takes place at Arborfield Garrison.

Future of MOD site

It has been noted that the vacation of the Hazebrouck Barracks site has been delayed from 2012 to 2014/5. This has obvious implications for development proposals.

It has also become known that the MOD intend to retain much of their housing at Arborfield Garrison even after the move of the MOD facility to St Athan. It is anticipated that the housing will be required as married quarters for families of servicemen deployed overseas.

Part C

Proposed changes to Submission Core Strategy on Transportation

CP10 - Improvements to the strategic transport network

In the table, delete the text in box no. 2 and substitute:

"2 - Reading Road to Wellington Road link, Wokingham and a solution to the level-crossing adjacent to Wokingham station to improve transport capacity along the B3349 Barkham Road"

In the table between boxes nos. 9 and 10 insert new boxes no. 10, 11 and 12 as follows:

"10 - Arborfield Cross relief road"

"11 - Link road from A327 to A33 Mere oak roundabout"

"12 - Improvements to Barkham Bridge (B3349)"

Consequentially renumber existing boxes nos. 10-21 as boxes nos. 13-24.

CP18 - Housing delivery

Insert new paragraph 4.81b after paragraph 4.81a as follows:

"4.81b The phased delivery of dwellings at Arborfield Garrison SDL in the table in Appendix 6 is subject to a limit of 750 dwellings pending the completion of the building of the Arborfield Cross relief road. If in any year during the plan period there shall be a shortfall in the completion of new dwellings at Arborfield Garrison SDL once 750 new dwellings have been built because the Arborfield Cross relief road is not in place, any shortfall in planned completions for that year may be off-set by the building of additional dwellings at other SDLs".

CP19 - Arborfield Garrison SDL

Re-write paragraph 1) as follows:

"1) Phased delivery of around ~~3,500~~ 2,500 dwellings (not exceeding 750 before the construction of the Arborfield Cross relief road), of which at least 35% will be affordable under policy CP5;"

Re-write paragraph 7) as follows:

"7) Improvements to transport capacity along the A327 (to both the M3 and Reading, including the construction of an Arborfield Cross relief road and a link road from the A327 to the A33) and routes towards Bracknell and Wokingham (including the extension of Nine Mile Ride to the A327); and"

Re-write paragraph 4.82 as follows:

"4.82 Without proper consideration of long term planning of the area around the Garrison, there is a risk that unsustainable travel patterns will arise once the MoD vacate the site in ~~2012~~ 2014/15". To address this and take account of the opportunities for redeveloping an existing site, the Council has identified the Garrison as an SDL. The authority will negotiate with the ~~landowners~~ developers a phased programme for the delivery of infrastructure, service and facility improvements, especially education new schools, ~~together with~~ and enhanced transportation infrastructure, including adequate highway capacity and accessible public transport, ~~associated with development~~ to make the new development sustainable".

Delete the sixth sentence of paragraph 4.83 (lines 11-13) and substitute:
"It is important to ensure that improved public transport services are provided to link Arborfield Garrison to Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell as well as adequate highway capacity, including the Arborfield Cross relief road which is needed because of capacity constraints at Arborfield Cross."

Appendix 6 – Expected Housing Land Supply to 2026 (Page 88)

The following additional footnote should be added on page 89:
"The phased delivery schedule for Arborfield Garrison SDL in the above table is subject to a limit of 750 dwellings pending the completion of the building of the Arborfield Cross relief road."

Appendix 7 – Additional Guidance for the Development of Strategic Development Locations

Infrastructure

A7.7 Access and Movement

Re-write paragraph a) as follows:

"a) ~~Consideration should be given to ensuring~~ It will be necessary to ensure that strategic car movements from Arborfield Garrison to both the M3 and M4 are accommodated and avoid loading further traffic on existing routes through Arborfield Cross and Shinfield. This will necessitate constructing an Arborfield Cross relief road before the size of the SDL reaches 750 dwellings as well as a link road from the A327 to the A33. Subject to modelling work being undertaken by Wokingham BC this may also necessitate a ~~strategic link road between the A327 and A33 to improve access to Junction 11 of the M4 motorway~~ Shinfield eastern relief road."

Re-write paragraph c) as follows:

"c) ~~Improvements to the single lane bridge crossing Barkham Brook on the B3349 near the Langley Common Road end of Barkham Road, which will need to be widened once substantial development takes place at Arborfield Garrison SDL. Commonfield Lane should be closed to general traffic to create a segregated bus and cycle priority route to Wokingham via Barkham connecting with Barkham Street/Barkham Ride (unclassified) and the B3349.~~"

Re-write the last (unnumbered) paragraph as follows:

"i) ~~Other~~ improvements to transport capacity along the A327 could include a variety of measures such as widening the existing highway, provision of bus lanes or signalisation of junctions (all within the highway boundary) ~~through to the provision of a new route avoiding existing settlements or junction such as at Arborfield Cross. Any measures will need to be modelled to ensure it is an effective solution and should be capable of delivery at an appropriate time in the delivery of the development.~~"

Planning Obligations

A7.13

a) Transport

Re-write paragraph i) as follows:

"i) Improvements to transport capacity along the A327 (to both the M3 and Reading, including the construction of an Arborfield Cross relief road and a link road from the A327 to the A33) and routes towards Bracknell and Wokingham (including the extension of Nine Mile Ride to the A327)"

Re-write paragraph vii) as follows:

"vii) Measures to maintain the operation of the network in times of flooding, including the A327 where it crosses the River Loddon"