

Planning Application DC/22/1052 – Lower Broadbridge Farm, Broadbridge Heath

**Outline application for the redevelopment of the site to provide up to 133 dwellings including the creation of new vehicular access, public open space, landscape planting, surface water attenuation and associated infrastructure 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 A281 and A264 – both very busy roads throughout the day. With an additional 133 dwellings it is likely to generate 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.

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 south of the site is already a bottleneck with significant queues 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 would form a significant barrier to those people on the western side of the road making safe pedestrian access to the village of Broadbridge Heath difficult and potentially dangerous.

It is important to note that the only on-site traffic survey conducted was for one hour between 1 and 2pm in January of this year.

The applicant is strongly promoting the uptake of environmentally friendly means of transport with provision and upgrading of pavements and cycle paths. They are allocating 258 parking spaces to residents, plus 27 for visitors, but are expecting no more than 65 vehicular movements at the roundabout during rush hours. As the 2011 census indicated that 73% of the Broadbridge Heath population commuted by car this looks to be a gross underestimate, but if it is correct, then it follows that the remaining residents will be walking, cycling or catching a bus? Therefore, it is likely they will have to cross the busy A264 or A281 roads. Will there be adequate and safe provision for pedestrians crossing these roads?

### **Noise Disturbance**

With the proposed 133 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 / A281 main road) 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.

### **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.

The section of deciduous woodland running north/south on the eastern boundary of Arun House, Millmeads and The Paddocks, is registered on the ‘Priority Habitat Inventory, Deciduous Woodland (England)’ on the MAGICMap published by Defra. The proposed development is extending right up to edge of this woodland, which will inevitably degrade the habitat.

### **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.

## **Biodiversity**

The reports and surveys commissioned by the applicant speak of the net gain of biodiversity. The sections of hedgerow that would 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 133 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 Slinfold and Broadbridge Heath 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 now not being built, how / where would primary school places for the children living in these new properties be provided?

There would be a significant loss of viable 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 and 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 habitat 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