

Planning Application DC/22/1057 – Lower Broadbridge Farm, Broadbridge Heath

**Outline application for the redevelopment of the site to provide up to 147 dwellings along with formal and informal open space, landscaping, surface water attenuation, footpaths, access and parking with all matters reserved except access.**

**Broadbridge Heath Parish Council urges that this application be refused for the reasons set out below.**

### **Local Development Framework Policies**

We have used the Horsham District Planning Framework dated November 2015 as the reference Local Plan for this response and Policy references used below are from this document.

We do however note the existence of the draft Regulation 19 Pre-submission Horsham District Local Plan document (July 2021) which remains stalled while certain issues including Water Neutrality are resolved. Any references to this document will be annotated accordingly.

### **Government Guidance**

Guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in July 2021 and changes in that revision are to be included by Horsham District Council in the Draft Regulation 19 Local Plan document. We have not taken into account any such changes in the NPPF.

### **Highway Safety**

The application includes a new access point from the existing roundabout location, at the junction of the A264 and A281 – both very busy roads throughout the day. With an additional 147 dwellings it is likely to generate well over 200 vehicles (approx.) and this will be particularly evident during the morning and evening peaks. With this proposed development being separated from the rest of Broadbridge Heath village it will generate more vehicle movements than a development that is within the confines of the village, or within the built-up area boundary. Traffic speeds, in particular along the A281 directly to the East of the site, are higher and not conducive to pedestrians crossing the road. (See also under “Traffic” below).

The suggested provision of uncontrolled pedestrian crossings in order to link this development with the existing village of Broadbridge would in themselves be a safety hazard and not a satisfactory solution.

### **Traffic**

As mentioned above, the planned number of dwellings will generate significant additional traffic to and from the site, onto an already busy road network. The roundabout to the northeast of the site is already at times congested in particular during commuting hours and this will only exacerbate the situation. It seems likely that those living in the new dwellings will feel it necessary to use their cars more so than a development integrated within the boundary of the village. The A281 and A264 form

a significant barrier to those people on the western and northern sides of these roads, making safe pedestrian access to the village of Broadbridge Heath difficult and potentially dangerous.

The applicant is strongly promoting the uptake of environmentally friendly means of transport in preference to the car, but there is no proposal for bus services on the grounds of a lack of need. The plans include allocation of 296 parking spaces plus 29 for visitors, but the study concludes that there will be no more than 72 vehicular movements at the roundabout during rush hours. As the 2011 census indicated that 73% of the BBH population commuted by car this looks like a gross underestimate, but if it is correct, then it follows that the remaining residents will be walking or cycling and most of them will have to cross the very busy A281.

There are two options, the first being a footpath, number 1453, that crosses the A281 Guildford Road, but it is unlikely to be used much:

*'There is street lighting within the 40mph speed limit zone, but not the derestricted section. Similarly, no footways are provided within the derestricted section of Guildford Road. Public footpath 1453 meets Guildford Road at the proposed pedestrian crossing facility, where presently there are steps on both sides, but no ramps or refuge island.'*

*'To assist pedestrians using this route, it is proposed that a pedestrian crossing, comprising ramps, tactile paving and a central refuge'*

These proposed plans include an uncontrolled crossing, so realistically, anyone needing to cross the busy commuter route that is the A281, must use the Lawson Hunt roundabout, and whilst there will be splitter islands, there is no safe provision for pedestrians crossing, particularly on the carriageway where cars are leaving the roundabout.

### **Noise Disturbance**

With the proposed 147 dwellings on this site the increase in noise is likely to be significant. The current quiet tranquillity enjoyed in particular during early mornings, evenings and weekends, will disappear forever.

### **Location**

The proposed location of this development is outside of the built-up area boundary of Broadbridge Heath and just within the parish of Slinfold. Breaching the obvious (natural / A264 & A281 main roads) boundary is a step too far, taking into account the level of development that has taken place in Broadbridge Heath over recent years, and is not supported by Slinfold Parish Council, in accordance with their Neighbourhood Plan, (Ref. Slinfold Neighbourhood Plan 2014 – 2031, June 2018).

