Crondall
Parish Council

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Ref: L01271026_26/01548/FUL

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By E-mail – planningadmin@hart.gov.uk

James Kidger
Planning Department
Hart District Council
Harlington Way
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Dear James

Crondall Parish Council Objection to Planning Application 26/01548/FUL *Construction of 43 houses (including affordable housing), formation of new accesses, associated works and infrastructure at Land North of Lefroy's Field, Crondall*

Crondall Parish Council (CPC) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the above planning application and for granting an extension to the consultation deadline.

The application was considered at the Parish Council meeting on 26th October, where councillors voted unanimously to **object** to the proposed development. The Council's objections are set out below.

1. Conflict with the Hart Local Plan
The proposed development conflicts with established planning policies relating to development in the open countryside and the protection of the character and identity of settlements.

- **Policy NBE1 of the Hart Local Plan:** The proposed development would constitute development in the open countryside, contrary to the objectives of this policy.
- **Policy SS1 of the Hart Local Plan:** This policy directs development towards defined settlements, previously developed land in sustainable locations, and allocated sites identified on the Policies Map. The application site does not accord with this approach.
- **Landscape character:** The Hart District Landscape Assessment identifies the area as having a distinctive rural character, characterised by extensive woodland, strong hedgerow structures and open views across farmland and the chalk landscape. The site also affords views towards Hannams Copse, a protected historic woodland. The proposed development would harm the openness and rural character of this landscape.

2. Conflict with the Crondall Neighbourhood Plan

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- **Conflict with Policy 4 of the Crondall Neighbourhood Plan: Local Gap**
  The development conflicts with Policy 4 of the CNP, which designates a Local Gap to prevent the coalescence of settlements and protect the integrity and distinct identities of Crondall Village and Mill Lane.

  The Local Gap was carefully refined throughout the neighbourhood plan-making process. Its boundaries were reduced to the minimum area necessary to fulfil its purpose, taking account of the relative sizes of the settlements and the development pressures arising from the A287 as it passes through the neighbourhood area.

  The designated gap also serves to protect the hamlet of Bowling Alley and maintain the separation and identity of the surrounding communities.

  The Local Gap designation is not arbitrary. The CNP underwent detailed formal consultation and independent examination before being put to a referendum, at which 84% of participating voters supported the plan. This democratic endorsement underlines the importance residents attach to protecting the character and separation of these settlements.

  Permitting the proposed development would undermine the purpose of this carefully considered policy and compromise the landscape and settlement character it seeks to protect.

- **Policy 1 of the Crondall Neighbourhood Plan (CNP):** The proposal conflicts with the policy of directing development within defined settlement boundaries.

3. Impact on the Rural Environment and Landscape
The proposed development would result in significant harm to the rural environment and the established landscape character of the area.

- **Hannams Copse:** The site lies close to Hannams Copse, a designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and ancient woodland. Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat, and the woodland adjoins the north-western part of the application site. The development risks adversely affecting this sensitive ecological environment.
- **Public rights of way:** The development would result in the loss of existing public rights of way, adversely affecting local access to and enjoyment of the countryside.
- **Protected trees:** A tree belt along the eastern boundary of the proposed development is subject to a group Tree Preservation Order (reference MD/DC/10/470). Its protection and long-term retention must be properly addressed.
- **Unsustainable location:** The site is poorly located in relation to schools, shops, employment opportunities and other essential services. With no public transport provision beyond school buses, residents would be heavily reliant on private cars, contrary to the principles of sustainable development.

Taken together, these factors demonstrate that the development would have a detrimental impact on the rural landscape, local biodiversity and the wider countryside setting of Crondall.

4. Traffic and Highway Safety
CPC has serious concerns regarding the adequacy of the transport assessment and the likely impact of the development on the local road network.

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The transport report anticipates 22 vehicle movements during the morning period and 31 during the afternoon period. For a development comprising 43 dwellings, these figures appear substantially understated. Assuming at least two cars per household, together with additional movements generated by deliveries, tradespeople, visitors and online shopping, CPC believes the resulting daily traffic will be considerably greater.

The roads within Crondall already experience significant congestion from through traffic. The additional movements generated by this development would exacerbate existing pressures, increasing congestion and potentially compromising highway safety. Furthermore, new developments in Farnham over the past two years have contributed – and can be expected to continue to contribute - to increased traffic through Crondall, placing further pressure on the existing road network.

Although the proposed parking provision may comply with Hart's parking standards, it is very likely that insufficient practical parking capacity will result in vehicles being parked along local roads, creating. additional hazards for pedestrians and other road users, particularly on roads that are already constrained.

CPC therefore considers that a robust and *independent* assessment of the development's likely traffic generation and its cumulative impact on the local highway network is essential.

5. Water Supply, Drainage, Sewerage and Flood Risk
CPC has significant concerns about the capacity of existing water and wastewater infrastructure and the adequacy of the proposed drainage arrangements.

- **Water supply**
  The application site lies within South East Water's WRZW-4 zone, which is subject to water supply limitations. The application must demonstrate that sufficient water resources and infrastructure capacity are available to support the proposed development without adversely affecting existing residents.
- **Wastewater and sewerage**
  The local sewerage system is already experiencing capacity pressures, with surface water reportedly entering the foul drainage system. The addition of 43 dwellings would further exacerbate these existing problems. CPC requires clear evidence that the wastewater network has sufficient capacity and that the development will not increase the risk of flooding, pollution or other drainage failures.
- **Flood risk and groundwater**
  The proposal also raises concerns in relation to Policy NBE5 of the Hart Local Plan, concerning increased flood risk and groundwater complications.

