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Copy to Councillor Wayne Smith, Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement  
([wayne.smith@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:wayne.smith@wokingham.gov.uk))

10<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Dear Sir,

**Wokingham Borough Council Draft Local Plan  
Housing in Hurst – Site 5HUO30, Land northwest of Hogmoor Lane Hurst and Land  
next to Whistley Green Cottage**

The rejection of the strategic development site at Grazely and therefore the requirement for a revised Local Plan has we believe provided an opportunity and indeed a necessity to reconsider the assessment of other non-strategic sites included in the current Draft Plan.

The Hurst Village Society (HVS) has been made aware of what we believe is compelling evidence to show that the methodology used in the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) and Sustainability Appraisal regarding Site 5HUO30 was unsound, and in addition and what is most disconcerting to the Society is that material planning considerations that should have properly been considered as part of the process in evaluating the site as a suitable option or not for development appear to have been omitted or disregarded. This highlights what appears to be a major inconsistency in the identification of sites for future development for inclusion in The Local Plan as this site shares many similar key characteristics with some other sites in the centre of the village which have not been included.

In relation to Site 5HUO02, the HELAA assessment should, in our view, have included, as was the case with all other sites, the relevant planning history of this site, but this has been completely omitted. This is all the more bewildering when one examines the decisions made and the comments of the Planning Inspector. In

this respect the Planning Authority appears to be contradicting itself in now including the site within the Local Plan whilst previously strongly objecting to any small development on the site.

This is therefore a formal request by HVS as part of the consultation process of The Local Plan that Wokingham Borough Council reassess the future inclusion of site 5HU030 in the light of the above information and the following precis of what is considered to be more highly relevant information that has been inexplicably omitted or ignored.

Similarly, the planning history of site 5HU020 should be revisited as should the reasons for the inclusion of the site when there are less than five houses proposed and it could not be considered to be contiguous with site 5HU030 so as to be considered as a single site.

## **Reassessment of Sites 5HU030 and 5HU020**

### **1 Geographical Information System (GIS).**

- The RAG rating of Site 5HU030 should be changed from green to red under the Tree Protection Order (TPO) category
- The RAG rating of Site 5HU030 should be changed from yellow to red under the Surface Water Flood Risk (SWFR) category.

### **2 HELAA (Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment) Appendix B Part 3: Hurst Sites**

- The Relevant Planning History of Site 5HU002 was omitted and should be added as this is a material planning consideration when allocating Sites for development in Local Plans.
- There are 2 veteran oaks on the A321 Broadwater Lane border of Site 5HU030 which should be noted as inhibiting development.
- There are 8 Tree Protection Orders on Site 5SHU030 that will inhibit development
- The Site is in a Green Route Enhancement Area where development proposals are only permitted where existing trees are retained.
- The partial Site itself is not located within Flood Zone 3a however there is recurrent flooding on the A321 Broadwater Lane border of Site 5HU030 that is recorded as affecting existing residents and this could be a potential constraint to development.
- The Area of Special Local Character includes the A321 Broadwater Lane roadside that runs along the boundary of Sites 5HU030 and 5HU002. Any development will therefore need to retain and enhance



the traditional, historical, local and special character of the area and its setting.

- There are 7 Grade II listed buildings bordering and close to Sites 5HU030 and 5HU002.
- It should have been noted that there is no safe walking route from the Sites to the centre of the village.
- Availability: the error that the two Sites are in single ownership under the Potentially Available heading should be corrected as each Site will have different timescales and forms of build depending on the individual owners.

### **3 Sustainability Appraisal: Hurst**

- Paragraph 5.75 states that the Site is 'potentially associated with certain landscape and heritage sensitivities. It omits to say that Site 5HU030 is specifically recognized as particularly requiring protection from development in Wokingham Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment C2: Hurst River Terrace - Landscape Guidelines Page 112 Bullet point 9.
- It should also have included that the Site is part of the setting of 7 Grade II listed buildings and borders an Area of Special Local Character.
- Paragraph 5.75 'the Site is well located in respect of local facilities' omits that there are potentially significant pedestrian safety issues when walking to local facilities.
- Paragraph 5.79 stating that 'the allocation of potentially suitable sites 5HU002 and 5HU030 to deliver 15 homes is the only reasonable option' should be reviewed in the light of the additional information put forward

Members of the Society and other village residents have also brought to our attention the severe flooding that now regularly occurs in Broadwater Lane (some say aptly named!!) in the vicinity of the proposed site and local road safety issues both matters as detailed in this letter. There is also confusion as to why in relation to this particular site the Borough Council appears to have disregarded much of its' own Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines.

HVS hopes that this information is useful to you and explains why we and a number of individual residents are concerned. Please can you confirm in writing that the Borough Council will undertake a full and detailed reassessment of Sites 5HUO30 and 5HOO2 having regard to the above facts.

If it is not your intention to do so at this time it would be helpful if you could explain your reasons as to why you think this is either inappropriate or unnecessary.

Yours faithfully,

**John Osborne on behalf of the Hurst Village Society**