Transport Reasons for Refusal

1. Introduction

This report sets out the access and transport reasons for refusal for the Murrell Green Planning Application 26/01201/OUT. HTP Consulting Limited have been appointed on behalf of Hartley Wintney Parish Council, Hook Parish Council and Winchfield Parish Council to review the transport aspects of the planning application.

HTP Consulting was set up in 2001 by Richard Hudson BA, MSc, MRTPI, MCILT who has over 40 years' experience in transport planning. He has worked on behalf of developers but in more recent years has been assisting highway authorities. These include Hampshire CC (HCC) and Wokingham BC (WBC) and has considerable expertise as being the highways development control engineer for large residential schemes of over 2000 dwellings. These include Aldershot Urban Extension (HCC), Arborfield (WBC), South of M4 (WBC) and South of Wokingham (WBC). He has also been an expert witness at numerous public inquiries, mainly representing highway authorities.

2. Summary

The transport related submissions to support the planning application include a large number of documents, notably the Transport Assessment with eleven appendices and the Environmental Impact Assessment. They do not adequately assess the impacts and the proposed mitigations are too limited. These concerns are reflected in the consultation responses received from the relevant highway authorities, as summarised below:

- National Highways with the power of direction, have stated that planning permission should not be granted for a period during which additional information has been requested.
- Hampshire County Council, the authority affected, have issued a holding objection with a long list of unresolved issues.
- Wokingham Borough Council object to the proposals and have requested additional information.
- Bracknell Forest Borough Council have requested additional information and assessment of impacts.

Four main reasons for refusal are summarised below, before being set out in more detail through this document. These four reasons are:

- Reason for Refusal 1: Highway Safety. Focused on several junctions that have existing road safety problems that the development will be adding significant volumes of traffic without mitigation. The cycle routes to Winchfield and Hook are not fully segregated and are not considered safe and attractive to cyclists.
- Reason for Refusal 2: Unsustainable development. The development is too car-dependent and lacks encouragement to use more sustainable modes of transport, notably walking, cycling and public transport. The Framework Travel Plan suggests ways to encourage sustainable modes of transport but fails to show how the measures will be delivered and funded. Without identified and secured funding the proposed measured cannot presently be relied upon as deliverable. Notably, there is no public transport strategy and no funding for it.

- Reason for Refusal 3: Highway congestion. The forecast traffic flows on the local network modelling are underestimated. Traffic growth from 2025 to 2045 is too low and exclude committed developments. Traffic generation from the development is underestimated and is based on inadequate unrepresentative TRICS survey data. There is also little justification for the reduced trip rates for the 'Do Scheme Sustainable Core' and 'Do Scheme Sustainable Plus' scenarios. The assumptions around the use of the proposed school are not adequately justified by the evidence. The highway network assessed requires extending to include junctions further afield. The operational assessments for the junctions that are covered are underestimating delays.
  The 'Decide and Provide' approach to highway improvements requires monitoring, potential funding and delivery in the future. There are several congested junctions where nothing is being offered to accommodate even a modest level of additional development traffic. There is no mechanism set out for the future delivery of improvements and the developer is delivering little more than the site access junctions.
- Reason for Refusal 4: Environmental impact of traffic. Most of the environmental factors in the Environmental Impact Assessment require all day flows and the derivation of these have not been presented. It does refer to applying 'Do Scheme Sustainable Core' and these development flows are underestimated. It fails to address a number of locations such as the impacts on rural lanes and the Hartley Wintney and Phoenix Green Conservation Area.

These issues are backed up by the comment letters to the application (as of 30/08/2026), of which 388 (93%) mention transport topics. The transport topics referred to with percentages are shown in Table 1. Congestion is by far the most common comment (58%), then active travel (34%) and rail and station capacity (29%).

Topic	Letters	% of transport letters
General congestion / peak-time capacity	225	58.0%
Active travel (walking/cycling)	130	33.5%
Rail capacity & station parking	113	29.1%
Bus service adequacy	82	21.1%
Junction capacity / roundabout safety	61	15.7%
Transport assessment / trip-generation critique	45	11.6%
Rat-running through village lanes	41	10.6%
Air quality / noise (from traffic)	41	10.6%
Car dependency / unsustainable location	39	10.1%
Construction / HGV traffic	18	4.6%
School-run safety	13	3.4%
Emergency vehicle access	9	2.3%
Local/overflow parking pressure	8	2.1%
Flooding affecting road access	7	1.8%

Table 1: Transport topics mentioned in comment letters

The reasons for refusal are detailed in the sections below.

