

**EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE
ON 26TH JULY 2017**

UPDATE REPORT

Item No: (2) **Application No:** 17/00472/FULMAJ **Page No.** 43-56

Site: Land North of Travellers Friend, Crookham Common Road, Crookham Common

Planning Officer Presenting: Emma Nutchey

Member Presenting:

Parish Representative speaking: N/A

Objector(s) speaking: N/A

Support(s) speaking: Mrs Jean Norman – CPHOA Committee
Mrs Sheila Ellison

Applicant/Agent speaking: Mr Duncan Crook

Ward Member(s): Councillor Rob Denton-Powell
Councillor Jason Collis

Update Information:

Additional consultation responses:

- Letter of support from Rob Denton-Powell Council member for Thatcham South and Crookham. Please see comments below:

'My reasons for support are listed below.

Economic

The Crookham Park has long been established and suffers from poor infrastructure and communications to the main town limiting employment opportunities for those approx. 350 local residents who may suffer adversely from the removal of bus services to and from

Crookham Park. I believe the development of live and work properties are hugely beneficial in rural communities and offer the potential of much needed local working opportunities. The roll-out of Gigaclear broadband further enhances the likelihood of low impact high tech enterprises especially much in demand high tech start-ups.

Infrastructure

With an established community of 139 homes within meters of the proposed development the impact of these 5 houses will be negligible and current road access and local services will be more than capable of supporting the proposed development.

Community

The proposal includes community transportation and as such addresses some considerable concern regarding transportation in light of the withdrawal of bus services. The community has been quite vocal regarding this service reduction and this helps alleviate some issues. I am aware this does not relate to any specific planning policy but does address a higher moral motivation of policy that developments should benefit communities rather simply comply to planning policy.

Thatcham South & Crookham is a rare ward within West Berks with urban, rural and commercial developments throughout the ward residents are rightly proud of the diversity and I believe they would welcome this beneficial diversification within the ward.'

- Two further letters of support outlining concerns regarding how the letter containing 24 signatures was conducted.
- The comments raised above do not present any new issues to those considered within the report.

Other matters:

Live work units. What are they?

Planning permission for working at home is not usually needed where the use of part of a dwelling for business purposes does not change the overall residential use. Live/work units are a mix of residential and business uses which cannot be classified under a single class within the Use Classes Order and would therefore be classed as *sui generis*.

Live work units are not defined within the development plan nor are they defined within the NPPF.

In the appeal decision letter relating to the previous application the Inspector recognises that the development plan does not contain specific policies for live/work units. He also recognises that there is no evidence that live works units in rural areas benefit from more relaxed policies than do their component elements. This proposal has been assessed by officers in terms of its component parts of housing and B1 office space, and where appropriate the particular characteristics of a live/work unit, following the same approach taken by the earlier inspector.

Settlements:

In response to members query regarding what constitutes a settlement, settlement boundaries are defined within Policy C1 of the HSA DPD. Within the defined settlement boundary there is

a presumption in favour of development. The application site lies outside of any defined settlement and for planning purposes is within the countryside, where development is strictly controlled.

While there is a long established mobile home park to the east of the application site and sporadic properties to the west the site is not part of a defined settlement, it is Greenfield land within the open countryside.

The applicant considers Policy C1 to be relevant to the application. It is relevant in so far as it defines the settlement boundaries.

The applicant however refers to the following part of policy C1 on the basis the proposal represents infill development. This proposal does not constitute infill development and as such this element of the policy was not covered within the report.

However in response to the applicant's comments, part of the policy states:

'In settlements in the countryside with no defined settlement boundary, limited infill development may be considered where:

- i. It is within a closely knit cluster of 10 or more existing dwellings adjacent to, or fronting an existing highway; and
- ii. The scale of development consists of infilling a small undeveloped plot commensurate with the scale and character of existing dwellings within an otherwise built up frontage; and
- iii. It does not extend the existing frontage; and
- iv. The plot size and spacing between dwellings is similar to adjacent properties and respects the rural character and street scene of the locality.'

The proposal does not constitute infill development in accordance with the terms of this policy. It is not within a cluster of 10 or more dwellings adjacent to, or fronting an existing highway. It sits next to a mobile home park and to the east is sporadic residential development. Furthermore the proposed residential development does not 'infill a small undeveloped plot....within an otherwise built up frontage.' This is a sizeable plot, not fronting the highway which separates the mobile home park to the west from the isolated sporadic development to the east.

Securing the car share scheme and footpath:

The car share scheme would be secured through a S106 agreement were the scheme allowed.

The proposal seeks to make improvements to the section of footpath THAT/26/1 along Crookham Common Road. The land required to make these improvements is not shown in the red line or detailed within the description and it is unclear who owns the land upon which these works would be carried out. Highways have not commented on the acceptability of the footpath given their overriding objection to the scheme based on sustainability.

Bus timetable:

The committee report refers to a 2 hourly bus service with no service on a Sunday. This service has however been reduced and operates Monday – Friday only with an infrequent service varying on a day to day basis.