Crondall
Parish Council

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Ref: L01181126_01844/OUT

Date: 18th November 2026

By E-mail - planningadmin@hart.gov.uk

FAO David Raper
Planning Department
Hart District Council
Harlington Way
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Dear David

26/01844/OUT - *Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except access) for the phased construction of up to 100,000 sq.m (GIA) of floorspace for flexible uses within Use Class B2 and/or B8 (including ancillary office space and associated plant and equipment); demolition of existing residential dwelling; associated infrastructure including temporary and permanent services and utilities, earthworks, parking, servicing, landscaping, drainage, and vehicular and pedestrian access (including Public Right of Way diversion) and associated works.*

Although the proposed development site lies outside the parish boundary, Crondall Parish Council (CPC) considers that its scale and potential impact raise significant concerns for the wider area, including Crondall and its residents. The boundary does not diminish these impacts and, although CPC is not a statutory consultee, it considers that neighbouring communities must be properly represented in the determination of this application.

The application was considered at the CPC meeting on 16th November, when councillors unanimously resolved to **object**. CPC considers the development inappropriate in its location and scale, lacking sufficient justification and likely to have unacceptable consequences for the local road network, rural environment and landscape. Its objections are set out below.

1. Conflict with the Hart Local Plan and National Planning Policy
The proposal conflicts with the objectives of Hart District Council's (HDC) emerging Local Plan, particularly its priorities of "Responding to Climate Change" and "Supporting Nature Recovery".

Lodge Farm comprises open agricultural land outside any settlement boundary and is not previously developed land. A development of this scale would represent an inappropriate encroachment into the countryside, contrary to sustainable development principles and the protection of the rural environment.

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CPC considers the proposal contrary to NPPF paragraphs 187, 195, 196, 198 and 199, Hart Local Plan Policy SS1 and the development criteria in Policy NBE1.

Paragraph 17 of the emerging Local Plan states that "The justification for building in the countryside must be very strong indeed." CPC considers that the applicant has failed to demonstrate why this location is essential or why the development cannot be accommodated elsewhere, including on sites already approved or under consideration.

2. Lack of Demonstrated Need and Overprovision
The applicant has not adequately demonstrated a genuine need for a development of this scale. The proposed warehouses appear speculative rather than supported by evidenced local or strategic demand.

There are already vacant warehouse premises near Hook, while a larger-scale warehouse development has been agreed at Junction 7 of the M3 through the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan.

Furthermore, HDC's emerging Local Plan identifies a requirement for just 3,000 square metres of industrial floorspace, including logistics, equivalent to approximately 0.7 hectares. The Lodge Farm proposal therefore appears excessive and risks creating vacant or underused premises without delivering the employment benefits claimed.

CPC also considers that the application fails to demonstrate compliance with:

- **Policy ED1 (New Employment):** The applicant has not adequately addressed criteria a, b and c, or the first clause of criterion d.
- **Policy ED3 (Rural Economy):** Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the development is appropriate in nature, scale and location within the rural environment.

CPC therefore considers that neither the need for nor the appropriateness of development on this scale at Lodge Farm has been established.

3. Unacceptable Traffic and Highway Impacts
The anticipated increase in traffic is a major concern. The development is estimated to generate approximately 12,000 vehicle movements during daylight hours, seven days a week, placing considerable additional pressure on the surrounding road network, including routes to the north and south of the site.

Although provision is made for traffic travelling to and from the M3, the application does not adequately demonstrate how local roads and junctions will accommodate these additional movements.

The surrounding network includes narrow rural A-roads unsuitable for a substantial increase in HGV traffic. The resulting congestion, highway safety risks and conflicts between road users would adversely affect neighbouring communities, including Crondall.

CPC is not satisfied that these impacts have been adequately assessed or that effective mitigation can be delivered. The proposal also conflicts with:

- **NPPF Policy TR6:** Which identifies circumstances where development should be refused due to severe transport impacts or unacceptable highway safety consequences.
- **Hart Local Plan Policy INF3 (Transport):** The additional traffic would place an unsustainable and inadequately addressed burden on the local and strategic road network.
- The increase in vehicle movements would also undermine HDC's carbon reduction objectives and commitment to tackling climate change.

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CPC considers that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the highway network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the development safely and sustainably.

4. Harm to the Rural Environment, Landscape and Biodiversity
The development would transform open agricultural land into large-scale warehouse buildings, fundamentally altering the rural landscape and causing significant harm to the area's established character.

CPC is particularly concerned about the following environmental sensitivities:

- **Protected sites:** Parts of the site lie within 1,500 metres of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and within 500 metres of the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area. Potentially irreparable impacts on these sensitive environments require careful assessment.
- **Flood risk:** Parts of the site fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3, raising concerns about floodwater displacement, drainage and the adequacy of proposed mitigation.
- **River Whitewater and chalk stream habitat:** The River Whitewater, an exceptionally valuable chalk stream habitat, runs through part of the site. These rare and biodiverse freshwater environments require protection and restoration, not development that could compromise their ecological value.
- **Loss of agricultural land:** The proposal would remove approximately eight acres of productive farmland, further eroding the rural character and agricultural value of the area.
- Taken together, these factors demonstrate the environmental sensitivity of the site. CPC considers that the application has not adequately demonstrated how the significant landscape, ecological and flood risk impacts can be avoided or satisfactorily mitigated.
- The proposal is also inconsistent with HDC's emerging Local Plan objectives of protecting the natural environment, supporting nature recovery and responding to climate change.

5. Conclusion and Request for Refusal
Following detailed consideration at its meeting on 16th November, CPC unanimously resolved to **object** to the Lodge Farm development.

CPC considers the proposal inappropriate in both location and scale, with insufficient evidence of need or justification for building in the open countryside. It conflicts with key HDC Local Plan policies intended to protect the rural environment and ensure employment development is appropriately located and sustainable.

The development would also cause significant harm to the landscape and environment, place unacceptable pressure on the surrounding highway network and raise serious concerns about flood risk and the protection of the River Whitewater chalk stream.

Crucially, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that these impacts can be adequately mitigated or that the necessary infrastructure is available. CPC considers that the claimed economic and employment benefits do not outweigh the substantial environmental, transport and infrastructure concerns.

CPC therefore requests that its objections are given full consideration and strongly urges HDC to **refuse planning permission**.

Yours sincerely

Astrid Angove
Parish Clerk – Crondall Parish Council