3. Reasons for Refusal 1: Highway Safety

The proposals will cause highway safety problems at the following locations:

a) The A30/ B3016. This junction already has an accident problem with 2 serious and 3 slight accidents over the last 5 years. The Transport Assessment states that these are '*predominantly involved turning movements to/from the B3016 and collisions with through-traffic on the A30'*. The development will add significant volumes of traffic to these movements. It is estimated that the traffic to/from the B3016 will increase by around 35% during the peak hours and as delays increase drivers tend to take more risks to find a gap in the A30 flows, so accident risk is significantly increased.

b) The A287/B3016. This junction also has a serious highway safety record with 7 person injury accidents over the last 5 years identified in the Transport Assessment. One was a fatality which the Transport Assessment stated *was likely due to the driver on the minor arm failing to look properly and disobeying the give way'*. This is the movement that will increase from the development traffic flows accessing the M3 J5.

c) The A30/B3011 roundabout in Hartley Wintney. There has been a significant number of reported accidents at the A30/B3011 roundabout in Hartley Wintney in the last 5 years, 1 serious.

d) The proposed site access B on the A30 is a priority junction. This is unnecessary and where possible priority junctions should not be added to the strategic highway network for highway safety reasons. As with items (a) and (b) it is adding cross movements, and these are potentially hazardous. The small portion of the development area accessing the A30 from this junction could easily divert to one of the two roundabout accesses.

e) The B3016 between the site access and Winchfield station has a narrow, shared pedestrian and cycle which is about 2.0m wide. There is potential for conflict between cycles and pedestrians and having to divert on to the main carriageway. The carriageway is relatively narrow, generally about 6.0m in width, so two passing vehicles will be close to the kerb. This means that traffic will be travelling close to pedestrians and cycles and there is potential for conflict. It is understood that there are proposals to widen the footway, but it needs to be at least 3m with a 0.5m strip to segregate from the main carriageway. Adjacent privately owned land needs to be secured and the overgrowing foliage requires trimming back and even when it is, questions remain over the longer-term maintenance. It has therefore not been demonstrated that this can be made a safe and attractive route for pedestrians and cyclists.

f) The B3016 junction with Potbridge Rd, which provides access to the SANG and sports pitches car park. Significant traffic will be added to a junction with substandard visibilities.

g) There is an incomplete cycle route to the centre of Hook for schools, shops and the rail station. Notably there is a concern about crossing the B3349 at the 'Sainsbury roundabout', which is difficult and hazardous and there was a recent fatality on 14/8/26. It continues on the other side as far as Gefferys House but then deposits cyclists on the narrowest part of the A30. The alternative route to the centre is via the B3349 underpass, but this is not connected to the A30 route.

h) There will be increases in traffic flows on a series of narrow country lanes that are not wide enough for two-way traffic flows and the assessment entirely ignores these. Car routing software such as Google Maps, routes traffic along these minor lanes depending on traffic congestion elsewhere, with little consideration for the narrowness of the lanes. The main lanes affected are Station Road (Winchfield), Bagwell Lane, Taplin's Farm Lane, Pale Lane, Chatter Alley, Potbridge Road, Church Lane (Dogmersfield) and Chalky Lane.

i) There are large HGV lorries including double trailers based at Charrington Farm that access the highway network on Station Road, about 200m east of Winchfield station. These all route under license to the B3016. These lorries impact on the operation of the highway network already. For example, the swept path of the lorries at the Station Road / B3016 take up the entire junction which will become more hazardous with the additional development traffic.

4. Reasons for Refusal 2: Unsustainable Development

The development is considered unsustainable in terms of transport as it is too car dependent and lacks encouragement to use more sustainable modes of transport, notably walking, cycling and public transport. Key weaknesses include:

a) The site currently has poor access to sustainable modes of transport. Hampshire CC examined the site using the DfT Connectivity Tool and it came up with a low score across all modes of transport. The Highway Authority concluded that '*overall, therefore, the location of the site is not considered to be accessible by any sustainable modes of transport given the distance to facilities, active travel provision and distance to public transport options'.* When reviewing the proposals with the development to mitigate this situation the proposals 'lacked detail' and they conclude that '*the site is in a location that is not accessible by any sustainable transport modes and would likely lead to an over-reliance on the private car without significant interventions*' .

b) The Framework Travel Plan (FTP), has many suggestions and includes some ways to encourage these sustainable modes of transport, but fails to show how the measures will be delivered and funded. It suggests that delivery will be by the developers gaining detailed planning permission, but for the measures to be effective they require a holistic and consistent approach across the entire site which cannot be delivered as each parcel is sold off. The application needs to show how these measures will be funded at this stage.

c) There is no public transport strategy. In terms of buses a detailed and funded strategy is required as in the early years buses will not be financially viable. The funding of these services should be delivered, coming through the S106 agreement.

d) There is limited capacity at both Winchfield and Hook railway stations. The car parks are currently almost full and there is no potential to increase parking capacity. The rail station platform lengths are also short and the route to London is a slow stopper that is unattractive for many commuters. There has been no assessment of the development impacts on the rail stations and rail services. This needs to be provided before the Applicant can rely on the rail services as part of the sustainable transport strategy.