Policy 3 – “Development will be permitted **within** towns and villages which have **defined built-up areas**.”

This location is in practice now the only real remaining green access or corridor from the village and provides many villagers (walkers) with a countryside route into and out of the village.

### **Loss of Trees**

We object to the loss of mature trees on this site as a result of the proposed development. The effect on the character of the landscape will be significant.

### **Effect on Listed Buildings**

There are listed buildings next to (very close to) the planned development site. It appears inappropriate to have developments so close to these historic and protected buildings.

### **Flood Risk**

Drainage strategy shows a significant flooding risk around the site water courses. We believe that the additional flow from the new estate would exacerbate this, leading to potential for neighbouring properties to be flooded. During prolonged periods of heavy rain the surrounding fields are often underwater.

### **Biodiversity**

The reports and surveys commissioned by the applicant speak of the net gain of biodiversity. The sections of hedgerow to be planted are only marginally more than those destroyed. The planting of young saplings in place of mature trees is not equal in value to the wildlife that is now living in and on the existing trees. The planting of wildflower seed does not replace those plants that are already established on the site. The noise, the disturbance, the light pollution, the destruction of the living environment and the construction of 147 dwellings in no way benefits the interlinked lives of the many birds, mammals, reptiles, trees, plants, fungi, and bacteria currently in situ.

This development would be yet another obstacle hindering wildlife in this area. Horsham District's own Nature Recovery Network states *'Key to this environmental work is the development of ecological networks which create wildlife corridors to allow species to move freely from place to place. These are known as Nature Recovery Networks.'*

### **General Points**

The application is an Outline application, except for access. We urge most strongly that specific permission for access must not be granted or approved until clarity on all planning matters and restrictions, including Water Neutrality, is established. Access should remain a reserved matter until it is clear that the application meets all planning criteria and requirements.

There is significant local objection from residents who feel most strongly that such development must not take place.

This development if approved would blur the boundary between Broadbridge Heath and Slinfold and erode the established land buffer.

There is already much pressure on Doctors and Dentists locally. There is no evident mitigation for this in the application. This development would also lead to more pressure on hospitals, which are already under severe strain and not local to this location.

With the planned new primary school on the Wickhurst Green development in Broadbridge Heath now not being built, how / where would primary school places for the children living in these new properties be provided?

There will be significant loss of viable and productive agricultural land.

The current Local Plan has already identified a potential further development site at the Broadbridge Heath Quadrant (Policy 2.2). This application makes no reference to this additional potential expansion of the village.

## **Summary**

In summary, Broadbridge Heath Parish Council objects most strongly to this application being approved.

We fully support the comments submitted by Slinfold Parish Council in their objection to this application, within whose parish this development would be situated.

It is a step too far considering the level of development that the village of Broadbridge Heath has already seen over recent years and would take the village beyond the established built-up area boundary to the west of the village.

This is clearly a case of over-development, adversely affecting the landscape and ecological habitats currently in place on this site.

Applicable Horsham District Local Development Framework Policies:-

Sustainable Dev – Policy 1

Strategic Dev – Policy 2

Dev Hierarchy & Settlement Expansion – Policy 3 & 4

Housing Provision – Policy 15

Meeting Local Housing Needs – Policy 16

Exceptions Housing Scheme – Policy 17

Policies for Development – Policy SD2 to SD9

Environmental Protection – Policy 24

District Character & the natural environment – Policy 25

Countryside Protection – Policy 26

Settlement Coalescence – Policy 27

Protected landscapes – Policy 30

Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity – Policy 31

Development Principles – Policy 33

Climate Change – Policy 35

Flooding - Policy 38

Infrastructure Provision – Policy 39

Sustainable Transport – Policy 40

Inclusive Communities – Policy 42

Community facilities, Leisure & Recreation – Policy 43