  Crondall lies within a highly sensitive catchment area of approximately 19 km², which is vulnerable to groundwater flooding, overland surface-water runoff and overflow from the River Hart. The surrounding area regularly experiences high groundwater levels and poor drainage.

  Replacing permeable greenfield land with buildings, roads, driveways and other hard surfaces would reduce natural infiltration and could significantly increase surface-water runoff, placing additional pressure on local drainage systems and potentially worsening groundwater-related problems.

  CPC is not satisfied that the drainage strategies submitted by the developer adequately demonstrate how these risks would be safely and effectively mitigated. In particular, the proposed sustainable drainage system (SuDS) lacks sufficient clarity regarding its operation and long-term effectiveness.

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Before any permission could be considered, the Local Planning Authority must be satisfied that the proposed development can be adequately drained, that groundwater and surface-water flood risks have been properly assessed, and that effective, deliverable and maintainable mitigation measures are in place.

6. Impact on Local Facilities and Community Activities
The development would place additional pressure on local facilities and could adversely affect established community activities.

- **Scouting activities**
  The proximity of the proposed development to the existing Scout Hut, which is in regular use, has raised concerns regarding the potential impact on scouting activities. The implications for existing community activities should therefore be fully assessed.

- **Healthcare provision**
  CPC is also concerned about the capacity of local healthcare services to accommodate the additional population.

  The consultation response from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board states that the existing GP surgeries providing primary care are already undersized and would be unable to accommodate the additional patients arising from the proposed development without further infrastructure investment. This would require extensions, including a first-floor and side extension.

  The application therefore raises a significant question about whether the necessary healthcare infrastructure can be provided in a timely manner to support the additional residents.

- **Contribution to the village setting**
  The Crondall Conservation Area Appraisal recognises that these fields provide views on entering the village and contribute to its rural setting. Development of the site would erode this important aspect of Crondall's character and adversely affect the experience of approaching the village.

7. Conflict with the Emerging Hart Local Plan (EHLP)
Although the emerging Hart Local Plan remains at an early stage of preparation, its stated vision provides a relevant indication of the Council's developing approach to sustainable growth.

The EHLP vision promotes **"Infrastructure-led growth"**, with development directed towards accessible and sustainable locations where existing or planned infrastructure, services and community facilities can support thriving communities. It also highlights the importance of sustainable access to rail stations and opportunities to support or enable wider infrastructure improvements.

CPC acknowledges that paragraph 7.2.4 of the EHLP recognises that smaller and medium-sized greenfield sites may need to contribute towards housing delivery. However, this does not remove the need to consider whether a particular site is sustainable or whether the infrastructure required to support development can be provided.

In this case, the significant concerns regarding flood risk, drainage, water supply, wastewater capacity, transport accessibility, schools, healthcare and community facilities demonstrate that the proposed development does not align with the emerging emphasis on infrastructure-led growth.

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These matters should be given appropriate consideration alongside the relevant adopted planning policies and the specific constraints of the application site.

8. Matters Requiring Resolution if Permission Is Contemplated
Without prejudice to CPC's objections, should Hart District Council (HDC) nevertheless consider granting planning permission, CPC considers that this should not occur unless and until the following matters have been satisfactorily resolved:

a) **Independent Transport Assessment:** An acceptable, independent transport assessment must properly evaluate the likely traffic generation, including cumulative impacts on the local road network, and demonstrate that the development would not result in unacceptable adverse effects on highway capacity or safety.
b) **Water, wastewater and drainage infrastructure:** The applicant must provide a clear and credible explanation of how water supply, wastewater and foul drainage will be connected and accommodated. The adequacy of the proposed drainage strategy and any flood mitigation measures must be independently demonstrated, with appropriate arrangements for the long-term operation and maintenance of the SuDS infrastructure.
c) **Community infrastructure contributions:** Appropriate Section 106 contributions should be secured from the developer to mitigate the direct impacts of the development on the local community and infrastructure. The specific improvements to be funded should be agreed with CPC and must meet the applicable legal and policy requirements for planning obligations.

These matters are fundamental to determining whether the proposed development could be made acceptable in planning terms and should not be deferred without sufficient evidence that effective solutions are achievable.

10. Conclusion
Crondall Parish Council has carefully considered the application, and it was unanimously resolved at its 26th October meeting to object to the proposed development.

The proposal conflicts with key policies of the Hart Local Plan and the Crondall Neighbourhood Plan, including those intended to protect the open countryside, maintain settlement boundaries and prevent the coalescence of Crondall Village and Mill Lane. It would also harm the rural landscape, threaten the setting of the village, and raise substantial concerns regarding highway capacity, sustainable accessibility, water supply, wastewater infrastructure, drainage and flood risk.

The application has not satisfactorily demonstrated that these impacts can be adequately mitigated or that the necessary infrastructure is available to support the proposed development sustainably.

CPC therefore strongly reiterates its objection to this planning application and urges Hart District Council to refuse planning permission.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Astrid Angove
Parish Clerk – Crondall Parish Council