5. Reasons for Refusal 3: Highway Congestion

The forecast flows on the local network modelling are underestimated and more delays to existing traffic is expected. The following key concerns about the traffic modelling and congestion have been identified and many of these are also shared by Hampshire C.C.:

a) The base flows in 2025 are forecast to grow in 2045 by about 10% in both the AM & PM peaks over 20 years. A flat growth has been applied and is not only is it too low, but it has failed to take account of committed and potential developments. Key developments omitted include:
   - Owens Farm, Hook (25/02564/OUT), 415 dwellings
   - Reading Road, Hook (26/00725/EIA) 143 dwellings
   - Hollybush Lane, Eversley (25/01581/OUT)190 dwellings
   - Firgrove Farm, Eversley (26/00145/OUT) 300 dwellings
   - Bramshill Quarry, Licence expansion, increased goods vehicles.

b) The level of trip generation from the development is considered to have been underestimated for following main reasons:
   - The trip rate is based on just 2 days of surveys, one day each of two TRICS sites, one in Sussex and one in Norfolk. A single day of Manual Classified Counts at each site is averaged which raises statistical concerns especially as the trip rates are being used for the peak hours. There are also concerns that these sites are not representative of Murrell Green, as the TRICS output says they have Travel Plans. Also, the Horsham site (Broadbridge Heath) has a primary school. While the Primary School maybe outside the surveyed area, it is likely to be within walking distance.
   - There is not sufficient justification for reducing the trip rate to 'Do Scheme Sustainable Core' and 'Do Scheme Sustainable Plus'. The reductions are not supported by evidence demonstrating how the assumed mode shift would be achieved and maintained. The lack of sustainable proposals as set out in the RRF2 is a key factor. By way of an illustration the 'Sustainable Plus' option in the AM peak (Table 7.3) has 214 bus passengers arriving and 127 departures to the site by bus. Apart from two buses not having this capacity this is an unexpected tidality. These concerns are reinforced by National Highways, which has confirmed that it cannot presently accept the assumption that two-way car-driver trips would reduce by approximately one-third from the Do Minimum scenario. National Highways has also requested further information on trip distribution and evidence demonstrating that the base model has been appropriately calibrated and validated.
   - Have not included the additional car trips generated by having the SANG and sports fields south of the railway. This is likely to be additional flows onto the B3016 and Potbridge Road accessing the car park.
   - The school travel modelling is unrealistic. The modelling assumes 95% of school trips would be to the new school within the development. This is unrealistic because the timing and phasing of the proposed school provision is not presently demonstrated or secured. During the period before the proposed schools are operational, pupils would necessarily travel to existing schools elsewhere such as at Hook and Hartley Wintney and many trips would be by cars double tripping (to and from the school twice per day).

Once pupils start, they are likely to remain at the same school. Also, the new school would start at year 1 and it will take several years to build up the complete number of forms.

- The assessment therefore needs to demonstrate how school-related trip generation and internalisation would vary through the development phasing.

c) The trip distribution and routing assignment raises many queries and concerns as follows:
    - The trip distribution needs to be further explained and presented, so the distribution based on Census statistics is presented, and also to show the changes made to this for the resultant distribution. As referred by National Highways a spreadsheet showing the distribution assumption should be presented.
    - The routing assignment has been manually applied based on assumed routes. Where there are alternative routes available to destinations, notably beyond the study network, then a modelling approach is recommended. We would support the suggestion by Wokingham Borough Council to use the Hampshire County Council model for this exercise.
    - The network needs extending to better understand impacts further afield at key junctions. To the north the B3349 and A33 and eastwards to the A331 and The Meadows. Both Wokingham and Bracknell Forest Borough Councils have raised objections based on concerns about impacts on their highway networks.
    - The trip distribution also needs to be modified with more external school movements. The distribution will be different for journey purpose, such as the different destinations for journeys to work and education.
d) The operational assessments have the incorrect flows as follows:
    - The base and forecast flows with and without development have underestimated flows and therefore delays. This means that additional mitigations will be required.
    - The assessments assume a flat demand profile over the 90-minute modelling period. Evidence is not presented to justify a flat demand profile, which is normally only applied in congested urban areas due to continuous demand flow. In rural areas and notably where there are schools and rail stations, some demand peaking within the peak would be anticipated.
e) Other specific concerns by junction are as follows:
    - The A30 / B3349 ‘Sainsbury roundabout’. The filter lane into Sainsbury is very short. With increased shopping traffic from the development, it is likely queueing will extend to the roundabout and block back though the junction. This needs to be added to the modelling and any mitigations identified. It should also be noted that when at capacity the junction is expected to cause rat-running along several the narrow residential streets such as Holt Lane, Pantile Drine and Holt Way.
    - The A30 / B3016 priority junction. This junction will have significant numbers of additional development traffic and delays are expected. Mitigation is required at the junction.

- The A30 / Griffin Way junctions. These are already congested and adding development traffic will add to delays. Regarding the Griffin Way South / A30 junction Hampshire CC have already commented on this junction relating to the Owen's Farm development (415 dwellings) on 03/09/2026. They said *'the proposals will result in an additional 49 trips in the AM Peak and 52 trips in the PM peak through a junction that is experiencing capacity issues and therefore will contribute to queuing and delay at this key junction in Hook.'*
- The A30/B3011 & A30/A323 mini roundabouts in Hartley Wintney. These are subject to delays currently and development traffic will add to these.
- The M3 junction 5. This has peak hour delays and adding development traffic will add to delays.

f) While the network requires extending and additional junctions added to detailed operational assessments as referred above, notably to include The Meadows and the B3349 and A33 junctions. Junctions within the existing network also need to be modelled. Junctions which need adding and have also been requested by Hampshire C.C are:
   - The B3016 / Station Rd (junction 2).
   - Fleet Rd / Elvetham Heath Way roundabout (junction 6)
   - Fleet Rd / Elvetham Heath roundabout (junction 7)
   - B3016 Odiham Rd / Potbridge Rd (junction 8)
   - A287 / B3349 (junction 10)
   - B3349 / Griffin Way / Station Rd (junction 13)

g) The approach to highway improvements is 'Decide and Provide'. However, other than access junctions, the developer is delivering very little. There are several junctions that have existing congestion where no mitigation is currently identified to at least accommodate some of the additional development traffic. For the approach to work it requires monitoring and potential funding and delivery in future. There is no mechanism set out for the future delivery of improvements. A series of schemes need to be designed and agreed and if congestion takes place, then this will trigger the delivery. Delivery of highway schemes is complex, expensive and filled with uncertainty such as the need to divert services and secure third-party land. For a 'Decide and Provide' approach to be relied upon, the Applicant should identify a clear and enforceable mechanism for monitoring network performance, defining intervention triggers, securing funding and delivering any subsequently required mitigation. No such mechanism has presently been demonstrated.

h) Congestion impacts on Hook and Hartley Wintney schools has not been assessed. These schools have congestion problems already and significant extra school traffic is expected. At the Hook there is a new secondary school which is not referred to. Specifically, in Hook there is already queuing from Hartletts Park and along Ravencroft.

i) Many objections to the planning application have been submitted and the most common reference was relating to traffic congestion. There were 388 transport objections and 58% referred to congestion.

6. Reasons for Refusal 4: Environmental Impacts of Traffic

There are a number of concerns relating to the Environmental Impact Assessments carried out as follows:

a) All day flows are important for many environmental categories of traffic impacts, such as noise, air pollution, accidents, severance and non-motorised user amenity. Details of the derivation of the 24-hour flows are required. It refers to the Transport Assessment and the trip generation Appendix F, but these do not provide any detail.

b) The traffic from the development is based, it says, on the 'Do Something Sustainable Core'. This underestimates the level of traffic generated as detailed in Section 5 (b) and (c) above. It is not considered to be a robust assessment as suggested in para 9.2.56.

c) The visual intrusion of traffic is omitted for the effects assessed. There are also impacts on the landscape character, settlement identity and rural character of the surrounding villages. This matter is considered in greater detail in the representations.

d) It omits to assess the impacts on the Phoenix Green Conservation Area.

e) There is inadequate consideration on the impacts on the Hartley Wintney Conservation Areas and Hook village centre.

f) It omits assessing the impacts on narrow rural lanes which are not suitable for higher volumes of two-way traffic. They have grass verges and one of the main impacts would be the damage caused by overrunning traffic. These include Station Road (Winchfield), Bagwell Lane, Taplin's Farm Lane, Pale Lane, Chatter Alley, Potbridge Road, Church Lane (Dogmersfield), and Chalky Lane.